

**Operationalising Love Within Austerity:  
An analysis of the opportunities and  
challenges experienced by the  
voluntary and community sector in  
Greater Manchester under the Coalition  
government (2010-2015).**

**KATY GOLDSTRAW**

**Department of Social Work and Social  
Care, Manchester Metropolitan  
University**

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**Katy Goldstraw**

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**Department of Social Work and Social  
Care, Manchester Metropolitan  
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## **Abstract**

The British voluntary and community sector (VCS) is currently experiencing unprecedented funding cuts. Many small voluntary groups are ceasing to exist under the strain of increasing demand for services and simultaneous funding cuts. As a consequence, the VCS is in transition, experiencing new challenges and opportunities. This thesis is an analysis of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government 2010-2015. I have developed a reflexive feminist ethnography, using participatory approaches within the adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester and one adult social care homelessness VCS organisation.

The thesis begins by considering the historical, ideological and policy background to the VCS before exploring the challenges and opportunities that the VCS of Greater Manchester experience. I then focus on the experiences of one adult social care homelessness VCS organisation in depth. Gender is considered throughout the thesis comparing the experiences of women within the VCS and reflecting on my gendered role as a researcher.

As a piece of feminist emancipatory participatory research, my thesis has implications for VCS policy and practice. Part of my participatory focus has included the development of a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit for VCS organisations. This toolkit supports VCS organisations to carry out an assets based organisational evaluation. The toolkit empowers small community and voluntary groups to focus on organisational assets and supports groups to develop strategy based upon these

assets. The adaptation of SLA for VCS groups and my addition of a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital, love, forms my contribution to original knowledge.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces my thesis. I explore my research question and aim, considering my research rationale, before summarising the contents of each of my chapters. In keeping with feminist methodologies, this introductory chapter examines my motivations for the research. I provide a definition of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and consider the demographics and circumstances of Greater Manchester's VCS. I then introduce my research approach, sustainable livelihoods analysis (SLA), which is key to my value-led social justice approach. My research is feminist and participatory, and as such includes reflexive accounts of my role as a researcher within the research process.

## 1.2 Research Question

Following a review of the literature, I developed my research question:

What are the opportunities and challenges experienced by the voluntary and community sector in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government (2010-2015)?

In order to answer this question, I developed a research aim:

### **Aim:**

- To use participatory feminist analysis in order to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government 2010-2015.

### **Objectives:**

Using the research aim as a basis for my thesis, I developed the objectives for my research alongside the VCS. I designed and developed a participatory workshop, inviting members of the VCS of Greater Manchester via adverts with two Greater Manchester VCS infrastructure organisations. At the first participatory workshop, the VCS developed the questions for my semi-structured interviews<sup>1</sup>. From these questions, I crafted my research objectives:

1. To examine the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives using participatory feminist research techniques.
2. To explore the experience of one adult social care VCS homelessness organisation during the term of the Coalition government 2010-2015.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix One.

3. To advance knowledge regarding VCS experiences of Coalition policy using feminist emancipatory research techniques.
4. To develop a new understanding of the impact of Coalition policy upon the gendered workforce of the VCS.
5. To adapt and refine SLA for use within VCS organisations, and in so doing support VCS practice.

My research was undertaken during the period of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition 2010-2015 in the UK and is therefore a reflection of the VCS experience under the Coalition, as the title states. In May 2015 the general election resulted in a Conservative Party majority, with David Cameron as prime minister. The future of the VCS remains uncertain under the new government (Ricketts 2015).

### **1.3 How I Achieve my Research Objectives**

I wish to examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro level perspectives. I draw on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory and on SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992). Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory fits within the school of socio-ecological models that aim to link behavioural theories focussed on small settings and anthropological theories that focus their analysis on larger settings. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological framework for human development applies socio-ecological models to human development. He argues that socially organised subsystems guide human development. These are explained in more detail in chapter four. These subsystems interrelate, and relationships exist within and between each level. SLA recommends the analysis of the institutional and policy contexts of the community before focussing on a more detailed participatory analysis at community level (Chambers and Conway 1992). I have simplified Bronfenbrenner's (1994) categorisations to micro, meso and macro as these reflect the categorisations used by SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992).

Some of my research for this doctoral study is based in a faith-based voluntary and community organisation within the adult social care homelessness subsector. Whilst I did not originally set out to research a faith-based organisation (FBO), my participatory approach meant that the organisation that approached me to work with them happened to be faith-based. Therefore FBOs are considered within the literature review and the background to FBOs is included within my research findings. My research within the voluntary sector of Greater Manchester was not within FBOs

because the organisations that contacted me during the initial participatory workshop and invited me to interview them were secular.

The challenge of feminist research is 'to find ways of working with difference and complexity whilst not losing sight of the bigger issues around women's (and some men's) oppression' (Burns and Walker 2005:68). For this reason I examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from three different perspectives: macro, meso and micro. My thesis is focussed around my participatory feminist ideals, which is why I have chosen to use an adaptation of SLA as a participatory research tool, to structure and analyse my research findings. Whilst sustainable livelihoods is not a specifically feminist tool, its participatory social justice approach sits well with feminist research practice. This adaptation of SLA and my addition of a sixth livelihoods capital form my contribution to original knowledge. I now consider each of my research objectives and how I meet each of them.

**Research Objective One: To examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives using participatory feminist research techniques.**

I focus my research to reflect the macro, meso and micro level research experience of VCS organisations. My national macro level research is literature-based. My meso Greater Manchester research was qualitative participatory research. My micro level research was an ethnography. I analysed my research findings and make comparisons between national, regional and organisational experiences.

**Research Objective Two: To explore the experience of one adult social care VCS homelessness organisation during the term of the Coalition government 2010-2015.**

I undertook an ethnographic research piece within an adult social care VCS organisation within Greater Manchester. Alongside this ethnography I also carried out semi-structured interviews with staff, trustees and volunteers and in participatory workshops. This gave me a detailed multi-layered picture of the organisation's experience under Coalition policy.

**Research Objective Three: To advance knowledge regarding VCS experiences of Coalition policy using feminist emancipatory research techniques.**

My research methods are qualitative. My methodology is ethnography; I use participatory action research (PAR), participant observation and semi-structured interviews to inform my ethnographic findings. My research objectives were set by the VCS in my first PAR workshop and hence reflect the needs of the VCS. My second PAR was specifically focussed on women, work and the VCS. I also focus on the opportunities and challenges faced by women in the VCS during the Coalition government. This thesis is a piece of feminist research that uses reflexivity throughout the study to contribute to the understanding of the research process. As part of my research I have co-produced an assets based organisational evaluation toolkit for small VCS groups which reflects my commitment to participatory feminist research techniques.

**Research Objective Four: To develop a new understanding of the impact of Coalition policy upon the gendered workforce of the VCS.**

Although SLA is not specifically a feminist research approach, I have adapted SLA for VCS organisational use and included a gendered analysis as part of my research. These reflect the VCS concerns about the effect of Coalition policies on women as

expressed in my first participatory workshop. I discuss the gendered nature of the VCS and the gendered experience of conducting research throughout my thesis.

**Research Objective Five: To adapt and refine SLA for use within VCS organisations, and in so doing to support VCS practice.**

In the process of this project I have adapted the five SLA capitals and explored how SLA can be applied to analyse VCS organisations. As part of this process, I created an assets based organisational evaluation toolkit for VCS groups.

In the next section I explain my research rationale.

## 1.4 Research Rationale

I have chosen this area of research as I have worked in the voluntary sector, both in Britain and overseas, for the last decade. Over the years since 1997, the change in government from New Labour to the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition has presented a myriad of challenges for the voluntary sector. Recent decades have seen a voluntary sector that has moved from an experience of government support and capacity-building initiatives to a sector that has been disproportionately affected by the government cuts (Hilton and McKay 2011). I have been inspired and intrigued by a VCS sector in Greater Manchester that has both contracted and adapted to its new recession situation. Having used SLA as an analytic tool during my Master's degree, to examine how sustainable tourism policy had affected the lives of the indigenous Bornean Iban<sup>2</sup>, I saw a parallel between the adaptive strategies of a Bornean longhouse<sup>3</sup> (in effect a large extended family) and the adaptive strategies of smaller VCS organisations (small organisations linked by networks and ties) to government policies.

### 1.4.1 Why Adult Social Care?

The adult social care sector was chosen as I have worked, on and off, as a carer in the adult social care field for the last fifteen years. The adult social care field has been subject to policies of privatisation and isomorphism since the late 1990s<sup>4</sup>, so arguably has had a longer time to develop adaptive strategies. The adult social care field is also

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<sup>2</sup> **MSc** My MSc was entitled 'A Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis of Ethical Tourism with the Bornean Iban' (Birmingham University 2003, Merit). The Iban are an indigenous group within Sarawak, Borneo. Different family groupings have become involved in tourism. My MSc thesis considered the effects of tourism on the Iban using sustainable livelihoods analysis.

<sup>3</sup> **Bornean longhouse.** Iban people in Borneo traditionally live in longhouses. These are long wooden buildings on stilts that have a central covered community section, an open air section on one side for drying produce and small sectioned-off family quarters along the other side. Several families live within one longhouse and there may be several longhouses within one community.

<sup>4</sup> **National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.** This Act introduced an internal market into healthcare.

an area that holds low status within society, traditionally being overlooked in the health and VCS fields in favour of research fields that have higher social status (Dickinson et al. 2012). I am committed to emancipatory social justice research and wanted to focus on an area of the VCS that could be considered in poverty, and as experiencing oppression.

On returning to work as a carer in the adult social care field in 2012, I noticed a significant difference in the care that I was able to offer to my clients. I returned to work in the same adult social care organisation I had worked in from 1997 to 2003, unusually for the same manager. My role in the late 1990s had held the same job description but the job had changed beyond recognition. In the late 1990s, I was employed to spend an hour with a client, providing company and sharing a meal. I was paid £5.79 for this task. This relationship involved care, and it also built up a social relationship between the client and the carer. In 2012, the contact time had been reduced to fifteen minutes, during which I was expected to make and serve a meal, provide personal care, write up my activity and wash up after the meal. I was paid £1.54 for this task. The older person was paying the local authority, and the local authority subcontracted the work to an independent care organisation. The relationship, in my view, no longer involved either social contact or care. How can a social relationship develop when so much is to be achieved in so few minutes? A conversation was not possible as the client was too busy trying to eat quickly.

I wanted to explore these changes in adult social care within a VCS organisation. Ethnography as a research tool seemed ideal as it enabled a detailed exploration of VCS organisational dynamics (Skeggs 2013). I chose a homelessness adult social care organisation as the location for my primary ethnography because homelessness is an area of the adult social care sector that is especially affected by Coalition policy

(Cloke et al. 2010) and therefore my research would be of maximum value to the VCS within this subsector.

### **1.4.2 My Voluntary and Community Sector Experience**

My experience of working within the VCS for a decade and of my return to caring after a long break inspired the development of this PhD. I began to consider ‘What has changed?’ and ‘How are organisations responding to the changes?’ I also teach on the MA in Voluntary and Third Sector Management at Edge Hill University<sup>5</sup>. The students that I teach are full-time workers in the VCS, seconded to the university. Much of my teaching is facilitative and involves discussion with students regarding the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS. My students have shared the financial effects of the recession upon their organisation and discussion has arisen around Victorian philanthropy and if Coalition policy would result in a return to Victorian notions of charity. These experiences have developed my research interest in the PhD topic and the enthusiasm to research the effects of austerity on an adult social care VCS organisation in Manchester.

The VCS is important to me. I identify as having moved into academia from the VCS and as such I feel that is still where my loyalty lies. I am deeply committed to adult social care, having worked in various iterations within the sector for all of my working life. Having considered why I chose this research area as the subject of my thesis and why it is important to me I now offer a summary of each chapter’s content before exploring my research approach.

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<sup>5</sup> **MA Voluntary and Third Sector Management**, Edge Hill University  
[http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/courses/leaflets\\_azorus/voluntary-and-third-sector-management.pdf](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/courses/leaflets_azorus/voluntary-and-third-sector-management.pdf)

## **1.5 Research Chapter Summary**

In this section I provide an overview of each chapter of the thesis.

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter is my introductory chapter. The chapter begins by summarising my research question and research objectives. The chapter then considers my research rationale. I offer a definition of the VCS, consider the VCS of Greater Manchester and explain why I chose sustainable livelihoods as a tool for analysis.

### **Chapter Two: The History of the Voluntary Sector: Opportunities and Challenges**

This chapter is the first of two chapters which examine the macro level context of the national VCS. I draw out key points in history such as the development of the notion of deserving and undeserving poor through to neoliberal interpretations of the VCS during the Thatcher era of the 1980s. The chapter draws parallels between policies and seeks to draw learning from the historical context in order to understand present day Coalition policy. Whilst including more distant history, I focus on New Labour's Third Way and the Coalition's Big Society and welfare reform policies.

### **Chapter Three: Considering Key Ideological and Policy Themes**

This is my literature review chapter. This chapter draws literature from the key themes within my research: adult social care, gender, homelessness and faith. This chapter considers the literature that relates to the ideological and policy backgrounds of the opportunities and challenges that the VCS faced during the Coalition term (2010-2015). This chapter considers the literature regarding how new public management techniques, purchaser-provider contracts and neoliberal policy ideals have affected the adult social care VCS.

## **Chapter Four: Theoretical Underpinnings and Research Methodology**

This chapter is a consideration of the methodological choices that I made. This chapter considers my research aim and objectives and how my research design meets these objectives. My methodology sets out how I have structured my thesis and examines my theoretical perspective and why I have chosen a feminist participatory approach to my research. The chapter examines how I conducted the multi-method participatory ethnography, describing the methods used and how they were employed. I also discuss how my research was analysed using thematic analysis and my adaptation of SLA. The chapter concludes with an exploration of my research ethics.

## **Chapter Five: The Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Greater Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector**

This chapter examines the meso level context of the regional VCS. I examine my findings from my Greater Manchester VCS research. I offer a reflexive account of the research process. I then consider the opportunities and challenges faced by the Greater Manchester VCS. I draw on themes such as partnership working, organisational identity and VCS silencing and consider them in relation to the opportunities or challenges they pose to the VCS of Greater Manchester.

## **Chapter Six: The Experiences of One Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation, CareGM**

This chapter is an exploration of one VCS adult social care homelessness organisation, discussed using the pseudonym CareGM. I describe the space within which CareGM operates and describe the organisation. I offer a reflexive account of the research process. I then consider key themes that developed from my ethnographic research and my semi-structured interviews. These themes –

organisational identity, mission and voice – are considered and developed as the chapter progresses.

### **Chapter Seven: Developing the Sixth Capital**

This chapter analyses the micro level experiences of one VCS organisation, CareGM, within Greater Manchester. I consider CareGM's faith-based values and consider whether SLA has been effective in representing how CareGM has responded to austerity. The chapter offers a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital, Caritas, as an appropriate addition to my research analysis.

### **Chapter Eight: Conclusion: Austerity in Focus**

This chapter is the conclusion to my research, and indeed the thesis. I review the opportunities and challenges faced by the VCS under the Coalition government at macro, meso and micro levels. I then go on to review my research question and examine how I have met my research objectives. I consider the limitations of my study and how my participatory research will continue in the form of a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit for the VCS. The chapter concludes by summarising how my PhD has contributed to original knowledge.

Having summarised the contents of each chapter I first offer a definition of the VCS, then consider the context that the VCS of Greater Manchester sits within and then move on to consider why I chose this research topic and why it is important to me.

## **1.6 Defining the Voluntary and Community Sector**

It is important within this introductory chapter to define what I mean by the VCS. The VCS is in transition (Milbourne 2013), and is experiencing hard times, significant funding cuts, changes to contract service provision and increasing demands to privatise (NCIA 2015). However, before these opportunities and challenges can be analysed the terminology with which the VCS operates must first be defined. These definitions refer solely to the British VCS, as does my PhD. The British voluntary sector sits within a vibrant, diverse and global civil society (WEF 2013, World Bank 2009); however, the focus of my thesis is on the British VCS.

### **1.6.1 A Variety of Terms**

The VCS has been referred to by many terms over the last few decades: voluntary and community sector, non-government organisations, the third sector, civil society and the voluntary sector. Definitions have varied over the years and have often been based around a default definition (Alcock 2010a, 2010b). Often definitions of the VCS have centred on commonalities between organisations and the services that they offer (Halfpenny and Reid 2002, Salamon and Anheier 1997, Billis 1989, Knight 1993, Kendall and Knapp 1996). Definitions of the VCS focus on funding sources (NCVO 2010a) and voluntary service, including the use of volunteers (Milbourne 2013). Other distinguishing features often identified when defining the VCS are its independence (Davies 2014, Knight 1993) and its value driven organisational purposes (Billis 2010, Nevile 2010). However, despite similarities in value and purpose the VCS is made up of a multiplicity of organisations: large and small, self-help groups, activists and service delivery organisations (Packham 2008). The VCS is not a homogenous group, and to attempt to define the VCS is therefore disputed ground (Milbourne 2013).

Economists have explained the existence of non-profit organisations across a variety of countries using functionalist models: theories of public good or contract failure (Badelt 1990, James 1990). Social welfare theorists have linked the development of the voluntary sector to a historical-contextual analysis of welfare policy (Kuhnle and Selle 1992).

Different political leaderships have defined and described the VCS differently. New Labour used the term 'third sector'; this definition included not just voluntary and community groups but social enterprises, cooperatives and mutual aid and other civil society groups (Blair 1998). The term third sector existed in the United States of America and the European Union before 1997 but was popularised by New Labour (Haugh and Kitson 2007). The term third sector was critiqued for failing to involve the construction of smaller voluntary groups (Richardson 1993) and for invoking associations of a derogatory 'third class' sector (Chambers 1997). The Coalition rebranded their description of the VCS, using the broader term of civil society. The term civil society is much broader than voluntary sector (Evers 2010) as it includes trade unions, cooperatives and mutual financial organisations. Civil society groups and less formal self-organising groups can be distinguished from the formally organised VCS (Evers and Laville 2004). This fits with Billis's (1989) distinction between informal civil society groupings and more organised formal sectors: public, voluntary and private. The diversity in size, structure and legal definitions of the VCS (Taylor and Kendall 1996) makes creating a clear and concise definition almost impossible.

### **1.6.2 Hegemonic Discourse**

Both New Labour and Coalition policies have promoted a 'new hegemonic discourse' (Milbourne 2013:11). The voluntary sector has operated to provide a unifying

framework for a wide range of organisations and interests, including charities, voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, cooperatives and other groups, which had 'previously been more politically divided and ineffective' (Alcock 2010a: 386). Milbourne (2013:11) states 'in both the New Labour and Coalition government regimes, hegemony and consensual ideology have played a strong part in discourse and strategic directions.' Alcock (2010a) argues that the notion of a single voluntary sector was about creating a sense of strategic unity; a great range of voluntary sector organisations exists. The VCS is operating in an increasingly contested space (Milbourne 2013). Coalition policies of reducing welfare and contracting out services have further contributed to the bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the sector, with larger organisations competing for contracts whilst smaller organisations lack capacity and staffing to perform in an increasingly competitive environment.

### **1.6.3 Complexity**

To define the VCS therefore is increasingly complex. Kuhnle and Selle (1992) define a voluntary organisation as 'an organisation which is neither part of government nor part of the private business sector' (in Johansson 2003:210). This is a very broad definition, but given the challenges in defining the increasingly heterogeneous sector it is perhaps as much of a definition as can be found. This definition, however, does not address the increasing pressures on the formalised VCS to simultaneously behave as a shadow state (Wolch 1990) via service delivery contracts and to privatise. I have considered a broad definition of the VCS in order to gain an understanding of what the term means. I will now consider the experience of Greater Manchester's VCS before I introduce SLA as a research approach.

## **1.7 Focus on Greater Manchester**

In line with my research objective one, to examine the effects of Coalition policy on adult social care organisations in Greater Manchester, I will now consider Greater Manchester and the VCS of Greater Manchester.

Greater Manchester is a city region arguably more likely to experience the effects of Coalition policies than its wealthier neighbours due to the levels of poverty within its boundaries (GMPC Report 2013). The Third Sector Research Centre (Mohan 2011, Clifford 2011) states that voluntary sector organisations in deprived areas tend to receive more public funding, and as a consequence of local authority funding cuts will experience greater deprivation. Deprived areas have a 'much bigger share of publically funded organisations than less deprived areas' (Clifford 2011:10). It is important to contextualise Greater Manchester's economic status and Manchester's VCS before examining my research into the effects of austerity policy on Greater Manchester's adult social care VCS as a whole.

### **1.7.1 Greater Manchester's Economic Status**

It is important to consider Greater Manchester's economic context in order to understand the demographic that Greater Manchester's adult social care VCS organisations are working with. Greater Manchester is one of the key economic centres in the north of England with a population of 2.7 million people (GMPC Report 2013). Manchester is the fourth most deprived city in England (Manchester City Council 2011). Three of the local authority districts in Greater Manchester (Manchester, Salford and Rochdale) are ranked within the top ten per cent most

deprived nationally (GMPC Report 2013). Greater Manchester provides over 1.2 million jobs (GMPC Report 2013). However:

despite the economic success of the sub-region, levels of poverty and disadvantage remain a key challenge as economic growth has not benefited those areas and residents that need it the most. This is borne out in a wide range of social and economic indicators. (GMPC Report 2013:5)

Greater Manchester is a city region that experiences high levels of deprivation (GMPC 2013, Manchester City Council 2011). Twenty-three per cent of the subregional population live in the most deprived areas (GMPC Report 2013). The indices for multiple deprivation are based on seven areas of deprivation: income, employment, health and disability, education and skills, barriers to housing services, crime and living environment.

The life expectancy of residents of Greater Manchester at birth is 76.4 years for males and 80.8 years for females; this is lower than the regional and national averages (New Economy 2012). Between June 2011 and June 2012 one-fifth of people aged 16-64 in Greater Manchester were disabled, higher than the national average (New Economy 2012). Greater Manchester sits within an economic context where:

Levels of unemployment and economic inactivity are among the highest nationally, with over 15% of working age residents claiming an out of work benefit. High levels of deprivation and worklessness mean future generations of Greater Manchester residents are more likely to experience poor health, education and employment outcomes, creating a cycle of deprivation and poverty within the sub-region. (GMPC Report 2013:5)

Greater Manchester's VCS, as a recipient of local authority funding, is likely to experience the effects of Coalition cuts. Much of the debate surrounding the effects of Coalition policy on the voluntary sector focusses on deprived communities and their reactions and capacity to react to funding cuts (Ransome 2011, Evans 2011, Bednarek 2011, NWIP 2011, Glasman 2010, Coote 2010a). The Third Sector Research Centre (Clifford 2011, Mohan 2011) identified the North West as an area where more than fifty per cent of voluntary sector organisations received local authority funding. The effects of local authority funding cuts are therefore more likely to be disproportionately affecting the VCS in Greater Manchester. My PhD study is focussed on adult social care as it is an area of the voluntary sector that is heavily linked to local authority funding (Wistow 2012) and consequently may be disproportionately affected by local authority cuts.

### **1.7.2 Greater Manchester's Voluntary Sector**

Manchester has a large and vibrant voluntary sector. The City of Manchester: State of the Voluntary Sector Report 2013 states that there are an 'estimated 14,592 organisations operating in the voluntary sector in Greater Manchester' (Dayson et al. 2013:i)<sup>6</sup>. The report also comments that there are a large number of 'below the radar' organisations that are not formally registered or incorporated:

Four-fifths of organisations are micro (annual income of under £10,000) in size, eleven percent are small (annual income between £10,000 and £100,000), seven percent are medium sized (annual income between £100,000 and £1 million) and only two percent are large (annual income greater than £1 million).  
(Dayson et al. B 2013:i)

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<sup>6</sup> **City of Manchester, State of The Voluntary Sector 2013** This is a key report monitoring the effects and impact the recession has had on Greater Manchester's voluntary sector. For this reason the report is quoted throughout this chapter. <http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cesr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/eval-voluntary-sector-2013-greater-manchester.pdf>

The majority of VCS organisations in Greater Manchester work within four areas: health and wellbeing, community development, education training and research, and sport and leisure (Dayson et al. 2013). The majority of the VCS within Greater Manchester has a local focus (Dayson et al. 2013:i). The majority of income is situated in large and medium sized voluntary organisations. Large and medium sized organisations accounts for less than a tenth of the Greater Manchester VCS's organisations but received more than ninety per cent of its income (Dayson et al. 2013:ii). This leaves the majority of the organisations, made up of under-the-radar micro and small organisations, with just one-third of the income to share.

With the majority of small VCS organisations having access to less than a third of the funding available to the VCS in Manchester, the needs of the marginalised groups that they serve are under threat. A significant proportion, three-quarters (Dayson et al. 2013:ii), of the VCS of Greater Manchester attains income from non-public sector sources such as lottery grants, trusts and foundations. However, more than half of respondents (fifty-three per cent) receive funding from public sector bodies (Dayson et al. 2013:v). This public sector funding is made up of seventy-one per cent from local authorities, fifteen per cent from local NHS bodies and nine per cent from national government departments (Dayson et al. 2013:v).

Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations (GMCVO) conducted research in March 2012 into the effects of the Coalition cuts on communities in Manchester. GMCVO found that the effects of Coalition policy have predominantly affected preventative services and services for vulnerable people (2012b:3). GMCVO (2012b) found that the cuts disproportionately affected families with dependent children and older and disabled people. At the same time demand for services, especially in mental health and preventative services, was rising. Service users were

being forced to crisis point before accessing services. Manchester's experience has been replicated across England's core cities:

severe cuts to services everywhere alongside rising demand which cannot be met despite some valiant efforts ... most badly affected ... children and young people, but services to older people, disabled people and people from BAME [Black and Minority Ethnic] groups have also been lost. (Core Cities 2015:2)

The research by GMCVO (2012b) was confirmed by Davidson and Packham<sup>7</sup> (2012, 2015). Davidson and Packham have conducted a significant amount of research on Greater Manchester and offer a picture of Greater Manchester's VCS in 2012 and 2015. This comparison is useful to get an overall sense of the experiences of Greater Manchester's VCS. Davidson and Packham (2012) examined the resilience, needs and strategies that will help the survival of smaller voluntary and community organisation experiencing finding cuts within the North West. Almost seventy per cent of small voluntary organisations felt that demand for their services would increase over the next year but many organisations felt that they would not be able to attract any more volunteers or expand their services (Davidson and Packham 2012). Davidson and Packham (2012:3) found that forty-two per cent of small voluntary organisations did not expect to exist in the next six months to three years. Most small voluntary groups were receiving some local authority funding and this funding was considered to be threatened (Davidson and Packham 2012). These groups were attempting to diversify their funding resources through increasing the use of volunteers and applying to other funders.

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<sup>7</sup> I have used Davidson and Packham's 2012 and 2015 reports extensively as they have focussed specifically on voluntary and community groups within Greater Manchester, and in returning to monitor the progress of the VCS groups between 2012 and 2015 they provide an insightful reflection of the impact of austerity upon the VCS of Greater Manchester.

In 2015 Davidson and Packham published updated research, returning to some of the organisations that they had surveyed three years earlier (Davidson and Packham 2012). The research revealed difficult times for the VCS of Greater Manchester, with several organisations disappearing or facing the threat of imminent closure. The researchers interviewed VCS infrastructure organisations across Greater Manchester. These organisations were facing significant funding cuts. The VCS organisations that GMCVO (2012b) were working with were experiencing great financial hardship. Many organisations had had to reduce the services that they were offering and were operating in a situation of increased need whilst having access to fewer resources, in terms of funding, support or infrastructure. Across England's core cities:

demand for advice on housing and debt has risen: pressure on services supporting people with mental health, alcohol and substance abuse problems is rising; homelessness is increasing; demand for charity such as food parcels has escalated. (Core Cities 2015:1)

GMCVO (2012b) highlight the multiple effects that cuts to services have on a community: that cuts to one voluntary organisation result in higher demand in other organisations. Manchester's voluntary sector is under threat from local authority funding cuts and a reduction in funding from large funders such as Big Lottery (GMCVO 2012b). At the same time as funding is being cut, need is rising (CLES 2014, GMPC 2013, Dayson et al. 2013, GMCVO 2012b, Davidson and Packham 2012). Manchester's adult social care VCS is seeing need increasing to crisis level; some organisations are closing, unable to cope with demand, whilst others are buckling under the weight of demand (VSNW and CLES 2013). Welfare reform and the consequential reduction in benefits and support packages has resulted in more people

approaching the voluntary sector for support at the same time as the sector is experiencing unprecedented cuts (VSNW and CLES 2013).

Organisational support for charities is reducing (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, GMCVO 2012a, Davidson and Packham 2012) with adult social care networking groups ceasing to exist due to lack of funds. Infrastructure organisations are supporting adult social care organisations in Greater Manchester, running forums to try to enable organisations to adequately respond to policy challenges (VSNW and CLES 2013). The central aim of my research is to examine the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester. I will now consider why I chose to adapt SLA in order to explore my research aim.

## **1.8 Taking a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to my Doctoral Research**

SLA originates from international development. It was brought to the UK by Oxfam GB (May et al. 2009). It is an assets based approach to analysis, focussed on examining a unit of analysis, most usually the household, in terms of its vulnerabilities or adaptive strategies. Rather than focussing purely on the economic, SLA examines a series of categories a household might use to adapt to change or crisis. I have chosen to apply SLA to VCS organisations, and this is reflected in my fifth research objective. I consider SLA in more detail in chapter four, my methodology. However, as SLA is the basis for my research approach I wanted to introduce the concept within this introductory chapter.

### **1.8.1 Why Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis for the Voluntary and Community Sector?**

I believe that the distinctive networked, often familial, feel to the VCS (Macmillan 2013) enables SLA analysis to be applied to VCS organisations. An SLA is a grassroots approach focussing on people's everyday experiences and using information gathered at grassroots level to build up a picture of their livelihood strategies. A livelihood can be defined as comprising 'the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living' (Rennie and Singh 1996:15). For a livelihood to be sustainable it must be able to generate and maintain a way of living: '... it must be able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks' (Rennie and Singh 1996:15).

The sustainable livelihoods approach is focussed on the lived experiences of people and organisations. It focusses, in the case of my thesis on their, organisation's assets,

and aims to make connections between micro level coping strategies and macro level policies (May et al. 2009). The aim of sustainable livelihoods is to

build up an understanding of the power dynamics underlying the different aspects of people's lives. Value what is often undervalued and invisible, for example non-financial assets. (May et al. 2009:5)

The VCS has a wealth of non-financial assets, and whilst many VCS organisations do not appear to hold power in a financial capacity, the resilience of the VCS throughout the last century of changing politics and its ability to react and recover from crises (Hilton and MacKay 2011) makes it suitable for a livelihoods analysis.

### **1.8.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis as a Tool for Emancipatory Research**

SLA explores how policies and institutions impact on communities, and upon the challenges and vulnerabilities that they face. An important principle of the sustainable livelihoods approach is recognition of the power relationships between and within organisations and communities. The recognition of and engagement with issues of power and oppression fit closely with feminist PAR methodology. SLA, although not explicitly a feminist research tool, is being used by Oxfam to conduct feminist and gendered analysis at household and community levels<sup>8</sup>. The recognition of gender disparity is especially important when researching adult social care organisations, which have a largely female workforce (Glendinning 2012). Therefore my adaptation of SLA, a participatory research tool, for VCS organisations reflects my fourth research objective, my commitment to feminist emancipatory research.

VCS organisations have developed a range of adaptive strategies over the last century to react and respond to changes in government policies. I am interested in

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<sup>8</sup> **GEM** Oxfam's cutting edge gendered market system approach to sustainable livelihoods development. <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/food-livelihoods/gem>

how Coalition policy has affected VCS organisational strategy and its responses. Sustainable livelihoods are a useful unit of analysis as they take a more holistic approach to adaptive strategies. VCS organisations have always had high social capital, for example, but have traditionally been low on financial capital. In this context distinctiveness is a 'strategy of distinction' (Macmillan 2013:42) in order to preserve space from other organisations and across the wider VCS sector.

In considering how distinctiveness is achieved within the VCS the sustainable livelihoods (Chambers and Conway 1992) approach becomes useful. SLA divides assets into five categories: human, social, public, physical and financial. Human assets are the human skills, knowledge, levels of educational attainment and capacity to work. Social assets are the social links and ties that integrate VCS groups into the community around them. Public assets are the relationships with public groups such as local authorities, the police or the NHS. Physical assets are the tools and equipment that people need to be productive and the buildings, space or digital infrastructure required for production. Financial assets are the organisational income, access to credit, grants or savings. A detailed SLA of Care GM is included in Appendix Seven.

As part of my research I facilitated an SLA focussed participatory workshop with CareGM, which reflects my fifth research objective. In creating and developing SLA alongside my ethnographic research I aim to weave reciprocity into my thesis, enacting my emancipatory research objectives<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix Seven is a full write up of this SLA

### **1.8.3 The Macro, Meso and Micro Contexts**

The sustainable livelihoods approach stresses the importance of policies and institutions, the macro and meso contexts, to enable communities or in the case of this thesis VCS groups, to promote the agenda of those in poverty and it seeks ways to support people and organisations to achieve their own livelihood goals by building on their existing coping strategies. This is why I have first examined the national level policy context, then the macro level Greater Manchester institutional and policy context, before conducting my own version of an organisation specific SLA.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduces my research and explores my motivations for the research project, my feminist and participatory values. My PhD is value-led social justice research. I consider why I have chosen a value-led social justice focussed piece of qualitative research and justify why this fits my research question. This introductory chapter fits alongside my methodology chapter which discusses how my research was conducted and how my role as researcher impacted on the study. This chapter considers my research approach and offers an introduction to a more detailed theoretical underpinning that sits within my methodology chapter.

My next chapter considers the historical context in which the VCS sits. The chapter links the experiences of the VCS of the past to the opportunities and challenges experienced by the VCS under the Coalition government 2010-2015.

## **CHAPTER TWO: The Voluntary Sector: Its History, Opportunities and Challenges**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter considers the historical background to the VCS's experience of austerity. I draw themes from the VCS's experience throughout history, and link them to the opportunities and challenges that the VCS is experiencing under the Coalition government. In reviewing state policy towards the VCS key policy narratives are identified and developed. This chapter sets the scene for my literature review chapter that moves on to consider the policy and ideological context in which the VCS operates. These chapters set the macro level context in which the VCS operates, achieving research objective one.

In this chapter I examine the role of the voluntary sector and explore the extent to which the Coalition's policy towards the voluntary sector is new or an adaptation of the charitable historical narrative. I map the history of the voluntary sector and analyse Coalition policy in the light of this historical narrative. Coalition policy exists within a policy history that began with the 1601 Poor Law (Wallis 2009). It arguably is the culmination of a series of neoliberal new public management policies that began with Thatcher's 1979 election. Themes can be identified which represent an adaptive and responsive voluntary sector throughout the centuries that has evolved through changes in party politics and during periods of rising and declining mass membership and in response to a diversity of interactions from institutions of central and local government (Hilton and MacKay 2011).

The Welfare to Work policies of the Coalition movement will be linked to the welfare in exchange for work policies of the workhouse. This chapter focusses on the post-Thatcher history of the VCS. The majority of the analysis will be focussed on policy changes from Thatcher onwards, linking trends in contract culture, neoliberalism and welfare reform. This chapter considers the historical narrative within which the VCS sits, setting the context for my third chapter, which is a literature review of the ideological and policy context within which Coalition policy sits.

## **2.2 Neoliberal New Public Management Approaches to Welfare 1979-1997**

The 1980s brought a significant shift in policy from social welfare provision through state-funded sources to the withdrawal of the state, the prioritisation of the markets and the emergence of new public management techniques. Jones and Lowe (2002:12) state that in the 1980s

the world economy was disrupted by successive oil crises, whilst the demand for welfare expenditure relentlessly increased, fuelled by a combination of rising popular expectations, higher professional standards and the needs of an ageing population.

Welfare began to be demonised, starting with the 1968 student revolt and culminating with the public sector union strikes of the 1978/9 'winter of discontent'; 'increasing suspicion was levelled at both the producers and consumers of welfare' (Jones and Lowe 2002:12). Murray (1996) documents the 1980s as a period where 'another kind of poor people' were understood. He introduces the term 'underclasses' as a two-tier understanding of deserving and undeserving poor. Welshman (2013) charted changes in terminology used to describe disadvantaged groups. The 1980s therefore brought a debate about the underclass.

### **2.2.1 Critiquing the Welfare State**

The first major academic critiques of the welfare state also arose during the period; Marxist (Gough 1985) and feminist critiques (Wilson 1997) were notable during this period. The tax payer was perceived as much less willing to subsidise services for the 'undeserving' poor. New right critiques of welfare were increasingly developed and offered as justification for rolling back state support. The long-standing confidence in

the public welfare settlement of the 1950s 'ceded to criticisms of bureaucratic inefficiency in the 1980s, opening the way for new ideologies premised on new public management and market competition' (Milbourne and Murray 2011:74). The 1980s is synonymous with a reduction in welfare state provision. Starting in 1979, Margaret Thatcher's government 'privatised and unleashed the market' (Bishop and Green 2011:2). The nature of the charitable sector changed markedly in the late 1980s. Government legislation, increasing consumer expectations, increasing competition and the increasing professionalism of those that manage public services resulted in a public service delivered via local authority staff, through the establishment of charitable trusts or in partnership with the commercial sector.

### **2.2.2 Voluntary Sector as Contractor**

The neoliberal policies of the Thatcher era saw an increased use of the voluntary sector as a subcontractor for services in a new contract culture. The voluntary sector was seen to exist in a 'mixed economy of welfare' (McCarthy 1989) aimed at diversifying service delivery away from over-reliance on state-run services. This policy was based on the new public management approach (Levy 2010) to public service reform, aimed at reforming the public sector through linking incentives and performance, measuring outputs, performance indicators and creating purchaser-provider relationships with the voluntary sector. This 'contract culture' gave the VCS a more prominent role as well as increased income from government (Kendall and Knapp 1996). Such boundary shifting of welfare provision had important consequences for the voluntary sector. Concerns were raised regarding the bureaucracy associated with contracts, inappropriate regulation, goal distortion and threats to the sector's independence, alongside a questioning of the distinctive

contribution that the VCS could make to welfare and society as a whole (Lewis 1999, Kendall 2003, Wolch 1990).

### **2.2.3 Purchaser-Provider Legislation**

The late 1980s brought the neoliberal Thatcherite agenda into legislation with the passage of the Social Security Act 1986, the Education Act 1988 and the Housing Act 1988 and the compulsory competitive tendering in the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. These acts brought forth the purchaser-provider relationship between the state and the VCS. Services continued to be financed by the state and were delivered via purchaser-provider contracts by a range of agencies. The voluntary sector of the 1980s and early 1990s was 'nothing if not diverse' (Reading 1994:5). Reading (1994) describes a sector that ranged from large charities with multi-million pound incomes to small self-help organisations with little or no income. Reading describes four areas of activity for voluntary activity during the late 1980s and 1990s: service provision, self-help or mutual aid, advocacy and campaigning (1994:5).

### **2.2.4 The 1996 Deakin Report: Meeting the Challenge of Change**

The 1996 Deakin Report *Meeting the Challenge of Change* followed a 1993 Centris Report into voluntary and community action. The Deakin Report (Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector 1996) was the outcome of an independent enquiry established by NCVO, chaired by Nicholas Deakin. The remit of the report was to review the challenges faced by the voluntary sector as it moved into the twenty-first century and to outline how these challenges might be overcome. The anticipation of change was an important element of the report. The recommendations of the report put significant emphasis on state/VCS relations, arguing that these could be improved through a more structured and proactive approach by both parties. One of the Deakin Report's recommendations was that the law on the definition and regulation of

charities should be updated. This led under New Labour to the 2006 Charities Act. Charity law was simplified and the definition of what a charity is clarified. Another recommendation of the Deakin Report was the need to formalise the relationships between the state and the VCS. The report suggested a 'Concordant' to formalise governance.

## **2.3 The Blair-Brown Era 1997-2010**

With the election of New Labour in 1997 there was a 'period of rapid policy change, with a rise in the profile of voluntary action' (Alcock 2011:158). By the mid-1990s the Thatcherite settlement between state and the market had become bi-partisan consensus:

over the three decades before the financial collapse, Britain helped turn this conventional wisdom about the roles of the state and the market into a global faith. (Bishop and Green 2011:2)

The new public management neoliberal agenda of the 1980s was replaced with a more supportive policy dialogue. New Right thinking not only changed Conservative Party thinking but also heavily influenced New Labour (Bishop and Green 2011).

### **2.3.1 The Third Sector**

The voluntary and community sector was relabelled the 'third sector', to be governed and supported through the Office for the Third Sector which was set up in 2006. This was part of a deliberate attempt by government to expand policy intervention into areas that were not traditionally associated with voluntary action, such as mutuals, social enterprises and cooperatives (Andalo 2011, Kendall 2003, Knight 1993). Third sector policy was devolved; policies were developed in England, Wales and Scotland. Kendall (2003:11) has referred to this as the 'hyperactive mainstreaming' of the VCS, focussing on partnership and the creation of the third sector.

### **2.3.2 Partnership Working**

Institutional change was accompanied by formal regulation and guidance and by provision of funding to support partnerships. As Carmel and Harlock (2008:155) argue:

the third sector was a product of a new discourse of governance through which agencies previously outside of formal policy planning could be constituted as a 'governable terrain' and therefore a site for policy intervention and potentially control.

Arguably the seeds were being sewn for the co-option of the VCS into a state service. Kendall (2003) argues that by the turn of the millennium much of the VCS had been mainstreamed in social policy terms under the Labour government. Kendall (2003) presents the drivers for this as including policymakers' beliefs that voluntary organisations could be more responsive, cost effective or responsible than the alternatives, could be more responsive to the needs of socially excluded groups and could be central to building social capital and fostering social enterprise.

### **2.3.3 Compact: 1998**

In 1998 the Deakin Report recommendation of a Concordant in order to formalise governance between the VCS and central government was put into action. A National Compact in England was established. The Compact provided a framework for relations:

the compact was an important endorsement of the value of the VCS in society, placing it on an equal footing with government. It was seen as a significant symbol of the mainstreaming of the sector under New Labour. (Taylor 2012:12)

Over the next few years local Compacts were created and implemented in all local authorities. Local variations worked best where there were good VCS and local authority relationships anyway (Craig et al. 2004). The Compact was a non-legally binding framework which led to disputes and criticism from practitioners that not enough was being done to translate policy into practice (Milbourne and Murray 2011).

In order to oversee Compact implementation and promote good practice the Compact Commission was created. The Compact Voice was an additional agency to coordinate and promote engagement with the sector. The Compact was 'part of a reconfiguring of the relationship between the state and the third sector, with the sector becoming part of a new arena of governance "at a distance from" the state' (Taylor 2012: 12). In 2001 the Compact was criticised by Dahrendorf (2001) as being an agent for isomorphism.

### **2.3.4 Active Communities Unit: 2001**

The Voluntary Services Unit that existed under Labour's Conservative predecessors was rebranded and expanded in 2001 into the Active Community Unit. This was followed by the creation of the Civil Renewal Unit which was then merged with a separate Charities Unit to create a Home Office based unit entitled the Active Communities Directorate. A new Charity and Third Sector Finance Unit was created in 2006 to coordinate fiscal policy for the third sector. Alongside the Home Office departments, in 2001 the government set up a Social Enterprise Unit within the then Department for Trade and Industry to develop, support and coordinate social enterprises. In 2006 the Office for the Third Sector rationalised the range of directorates to support the third sector and secured an even higher profile for the sector, being based within the Cabinet Office (Cabinet Office 2001). It took over coordination of all state policies and investments for the third sector. By the middle of the first decade of the new century 'a range of new institutions and legal forms had been created to provide a new structure for relations with the voluntary and community sector' (Hilton and McKay 2011:167).

### **2.3.5 ChangeUp 2004**

The Treasury-led Cross Cutting Review of 2002 led to the development of significant new initiatives to support third sector organisational development, including new

investment streams such as Futurebuilders<sup>10</sup> and Communitybuilders<sup>11</sup>. In addition to this, in 2004 New Labour also introduced another funding programme, ChangeUp<sup>12</sup>, to develop capacity building in third sector organisations. After 2006, ChangeUp was delivered by a separate government agency established by the Office for the Third Sector called Capacitybuilders<sup>13</sup>. As a source of horizontal investment in the sector the Big Lottery Fund<sup>14</sup>, was very influential:

as relatively independent of government policy priorities, it was also able, in practice, to reach a wider range of third sector organisations. By the end of the 2000s, therefore, it had become a central feature of the new environment of capacity building and investment. (Hilton and McKay 2011:172)

As a result of New Labour investment, income for general charities over the period 2000 to 2007 increased from £24.2 billion to £33.3 billion, with around thirty-one per cent of this coming from statutory sources (Kane and Clark 2009). There was a major increase in the public funding of charities, described by Kendall as ‘hyperactive mainstreaming’ (2003:11), which had significant consequences for voluntary action and third sector management. Partnership was the term used by New Labour to describe their new form of engagement with the third sector. The Compact was described as ‘an expression of the commitment of Government and the voluntary and community sector to work in partnership’ (Home Office in Hilton and McKay 2011:173).

<sup>10</sup> **Futurebuilders** Futurebuilders investments were financial services available to VCS groups in England <http://www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> **Communitybuilders** Communitybuilders was an infrastructure Investment programme <http://www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> **ChangeUp** ChangeUp was a capacity-building programme for the VCS [www.nao.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2009/02/0809132\\_impact\\_of\\_changeup.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2009/02/0809132_impact_of_changeup.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> **Capacitybuilders** Community capacity building provided support to groups to empower them to act together voluntarily to tackle problems, influence public services, meet social needs and improve the quality of life in their local areas. It was part of the approach that built active citizenship, as expressed in the government’s *Together We Can* campaign [http://www.cdf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/WATCB\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/WATCB_final.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> **Big Lottery Fund** Responsible for distributing the money raised for charitable causes by the National Lottery. <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/about-big>

### **2.3.6 Charities Act 2006**

The 2006 Charities Act was presented with the hyperbole that it was the most substantial reform of charity for over 400 years (Hilton and McKay 2011). It was a culmination of reform that began with the 1973 Goodman Review. The 1973 Goodman Review recommended that the 1601 preamble to the Act be replaced with more up-to-date guidelines. The 1993 Charities Act consolidated the provisions of the 1960 Charities Act. The 1996 Deakin Report recommended that the concept of charity be redefined in statute in terms of benefit to the community. An NCVO review in 2001 *For the Public Benefit* further focussed on redefining charity for the public benefit. The 2006 Act sets in statute, clearly and in modern language, what charity covers and the requirement of a charity to exist for public benefit. The Act explicitly includes issues such as human rights and citizenship which in the past were regarded as explicitly political. The VCS is not simply made up of charities, but is a diverse grouping of organisations; however, as my discussion in chapter one identified, many VCS groups are registered charities and as a result the 2006 Charities Act affected them.

### **2.3.7 Purchaser-Provider Contracts**

One of the key tenets of New Labour's partnership with the voluntary sector was in the expanding role of the third sector as a service provider. There was a marked public policy shift in the UK towards networks and partnership working (Rummary 2006), new localism (Aspden and Birch 2005) and the growth of numerous short-term policy initiatives. There was a shift to contract funding; this was in fact welcomed by many parts of the sector at the time (ACEVO 2004). Contracting should be considered a basic reconfiguration of the power relationship (Perri 6 and Kendall 1997): changing the focus of state welfare from 'gift giving' to 'regulatory'.

Contract funding was not without its problems, such as the 'transactional costs' of securing and delivering on the contracts themselves. Research also highlights mistrust and competitive interests permeating this apparently collaborative work, suggesting smaller organisations were often relegated to outsider status (O'Brien 2006, Taylor 2003) whilst the more powerful agencies determined the agenda (Clegg 1989). Services were driven by the requirements of government funders rather than those of the third sector organisations, leading to concerns over mission drift by service delivery organisations:

Contracting can be seen as a deliberate, instrumental strategy for furthering immediate, self-interested political goals, rather than as benevolent or disinterested pursuit of welfare. (Perri 6 and Kendall 1997:3)

The role that voluntary and third sector organisations can play in promoting citizenship, a key element of Blair's 'cross cutting' agenda, was recognised by New Labour. Indeed Putnam, who wrote extensively about the role of civil society in engendering citizenship (Putnam 2000), was an early adviser to the New Labour government. In 2003 the Home office published a strategy document, 'Building Civil Renewal', and established a separate Civil Renewal Unit. Funding for civil renewal tended to be grant funded, which led to criticism of New Labour. Larger groups were arguably more likely to share the aims of their public funders and the smaller community groups were arguably more likely to be campaigning against public agencies. Craig et al. (2004) suggest that the divide between different types of voluntary group created a distinction between insiders (which were compliant and welcome partners to government) and outsiders (which were challenging to government). Having considered New Labour's approach to the VCS I will now consider some of the critiques of their policies.

### **2.3.8 Critiques of New Labour Policy**

The reality was that the third sector was never a homogenous entity with which the government could enter into partnership. The third sector has always been a 'loose and baggy monster' (Kendall and Knapp 1996:1). Kendall (2003) identified a tri-partite partnership discourse that developed under New Labour. He suggested three partnership paradigms, based on consumerist ideologies (based on quasi market service delivery models), civil revivalist ideologies (promoting the sector as a response to democratic deficiency) and democratic renewal ideologies (third sector perceived as a vehicle for community empowerment). Fairclough (2000) and Milbourne and Murray (2011) discuss the language of partnership used under the New Labour government. Milbourne and Murray (2011:77) argue that the term 'partnership' was used with little understanding or recognition of community conflict.

Throughout the thirteen years of New Labour government the voluntary and third sectors enjoyed a

higher profile in political debate and policy planning than at any other point in its long history ... [New Labour] created a new third sector and placed it at the centre of a new third way for policy development. (Hilton and McKay 2011:178)

On 14th September 2008, Lehman Brothers, a large New York based investment bank with significant operations in London's Canary Wharf, collapsed. The collapse of Lehman brothers became 'the world's biggest bankruptcy. The ensuing panic triggered the worst economic crisis since the 1930s' (Bishop and Green 2011:2). The global economic crisis that ensued led New Labour into a general election in 2010.

## **2.4 The Coalition 2010-2015**

In May 2010 New Labour lost the general election and a new Coalition was created between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrat Party. The period of the Coalition government 2010-2015 is the timeframe for my PhD study. As Bishop and Green (2011:1) argue:

history may judge the general election of May 2010 as important as those of 1906, 1945 and 1979 in radically redefining British Capitalism and the future role of the state.

The Coalition began by launching radical changes to welfare policy encompassed in its now defunct Big Society policy (NCIA 2015, Corry 2012, NAVCA 2010). Abbas and Lachman (2012:5) argue that the Big Society represented a 'profound challenge to social relations as social needs are commercialised'. Important policy statements and new legislation include the Open Public Services White Paper (2011), the Localism Act 2011, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Care Act 2014 and other legislation focussing on housing and welfare benefits. In reality 'these approaches are highly centralising and not localising and opening the flood gates to the corporate giants' (Moar Communities 2012:6).

### **2.4.1 New Coalition: New Language**

Under the Coalition government there has been a shift in language from community engagement to social action (McCabe 2010). Sage (2012:15) argues that the Big Society's

core argument regarding the conflict between the free market and society offers a more radical and potentially transformative communitarian challenge to the neoliberal consensus.

The concept of 'community' and communitarianism (Etzioni 1993, Putnam 2000) has aimed to 'formalise a cogent and coherent defence and celebration of community life' (Sage 2012:2). The labile and polyphonic meanings of community (Hancock et al. 2012) have meant that the term is a highly attractive tool for policy makers. The Coalition have used the concept of community to facilitate the neoliberal notion of an alternative to state-provided welfare (Hancock et al. 2012). Communitarianism aims to reinvigorate citizenship to help re-shape the social, philosophical and political agenda, and argues that with rights come responsibilities, and that citizens need to engage with these responsibilities in order to create a better society. Communitarianism can be seen as a critique of neoliberalism; we might be individuals but we are also part of universal groups such as families (Hancock et al. 2012).

Arguably the Coalition's agenda draws on Etzioni's (1993) communitarian agenda and Friedman and Friedman's (1982) attempt to reform American society about its responsibilities as well as its rights in refocussing policy on the role society has with citizenship and civil society. Hancock et al. (2012) argue that whilst the concept of community has remained a key policy notion of the Coalition, it is a top-down depoliticised community rather than the community engagement of deprived communities. Hancock et al. (2012) state that fiscal crisis is used as a reason why we cannot deviate from the neoliberal paradigm.

This change in language has seen a return to a Victorian narrative of the deserving and undeserving poor (Shildrick and Rucell 2015) and a 'dangerous alchemic mix of

more austerity and more authoritarianism' (Clarke and Newman 2012:316). The language of 'fairness' is used, replacing New Labour's 'equality'. As Wiggan (2012:389) states:

the concept of fairness is utilised to manufacture a dichotomy between those who are said to primarily contribute to, and those who are primarily said to receive, social security.

Wiggan (2012) argues that Coalition policy marginalises the structural aspects of long-term unemployment and poverty by transforming these into individual pathologies of the undeserving poor and worklessness. There has been an attempt to separate the economics from the social effects of Coalition policy (Finlayson 2010). The Coalition government have evoked notions of deserving and undeserving poor, reframing the social constructivist post-war notion of welfare into a neoliberal individualist approach emphasising personal responsibility, self-motivation and the superiority of the market (Wiggan 2012). From this Conservative adaptation of the communitarian agenda has come the Big Society. The Big Society is arguably an adaptation of community to facilitate the neoliberal notion of an alternative to state-provided welfare (Hancock et al. 2012).

#### **2.4.2 Defining Society: The Big Society?**

'Society' is an amorphous term. It has been used to justify a variety of political objectives, from Thatcher's 'there is no such thing as society' (1987:8) and Blair's communitarian vision (Sage 2012, Blair 1998) to the Big Society (Conservative Party 2010, Cabinet Office 2010, Cameron 2009). There are clear tensions between

the political economy of the Coalition – which encourages mobility, flexibility and competitiveness – and the mutuality, solidarity and sense of place required

to make stable association a meaningful possibility in people's lives. (Glasman 2010:62)

The Coalition's solution to the failure of the third sector has led to an 'accusation of a return to a Thatcherite agenda of dismantling the Welfare State' (Jordan 2010:200). Jordan (2010) argues that the 'bonfire of the Quangos' and the dismantling of many of the trusts, boards and agencies through which New Labour regulated its public services signalled a rejection of the Third Way theory, and that by calling for a 'shift in the culture of government' and a 'radical re-distribution of power' to communities Cameron was

appealing to an approach to regulation and citizenship based on associative bonds and mutual commitment, rather than mechanistic, abstract or formal systems, rules and incentives. (Jordan 2010:202)

Arguably the Big Society is a denial of 'there is no such thing as society' (Thatcher 1987), a move away from the 'Great Society' (Smith 1790) of neoliberalism, but a move linked to Brown's (2002) 'Good Society'. The Coalition's Big Society policy therefore becomes a conception of small-scale community level society that has not previously been envisaged by the state.

### **2.4.3 The Big Society**

The Big Society has been described as 'the most important innovation in British politics' (Blond 2010), 'a fraud' (Toynbee 2011) and 'a failed concept' (Miliband 2011). Cameron described the Big Society as his mission in politics (Cameron 2011). The Coalition envisioned the Big Society as a reduction in state spending and a reduction in the role of the state but an increase in its effectiveness by engaging in a partnership with citizens and the private sector. The Big Society not Big Government [BSNBG]

report (Conservative Party 2010) stated that the aim of the Big Society policy is to create a society where power and control are decentralised and people are empowered to solve their own problems within their communities. The Conservative Party saw the Big Society agenda as a solution to Labour's top-down state-run bureaucracy, which they considered to have eroded social responsibility and subdued social action. Big Society policy focussed on three areas: public service reform, empowering communities and social action. In May 2010 the new Office for Civil Society was set up to replace the Office for the Third Sector. This change in language was key; civil society is a broader term and includes

an ever wider and more vibrant range of organised and unorganised groups, as new civil society actors blur the boundaries between sectors and experiment with new organisational forms, both online and off. (WEF 2013:5)

The BSNBG report 'adds an explicit responsibility dimension to the value of the voluntary sector' (Cox and Schmuecker 2010:10). Following a consultation during 2010, a renewed Compact was negotiated between government and the voluntary sector which made reference to the Big Society. The new Compact was 'aligned to the new government's priorities and designed to make it easier to use and understand' (Taylor 2012:14). The renewed Compact was updated to focus on the following key areas: nationally agreed principles with a clear outcome (interpreted locally to reflect community need); the need to bring key partners together to solve community issues; the need to recognise the importance of more equal partnerships at community level; and the need to recognise the importance to communities of having the right to influence the design and delivery of local services.

The voluntary sector gave the Big Society a 'qualified welcome' (Woodhouse 2011:1), although a number of concerns were raised, including the impact of spending cuts on the voluntary sector's ability to play an increased role in the provision of public services, whether the sector's independence would be compromised and how the market, state and society would interact (Davies 2014). This qualified welcome (Woodhouse 2011) was short-lived. Whilst the term 'Big Society' has been little used since mid-2012 (NCIA 2015, Corry 2012), Coalition policy developed from it. Big Society policy focussed on three areas: public service reform, empowering communities and social action (Conservative Party 2010). These policy themes were developed by Coalition policy. The Open Public Services White Paper (2011), the Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014 all developed the Coalition themes of reducing state intervention, reducing welfare provision and privatising public services (NCIA 2015, CLES 2014, Milbourne 2013). Early on in the Coalition government Compact Voice briefings (Compact Voice 2011) focussed on creating, enabling and developing VCS Compacts as agents for the Big Society policy. More recently (2014) briefings focussed on partnership working and how to engage with funders such as commissioners (Zimmeck 2010).

#### **2.4.4 Coalition Policy: Localism**

The Localism Act came into existence in 2011 and signalled a different type of relationship between central and local government. The Bill stripped away much of the regulatory infrastructure governing local authorities, strengthening community accountability through referendums and empowering communities to take on state-run services. The Coalition's reforms showed 'traces of an ideological commitment to localism and a new understanding of local self-government' (Lowndes and Pratchett

2012:22). However, a review of the literature reveals that the policy of localism was not coherent and was constrained by three factors: conflicts in conservative thinking, the impacts of cuts that required short-term policy making, and that the implementation of localism incurred problems due to New Labour ideologies being entrenched in local authorities (Lowndes and Pratchett 2012, Wilson and Game 2011). As Lowndes and Pratchett (2012:28) state:

At face value these reforms promise to renew local democracy by making local authorities and other bodies more accountable and responsive to the communities they serve.

Whitehall continued to control seventy-five per cent of local government spending (Wilson and Game 2011:237), which leads to the question of how true the commitment to localism was.

#### **2.4.5 Coalition Policy: Welfare Reform**

The Coalition government significantly changed welfare provision with the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Housing and unemployment benefits underwent significant cuts and there were changes in regulations regarding who was eligible for benefits (Fearn 2013). As part of the Coalition's austerity programme, cuts were made to state funding of local authorities, which in turn affected the VCS (Fearn 2013). The Open Public Services White Paper (Cabinet Office 2011) opened up the opportunity for the VCS and the private sector to become involved in the delivery of what previously would have been considered 'public sector' work streams. This trend, first introduced with compulsory competitive tendering (Local Government Act 1988 and 1992) and continued throughout the Blair-Brown years as Best Value (Local Government Act 1999), led to the accusation of the 'marketisation' of welfare (Salamon 1993).

The Coalition 'rolling back of the State' in order to engage other providers in service delivery led to the charge that the Coalition was privatising charity. Taylor (2012) discusses this privatisation in terms of the Coalition Work Programme Policy and states that the majority of contracts for the Work Programme went to private sector providers. To date charities have largely been subcontracted to large private sector contractors rather than utilising the privatisation agenda for VCS independence (Moore and Scott 2012).

This change in language and in the understanding of society and community had a fundamental impact on how Coalition policy interpreted neoliberal new public management reform. This neoliberal welfare reform was discussed early in the Coalition term under the now defunct term Big Society (Corry 2012) and more recently under the banner of austerity.

#### **2.4.6 Coalition Policy: Austerity and Neoliberalism**

Austerity and neoliberalism are interlinked within Coalition policy (Clarke and Newman 2012). Austerity is a term that has been reintroduced into the vernacular by the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund<sup>15</sup> (IMF) and World Bank<sup>16</sup> that have affected many European Union national coffers (Bramall 2011). Austerity can be defined as an economic policy to reduce government deficits (*Financial Times* 2013). Clarke and Newman (2012) introduce the concept of the 'alchemy of austerity' and discuss how austerity is marketed through government policy. Coalition policy, they argue, attempted to turn the fiscal crisis into a triumph of neoliberalism (Clarke and Newman 2012). Coalition policy reformed an economic problem, the global financial crisis, into a political problem (Clarke and Newman 2012).

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<sup>15</sup> **International Monetary Fund** The IMF works to foster global monetary cooperation [www.imf.org/external/about.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/about.htm)

<sup>16</sup> **World Bank** The World Bank has two goals: to end poverty and support nations to achieve prosperity. [www.worldbank.org/en/about](http://www.worldbank.org/en/about)

They introduce the term 'magical thinking' to discuss the language the Coalition used in order to market IMF style structural adjustment policies such as austerity as a solution to 'liberate' the British economy from the global fiscal crisis. Austerity has been used by the Coalition government as a rationale for welfare reform (CLES 2014, Bramall 2011).

Neoliberalism prioritises individual needs over collective or public interests, allowing neoliberal inspired governments the opportunity to resist their moral obligations (Judt 2010) in the pursuit of market gains. Neoliberalism is associated with the ideas of Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek, James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, who 'articulated a radical critique of the welfare state and called for the devolution of its functions to private sector agents' (Cahill 2012:1). Neoliberal ideology has five core objectives: free trade, competition, market deregulation, increasing the power of business in policy making and reducing the role of the state (Whitfield 2014). The key concept of neoliberalism is the

rational, self-interested individual with unique and subjective preferences. From this is constructed both a philosophical and an economic defence of free markets. (Cahill 2010:2)

Markets are conceived as spheres of voluntary exchanges between individuals and a means by which liberty can flourish. Prices act as information that indicates individual preference and when freed from external (government) interference are the most moral and efficient means of producing and distributing goods and services. Financial markets, institutions and elites have had an increasing influence over economic policy (Palley 2007, Crotty 2007, Harvey 2005). Accompanying the increasing involvement of financial institutions in economic policy has been the increase in deregulation of state

policy towards planning and development, environment, employment and health and safety frameworks (Whitfield 2014).

Neoliberal ideology has returned to government vocabulary in recent years (Crouch 2011). Neoliberal transformation of the public sector consists of four processes: financialisation, personalisation, marketisation and privatisation (Whitfield 2014). The growth in the role of the private sector in delivering state services has been well documented (Harris 2013, Whitfield 2012). Neoliberal Ideology has affected the voluntary sector in terms of commissioning competition and contracts, the corporatising of voluntary organisations, and reductions in labour costs (Whitfield 2014). The creation of new public service markets, open to the private and voluntary sectors, and the proliferation of 'outsourcing through competitive tendering has characterised Coalition government policy' (Milbourne and Murray 2014a:2). Whilst the voluntary sector is regularly referred to in government proposals (Marsden 2011), the multiple problems facing smaller organisations in responding to large government problems has been well documented (Milbourne and Murray 2014a, Butler 2014).

A key section of the VCS has been 'colonised by neoliberal thinking and has ultimately chosen subcontracting to the corporate sector as a means of organisational survival' (Milbourne and Murray 2014a:17). However, other, often smaller, sections of the VCS have never been affected by neoliberalism and have never entered into service delivery contracts (Milbourne 2013). The VCS's 'dangerous liaison with neoliberalism' (Frazer 2013a:132) requires regulation. With purchaser-provider contracts come accountability and transparency requirements. Frazer (2013b) argues that new public management theory regulates neoliberal marketisation through the monitoring of purchaser-provider contracts. Contracting expanded under New Labour and the policy of privatising public services has been continued by the Coalition government (NCIA

2015, Whitfield 2014, Milbourne 2013, Dayson et al. 2013). I return to neoliberal inspired purchaser-provider inspired contracts in my literature review in chapter three.

Having considered the historical political context in which the VCS sits, dating from the 1980s onwards, I will link the opportunities and challenges experienced by the VCS under the Coalition government into the broader historical narrative.

## 2.5 Considering the History of the Voluntary and Community Sector: Opportunities and Challenges

From the workhouse to workfare<sup>17</sup> themes can be identified in the British approach to charity across the last four hundred years (Frazer 2013a, Hilton and McKay 2011). Coalition policy, with its focus on the undeserving and deserving poor and on work in exchange for benefit and the withdrawal of state-funded services, had strong links to the 1834 Poor Law. The 1834 Poor Law changed the 1601 Poor Law's focus on the collective parish responsibility for its poor, instead locating the poor of the parish in the workhouse, where they were expected to work in exchange for housing and shelter. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduces a series of welfare reforms including the Work Programme<sup>18</sup> and Universal Credit<sup>19</sup>. The Work Programme requires recipients of state unemployment benefit to engage in work placements in exchange for their benefit payments. Universal Credit links housing benefit to unemployment benefit, with the effect that if recipients do not engage in the Work Programme they are 'sanctioned'. When a person is 'sanctioned'<sup>20</sup> by the Work Programme, under Universal Credit their unemployment benefit is stopped and their housing benefit is also stopped. This leads to parallels being drawn between the 'hard labour' of the workhouse in exchange for shelter and food and the 'hard labour' of the Work Programme in exchange for shelter and the money to buy food. The Work Programme

<sup>17</sup> **Workfare** Workfare is a term used to refer to British government benefit schemes, whereby the individual is required to work in return for payment of benefits. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/28/help-to-work-britains-jobless-forced-workfare-unemployed>

<sup>18</sup> **The Work Programme.** A condition of some unemployment benefits. The participant is required to train for a work environment. It replaces previous programmes such as New Deals, Employment Zones and the Flexible New Deal [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49884/the-work-programme.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49884/the-work-programme.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> **Universal Credit.** Universal Credit is a single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. It was introduced in 2013 and will replace income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credits and Housing Benefit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-welfare-reform/2010-to-2015-government-policy-welfare-reform#appendix-1-government-policy-on-universal-credit-an-introduction>

<sup>20</sup> **"Sanctioned"** Removal of benefits for a period of time as punishment for not conforming to government conditions. <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/ask-cpag-online-how-can-you-avoid-isa-work-programme-sanction>

initially began by creating contracts for work placements with large private sector providers such as Tesco<sup>21</sup> and Argos<sup>22</sup> (Malik et al. 2012). The parallel with hard labour is further advanced by the recent creation of Work Programme placements with a large national charity, Groundwork<sup>23</sup> (Groundwork 2014). Groundwork is a conservation charity: participants in the Work Programme placed at Groundwork will be engaged in 'hard' outdoor labour.

### **2.5.1 Poor Law and Obligations**

The VCS within England has always operated within a framework of legal obligations to the poor (Charlesworth 2012). Coalition policies

seem to share an idealised view of English historical development based on philanthropy and localism, both of which indeed played a part in developing the components of our complex modern society. (Charlesworth 2012:50)

The Coalition policy initially focussed on themes of community and localism under the branding of Big Society. Arguably, the Big Society was an attempt to return to a pre-welfare state world of poverty alleviation, a state where community and civil society provided a social safety net. Indeed, Charlesworth (2012) links the Big Society into an attempt to return to a time before the 1601 Poor Law. Before the reformation the monasteries provided poor relief (Ishkanian and Szreter 2012), but the 1601 Poor Law provided the first substantive legal footing for anti-poverty work in British legislation.

### **2.5.2 Welfare State Formulation**

A further substantive legal footing for British welfare was the creation of the welfare state. The Beveridge Report was published in 1942 and sold 635,00 copies (Jones

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<sup>21</sup> **Tesco**. A large international supermarket chain. [www.tescos.co.uk](http://www.tescos.co.uk)

<sup>22</sup> **Argos**. A large retail company [www.argos.co.uk](http://www.argos.co.uk)

<sup>23</sup> **Groundwork**. A large national charity. <http://www.groundwork.org.uk>

and Lowe 2002:10). Such popularity forced a radical change in the political agenda and as a result a series of white papers covering all aspects of welfare were produced. Arguably 'the Beveridge Report made so significant an impact that it has remained a reference point for all later welfare reform' (Jones and Lowe 2002:12). Pierson (1999) suggests that the creation of the welfare state could be understood as the inevitable result of industrialisation or as a result of workers' movements or as a political side effect of economic processes.

Clement Atlee's 1945 Labour Government 'took the commanding heights of the economy into public ownership and created the National Health Service' (Bishop and Green 2011:2). On 5th July 1948 five pieces of legislation became operative: the National Insurance and National Assistance Acts, the National Health Service Act, the Town and County Planning Act and the Children Act. The Acts are considered to be the birth of the welfare state 'and in retrospect can be seen to have represented a watershed in welfare principles and practice within Britain' (Jones and Lowe 2002:3). The Acts were based on the Beveridge Report 1942. The Report argued that economic and social policies could be complementary rather than antagonistic and that social policy should be both comprehensive and universal.

Beveridge himself feared the effect that an all-inclusive welfare state would have on the voluntary sector. In 'Voluntary Action; A Report on the Methods of Social Advance' (1942), Beveridge feared that he would trample the 'vigour and abundance' of voluntary action (in Hilton and McKay 2011:1). In the paper he sought out ways to encourage the continued vitality of voluntary action. The report made several recommendations about how the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector should be shaped. These included a minister for the voluntary sector and a

state-endowed funding body to support voluntary action. Beveridge himself was able to document the resilience of the VCS:

in the face of these changes philanthropy has shown its strength, of being perpetually able to take new forms ... the capacity of Voluntary Action inspired by philanthropy to do new things is beyond question. (Beveridge 1948 in Hilton and McKay 2011:3)

Indeed, the voluntary sector had its own assets to bring to the post-war economic climate. The voluntary sector generally had 'a good war' (Hilton and McKay 2011:80). In fact, some areas of the welfare state were prepared to contemplate a substantial role for the voluntary sector. With the National Health Service Act in 1948, the Minister for Health, Aneurin Bevan, chose to solve the issue of a divided system of hospital management by nationalising all hospitals, both voluntary and local authority controlled. The resulting system was a substantial increase in state power. However, Bevan recognised a role for the voluntary sector. As early as 1946, in the National Insurance Bill, Bevan discussed 'making full use of voluntary organisations' (in Hilton and McKay 2011:82) whilst reducing the need for charities to raise funds. Bevan identified the possibility of a role for the VCS in delivering older people's care as early as 1946 in a Ministry of Health Circular.

By the end of Labour's period in office the national coordinating body for the voluntary sector in England, the National Council of Social Service, concluded that

the importance of voluntary organisations was now deliberately recognised and that the authorities were prepared to regard them as important instruments of community life, not merely as useful agents (Hilton and McKay 2011:84).

One could argue that this recognition and inclusion of the VCS within mainstream welfare provision was isomorphism in the making.

### **2.5.2 Legitimacy Based on an Idealised View of History**

Coalition policy was arguably an attempt at control, to create an 'army of community activists' (Blond 2010) to deliver services previously delivered by the state. Ishkanian and Szreter (2012) identify three contradictions of Coalition policy: it sought legitimacy based on an idealised view of history, it was inextricably bound up with funding cuts, and its efforts to externally strengthen civil society organisations were flawed. However, they suggest that the voluntary sector is too dynamic to be controlled. Heginbotham (1990:35) warns of the danger that voluntary organisations will become institutions of repression:

the ever present danger with volunteering is the use of volunteers to relieve the gross manifestations of inequality; to place a pretty counterpane over the bed with no sheets and blankets; to make just bearable the gross disadvantages that many people suffer.

Coalition policy existed within a discourse that began with the 1601 Poor Law. It arguably was the culmination of a series of neoliberal new public management policies that began with Thatcher's 1979 election. What differentiated this policy from previous approaches was its attempt at the privatisation of charity. Critiques of Coalition policy, such as silencing the voice of the VCS (Rochester 2014, 2013), creating welfare policies that have increased poverty (Bunyan and Diamond 2014a, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) and refocussing its relationship with the VCS into one of purchaser-provider (NCIA 2015, Rochester 2013, Milbourne 2013, Milbourne and Murray 2011),

are well documented. Moar Communities at their Outsourcing and Austerity Conference in October 2012 asked:

does this leave the voluntary sector as a rather gullible pawn in what is actually a much bigger process, a vigorous, wide ranging dismantling of the UK's Welfare State in the interests of Big Business? (2012:6)

The VCS is now in a much changed position compared to the start of the Coalition government (NCIA 2015, Compact Voice 2014). The Coalition government term ended in May 2015, when a majority Conservative government was elected. The future of the VCS remains uncertain (Ricketts 2015).

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has examined the historical context that the VCS sits within. I have mapped the policy context of the VCS since the dawn of purchaser-provider contracts and have sought to draw broader historical links signposting back to the 1601 Poor Law.

My next chapter is a literature review which considers key themes as they relate to my research aim. I consider the adult social care VCS, gender, faith and homelessness.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Considering Key Ideological and Policy Themes**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a literature review which examines key literature as it relates to my research. The 'first step in qualitative data analysis involves conducting a literature review' (Rice and Ezzy 2000:191). I begin by considering themes affecting the VCS such as organisational identity, voice and silencing. Purchaser-provider contracts, new public management theory and neoliberal ideals have all led to a situation where the VCS, having expanded and become more homogenous during New Labour's government, has been asked to prioritise under Coalition welfare reform agendas (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013).

I now turn to a comprehensive literature review in order to gain a detailed picture of current policy, theory and practice (Ridley 2012, Boyd et al. 2007). A literature review can be defined as 'a systematic and thorough search of all types of published literature in order to identify as many items as possible that are relevant to that particular topic' (Gash 1999:1). I used a snowball approach to the literature review (Ridley 2012:56). I located key texts (Milbourne 2013, Ishkanian and Szreter 2012, Hilton and MacKay 2011, Wolch 1990) and then snowballed out my reading by accessing further sources via the bibliographies of these key texts. A broader document search was also conducted using internet search engines to ensure policy and think-tank publications were included in the review. Literature was broadly classified under these terms: voluntary sector, adult social care, faith, homelessness, gender and care. The literature review process was iterative (Blaxter et al. 2010, Rice and Ezzy 2000, Coffey and Atkinson 1996), in line with my participatory ethnographic

research approach. Therefore, whilst some classifications were included in my original literature searches, e.g. voluntary sector, other classifications such as faith were added as my research progressed. The material was then analysed according to this classification context, which allowed interpretation of key issues such as organisational identity, mission drift and purchaser-provider contracts. The review uses sources consisting of policy papers, academic articles, books and news articles.

This review aims to situate my research within the literature and to form the context and background to my research findings and my insights into existing research on the topic (Blaxter et al. 2010). I have used a literature review format suggested by Ridley (2012:7,14) which has three literature sections: theoretical underpinning, historical context and ideological context. These chapters contextualise my research. Chapter two examined the context of the VCS. This chapter reviews the literature that considers the opportunities and challenges that the VCS has faced during the Coalition term in line with my research aim. This literature review examines gender, faith and homelessness within the VCS's experience of Coalition policy in line with my research objectives. The organisation in which my ethnographic study was based was a homelessness adult social care organisation and this reflects my second research objective. Faith emerged as an additional element of my research as the organisation in which my ethnography was based was an FBO, and I included it in this literature review.

This review chapter considers the context for the study and analyses the ideological and policy context within which the VCS operates. A further literature review section, within chapter four, focusses on theoretical frameworks, as it considers and locates my feminist participatory research methodology from a theoretical perspective. It is important that my research discusses theories and concepts which I will draw on

throughout my research. This review sits within the methodology chapter and theoretically underpins my research methodology (Ridley 2012:30).

## **3.2 Considering Themes: The Loss of Voluntary and Community Sector Identity, Blurring of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisational Boundaries and Silencing**

This section of the chapter will introduce and discuss the literature that relates to key themes within my study: the blurring of organisational boundaries, loss of organisational identity and silencing. The concepts will be introduced and discussed before an examination of the current policy context of adult social care, which is the subsector of the VCS that my thesis is focussed on. This approach to my thesis reflects the commitment of my research objective five to SLA which aims to offer a holistic assets based approach to analysis.

SLA aims to analyse the institutional and policy background to a community before using participatory research methods, to empower the community to analyse assets using a fivefold model. SLA first considers the policy context of the research, the macro level (May et al. 2009, Chambers and Conway 1992). Therefore my literature review considers the ideological and policy context for the adult social care VCS.

### **3.2.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector in Transition**

The VCS is in transition (Milbourne 2013); new opportunities are arising among the significant and indisputable challenges of funding cuts and welfare reform. These interlocking themes are woven throughout the history of the VCS, as my chapter mapping VCS history demonstrates. It is therefore important that my literature review considers the definitions of these terms. I will return to these concepts throughout my thesis.

An important principle of the sustainable livelihoods approach is recognition of the power relationships between and within organisations and communities (Chambers and Conway 1992). This recognition of and engagement with issues of power and oppression fit closely with feminist PAR methodology and reflect research objective four. Partnership working and the blurring of VCS organisational boundaries potentially affect the independence (Mason 2012) of the VCS:

the fixation of some organisations which solely equates income with sustainability is dangerous if an organisation wishes to be viable, autonomous and civic. (Dickinson et al. 2012:22)

I consider literature related to the blurring of organisational boundaries and organisational identity in this context.

### **3.2.2 Becoming Similar**

There is significant literature to suggest that the VCS's involvement in service delivery and its expansion under New Labour's Third Way policy has led to its bureaucratisation and homogenisation, and arguably to its isomorphism (Cooney 2006, Abzug and Galaskiewicz 2001, Bidwell 2001, Morrill and McKee 1993, Kanter and Summers 1987, Riiskjaer and Nielsen 1987). Institutional isomorphism was developed as a theory by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and is relevant to this thesis as it provides a lens through which blurring of organisational boundaries and VCS organisational identity can be understood. In the context of this thesis isomorphism is defined as the process by which

highly structured organisational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead in aggregate

to homogeneity in structure, culture and output. (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:147)

Di Maggio and Powell (1983) argue that once organisations become professionalised, rational actors manage their organisations in similar ways and change them so that organisations within a sector begin to reflect each other's organisational structure. When organisations first exist they vary in organisational form and structure but as a sector develops, homogenisation occurs. Arguably the VCS has undergone this process through a series of welfare reform developments that commenced in the 1980s, and as a result its independence has been threatened, as has its ability to react to the challenges of austerity. Isomorphism in the context of my research can be discussed in terms of how the VCS, in increasing its involvement in service delivery contracts, has become more and more like the shadow state (Wolch 1990)<sup>24</sup>. I return to the concept of VCS isomorphism, blurring of organisational boundaries and VCS identity in chapter five.

### 3.2.3 Types of Isomorphism

Three types of institutional isomorphism are suggested by Di Maggio and Powell (1983): coercive, mimetic and normative. Coercive isomorphism is considered to be when other organisations such as funders, the state or other organisations within the organisational field exert pressure to homogenise. Mimetic isomorphism is often a response to uncertainty (March and Olsen 1976). According to Di Maggio and Powell (1983:152):

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<sup>24</sup> **Types of Isomorphism** Di Maggio & Powell (1983) assert that 'the concept of institutional isomorphism is a useful tool for understanding the politics and ceremony that pervade much of modern organisational life' (1983:150). Isomorphism takes different forms. Meyer (1979) and Fennel (1980) discuss isomorphism as taking two forms: competitive and institutional. Theories of competitive isomorphism draw on Hannan and Freeman's (1977) research which assumes a system of rationality that emphasises market competition. Theories of institutional isomorphism argue that organisations compete not just for resources but for institutional legitimacy (Deephouse 1996, Zucker 1987). Deephouse (1996) and Zucker (1987) argue that a combination of factors affect an organisation; these factors can be categorised as strategic and institutional. Strategic factors can be deemed to be shared values and organisational mission. Institutional factors can be deemed to be the factors that guide management decisions based on organisational shared values.

organisations tend to model themselves after similar organisations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful.

Normative institutional isomorphism stems from professionalisation. Di Maggio and Powell (1983) identify two aspects of professionalisation as important to isomorphism; the first is the formal education process of professionalisation and the second is professional networks. As new institutional theory applied to the VCS suggests (Aberg 2013), many organisations will mimic or comply with normative, standardised organisational formats in order to gain legitimacy and funding, sometimes at the expense of their organisational mission<sup>25</sup>.

### **3.2.4 Becoming a Shadow State**

The VCS has rationalised in response to its involvement with the state in order that it can fulfil its delivery responsibilities to its clients (Ramanath 2009). There has been an increasing critical discourse surrounding homogeneity of the VCS internationally (Cooney 2006, Abzug and Galaskiewicz 2001, Bidwell 2001, Morrill and McKee 1993, Kanter and Summers 1987, Riiskjaer and Nielsen 1987). Indeed, Johansson (2003) documents a direct correlation of performance-related government funding with an increased likelihood of isomorphism. VCS organisations realised that in order to engage funders, state engagement was necessary and so isomorphism occurred:

there was an element of normative and comparative pressure on NGOs to engage in delivery and many began the now fairly common tactic of hiring a

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<sup>25</sup> **Predictors of isomorphism: funding, legitimacy and professionalism** Predictors of isomorphism can be identified in organisational fields (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). The more dependent an organisation is on other organisations within its field, the more isomorphic it is. The greater the dependence on organisational funding, the more isomorphic the organisation is. The more uncertainty an organisation experiences, the more isomorphic it tends to be. The greater the need of an organisation for legitimacy, the more isomorphic it becomes. The higher the level of academic qualifications a staff group has, the more isomorphic the organisation. Arguably the VCS has become more professionalised and as it has become more professionalised it has become more isomorphic.

former government bureaucrat to help manage delivery related service responsibilities. (Ramanath 2009:65)

Ramanath (2009) documents a process of normative isomorphism as the VCS professionalised, and staff that previously had been drawn from the community began to be recruited from more technical-financial backgrounds. Ramanath (2009) documents the role of these new staff in boundary spanning roles, bridging government policy and translating it into VCS delivery of public policy.

### **3.2.5 Leading to a Loss of Voluntary and Community Sector Identity**

The isomorphic tendencies of purchaser-provider contracts and state involvement in the VCS have led to a situation where ‘having lost some of their uniqueness, many voluntary agencies face an identity crisis as they and their counterparts become more bureaucratic, professional, political and entrepreneurial’ (Lynn 2002:74). This literature questions whether the contract culture espoused by successive neoliberal inspired governments has affected VCS innovation and identity (Baring Foundation 2014, Milbourne 2013).

### **3.2.6 The Bifurcation of the Sector**

The concept of the isomorphic behaviour required of VCS organisations engaged in purchaser-provider contracts that potentially led to the bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the VCS is relevant to my thesis. Johansson (2003:213) states:

one might say that the voluntary sector has been divided into a core of purely voluntary activists (voice) and a second part consisting of non-profit operated services.

The distinction between the VCS and the public sector becomes clouded when the VCS delivers public services: 'where money goes, control follows' (Lynn 2002:67). Wolch's (1990) concept of a shadow state, the VCS providing services previously offered by government, becomes a reality. As the boundaries of larger VCS groups have blurred, through the development of purchaser-provider service delivery contracts, so arguably a new shadow state (Wolch 1990) has been created.

### **3.2.7 Silencing**

Here the issue of the silencing of the VCS voice is relevant to my study (NCIA 2015). Isomorphic behaviour arguably has been created by the need to legitimise in order to achieve public sector contract success. Ramanath (2009) argues that this move towards cooperation stems from a need to achieve scale and legitimacy. She questions how a VCS organisation set up to confront government can change its policy to cooperate with government, and she goes on to question if this threatens diversity in VCS strategies. Literature suggests that the VCS here becomes silenced; as the VCS is increasingly dependent on government-funded service delivery contracts it is not encouraged to actively campaign against government policy for fear of losing its funding (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013).

### **3.2.8 Critiquing Isomorphism**

There are, however, critiques of isomorphism which are relevant to this literature review. The resource environment affects micro level VCS isomorphism (Ramanath 2009). VCS organisations have faced two types of resource uncertainty: turnover of critical and senior staff and sourcing funding. Arguably, each VCS organisation responds differently to the same macro level environment; Ramanath (2009:70) states:

variation in tactical response to similar institutional environments can bring about differentiation rather than isomorphism or at the very least, places limits on the extent of isomorphism in the NGO sector.

The VCS is often discussed as a homogenous group, especially in relation to the state. However the VCS is not homogenous (Alcock 2010a) and VCS groups do not all react in the same way to the same experience, for example state funding. Verbruggen et al. (2011) analyse VCS organisational behaviour in terms of resource dependant theory and institutional theory, and they identified six reasons for resource dependence: market orientation, leadership, board involvement, board size, board structure and financial vulnerability.

Not all organisations are affected by isomorphism in the same way; some organisations are better placed to more effectively resist isomorphic pressures than others. For example, Slack and Hinings (1994) argue that organisations in stronger market positions or with unique attributes (such as innovation) are less likely to succumb to isomorphic pressures than their competitors. Johansson (2003:209) states:

it is problematic to assume that even a delimited group such as voluntary social service organisations act and react in the same way.

After all the VCS is not homogenous (Milbourne 2013, Alcock 2010a). It has complex organisation and management features, hence my thesis requires the development and application of specialist theories (Harris 2001). Harris (2001) identified that government funding, combined with tight regulatory and accountability systems imposed from the outside, produces dramatic organisational effects in terms of rapid organisational growth, formalisation and multiple accountabilities.

Harris (2001) continues that policy pressures erode the very ethos of active citizenship that the VCS has been championed for. Johansson (2003) argues that outside the core of the welfare state, VCS organisations did have more freedom. The degree of freedom that VCS organisations had was determined by organisational characteristics such as ideology, cooperation strategy, levels of resource dependence and professionalisation.

Other scholars suggest that the impact of VCS homogenisation is different depending on whether the core of the organisation exists in the form of a social movement or a welfare provider. Johansson (2003) argues that different VCS organisations experience different levels of isomorphic pressure. Larger organisations are more professionalised and rationalised whilst more recently founded organisations are more likely to use formal practices, and organisations with more diverse funding sources can respond more flexibly to external demands (Hwang and Powell 2009). Johansson (2003) states that the 'public sector' is hardly a homogenous organisation itself, and it cannot be looked at as one provider. There is considerable variation in local authority approaches to commissioning. At a micro level VCS organisations face different challenges and respond to these challenges using a diversity of tactics. Path dependant factors at a micro level include the organisational commitment to their founding values, entrenchment in tried and tested working regimes and their leadership's delivery related focus.

### **3.2.9 Linking Isomorphism into the Opportunities and Challenges that the Voluntary and Community Sector Faces**

My review of the literature suggested that isomorphism has been a key challenge that the VCS has faced as it has professionalised and become more bureaucratic (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013, Mason 2012, Ramanath 2009). Boundaries have become

blurred between VCS organisations and the state, at the same time as VCS organisations have become more professionalised and less grassroots (NCIA 2015). The focus of my thesis is on the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS in Manchester. The next section examines the effects of privatisation on the VCS. My literature review suggests that the combined challenges of isomorphism and privatisation have changed the VCS operating environment in recent years (Milbourne 2013). In line with my research objective five, to adapt and refine SLA, I will now examine another of the key policy trends experienced by the VCS: privatisation.

### **3.3 Considering Themes: Purchaser-Provider Contracts, Social Enterprise and Privatisation**

Privatisation can be defined as 'the way in which a government discharges critical public responsibilities through or in tandem with private associations' (Cordelli 2012:65). Privatisation defined as 'the use of the private for public purposes' (Cordelli 2012:66) can occur in two ways. It can be via service delivery contracts or incentivised associations such as tax deductions to charities or subsidised associations such as UK care services (Minow 2007, Minow 2003, Metzger 2003). Local authorities use private charities to ensure the care of hard-to-place people. In exchange for successful placements, the private charities receive a payment (Cordelli 2012). The literature suggests that governments support privatisation for a variety of reasons: cost efficiency (Andalo 2011, Cory et al. 1996), equality improvements (Minow 2003, Smith and Lipsky 1998) and representation and community democracy motivations (Hirst and Bader 2001, Hirst 1995).

#### **3.3.1 Opportunities for Contracting**

The Opening Up of Public Services White Paper (2011) opened up an opportunity for the VCS and the private sector to become involved in the delivery of what previously would have been considered 'public sector' work streams. Therefore, as part of this study it is important to explore the literature regarding the ways in which purchaser-provider contracts, social enterprise and privatisation have affected the opportunities and challenges faced by the adult social care VCS (Andalo 2011). This trend towards contracting out public services was first introduced with compulsory competitive tendering (Local Government Act 1988 and 1992) and the 1990 National Health

Service and Community Care Act and continued throughout the Blair-Brown years as Best Value (Local Government Act 1999). The trend has led to the accusation of the marketisation of welfare (Salamon 1993). The extension of social care contracts to VCS organisations was arguably a side effect of the 1990 Act (Hogg and Baines 2011). The intention of the 1990 Act was to marketise healthcare, and under New Labour's Third Way adult social care became contracted to VCS organisations as a more explicit policy (Hogg and Baines 2011). The marketisation and contracting to VCS organisations under the Third Way was continued in the Coalition's Big Society policy, as I discuss in chapter two. However, the Opening Up of Public Services White Paper (2011) broadened the range of contractors (NCIA 2015, Milbourne and Murray 2014, Butler 2014).

The Coalition's 'rolling back of the State' in order to engage other providers in service delivery led to the charge that the Coalition was privatising charity. In the process of opening up public services to outside bidders Lynn (2002:69) argues that governments

experience challenges in obtaining enough qualified bidders, developing sufficiently detailed contract specifications, and implementing effective methods of monitoring contractor performance.

Outsourcing has benefitted larger charities capable of bidding for contracts within a highly competitive, payment by results, environment (Rochester 2014, Milbourne 2013, Buckingham 2009).

### **3.3.2 Privatising Charity**

My literature review suggests that VCS roles such as providing adult social care became privatised under Coalition policy. Henderson and Malani (2009) and Malani

and Posner (2007) argue that much of the work of the charitable sector should be delivered by private profit-making firms. They argue that for-profit organisations are more efficient and can offer high-powered incentives to cut service delivery costs. Malani and Posner (2007) argue that for-profit organisations could do the philanthropic role of charities just as well. They point to the charitable efforts of Google<sup>26</sup>, to provide an example. Here corporate social responsibility is used as an argument that private sector organisations can offer a similar philanthropic role to charities.

However, corporate social responsibility is not the only way that the private sector has taken on what may have previously been perceived as a charitable or philanthropic role. The private sector is increasingly taking on service delivery contracts in what used to be domain of the public and voluntary sectors. Indeed, in the UK the emergence of Virgin Care, a derivative of Richard Branson's for-profit Virgin Brand, has recently taken on contracts providing adult social care services across England<sup>27</sup>. Henderson and Malani (2009) argue that economies of scale make charity more efficient in a for-profit firm, with the charitable element of that firm benefitting from expenditures on the for-profit side. Malani and Posner (2007) develop this argument to suggest that competition in the charitable sector from for-profit firms will help drive highly inefficient non-profits out of business. Salamon (1999:117) states that

for-profit providers seem to have upstaged non-profit ones in every component of the social service field, welfare provision has consequently become a 'true mixed economy'. (1999:119)

Literature highlights that the VCS voice and identity are fundamentally questioned by the notion of private sector organisations taking on contracts formerly delivered by

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<sup>26</sup> **Google**. Google have a well-developed corporate social responsibility policy <http://www.google.cn/intl/en/about/company/responsibility/>

<sup>27</sup> **Virgin Care** Virgin Care delivers over two hundred NHS and adult social care contracts <http://www.virgincare.co.uk/>

charities (Ryan 2014). Lynn (2002:69) states 'commercialisation raises a host of new issues concerning the fundamental character of non-profit charitable service provision'. The VCS is experiencing significant challenges nationally as private sector firms take on contracts previously held by the voluntary sector (Ryan 2014, Whitfield 2014, Butler 2014, Taylor 2012, Buckingham 2009).

### **3.3.3 Critiques of the Privatisation of Charity: Loss of Identity**

There are substantial critiques of privatisation within the literature which are relevant to my thesis. The idea that VCS organisations have a choice to accept state funding or not is illusory (Cordelli 2012). Although many small organisations operate under the radar (Alcock 2010a), and therefore often are not dependent on contracts for funding, larger and medium sized adult social care VCS organisations are contract dependant for funding (NCIA 2015, Crowe et al. 2014, Buckingham 2009). As Lynn (2002: 70) argues:

the presence of competition in service provision can be expected to squeeze out surpluses, jeopardising the missions they subsidise and the independence such missions represent.

Associations are co-opted into the state privatisation agenda as they have no viable alternatives to funding. Many organisations need state funding, and therefore enter contracts as they require funding for survival and legitimacy (Rochester 2013, Buckingham 2009, Smith and Lipsky 1993). As Cordelli (2012:77) argues:

the more a society relies on private associations to provide public services, the more these associations become essential, rather than supplementary, to the effective public delivery of vital services.

### **3.3.4 Hybrid Voluntary and Community Sector: a Loss of Voluntary and Community Sector Identity**

The notion of VCS hybridity should be considered in the context of my thesis as it relates to both notions of isomorphism and privatisation. The VCS organisations that are delivering public service contracts are becoming hybrids between marketised organisations and state agencies (Cordelli 2012, Billis 2010, Buckingham 2011, Billis and Glennerster 1998). Indeed, Billis (2010) develops the theory of hybrid VCS organisations, arguing that perhaps the terms private, public and voluntary sector are no longer relevant, and that organisations within these sectors are no longer simply operating within their traditional limits. The voluntary sector is now delivering what previously would have been public sector services. The private sector has taken on what were voluntary sector service delivery contracts. Billis (2010) questions if hybridity is eroding the unique qualities of the different sectors.

The loss to pluralism and the expressive character of civil society is too high a price to pay for privatisation (NCIA 2015, Cordelli 2012). Cordelli (2012:67) argues that 'privatisation threatens both an individual's liberty and the private, non-political value of associational life'. Privatisation, Cordelli (2012:74) argues,

changes the social role and responsibility of associations. Associations become the proxies through which the political society pursues its public goals and discharges its public responsibilities.

These policy themes of neoliberalism, new public management, isomorphism and privatisation were interlocked in Coalition austerity policy. An important principle of the sustainable livelihoods approach is recognition of the power relationships between and within organisations and communities. This recognition of and engagement with

issues of power and oppression fit closely with feminist PAR methodology, reflecting my research objectives one, two, four and five. I will now review the literature regarding the impact of these themes within an adult social care VCS context.

### 3.4 The Adult Social Care Policy Context

Having reviewed the literature which considers the ideological context in which the VCS operates, I now examine the literature focussing on the policy context that the adult social care VCS sat within under the Coalition government. I examine this policy context from the perspective of gender, faith and homelessness, reflecting my research objectives two and three. Faith, as mentioned in my introduction to this chapter, was not an original research objective but emerged during my research when I located my ethnographic study within a faith-based homelessness VCS organisation. VCS organisations

have key roles in terms of social care including those who are commissioned by local authorities to provide this care and also those who are financed through self-funding individuals or on a charitable basis. (Dickinson et al. 2012:4)

My research has focussed on adult social care organisations as they have borne the brunt of local authority cuts and have been exposed to neoliberal new public management policies since 1990<sup>28</sup>. My thesis considers the effects of Coalition policy on adult social care VCS organisations, and it is therefore important within my literature review to contextualise the policy environment that these adult social care voluntary organisations faced.

#### 3.4.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector and Adult Social Care

The voluntary sector has been providing adult social care for the last century or more. Dickinson et al. (2012:i) argue that:

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<sup>28</sup> 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act

long before the advent of the 'contract culture' that started to emerge in the 1980s, third sector organisations have been involved in the delivery of what we would today define as social care.

The Care Quality Commission<sup>29</sup> (2014) valued the adult social care market for older people at approximately £22.2 billion per year of local authority funding; this does not include unpaid care or self-financed care. However, the National Audit Office (NAO) (2014) states that adult social care funding fell in real terms by eight per cent between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (NAO 2014); this was confirmed by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES 2014). The collective cost of social care provided by third sector organisations is estimated to be £2.9 billion per year (NAO 2014). However, the impact of the Care Bill 2014 was still being negotiated during the writing of this thesis, meaning that whilst it was generally accepted that funding for adult social care services would reduce (NAO 2014), the details of these funding cuts were unclear.

A review of the funding environment experienced by adult social care reveals it has become increasingly complex (CLES 2014, Glasby and Dickinson 2014) with the advent of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014. The arrival of clinical commissioning groups<sup>30</sup> as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 has further confused the funding environment. The NAO states that £55 billion to £97 billion of adult social care is provided by informal care (these are high and low estimates and relate to the replacement cost of the care), £10.2 billion by privately produced care and £2.9 billion by VCS care providers (NAO 2014). The Opening Up of Public Services White Paper (2011) gave a commitment to devolve power and

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<sup>29</sup> **The Care Quality Commission.** An organisation that performance monitors the care industry <http://www.cqc.org.uk/>

<sup>30</sup> **Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)** Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) commission most of the hospital and community NHS services in the local areas for which they are responsible. <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/ccg-outcomes.aspx>

responsibility of public services to those that are using them. This, Dickinson et al. (2012) argue, gave more opportunities for the third sector. However, this is set against 'a background of funding cuts and an ongoing emphasis on the preventative agenda' (Dickinson et al. 2012:7).

### **3.4.2 Neoliberalism and Voluntary and Community Sector Provision of Adult Social Care**

My literature review suggests that the VCS is experiencing significant challenges in the wake of Coalition policy (NCIA 2015, VSNW and CLES 2014, CLES 2014, Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Milbourne 2013). The adult social care VCS is arguably more experienced at reacting to neoliberal new public management policies as it has experienced them since 1990<sup>31</sup>. Yet the adult social care VCS is bearing the brunt of local authority funding cuts (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). My research will examine how the sector has reacted to Coalition policy and the opportunities and challenges it has faced as a result of austerity. It is important to get a picture of the policy context that the adult social care VCS sits within. The National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 brought significant changes for social care. Kendall (1999:68) states that the 1990 Act 'introduced the most sweeping legislative reforms in the field since the 1940s'. It gave responsibility to local authorities for adult social care. Local authorities were expected to meet local care needs and were also required to separate purchaser-provider functions. Purchaser-provider contracts were seen as a way to improve the quality of social care provision locally.

New Labour's Third Way evoked policy themes around service users' choice and control of services, greater partnership working between sectors and a strong emphasis on citizenship and social inclusion. The key change under New Labour was

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<sup>31</sup> **1990** The National Health Service and Community Care Act

the 'abolition of generic social services departments and the creation of new integrated services for children and for adults' (Dickinson et al. 2012:6). In 2006 the Cabinet Office set out a commitment:

the principle of, where services are commissioned and procured by government, there must be a level playing field for all providers regardless of sector. (Dickinson et al. 2012:6)

This was seen as a further move to integrate third sector service delivery into what had been state-provided services. Milbourne and Murray (2011) question how purchaser-provider relationships have affected the nature of the VCS, with larger organisations seemingly benefitting from contracts to a greater extent compared with smaller VCS organisations.

### **3.4.3 The Personalisation Agenda**

In 2008 central government reformed the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act to include personalised care services. Personalised care requires more flexible methods of delivery, which are likely to be specified within the contract (Chester et al. 2010), and services that are responsive to the user. Personal budgets were welcomed by many disabled civil rights groups as a way of gaining independence, choice and control, but they have also been critiqued as a market-based mechanism for rolling back the welfare state, as privatisation by the backdoor (Glasby and Littlechild 2009).

The personalisation agenda was presented as an opportunity for voluntary sector organisations to engage (Social Care Institute for Excellence 2009, NCVO 2009, Department of Health 2008). Indeed, personalisation can be extended into the VCS via the development of cooperatives and social enterprises (Fisher et al. 2012). The

rationale for this is based on the distinctiveness of the voluntary sector and its strong grassroots links to local communities. Dickinson et al. (2012:15) state:

specific opportunities for third sector provision include working in partnership with councils to design personalised services, as well as various ways of supporting personal budget holders through brokerage, training, advocacy, information and advice.

There are, however, critiques of personalisation. Local authorities have expressed concerns that personalisation could reduce a local authority's control over costs and that it could be incompatible with commissioning based on geographic divisions. There was concern over specialist in-house reablement teams, since some local authorities believed that users might choose not to use these specific services (Rubery et al. 2013). However, personalisation continued under the Coalition, most often under the new term 'client-centred practice' within the Care Act 2014 (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). I return to the Care Act 2014 in chapter eight .

#### **3.4.4 Commissioning**

A review of the literature suggests that larger contracts and payment by results have posed a significant challenge to the VCS (Corry 2012). As service delivery contracts have become increasingly complex and Coalition health and social care legislation has developed, all but the larger organisations in the VCS have struggled to access funding contracts (NCIA 2015). Commissioning of social care is based on

multiple objectives including reducing costs, improving quality, integrating with health, empowering users, ensuring national standards, or promoting local experimentation. (Rubery et al. 2013:5)

The outsourcing of health and social care work to private companies and the VCS has been justified on the basis that these sectors would be more able to efficiently organise public services. The proportion of domiciliary care provided by the independent sector (private and VCS) but partially funded by the state has increased from two per cent in 1992 to seventy per cent in 2009 (Snell 2009). The VCS has been more successful in recruiting and retaining care staff, suggesting that the VCS is a better employer than the private care sector (Himmelweit and Land 2011). This literature links to discussion of VCS distinctiveness (Macmillan 2013) which I will return to in chapters seven and eight.

### **3.4.5 Marketisation, Performance Management and New Public Management**

Marketisation and performance management are fundamental to Coalition new public management policies. My literature review suggests that the focus on commercial viability and quantitative performance management of service delivery contracts has fundamentally challenged the grassroots, quality focus of adult social care VCS organisations (Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Dickinson et al. 2012, Rubery et al. 2013). Rubery et al. (2013) discuss the key role of market competition, especially in relation to performance outcomes and contracting organisations' competencies, and they highlight the importance of public, private and voluntary sector relationships. This 'dyadic relationship is in practice influenced by multiple triangulated relationships' (Rubery et al. 2013:1). My literature review here highlights three key issues: the role of multiple public agencies in commissioning, the role of service users in commissioning, and multiple levels of control and divisions of responsibilities (Clarkson 2010).

The next section of my literature review focuses on the adult social care workforce and how its gendered nature has impacted on its response to Coalition policy.

### **3.5 The Gendered Experience of the Adult Social Care Voluntary and Community Sector**

Reflecting on my feminist research aim and my research objective four, to develop a new understanding of the impact of the Coalition government on the gendered workforce of the adult social care VCS, I now consider the gendered nature of the adult social care VCS. An important principle of the sustainable livelihoods approach is recognition of the power relationships between and within organisations and communities (Chambers and Conway 1992). This recognition of and engagement with issues of power and oppression fit closely with feminist PAR methodology. SLA, although not explicitly a feminist research tool, is being used by Oxfam to conduct feminist and gendered analysis at household and community levels<sup>32</sup>. The recognition of gender disparity is especially important when researching adult social care organisations which have a largely female workforce (Glendinning 2012). Gender and pay differences affect VCS adult social care organisations' resilience and as such a livelihoods analysis can help identify coping strategies in the wake of challenges from Coalition policy. I now examine the review the literature regarding the gendered nature of the adult social care VCS.

#### **3.5.1 Formalised Care**

The formalisation of care work has developed since the 1990 Health and Social Care Act, and has resulted in the transfer of delivery of public services from the state to the third sector (Atkinson and Lucas 2012, Cunningham and James 2009, Haugh and Kitson 2007) and an expansion in VCS employment (Moro and McKay 2010). Many

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<sup>32</sup> **GEM** Oxfam's cutting edge gendered market system approach to sustainable livelihoods development. <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/food-livelihoods/gem>

VCS organisations operate in caring fields traditionally occupied by women (Teasdale et al. 2011). Adult social care can be defined as

essentially concerned with supporting individuals to live their lives comfortably and has a particular focus on helping those who need a degree of additional physical and practical support. (Dickinson et al. 2012:3)

The functions of social care can be broken down into categories: protection of children, older people, disabled adults who may be at risk, provision of care and support, care coordination and brokerage, regulation, community development and social integration (Dickinson et al. 2012). The majority of social care is provided by informal carers yet it is becoming increasingly important to the effective delivery of health and welfare services (Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Glasby 2012). Local authorities have played an important role in the delivery of social care since 1962 (Wistow 2012), initially in terms of direct provision and increasingly as purchasers of care services (Dickinson et al. 2012). Within local government, job cuts have had a disproportionate effect on women (CLES 2014). The Women's Budget Group (WBG) have found that women have not benefitted equally from employment in the private sector. The new jobs that women have moved into, from local authority to private sector employers, are lower paid and often part time (WBG 2013).

### **3.5.2 Gendered Care**

Care is a heavily gendered subsector (Glasby and Dickinson 2014) within an already highly gendered VCS workforce (Teasdale et al. 2011). Conceptualisations of care are heavily gendered (Thomas 1993, Tronto 1993, Graham 1991, Twigg 1989, Finch 1987). Care work covers a huge and rather broad spectrum of areas. Milligan and Wiles define care as 'the provision of practical or emotional support' (2010:737). Care

can be reciprocal, or reciprocal dependence in which recipients and providers are involved in the co-production of care (Fine and Glendinning 2005). Popke describes care as 'a fundamental feature of being human' (2006:507). Indeed, care is complex and involves multi-level connections that move back and forth (Milligan and Wiles 2010, Wiles 2003a, 2003b, Milligan 2000, Tronto 1993). It is useful to consider care in terms of 'interdependency, reciprocity and multidirectionality' (Milligan and Wiles 2010:737). Because power and powerlessness are also reciprocal (Kittay 2001), the powerlessness of the care recipient is reciprocated in the powerless needs of the low-status poorly paid care worker. Our understanding of care is 'shaped by social and political-economic context operating at the level of the individual or wider society and public or private spheres' (Milligan and Wiles 2010:738).

One can examine the literature on care work within the 'gendered occupational hierarchies of healthcare' (Twigg et al. 2011:174), with the predominantly male higher status roles relegating the 'dirty' emotional and personal care roles to those of lower status. Pay restrictions need to improve to encourage a more equal care workforce:

the care sector's poor pay is a large contributor to the gender pay gap and deters men from joining it. Privatisation of residential and domiciliary care has produced a labour market with insufficient opportunities for training and career development. (Himmelweit and Land 2011:202)

Indeed, critiques of privatisation have suggested that it has affected the quality of care provided (Twigg et al. 2011, Diamond 1992). As care becomes increasingly formalised government policy has taken on the role of regulator, introducing task-based work assessments of care.

### **3.5.3 Women's Work: Critiquing a New Public Management Approach to Care**

My review of the literature reveals that the majority of the care workforce is female, as both employers and volunteers (Milligan and Wiles 2010, Teasdale et al. 2011).

Employment conditions reflect care work's poor status:

reflecting its 80 per cent female workforce, pay, training opportunities and career prospects in the paid care sector are particularly poor. (Himmelweit and Land 2011)

A commitment to the organisation's mission and an opportunity to do a job that reflects one's values are often used to justify low wages and poor working conditions (Van Til 2000, Nicholson 1992). The gendered nature of the workforce arguably results in gendered expectations of the work role. Women are assumed to be natural caregivers, with an ability to overwork and happily sacrifice themselves for the role. These 'women's' caring roles are perceived as utilising innate and commonplace skills rather than acquired and sophisticated learning (Findlay et al. 2009, Seymour 2009, Virkki 2008, Baines et al. 1998).

### **3.5.4 Masculinising the Feminine: Task-Based Approaches to Care**

A review of the literature reveals that the policies of successive governments have been instrumental in advocating a more task-based, masculine approach to care (Atkinson and Lucas 2012). The new public management techniques used by successive neoliberal inspired governments have resulted in the outsourcing of care from local authorities to private and VCS providers, and hence the separation of policy making and its implications (Goldfinch and Wallis 2010). The Care Standards Act 2000 established a set of National Minimum Standards of care delivery (these were replaced in 2010 by standards specified in the Health and Social Care Act 2008).

These standards adopted an instrumental task-based interpretation of quality of care (Cameron and Boddy 2006), which was then measured by the Care Quality Commission. Atkinson and Lucas (2012) argue that the policy ignored the structural barriers to care and displaced the policy responsibility to individual carers to provide care quality. The policy disregarded gender structures (Evetts 2003, Ungerson 2000), and despite the fact that the care workforce is one of the most gender segregated in England (Atkinson and Lucas 2012) the policy did not actually address gender. The task-based policy environment in which the National Minimum Standards and Care Quality Commission sit measures a task-orientated understanding of care quality – where it falls down is in that it fails to go beyond the quantifiable (Himmelweit 2007). As Milligan and Wiles (2010:745) state:

Welfare retrenchment, coupled with the market logistics of competition and efficiency, is viewed as underpinning the imperative for cut backs in care and social services, which impact disproportionately on the poorest ... these shifts are manifest in a geography of poverty and inequality that also reflects who has access to care and who undertakes care work.

The feminine qualitative delivery of care has been undermined by new public management task-based assessments of care. The heavily gendered, low-paid care workers of the VCS are required to conform to masculine task-based quantitative measurements of care at the same time as offering improved quality of care to service users (Atkinson and Lucas 2012).

A literature review of the gendered nature of care work presents care as having links to mothering and femininity (Ungerson 2000). Women's provision of bodily care is based on gendered associations between bodies, spatial regulations and dirt (Widding

Isaksen 2002, Ungerson 1983). Feminine skills such as caring are often given lower status (Milligan and Wiles 2010, Mann 2005), limited career possibilities or a wage premium (Lindsay 2005). The gendered nature of care work arguably leads to its undervaluation (Milligan and Wiles 2010, Himmelweit 2007); indeed, Findlay et al. (2009) even go so far as to argue that care work is contaminated by the fact of caring. Staeheli and Brown (2003) suggest that care and politics cannot be separated. Care and power are interlinked through the expression of care and care activities within a political landscape (Tronto 1993).

### **3.5.5 Reviewing the Literature on Women and the Voluntary and Community Sector Nationally**

This section examines the national context of women within the VCS. I review the literature which considers the effects of a heavily gendered VCS workforce, and how it impacts on the ability of the VCS to respond to austerity (NCVS 2015, CLES 2014). The voluntary sector is a heavily gendered workforce (WBG 2013, CLES 2014, Teasdale et al. 2011). This heavily gendered workforce has remained gendered at a stable level since 2001 (NCVO 2012). Women are more likely to work within the VCS, to hold lower management and professional roles and to volunteer. However, the majority of higher status roles within the VCS are taken by men (Teasdale et al. 2011). As NCVO (2012:1) states:

In 2010, over half a million women (522,000) were employed in the voluntary sector alongside nearly one-quarter of a million men (244,000). More than two-thirds (68%) of the voluntary sector workforce are women which compares with the public sector (64%) but contrasts with the private sector (39%) (LFS).

The gender pay gap is narrower in the VCS than in other sectors. However, opportunities for women to move into leadership positions are limited (CLEES 2014). Gender segregation can be seen among job roles and within job hierarchies. Hakim (1992) describes the gender segregation within industries as 'horizontal segregation' and the gender segregation within an organisation's leadership as 'vertical segregation'. Teasdale et al. (2011) found that VCS organisations were horizontally segregated, with VCS organisations employing about twice as many women as men (2011:71), but that vertical segregation was much less apparent – women seemed to be more equal in lower management positions but less so at higher-level management.

Women are underrepresented at board level within VCS organisations (Lyon and Humbert 2013). There are concentrations of women on VCS boards in organisations such as schools, parents' groups and organisations that represent women's issues (Lyon and Humbert 2013, Rotolo and Wilson 2007, Mailloux et al. 2002). Lyon and Humbert (2013) state that there are differences in practices, activities and values of social enterprises that have female or male dominated boards. Female-dominated boards have lower turnover, are in smaller charities and tend to be more locally focussed (Lyon and Humbert). Balanced boards had the highest turnover (Lyon and Humbert 2013).

A review of the literature reveals that women may use the VCS to 'counteract negative attributes' (Humbert 2012:8) such as re-entry into the labour force or building their skills. Women in the VCS engage in different types of work and work for different types of organisation, and the nature of their involvement is different to men (Humbert 2012). Teasdale et al. (2011) argue that whilst women earn less than men in the VCS, the gender differential is less and that the 'horizontal segregation of women into caring

industries explains much of the gender differential' (2011:71) due to the fact that the caring skills are valued less than learned skills. When they examined higher-level managers only, the gender pay gap did not exist (Teasdale et al. 2011:71). There is considerable discussion within the literature regarding a gender pay gap.

### **3.5.6 The Gender Pay Gap**

Whilst women have increasingly joined the paid workforce they have joined in lower paid, part-time roles (Hegewisch and Gornick 2011). Himmelweit and Land, quoting Trades Union Congress (TUC) figures, state 'part-time employment in Britain has always had lower pay, less security and fewer opportunities for training and promotion' (2011:203). Women dominate certain professions such as 'caring jobs' in health and education (Pilcher 2009). Many English female-dominated service sector jobs are poorly paid (Lindsay 2005), and pay rates for care workers especially are often only marginally above the National Minimum Wage (Themudo 2009).

Teasdale et al. (2011) found that women on average were paid 16 per cent less than men (per hour) in the VCS compared to gender pay gaps of 22 per cent in the public sector and 33 per cent in the private sector. Hegewisch and Gornick (2011) explain the gender pay gap in terms of depreciations in human capital, as women are often encouraged into part-time work in order to combine motherhood with work responsibilities, thereby reducing their career potential and losing seniority. Women provide a great deal of care, often as informal work. Women care for generations above and below them; this is often referred to as the 'tricycle' of care (NCVS 2015, McDowell and Pringle 1992). These care responsibilities, combined with part-time, lower status roles, have significantly affected women's earning potential.

### **3.5.7 Women, Work and Austerity**

A review of the literature on austerity questions to what extent women's employment is vulnerable to recession (WBG 2013, Swaffield 2011, TUC 2010, Rake 2009). The recession has resulted in high levels of unemployment among women and young people (Shildrick and Rucell 2015, CLES 2014, WBG 2013, Stewart 2011, MacLeavy 2011). Arguably women have been hardest hit by the recession (Stratton 2010). Austerity 'risks new and more intense forms of segregation as it seeks to reduce the state mediation of labour market outcomes' (MacLeavy 2011:359). Arguably, the recession and Coalition policy represent 'the biggest reversals in opportunities for women since the end of the First World War' (Campbell 2010). Women's employment vulnerability in a recession should be considered from three perspectives: demand, women's commitment to participation and the role of employer policies in supporting women (WBG 2013, Rubery and Rafferty 2013). Rubery and Rafferty (2013) argue that women have a different experience of recession, which relates to cultural and gender differences in the position of women in the labour market.

Women have arguably been hardest hit by recession (NCVS 2015, CLES 2014, WBG 2013, MacLeavy 2011), both in the sense that the public and private sectors in which they predominantly work (WBG 2013, NCVO 2012) have experienced significant and sustained funding cuts (NCVO 2012) and in terms of increased care responsibilities because of reduced service provision (MacLeavy 2011). Losses in employment are 'nearly always borne by women' (Himmelweit and Land 2011:204). This leads me to question whether if the VCS has a predominantly female workforce, and women have been bearing the brunt of austerity, then does the gendered nature of the VCS workforce affect the VCS's capacity to respond to austerity?

### **3.5.8 Gender Segregation and Austerity**

The literature is clear that gender segregation is a pervasive characteristic of all labour markets (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009), although the extent and type of segregation (Scott et al. 2010) is different across sectors. Rubery and Rafferty 2013) argue that women are bearing a disproportionate share of job losses, and this is linked to the number of women working within the heavily gendered public sector: ‘normally a source of protection, the public sector is poised to be a source of women’s vulnerability to both job loss and employment downgrading’ (2013:428). Teasdale et al. (2011) state that the VCS work force has similar vertical gender segregation as the public sector and that both these sectors were less vertically segregated than the third sector.

### **3.5.9 Double Impact of Recession**

A review of the literature suggests that women have experienced a double impact of the recession due to Coalition policy of reducing the public sector workforce alongside a policy stance which encourages a dual income, for example through Working Tax Credits<sup>33</sup>. Much of the Coalition policy undermines New Labour’s support for women in work, including maternity rights (NCVS 2015, CLES 2014, WBG 2013, MacLeavy 2011).

New public management neoliberal policies have led to increasing outsourcing and contracting of previously state-run services to the VCS (Ryan 2014, Benson 2014). New forms of working under new public management have led to new forms of work, flexible shifts, lone working, fragmentation of skills, heavy workloads and increased work related stress (Baines and Cunningham 2011, Cunningham 2008, Baines 2006).

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<sup>33</sup> **Working Tax Credits** An employment related benefit. <https://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit/overview>

Women working in the adult social care VCS have been disproportionately affected by this changing work structure:

required to deal with highly excluded service users with extremely challenging behaviours and problems that do not correspond to quick and easy interventions, workers in the Voluntary Social Services (VSS) often find themselves working at the edge of their skills and endurance hanging on by their fingernails, providing 'white knuckle' care to the most excluded. (Baines and Cunningham 2011:761)

It would seem that women working in the heavily gendered VCS workforce are being squeezed from two directions. Their dual roles (Myrdal and Klein 1956) are both expecting more from them in times of austerity. They are expected to offer more within their work role, and their VCS organisation, experiencing the effects of funding cuts, is expecting them to do more for less. They are also expected to provide more familial and community care. Women are being expected to volunteer their time more and to offer more to the community. I have examined adult social care from a gendered perspective, in line with my research objective four. I return to my research findings, more specifically to the gendered experiences of women within the VCS, in chapter nine. I now consider the literature focussing on the homeless and the faith-based adult social care VCS before considering critiques of care and care management as relevant to my thesis's aim of examining the opportunities and challenges faced by the adult social care homelessness VCS.

### **3.6 The Policy Context of Homelessness Organisations**

The homelessness subsector of the adult social care VCS is a good place to examine Coalition policy (Buckingham, 2009) for several reasons. The VCS has played a major role in homelessness services over a number of years; for example, the Salvation Army was established in 1865. As a result of a long history of VCS welfare provision, homelessness organisations exhibit a wide range of organisational forms, characteristics, service types and stages of development. Government policy under New Labour focussed on initiatives to reduce street homelessness. This policy saw an increase in funding and regulation of homelessness VCS organisations. Homelessness VCS organisations have established quasi-market conditions, due to purchaser-provider arrangements and competitive tendering (Buckingham, 2009), for longer than other subsectors of the VCS. Homelessness is a subsector of the VCS where the attributes that are considered to be those of the VCS (values driven, caring, community relationships) are often crucial to the quality and effectiveness of services (Billis and Glennerster, 1998).

#### **3.6.1 Voluntary and Community Sector Homelessness Organisations**

The prolonged dominance of the VCS in the delivery of homelessness services is explained within the literature as partly due to market failure of other sectors to meet homeless clients' needs (Buckingham, 2009). Buckingham (2009) lists the reasons for these failures: resource insufficiency, limitations of particular welfare services and the barriers that make it difficult for single homeless people to access welfare provision. Single homeless people are often excluded from services offered by the state, market and informal sectors (Buckingham 2009). The VCS's involvement of volunteers in its service delivery seemed to Buckingham (2009) to be fundamental to an organisation's

ability to meet homeless people's needs. Christian faith for many homelessness organisations' volunteers played a part in terms of motivating the volunteers and in terms of giving access to a wider community through church congregations that were sources of volunteers and donations in kind (Buckingham 2009; Cloke et al. 2007; Johnsen et al. 2005a, 2005b). Indeed the 'post-secular' service spaces of the hostel, night shelter and drop-in centre 'represent spaces of praxis in which secular and faith motivation collude in new forms of ethical citizenship' (Cloke et al. 2010:2). I return to this theme in more detail in chapter eight. I now very briefly consider the policy context that homelessness VCS organisations sit within before returning to examine Coalition policy and the homelessness VCS.

### **3.6.2 The 1980s and Homelessness Policy**

The crisis in street homelessness in the 1980s (Carlen, 1996) was caused by the 1980 Housing Act's 'Right to Buy' scheme, the removal of fair rents to private landlords, and the 1986 Social Security Act that stated that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds were not eligible for income support (Anderson, 1993). By the summer of 1990, some three thousand people were street homeless in central London (Goodwin and Painter, 1996). The Conservative government responded to the crisis with the introduction of the Rough Sleepers Initiative in 1990, managed by the Department of the Environment. The Initiative was most usefully considered an exercise in containment and removing homeless people from the streets (Cloke et al. 2010). This attempt at containment was largely ineffective (Brown et al. 1996).

### **3.6.3 Homelessness Policy and New Labour**

Under New Labour the neoliberal focus on funding large-scale VCS organisations led to a change in emergency service provision for homeless people (Cloke 2007, May et al. 2005). In 1999 New Labour set up the Homelessness Action Programme, which

was rolled out from 1999 to 2002 under the auspices of the newly created Rough Sleepers Unit that was central government funded. In 2002 this was replaced with Supporting People funding and Local Homelessness Strategies were formulated, requiring local authorities to set out their plans to meet the needs of single homeless people within their area. In 2008 the Communities and Local Government Committee set up the No One Left Out initiative (CLG 2008). This project took over where the Homeless Action Programme left off, providing £200 million to its local government and voluntary sector partners in order to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers in England by 2012. New Labour sought to remind people of their public duty towards street homeless people (Daily Telegraph 1998). In its 2000 'change for life' campaign, the Rough Sleepers Unit sought to define the right and proper mode of caring for homeless people (Fitzpatrick and Kennedy, 2001).

One of the most notable aspects of the campaign was that it attracted some rather limited criticism from VCS homelessness organisations (Fitzpatrick and Kennedy, 2001). The homeless VCS groups were cautious about criticising the campaign in case they jeopardised their ability to influence government thinking on forthcoming legislation, the 2002 Homelessness Act (Shelter). This silencing of the VCS whilst focussing on potential forthcoming service provider contracts suggests the seeds of the shadow state (Wolch 1990) were being sown within the homeless sector. As Cloke (2010:10) states:

In some ways, of course, an infrastructure of poor quality and sometimes unprofessional shelters and hostels, usually in the marginal spaces of the city, seems to be entirely compatible with overarching theses of control and containment. These services are the necessary containers into which homeless people can be swept up thus preventing their unwanted presence in prime

areas of the city. They provide outlets for the expression of liberal and sentimentalist ideology, presenting opportunities for volunteers to feel good about themselves whilst upholding the underlying political structures of bipolarisation.

National government programmes such as the Rough Sleepers Initiative and the Supporting People Programme have led to the rise of large-scale VCS organisations delivering state-funded homelessness services. New Labour's 'Coming in from the Cold' strategy sought to reduce street homelessness (ODPM 1999:4) and move homelessness from the streets to hostel accommodation (Moore 2002). In a 'spectacular triumph of structure over agency' (Cloke et al. 2010), homeless people were being 'swept up' (Cloke et al. 2010) and out of cities by what Cloke et al. (2010) refer to as an increasingly punitive (De Verteuil et al. 2009), revanchist (Smith 1996) approach to homelessness policy. Homeless people, as a result of punitive policies to 'clean up the streets', were increasingly becoming 'urban Bedouins' (Davis 1990:236), wandering fugitives fleeing anti-social behaviour orders and anti-begging legislation. In 2003, the Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit took up the issue of 'problem street culture', enacting anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) against those who persistently begged. The same year saw begging made a recordable offence for the first time (Cloke et al. 2010).

### **3.6.4 Coalition Policy and Homelessness**

The Coalition government significantly changed welfare provision with the Welfare Reform Act 2012. My literature review found that housing and unemployment benefits have undergone significant cuts and there have been changes in regulations regarding who is eligible for benefits (Shildrick and Rucell 2015, CLES 2014, Fearn 2013). As part of the Coalition's austerity programme, cuts were made to state funding

of local authorities, which in turn affected the VCS. This has led to the closure, since 2010, of one hundred and thirty-three homelessness projects and the loss of more than four thousand bed spaces at the same time as there has been a significant increase in the number of people who are homeless (Fearn, 2013).

Arguably, VCS organisations have bought into the neoliberal policy ideal and participated in purchaser-provider service contracts by engaging in policy initiatives such as the Rough Sleepers Initiative. Since the turn of the millennium, FBOs have taken on an increasing role in social welfare provision generally (Dinham et al. 2009, Beaumont 2008), especially within the homelessness sector (Johnsen and Fitzpatrick 2009). This increase in FBOs as service providers has led to the emergence of post-secularism in the homelessness VCS sector:

homelessness has served as a highly visible example of the inability of secularist ethics alone to prevent or deal with social exclusion in contemporary society and the serving and caring for homeless people has emerged as a key arena in which post secular praxis has developed. (Cloke et al. 2010:42)

However, it is a considerable reductive leap to analyse homeless hostels and drop-in centres only in these terms. As I go on to discuss in chapters six, seven and eight, the service spaces that hostels, day centres and night shelters provide exhibit powerful forces of Caritas and care (May 2009, Link et al. 1995). This care can be considered a form of resistance to neoliberal governmentality, offering homeless clients care as victims of neoliberal excess (Cloke et al. 2010).

### **3.6.5 Messy Middle Grounds**

In mapping the neoliberal policy responses to homelessness, Cloke et al. (2010) argue that one should recognise two crucial dissonances: the good intentions of government

and the agency of individuals and organisations to resist policy narratives (Larner and Craig 2005, Carey et al. 2009). However, resistance exists in its 'messy middle grounds' (Sparke 2008:423), with a mixture of control and opposition, structure and agency, incorporation and alternativeness. Welfare provision exists within this messy middle ground:

romanticised, yet often in practice deeply unromantic; easily dismissed as merely upholding the status quo, yet powered by an urge to do something about the injustice of the status quo. (Cloke et al. 2010:43)

A review of the literature on new public management approaches to adult social care policy suggests that they have proved to be a powerful displacement activity and have failed to address the structural roots of inequality; a 'solution' has been found in a government skills initiative, rather than in examining the structural barriers to improving care (Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Atkinson and Lucas 2012). I then move on, within this chapter, to discuss critiques of the neoliberal inspired contract culture that challenges the adult social care homelessness VCS, focussing on FBOs. My next section examines adult social care in a faith and homelessness context. I offer a further consideration of the literature on FBOs in chapter eight as I explore what kind of organisation CareGM is.

### **3.7 Policy Context of Faith-Based Voluntary and Community Sector Adult Social Care Organisations**

A review of the literature suggests that the increasing prominence of FBOs in providing welfare in the UK is considered a bi-product of neoliberalism: 'FBOs are in essence viewed as willing or unwilling participants in the hollowing out of the welfare state' (Williams et al. 2012:1480; Annette 2011). Arguably, neoliberalism has been co-constituted by the involvement of FBOs, which have simultaneously been able to add alternative philosophies of care to the welfare mix. FBOs have been active at national, regional and local levels across a range of welfare sectors from homelessness to young people, to housing, poverty and debt. Whilst this activity is by no means a recent phenomenon (Prochaska 2006, Harris 1995;), the policy interests of central and local government have been reignited under the guise of creating a neoliberal welfare mix.

#### **3.7.1 Critiquing Government Policy**

However, alongside their role in welfare provision faith and religious culture within public life have re-emerged as sources of social justice values (Bunyan and Diamond 2014ab). The dynamism of individual faith groups, the resources that many of the larger faith groups have access to and the social capital that faith groups link into are recognised as important contributors to civil society. The application of faith to offer a critical perspective on the world is another area that faith groups can contribute to in civil society. Indeed, faith groups have also offered powerful critiques of the neoliberal agenda (WEF 2013). These critiques have been focussed on reinstating social values into service provision (Dinham et al. 2009).

Different types of state-religious partnership have been suggested by Dinham et al. (2009): resource-focussed rationale, governance-focussed rationale and normative focus. Resource-focussed rationale considers FBOs in terms of the material resources that they own and can share with their communities, for example meeting rooms. The governance-focussed rationale emphasises the capacity of FBOs to advocate community interest to government. A normative-focussed rationale, the least popular policy rhetoric, emphasises the morality and vision of FBOs to improve social justice.

### **3.7.2 Coalition and Faith-Based Organisations**

Reviewing the literature regarding the public policy interest in faith as a repository for 'strengthened community' reflects communitarian ideas of community that influence the Big Society and Coalition ideas of civil society. The Coalition's Big Society policy draws on Blond's (2010) Red Toryism, which in turn develops a radical orthodoxy school of theology, urging Christians to recognise the public sphere. The Big Society and Coalition approach to 'rolling back' the welfare state (Peck and Tickell 2002) led some FBOs to interpret that Coalition policy is recognition of the social activism that they were doing already. Other faith groups critiqued the Coalition approach and the reduction in state support as

a suffocating and colluding return to Christendom in which revolutionary Christian hope is translated into passive acceptance of the current world order.  
(Williams et al. 2012:1483)

Much of the literature suggests that the Coalition government did not depart significantly from New Labour's principle of encouraging faith groups to deliver welfare services. Coalition policy 'remained concerned with knowledge development and capacity building to enhance collaboration and dialogue between faith groups and

government agencies' (Jawad 2012). The Big Society and subsequent Coalition policy towards the VCS represented a significant move change from New Labour's community capacity building towards reliance on volunteers and the VCS to deliver welfare services (Rochester 2014, Whitfield 2014, Milbourne 2013, Buckingham 2009). FBOs represent a range of different involvements in welfare provision. In most areas of social welfare there is prominent representation from FBOs, and even some sector leaders; for example, in homelessness services there is the Salvation Army and for disability services there is Liveability (May et al. 2005).

### **3.7.3 Complex History**

My review of the literature reveals that the policy context of FBOs has a complex history. FBOs have arguably been co-opted into the neoliberal welfare mix. However, faith-based groups face many challenges when attempting to work in partnership with government (Jawad 2012). FBOs often lack the human capital expertise when applying for grants and state funds often require a secular mission statement. Moves towards service delivery can often alienate local congregations. State funders do not understand faith organisations and FBOs often do not understand state requirements. Some of these issues have been experienced by the faith-based VCS in Greater Manchester, as I explore in chapters five, six, seven and eight. Next I consider the literature that critiques new public management approaches to care.

### **3.8 A Critique of the Effects of a New Public Management Approach to Care**

Marketisation and performance management have been critiqued within VCS literature as having affected the VCS approach to care management (Rochester 2014, Whitfield 2014, Milbourne 2013). Atkinson and Lucas (2012) examine the effects that this routinised approach to care have on manager-worker approaches to care and their understanding of good quality care. Atkinson and Lucas highlight a further effect that a new public management approach to adult social care has had: the 'professionalisation of lower-level public service occupations' (2012:2). National Minimum Standards have clearly defined tasks that equate to good care, which Atkinson and Lucas (2012) argue has led to the professionalisation of the care workforce. Professionalisation has been further reinforced by a Workforce Development Strategy (DoH 2009 in Atkinson and Lucas 2012). The Workforce Development Strategy defines the worker skills that are required in order to deliver National Minimum Standards and provides for occupational training and certification of care workers.

#### **3.8.1 Care Delivery**

Atkinson and Lucas (2012) identify three main policy implications from a new public management policy approach to adult social care: a professionalised task-based approach to care is undertaken, the policy fails to understand the emotional skill and human-centred nature of the work and the marketisation of care will ensure low prices and hence low wages for carers. Rubery et al. (2013:3) state that 'the majority of care hours were shifted to the private sector due to the high cost advantage of outsourced domiciliary care'. The marketised new public management approach to care has significantly affected the VCS approach to care delivery. Arguably my review of the

literature leads to the conclusion that the isomorphic effects of performance management have detrimentally affected the quality of care offered by third sector adult social care organisations.

### **3.8.2 Critiques of Contract Culture**

There is considerable criticism of the contract culture that has evolved since the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act (NCIA 2015, Rochester 2014, Milbourne 2013, Hardill and Dwyer 2011, Nicholls 1997). Piecemeal funding and lack of full cost recovery (Little 2004) have been major setbacks for voluntary sector delivery of adult social care. There is considerable literature that documents how smaller voluntary organisations lack the capacity to respond to tenders and lack the cultural and commercial skills to tender effectively (Davidson and Packham 2015, Rochester 2013, Macmillan 2013, Milbourne 2013, Alcock 2010, Coote 2010a). Many small voluntary organisations lack the correct level of public liability insurance or financial turnover required to enter the local authority tendering process (Rochester 2013, Valios 2007). Partnerships open up issues such as abuse of trust, opportunistic behaviour among powerful private sector contractors, complacency and limiting innovation (Glasby and Dickinson 2014).

The effects that insecure contract funding has had on employment and care quality are documented by Alcock (2004) and Cunningham and James (2009). Issues such as greater demands on management resources, bureaucracy associated with programmes such as Supporting People<sup>34</sup> and reduced staffing levels and threats to

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<sup>34</sup> **Supporting People programme.** The Supporting People programme was launched in 2003 as a ring-fenced grant to local authorities intended to fund services to help vulnerable people live independently. The level of the grant was reduced in subsequent years. In 2009, the ring fence was removed from the grant thereby allowing all local authorities to spend their Supporting People allocation as they deemed appropriate. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP12-40/RP12-40.pdf>

continuity of care due to employee turnover were all documented by Cunningham and James (2009) as negative effects of contract culture. Milbourne and Murray (2011:72) state that

contract risks and transaction costs are accentuating existing burdens on third sector providers, with smaller non-profit organisations experiencing growing pressure to do more for less to survive.

The role and remit of many adult social care organisations have been challenged by care contracts. In the past VCS organisations may have been grant funded and been fairly free to deliver care how they wished. Local authority care contracts have meant that VCS organisations have had to deliver care according to prescribed and qualitative restrictions. Many third sector organisations have 'shifted into service delivery on a contract, rather than grant basis, this may cause tensions for third sector organisations in terms of their role and remit' (Powell 2011:14). There is the threat of institutional isomorphism (Scott and Russell 2001, Chew and Osborne 2009), a notion that 'the contract market environment has recoded the unique characteristic of voluntary sector organisations, separating them from their core missions' (Dickinson et al. 2012:19).

### **3.8.3 Blurring Boundaries**

The blurring of organisational boundaries within the adult social care VCS could damage the community-based approaches that the VCS has traditionally taken to resolve community issues. The effects of contract culture and partnership working are

to weaken organisational meanings, making organisations more susceptible to externally defined goals and behaviours. The spread of wide scale commissioning, with associated competitive and performative cultures,

exacerbates isomorphic pressures on voluntary organisations to adopt particular modes of operation, especially when coupled with survival needs. (Milbourne and Murray 2011:76)

Contract culture is critiqued within the literature as having fundamentally challenged organisational independence (NCIA 2015, Ryan 2014, Milbourne 2013, Milbourne and Murray 2011). Adult social care VCS organisations risk losing the very quality of care that distinguishes them from their public and private competitors by entering into prescriptive service delivery contracts (Macmillan 2013).

### **3.9 Responses to Policy Challenges, Adult Social Care and Social Enterprise**

As a response to the recession, funding cuts and Coalition policy there is a body of research focussed on how adult social care VCS organisations are adopting neoliberal approaches to organisational strategy. Many adult social care VCS organisations are choosing to develop social enterprise projects as a solution to or a diversification of, funding (NCIA 2015, Huckfield 2014). Bruce and Chew (2011:155) state that:

VCOs are adopting management approaches and values of the private (for-profit) sector as a means to respond to their changing environment, in particular to market-based government policies.

Many adult social care organisations have taken the form of not-for-profit social enterprises (Huckfield 2014, Brindle 2011). Carmel and Harlock (2008) recognise the central role that social enterprise has been given by successive UK governments.

Charities are trying to raise more money from non-statutory funders, and 'in some ways are returning to a sort of pre-welfare state world' (Corry 2012:23). Social enterprise success factors listed by Cox and Schmuecker (2010) rely on strong social capital and access to organisational support. They discuss how public sector procurement and commissioning can be very restrictive in terms of how service delivery is enacted, and they summarise that social enterprise organisations need good organisational infrastructure and that finding this is a big barrier for many organisations. The literature suggests that social enterprise, despite being involved in a process of reflexive isomorphism (Nicholls 2010), offers adult social care organisations an opportunity to access and develop new funding streams and potentially offers the VCS a new model of operating.

Having considered the literature regarding the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care homelessness VCS, I now summarise my literature review.

### 3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews the literature relating to the ideological and policy context in which the adult social care VCS operates. The chapter clarifies and develops my research themes, focussing on my research objectives. I review the literature on the VCS adult social care policy context and focus on key themes such as gender, faith and homelessness within the VCS. In considering the policy context of the adult social care VCS this chapter sets the national, macro level scene in advance of my next chapter, which considers my research findings on the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester.

Within the context of this changing policy environment, VCS organisations are experiencing significant challenges. They are serving communities that are in increasing need due changes in welfare and they are experiencing significant funding cuts (NCIA 2015). The bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the VCS has increased, as larger VCS organisations are more able to compete in complex competitive funding environments. There has been a rise in VCS organisations becoming social enterprises and increasingly entering into subcontracting relationships with private providers (NCIA 2015). This changing identity of the VCS, from voluntary group to independent social enterprise, has affected the autonomy, voice and identity of the VCS (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013, Rochester 2014).

Having considered the ideological and policy context of the adult social care VCS within this literature review, I move on to consider the Greater Manchester VCS's experience of Coalition policy. However, before I begin to review my research findings I first consider my methodology.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Theoretical Underpinnings and Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter discusses how my research was conducted and the conceptual approach to my research, and examines my role as a researcher within the research. In keeping with feminist methodologies (Olesen 2000, Maguire 1992, Reinharz 1992, Harding 1987, Maguire 1987, Mies 1983), my methodology chapter examines my motivations for the research and my experiences of conducting the research.

The chapter begins by examining my research aim and objectives. I consider my theoretical approach, my reasons for choosing participatory research techniques and my commitment to feminist emancipatory research. I then discuss how my research was conducted and analysed. I go on to conclude with a consideration of the ethics of my feminist communitarian approach.

## **4.2 Defining My Research Question, Aim and Objectives**

I now discuss my research aims and objectives.

### **Aim:**

- To use participatory feminist analysis in order to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government 2010-2015.

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To examine the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives using participatory feminist research techniques.
- 2) To explore the experience of one adult social care VCS homelessness organisation during the term of the Coalition government 2010-2015.
- 3) To advance knowledge regarding VCS experiences of Coalition policy using feminist emancipatory research techniques.
- 4) To develop a new understanding of the impact of Coalition policy upon the gendered workforce of the VCS.
- 5) To adapt and refine SLA for use within VCS organisations, and in so doing support VCS practice.

### **4.2.1 Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Socially Organised Subsystems.**

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory and SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992), I examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro level perspectives. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological framework for human development applies socio-ecological models to

human development. Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that socially organised subsystems guide human development. He separates the subsystems into micro system, exo system, macro system and chrono system. Bronfenbrenner (1994) uses a child to provide examples of how each subsection guides human behaviour. The micro system is the socio-ecological layer closest to a child: the parents, family and caregivers with whom the child has direct contact. The meso system connects the micro structures; for example, they might be the connection between parent and teacher, or parent and church. The exo system is the larger social system in which the child may not be directly involved, but can positively or negatively influence the child's experience, for example a parent's workplace. The macro system reflects the cultural setting, the values, customs and laws that the child lives within. The chrono system is the time in which the child exists within this multi-layered system, and the influence that historical factors have on the dynamics of the micro, meso and macro systems.

#### **4.2.2 Simplifying Bronfenbrenner's Categories**

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) subsystems interrelate and relationships exist within and between each level. I have chosen to simplify Bronfenbrenner's (1994) categories. I categorise my research analysis into macro, meso and micro subsections. The challenge of feminist research is

to find ways of working with difference and complexity while not losing sight of the bigger issues around women's (and some men's) oppression. (Burns and Walker 2005:68)

For this reason I will examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from three different perspectives: macro, meso and micro. This tri-level analysis replicates the approach that my research took much more accurately, and

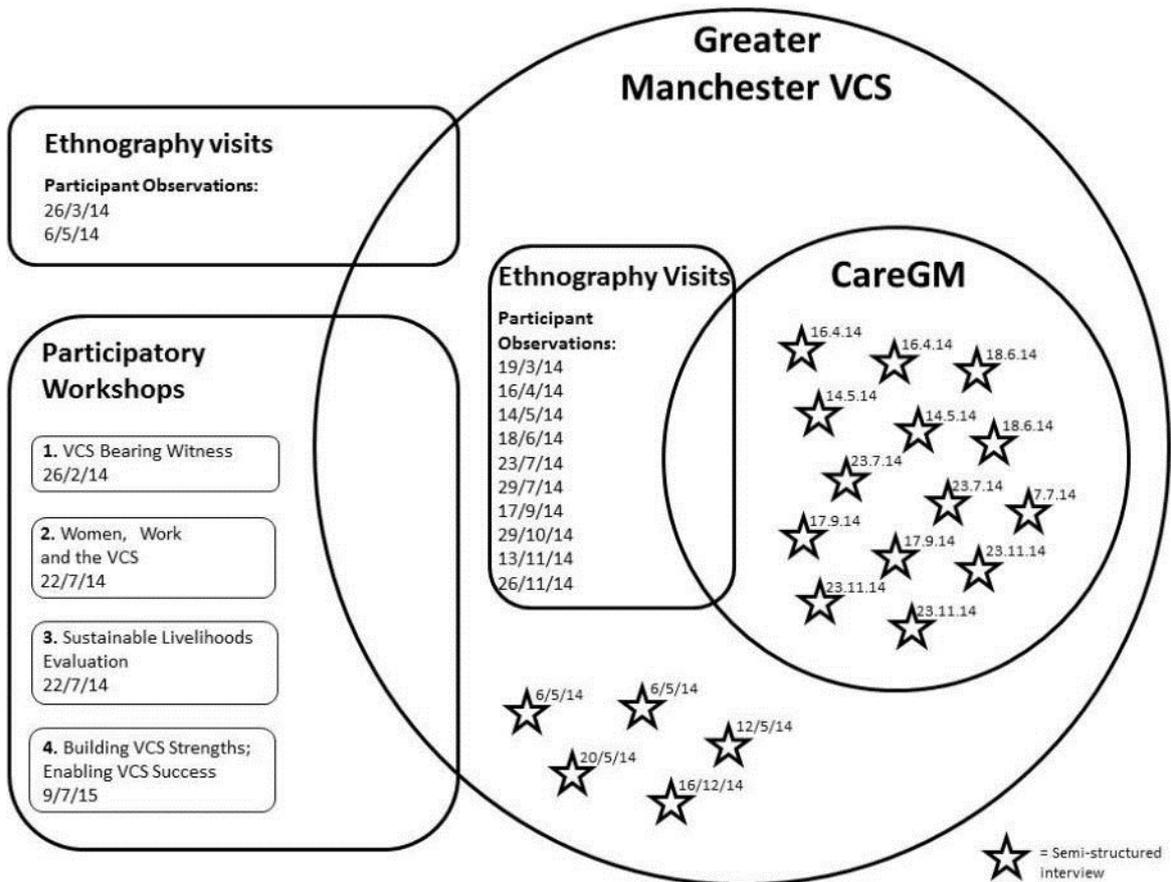
reflects the macro, meso and micro categorisations of SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992) that my research utilises as an analytical tool.

#### **4.2.3 Macro, Meso and Micro**

Within my PhD the macro level analysis is understood to mean the ideological and historical context within which the VCS operates. This macro level research is literature-based. I begin the PhD by examining the historical context of the VCS. My second chapter examines the ideological and policy context within which the VCS operates. These macro level chapters set my situated Greater Manchester research within a wider national context. This gives a broader picture to my research which is important in setting the scene for my place-based research findings. The meso level analysis provides insight into the experiences of the VCS of Greater Manchester and is based on my participatory research and semi-structured interviews. The micro level analysis is focussed around an ethnography of one small VCS organisation. This ethnography is supported by semi-structured interviews with key informants within the organisation. The micro level approach provides a detailed analysis of one organisation's livelihood during austerity.

In taking this approach to research I offer a multi-level picture of how the VCS is responding to the opportunities and challenges posed during the period of the Coalition government 2010-2015. By situating my research within a national context, then examining the Greater Manchester experience before focussing on an in-depth examination of one VCS organisation, I offer a highly detailed multi-level picture of how the VCS is responding to the opportunities and challenges during the Coalition government. I include here a diagram that illustrates how my research was conducted before going on to consider the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

### 4.3 A Diagram of my Methodological Approach



#### **4.4 Considering Research: My Theoretical Approach to Research**

Research can be defined as ‘a dialogue aiming to produce valid knowledge’ (Reason and Rowan 1981:4). The purpose of research can be said to be the questioning of assumptions: ‘the essence of science is a communal questioning of assumptions, not of all assumptions but of those judged to be open to reasonable doubt’ (Hammersley 2000:52).

My research considered the opportunities and challenges that the adult social care VCS organisations experienced and how they have made sense of these challenges. Social justice is my ontological position; I hold a clear commitment to the emancipatory role of research. Ensuring an appropriate epistemology is an important part of a methodological commitment to social justice. A theoretical perspective suggests the types of questions we should be asking and the phenomena in need of explanations. It provides the concepts to use in analysis and ways of answering questions, as it orientates assumptions and guides observation. A theoretical perspective structures the process of perception and involves value judgements about the value of scientific knowledge. I take a broadly post-structural feminist perspective, using my adaptation of sustainable livelihoods as a unit of analysis. I return to SLA as a unit of analysis later in this chapter. I now consider the theoretical underpinning of my research approach.

## **4.5 Embedding Values into Research**

Participatory research is distinctive in its emancipatory focus. Action is achieved in participatory research within a reflective cycle; research participants collect data, analyse their data and then decide on appropriate action. Glesne (2006:17) states that:

feminist ethnographers also focus on issues of justice and power and are committed to uncovering and understanding the forces that cause and sustain oppression ... they, too, hold as a primary focus of their work the transformation of asymmetrical power relations, particularly as applied to women.

My PhD is situated within the Department of Social Work and Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University. The PhD was originally supervised by the Professor of Social Justice, but due to the Professor moving to another university, the supervisors changed. However, my commitment, and the commitment of my supervisors, remains focussed on social justice. It is important to me as a researcher that the research is not simply part of an extractive research process that removes knowledge from the community it seeks to research. I have worked within the voluntary sector for a decade, in a social justice capacity, and I was clear from the very beginning of my research that I wished it to have an empowering and emancipatory function for the VCS. My third research objective reflects my commitment to emancipatory feminist research.

### **4.5.1 Feminist Interpretation of Participatory Action Research**

As a result, I have chosen a feminist interpretation of PAR as a methodology, using my adaptation of SLA as an analytical tool. I have used thematic analysis (Tuckett

2014) to adapt and develop SLA, and in so doing I develop my original contribution to knowledge. As I discuss in chapter seven and eight , I use thematic analysis to develop SLA<sup>35</sup> and in so doing identify love as a sixth livelihoods capital present in CareGM.

This commitment to participatory feminist research is reflected in my fourth and fifth research objectives. The goal of all research must be change:

The truth of a theory is not dependent on the application of certain methodological principles and rules, but on its potential to orient the processes of praxis towards progressive emancipation and humanization. (Mies 1983:124)

Social justice is a term that implies equality of opportunity and social fairness. Social justice can be understood in terms of our social responsibilities to one another (Putnam 2000, Etzioni 1995). Rawls (1971) discusses social justice in terms of balancing social equality and individual freedoms. This balance of individual liberty and social responsibility can be paralleled in the challenges to VCS organisational identity and privatisation faced by the VCS presently. The aim of this PhD is to investigate the opportunities and challenges that the adult social care VCS in Greater Manchester experienced under the Coalition government. Through my use of PAR as a research technique and sustainable livelihoods as a unit of analysis, the research methodology is focussed on achieving an empowering and emancipatory function. This is reflected in my fourth research objective.

PAR re-examines notions of power and questions the nature of knowledge and the extent to which knowledge can serve the interests of societies which are powerful in reinforcing societal hierarchies. Participation and conscientisation (Freire 1974) offer

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<sup>35</sup> A full SLA of CareGM is included in Appendix Seven

an opportunity for participants to question and to problematise their VCS experience. In so doing VCS participants share experiences, build conscientisation (Freire 1974) and empower action (Clennon et al. 2015). For this reason, I have chosen to use participatory research techniques and to embed the research within two theory chapters that focus on the history of the voluntary sector and on the ideological and policy context of adult social care. My PhD aims to understand the historical and cultural context of adult social care VCS organisations in Manchester and to consider the ideological background, and then to use participatory research techniques to enable the organisations the VCS works with to engage in action in order that they can respond more effectively to the impact of Coalition policy.

#### **4.5.2 Feminist Social Justice Research**

I use a feminist ideology, as the adult social care sector is dominated by a female workforce (Glendinning 2012). It would be neglectful to take a social justice approach to the analysis of majority female organisations without addressing feminist approaches to social justice, and this commitment is reflected in my third research objective. Maguire (1987) asks if participatory research can ever be truly emancipatory without the incorporation of feminist perspectives and issues. Varieties and definitions of feminism vary, and there are 'many ways of being a feminist' (Jaggar 1983:353), but there is a shared emancipatory and transformative goal of feminism and PAR. The common experience of oppression, despite a multiplicity of experiences of oppression, links PAR and feminism. Maguire (1987) acknowledges that PAR builds on the Freirean (1974) notion of a person's alienation in the world.

It is the role of feminist PAR to overcome this critique and attempt to address a feminist approach to overcoming oppression. Hall (1981:17) states that as feminist participatory researchers we need to ask the question about how PAR might be

human-centred, not man-centred. Welbourn (1991) recognises that whilst 'women' are not a unified category, participatory research methods can enable both researcher and participants to document and raise awareness of differing experiences, insights and ideas of individual women and groups of women. Within participatory research, therefore, there is the need to negotiate the needs of different interest groups.

Feminist researchers differ from other ethnographers in their research design. They ask questions of power and relationships at a societal level but also at the researcher-participant level (Olesen 2000; Maguire 1992; Reinharz 1992; Harding 1987; Maguire 1987; Hooks 1984; Mies 1983). My PhD addresses issues of power and hierarchy at organisational level between VCS organisations and their public and private partners. My PhD's PAR methodology questions power relations at a researcher-participant level (Lincoln 1997), developing research through workshops and observations that aim towards participant empowerment.

#### **4.5.3 Developing a Feminist Research Technique**

There is no general agreement on what constitutes a feminist methodology (Skeggs 2013), but recognition of the power held in conducting research and the aim of reciprocity would seem key tenets of feminist methodology. Taking a feminist approach to my ethnographic research is what renders it feminist (Reinharz 1992). For me, as for Neilsen, 'feminist enquiry is dialectical, with different views fusing to produce new syntheses that in turn become the grounds for further research, praxis and policy' (1990:29). Whilst ethnography is not inherently feminist, feminist research techniques and ethnography work well together as research perspectives, as both value experience (Smith 1997) and participation (Skeggs 2013). Feminist ethnography 'produces experience viewed through the critical analytical interpretative device of feminism' (Skeggs 2013). My research recognises the diversity of feminist research, of

multiple knowledges (Hill Collins 1990), whilst attempting to offer an ethnographic account informed by feminist theory of women, work and the VCS.

#### **4.5.4 Feminist Enquiry**

Harding (1987) identified three types of feminist enquiry. She identified the first type as feminist empiricism: knowledge is possible. This approach sees knowledge as empirically based, deriving from observation of behaviour and hypothesis testing. This position tends to focus on the individual; consciousness raising is considered an important part of expanding women's knowledge of their shared experience.

The second type of feminist enquiry moves beyond what is empirically verifiable and considers the underlying structures of women's oppression. This approach, often discussed as standpoint theory, argues that although power may be experienced in individual terms it also has a systematic quality about it. Structural reasons for oppression (Walby 1990) were examined by Marxist and socialist feminists who were particularly concerned with identifying the structures of patriarchy and their relationship to capitalism.

Feminism has involved the questioning of the nature of privilege within society. Early feminists sought inclusion into a male dominated world. Second wave feminists and activists moved away from a focus on inclusion towards presenting women as actors in struggles against their oppressors. This second wave of feminists focussed on models of struggle and empowerment (Rai 2008). This empowerment was sought on three levels (Rai 2008): on a personal level (conscientisation), alongside others (women's movements) and for change (transformative politics). As women have challenged their role in societal patriarchy so intersectionality has emerged, and women have sought to challenge oppression on grounds of race, class, disability,

sexuality, religion and location. The complexity of tensions between structure and agency challenged the solidarity of the second wave feminism.

More recently, feminists have tended to consider gender rather than patriarchy as a category for understanding social relations. 'Post-structuralism' was used by feminists to define women as a central issue. Post-structuralism 'does not advocate a return to empiricism but it does point to the instability of structures, stressing their open ended and partial nature and variability over time and space' (McDowell and Pringle 1992:12). Post-structuralists argue that reality is inextricably interlinked with language and discourse. Harding (1987) refers to a third type of feminist research theory that argues knowledge is situated. The third type of feminist enquiry, postmodern theories, focuses on the stories that women share about themselves.

#### **4.5.5 Critiques of Empiricism, Standpoint Theory and Postmodern Feminism**

All three categories of feminist research can be criticised. Epistemological approaches to feminism have been critiqued as taking an androcentric, western and bourgeois approach to science (Harding 1990). Harding (1990) argues that other forms of science are quite possible, and that researchers should be aware of their role in research. Standpoint theories have been criticised over risks of relativism (Harding 1987), fears that they are overly simplistic (Hawkesworth 1989) and concerns regarding validity (Ramazanoglu 1989). Other critiques of standpoint theory have included concerns regarding the potential for essentialism (Lemert 1992, Campbell 1984), neglect of black women's knowledge (Collins 1992) and the difficulties of evaluating evidence from different perspectives (Hekman 1997, Welton 1997, Maynard 1994, Longino 1993). Standpoint theories have been debated with passion among feminist theorists (Smith 1993, Clough 1993), questioning how women's knowledge is privileged and how claims to truth can be settled (Hekman 2000, 1997).

Postmodern theories of feminism have also been criticised. The illusionary position of knowledge within postmodern feminist theory has faced criticism in that it left no ground for reform-orientated research, and in so doing reinforced the status quo (Collins 1998, Benhabib 1995).

#### **4.5.6 My Research as Feminist Research**

My research is for women and was co-produced in participatory workshops, enabling it to hold a political commitment to transformation. This is reflected in my third research objective. Ramazanoglu (1989) discusses the value of taking a feminist perspective in understanding the relationships and production of knowledge for women. Feminist research is the production of knowledge for women and should involve women's participation in the research (Ramazanoglu 1989, Finch 1984, Acker et al. 1983, Mies 1983). In examining the way that women work within the voluntary sector and how women respond to austerity within an organisation, my research is feminist research as it seeks to interpret relationships between men and women, and in offering an interpretation makes a political commitment to transformation (Ramazanoglu 1989).

## **4.6 Feminist Research and Reflexivity**

As a broadly post-structural feminist I wanted my research to reflect my role as a researcher, the impact I had on the research and the impact that the research had on me. For:

the pot carries its maker's thoughts, feelings and spirit. To overlook this fact is to miss a crucial truth, whether in clay, story or science. (Krieger 1991:89)

As a feminist participatory researcher, I recognise that I am a central figure within the research, that I influence the collection, selection and interpretation of data. Meanings are negotiated between research participants within a specific social context and me, the researcher, so a researcher within a different research relationship will develop a different story. Reflexivity is included throughout my thesis, although specific reflexive accounts of the research process are included in chapters five and six. Reflexivity 'involves reflecting on the way in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes' (Hardy et al. 2001:534, Holland 1999). Feminist participatory research is a 'joint produce of the participants, the researcher, and their relationship: It is co-constituted' (Finlay 2002:531).

### **4.6.1 Reflection and Reflexivity**

Reflection and reflexivity, whilst often used interchangeably, can perhaps be best viewed as a continuum (Finlay 2002). Reflection can be best understood as thinking about and considering the research subject. Reflexivity is more immediate: a contested dynamic and subjective self-awareness (Finlay 2002). In reflexive analysis, the researcher is aware of the research experience and moves between experience and awareness; 'to be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about the

experience whilst simultaneously living in the moment' (Hertz 1997:VIII). Wilkinson (1988) describes three types of reflexivity: personal, functional and disciplinary. (Tindall 1994) further develops personal reflexivity, stating that it is about knowing who you are as a person and as a researcher and recognising that your values influence the entire research process from inception to conclusion Here:

feminism and the so called postmodern, turn in the social sciences to represent a serious challenge to the methodological hegemony of neo-positivist empiricism. (England 1994:81)

Reflexivity in the context of post-structural feminist research has helped to open up multiple readings and highlight the fact that any research text is simply one perspective among many possible representations (Jermier 1985).

Reflexivity as a research approach has theoretical foundations in a range of social science approaches. Social constructivists draw on the notion of reflexivity to explain how individuals make sense of the world and their place within it (Gergen and Gergen 1991). Psychodynamic theorists explore how unconscious processes structure relations between the researcher, participants and data; they consider how neither conversation nor text affects us and reflect on what we, as researchers, bring to the research (Hunt 1989). Participative approaches recognise research as co-constituted. Participative research theorists recognise research participants as reflexive beings, involving participants in reflexive dialogue during data analysis or evaluation (Heron 1996, Smith 1994).

#### **4.6.2 Methodological Self-Consciousness**

Methodological self-consciousness has been common among ethnographers and anthropologists since the 1970s (Seale 1999). I therefore argue that reflexivity fits well

with both my methodological practice (ethnography) and my participatory based approach to research. I have used a reflexive approach to my research, recognising that:

feminist and post structural challenges to objectivist social science demand greater reflection by the researcher with the aim of producing more inclusive methods sensitive to the power relations in fieldwork. (England 1994:80)

Reflexivity can be defined as 'the tendency to reflect on, examine critically and explore analytically the nature of the research process' (Fonow and Cook 2005:2218). Reflexivity is where researchers engage in explicit, self-aware analysis of their own roles. The process of engaging in reflexive analysis, however, is 'difficult and its subjective, ambiguous nature is contested' (Finlay 2002:531). Understanding the

role of the feminist researcher as an active agent in constricting knowledge has generated a large body of reflexive writing and reminiscences about the motivation, interpretation and process of doing research and producing scholarship. (Fonow and Cook 2005:2219)

Reflexive research centres on the belief that the values of researchers can never be eradicated from their work and that no amount of methodological technique or declaration of bias can remove the researcher's theoretical presuppositions (Linstead 1994). Reflexivity has therefore become much less concerned with removing bias than with rendering bias visible through personal disclosure, so that readers of the research can understand it.

### 4.6.3 Reflexive Research

The reflexive researcher 'does not simply report "facts" or "truths" but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experience in the field then questions how those interpretations came about' (Hertz 1997:VIII). Feminist scholars conduct participatory research in which participants are active in the construction of knowledge about their lives and researchers attempt to be more transparent about their roles. England (1994:87) argues that:

fieldwork is intensely personal, in that positionality and the biography of the researcher plays a central role in the research process, in the field as well as in the final text.

Ethnography and reflexivity are interconnected (Davies 1999). These different methods sometimes yield results that are contradictory, or result in only a partial understanding. However, this competing knowledge can be utilised to uncover new knowledge (Fonow and Cook 2005). For this reason I have chosen to use reflexivity within my feminist participatory research approach, as reflexivity seeks to consider and address power, which is a fundamental concern of participatory social justice research (Ryle 2012).

## **4.7 Building Knowledge in a Participatory Setting: Power and Critiques of Reflexivity**

When taking a feminist perspective to research, issues of power should be addressed (Skeggs 2013). It is impossible to discuss gender without also discussing power:

gender exists as a category that enforces differences that create and preserve power for one group while depriving another group of access to that power. (Ryle 2012:470)

Researchers affect the process of research. As a researcher I too have impact and am affected by intersectional ties of gender, class and race (Skeggs 2013, Ryle 2012, Phoenix 1994).

### **4.7.1 My Power as a Researcher**

As the researcher, I hold power within the research; this power is derived from delivering the PAR workshops ‘in my territory’ on the university campus, and beginning the workshops standing at the front of the group. Within the research setting, even in the interviews, I controlled the pace of the interview and the tone, and I asked most of the questions. In the ethnographic setting, I was distinguished by my class and accent – I was clearly an outsider. Service users and workers asked me who I was – although welcomed, it was clear that I was not from the area. The identity of the researcher cannot be dropped entirely (Hooks 1990a, Collins 1990):

when we enter ethnography we enter it with all our economic and cultural baggage, our discursive access and the traces of positioning and history that we embody. (Skeggs 2013: 433)

As a reflexive feminist participatory ethnographer I needed to be sensitive to the way that I framed the research questions, selected participants and interacted with them to produce the observations and field work notes:

through personal accounting, researchers must become more aware of how their own positions and interests are imposed at all stages of the research process – from the questions they ask to those they ignore, from who they study to who they ignore, from problem formulation to analysis, representation to writing – in order to produce less distorted counts of the social world. (Hertz 1997:VIII)

The use of reflexivity during fieldwork can ‘mute the distance and alienation built into conventional notions of “objectivity”’ (Wasserfall 1997:152). In an interview context intersectionality is important, as the differences between men and women cannot be separated from wider systems of inequality; ‘women are not all equally oppressed, nor oppressed in the same ways’ (Ramazanoglu 1989:433).

#### **4.7.2 Critiquing Reflexivity**

There is a power in the interpreting of information as part of the research process:

If we are not just a single person, but rather a multitude of possibilities ... as ethnographers we could be about utilising these multiple selves to create multiple texts. (Lincoln 1997:42)

One must consider concerns of bias, objectivity and the validity of the research. Concerns regarding bias have led some feminists to argue for reflexive accounts about the researcher’s own role in research (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994, Phoenix 1994, Fine 1992, Warren 1988). However, reflexivity can be critiqued in that it

can become viewed as the antidote to the crisis in legitimisation and representation. Brueggemann (1996) states that there are limits to reflexivity; self-reflexivity,

turning as it does on issues of representation, risks turning reflexivity into a solipsistic, rhetorical position in which the researcher (the self) – ah, once again – usurps the position of the subject (other). (Brueggemann 1996:33)

The process of engaging in reflexive analysis is not simple and the ambiguous nature of reflexivity can be contested. An overly reflexive preoccupation with one's emotions and experiences can skew findings in 'undesirable directions' (Finlay 2002:541). The researcher's position can become all-encompassing, blocking participants' voices. There is a balance to be found between self-awareness and navel-gazing (Finlay 2002).

Reflexivity in this context can be critiqued; reflexivity allows readers little opportunity to verify the reflexive account, complete self-knowledge is unattainable, reflexive accounts are therefore highly subjective and the reflexive approach still assumes that the researcher is passive, placing bias as an issue aside (Hardy et al. 2001: 535). The growth of postmodern and post-structuralist work has undermined these premises – that subjects could exist in any 'real' sense, and that they could be objectively researched (Gergen 1991, Rorty 1989). Postmodernised, post-structuralised perspectives argue that there are then no objective observations, only observations that are socially situated from the seat of the observer of the observed (Chia 1996, Denzin and Lincoln 1994). The reflexive researcher's task is therefore fraught with ambiguity. Any reflexive analysis can only ever be a 'partial, tentative, provisional account' (Finlay 2002:543).

Reflexivity can also be critiqued in that concerns have been raised that highly reflexive accounts fail to address hidden structures of oppression (Gorelick 1991) and can unwittingly replicate androcentric perspectives (Scheper-Hughes 1983). Feminist researchers have discussed objectivity in its most positivist scientific terms (Hirsh and Olsen 1995) alongside objectivity, whilst maintaining social justice research aims (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994). In terms of validity, feminism has generally broken with the term in its most positivist, scientific understanding. However, validity is discussed by feminist research in terms of authenticity of voice (Manning 1997, Richardson 1993, Lincoln and Guba 1985).

#### **4.7.3 Power and Identity**

In feminist research, power must be recognised in terms of the impact of the researcher upon the research and within the research process. In recognising the intersectional ties of power within the research process as well as within the research environment, my thesis seeks to identify a feminist perspective on austerity within the VCS.

Having considered how my research was conducted and the theoretical basis for my research I now consider accessing the field. .

#### 4.8 Accessing the Field

In line with my participatory feminist methodology I wanted to ensure that I approached my field work from an emancipatory perspective (Merriam 2009, Glesne 2006, Mies 1983). I began by approaching VCS infrastructure organisations as the gatekeepers (Heath et al. 2004) to VCS groups. I built relationships with key workers within VCS infrastructure groups in Greater Manchester and pre-arranged the advertising of my first participatory workshop through these relationships. I created an advert for my first participatory workshop, set up an Eventbrite<sup>36</sup> booking page for it and asked the VCS infrastructure organisations to advertise the workshop across their networks. The VCS organisations advertised my workshop via their digital media and newsletters. Individuals representing VCS groups and organisations then booked onto my first workshop in February 2014.

At this first participatory workshop in 2014, as part of the welcome, I asked if any groups would like to become involved in the research. At the end of the session several groups expressed an interest. In the following few weeks I contacted these groups. The group that expressed a clear interest and commitment and responded to my e-mails quickly was CareGM. Hence CareGM became the organisation in which I based my micro level ethnography.

Once I had a host organisation for my ethnographic study, I then contacted other VCS groups within Greater Manchester that had expressed an interest in my research, either at the first workshop or through seeing one of my adverts with the VCS infrastructure organisations. Here I located the organisations that I would interview for my Greater Manchester research. The participant observation of the two Greater

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<sup>36</sup> EventBrite is an online event booking tool [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

Manchester infrastructure organisations' adult social care groups was accessed via the initial relationship that I had built in order to advertise my workshop.

My second and my fourth participatory workshops were again advertised via adverts with the infrastructure organisations, through their digital media and newsletters. My third participatory workshop was solely with CareGM so was not advertised. Trustees, volunteers and employees were simply invited via word of mouth within the organisation. I will now discuss how my research was conducted and my research approach before considering how my research was analysed.

## 4.9 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a broad ranging approach to research with multiple definitions, some focussing on research purpose and focus (Merriam 2009), others emphasising the epistemological approach (Parkinson and Drislane 2011) and yet others focussing on the process and context of data collection.

This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:3)

A simple definition is provided by Nkwi et al. (2001:1): 'Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal fields.' Qualitative research can take a range of ontological and epistemological approaches. Approaches to data collection within qualitative research can include phenomenology, ethnography, inductive thematic analysis, grounded theory, case study, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and mixed methods (Denzin and Lincoln 1997).

In taking a feminist participatory approach to social justice, my ontological position led me towards qualitative methods, as

qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. (Merriam 2009:13)

I will now consider the qualitative research techniques that I used: ethnography, participatory workshops and semi-structured interviews.

## 4.10 Ethnography

Defining ethnography is a contested area. Ethnography has a multiplicity of meanings; 'for some it refers to a philosophical paradigm to which one makes a total commitment, for others it designates a method that one uses as and when appropriate' (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000:249). The term ethnography takes its roots from the Greek term *ethnos*, meaning 'an ethnic group', and *graphy*, denoting 'a form of writing, drawing or publication'. Traditional ethnographic research involves the researcher's total and prolonged immersion within a study community, often for longer than a year.

### 4.10.1 Features of Ethnography

Ethnographic research has a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of social occurrences, a tendency to work with unstructured data (data that has not been coded at the point of collection), investigation of sometimes one but often a small number of cases and analysis of data that focusses on the explicit interpretation of human activity (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000). Ethnographic interviews are a commonly used qualitative methodology (Aronson 1992). Ethnographic approaches to research have been adapted in a variety of research methods within the social sciences, from cultural anthropology to human geography. However:

it is noteworthy that in none of these disciplinary areas is there a single philosophical or theoretical orientation that can lay unique claim to a rationale for ethnography and participation. (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000:257)

Ethnography can therefore be framed within a variety of paradigms and theoretical approaches. I have used ethnography as a primary research approach and combined it with PAR techniques, for ethnography is a 'broad church' (Hobbs, 2011:1).

#### 4.10.2 Participant Observation

A strength of ethnography is its naturalistic manner, emphasising the insider (emic) perspective. Observing individual and group behaviours in natural contexts whilst participating within those contexts can generate insights that other forms of research cannot. Participant observation has historically been an integral component of ethnography (Fetterman 2010). Participant observation can be defined as

establishing a place in some natural setting ... in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting. (Emerson et al. 2013:352)

Participant observation is often distinguished from non-participant observation; the former refers to an observation made when the researcher is engaged (i.e. participating) in a role within the study (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000). However this distinction is not always useful as it assumes that the observer plays no role in the scene studied, that their presence is neutral (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000). Therefore there is a more widely used typology: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant (Junker 1960, Gold 1958). This typology can also be critiqued as arguably all social research is a type of participant observation; we are part of the worlds we research (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000).

Ethnography and participant observation offer 'a uniquely humanistic, interpretive approach' (Atkinson and Hammersley 2000:249). One of the more challenging aspects of feminist ethnography is that forms of feminist ethnography are nearly as diverse as feminist ethnographers themselves (Buch and Staller 2007). Ethnography is a responsible iterative and flexible form of research and is 'well suited to answering

many of the kinds of questions feminist are interested in' (Buch and Staller 2007). My feminist participatory ontology is therefore ideally suited to ethnography as a research approach.

#### **4.10.3 Participant Observation in Greater Manchester**

Following my initial participatory research workshop I conducted two participant observation visits within a VCS organisation in Greater Manchester. I developed relationships with a VCS infrastructure organisation and conducted two participant observations of adult social care policy groups. I attended these groups in March 2014 and May 2014. I was introduced to the groups as a researcher and I was allowed to take notes. I was also given the formal minutes of the meetings. This organisation offers advice, training, advocacy and development work with VCS organisations within Greater Manchester. The meetings that I attended were of their adult social care forum. The meeting was attended by approximately fifteen organisations. These meetings were important in informing my research into the Greater Manchester context of adult social care and were attended by a mix of larger (national), medium (Greater Manchester) and small (community level) adult social care organisations. The meetings discussed policy and VCS funding opportunities.

#### **4.10.4 Participant Observation in CareGM**

I conducted ten participant observation visits with CareGM. I participated in the operations of the centre, I wrote minutes during the debrief meetings and regularly participated in the cleaning of the centre once the clients had left at the end of the day. For me it was important to participate whilst conducting the ethnography, as the organisational culture was very much focussed on participation. It was important that my research disrupted implicit and explicit power relations (Jowett and O'Toole 2006, Lafrance and Stoppard 2006). All staff, volunteers and trustees participated in the end

of day clean-up and it would have appeared unusual for me simply to watch. My aim in using participant observation as an ethnographic method was to participate fully in social relations, endeavouring not to replicate the unequal power relationships of the researcher and the researched (deLaine 2000). By taking the meeting notes, I was not only gathering information for my research but also providing a useful contribution to the meeting.

#### 4.11 Participatory Workshops

PAR is a style of research not a method. A variety of research techniques can be used in PAR, which 'is now identified with research in which the researchers work explicitly with and for people rather than undertake research on them' (Meyer 2000). Adult social care and the voluntary sector have held such a marginalised position within society (Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Reading 1994) that arguably participatory research methods are the only appropriate research tools that can be used. A participatory workshop is:

an organised event which brings a group of people together to seek their opinions, extract their knowledge and to solve problems in a collaborative and creative environment. (JISC infoNet 2012)

The role of participatory research in the context of this PhD was to create VCS organisations that are critical thinkers, and that can engage with the Manchester VCS policy context and adapt as empowered organisations to the opportunities and challenges posed by Coalition policy (Baum et al 2006). This is reflected in my research objective four, to develop a feminist emancipatory research approach.

Creating participation requires workshops, training and learning that are themselves participatory (Chambers 2002, 1992). Participatory workshops are therefore an ideal tool to reflect my feminist emancipatory approach, and they reflect my research objective four. In February 2014, I organised the first participatory workshop

#### **4.11.1 Participatory Workshop One: Bearing Witness: The Voluntary and Community Sector and Austerity**

In order to advertise the PAR workshop to the VCS, I used two VCS infrastructure organisations to advertise it throughout Greater Manchester. The workshop, in February 2014, was attended by male and female representatives of twenty-seven VCS organisations. I asked at this workshop for organisations to volunteer to host my PhD research. This workshop was set up to create my research questions. This workshop reflects research objective three, my commitment to emancipatory research. It was important to me that my research was of value and useful to the VCS as a sector, which was why representatives of the VCS created my research questions. These questions formed the basis for my semi-structured interviews<sup>37</sup>. It was here that my ethnography organisation and I made contact.

#### **4.11.2 Participatory Workshop Two: Women, Work and the Voluntary and Community Sector**

My second PAR workshop was in June 2014. Focussed on gender it was entitled 'women, work and the VCS'. Gender was a key issue that was identified during my participant observation of the Greater Manchester VCS infrastructure organisations' meetings and my first participatory workshop, and it reflects my fourth research objective, to examine the gendered workforce of the VCS. The workshop was attended by fifteen women. Some participants were academics and a small number (seven) worked or volunteered within the VCS. The workshop focussed on how the heavily gendered VCS workforce was affecting the VCS's experience of austerity.

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix One for a list of the semi-structured Interview questions.

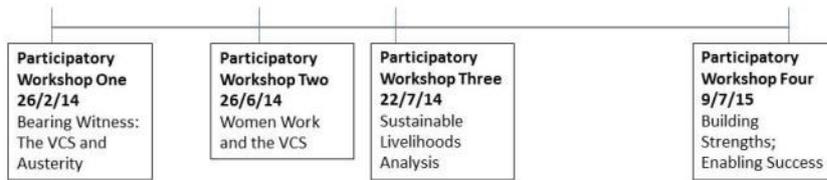
#### **4.11.3 Participatory Workshop Three: Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis**

My third PAR workshop took place with CareGM, the organisation in which my micro level study was based, in July 2014. It was an SLA of this organisation. The workshop was attended by male and female volunteers, employees and trustees of the organisation. I wrote up this research into a report for the organisation and presented it to the trustees.

#### **4.11.4 Participatory Workshop Four: Building Strengths; Enabling Success**

My final Greater Manchester focussed PAR workshop took place at the end of my research, in July 2015. The workshop was, in keeping with my participatory methodology, reflecting research objectives three and five, and was a pilot of an assets based evaluation tool for VCS organisations. Greater Manchester VCS organisations were invited and the workshop was attended by male and female representatives of thirty-one VCS groups. The purpose of this final workshop was to pilot the SLA toolkit, to share and confirm my research findings (Stake 2006) and ensure authenticity of voice (Manning 1997).

### 4.11.5 Timeline of my Participatory Action Research Workshops



## **4.12 Semi-Structured Interviews**

I built on my ethnographic approach using semi-structured interviews with key informants. The term semi-structured interview is an overarching term used to describe a range of different approaches to interviewing associated with qualitative research (Mason 2010). The defining characteristic of semi-structured interviews is that they have a fluid and flexible structure. They can be differentiated from more formal structured interviews, where the same questions are asked in the same way to all interviewees (Mason 2010). My semi-structured interviews were focussed around a short set of five aide-memoire questions that I adapted to suit the interviewees' own understanding and confidence<sup>38</sup>. These questions, as mentioned earlier in this chapter and in chapter one, were developed by the VCS in my first participatory workshop.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted congruently with participatory observation and participatory workshops as part of my iterative research process. Traditionally semi-structured interviews would be carried out until 'saturation' was achieved (Baker and Edwards 2012); for a PhD study this may be between thirty and fifty interviews. However, Baker and Edwards (2012) suggest that interview data needs to be mixed with other ethnographic approaches in order to contribute to research validity. For this reason my PhD is a multi-method participatory research project that is made up of thirty-five research interactions. These research interactions were made up of participant observations, participatory workshops, ethnographic visits and semi-structured interviews.

### **4.12.1 Semi-Structured Interviews in Greater Manchester**

Having identified the host organisation for my micro level research through my initial PAR workshop, I located key organisations from the Greater Manchester adult social

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix One for a list of semi-structured interview questions.

care VCS that offered related services to that host micro level research organisation, CareGM. I then contacted these organisations to conduct semi-structured interviews. The five semi-structured interviews were confirmed after I had agreed the organisation in which my micro level study would be based, CareGM. These organisations were chosen as they offered similar adult social care services to CareGM. I interviewed staff within these organisations. The purpose of a qualitative research interview is

to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees. (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006:314)

The individual in-depth interviews allowed me to 'delve deeply into social and personal matters' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006).

I visited the organisations in order to conduct the research interviews, having made an initial appointment. My interviews took place in a variety of settings, from individual one-to-one interviews in an organisation's meeting room to sitting beside an interviewee in an open-plan office. These interviews gave me a useful insight into the experiences of the VCS of Greater Manchester and allowed me to probe more deeply into the effects of austerity upon an organisation. Issues that had arisen or I had become aware of in the PAR workshops and participant observation of the adult social care group could be discussed and analysed in greater detail.

#### **4.12.2 Semi-Structured Interviews Within CareGM**

I also conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants within CareGM. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key participants in each project in order to clarify information gathered through participant observation and the participatory workshops. These semi-structured interviews used the research questions above and

provided a more detailed exploration of the organisational response to austerity from a variety of perspectives. I interviewed a total of fourteen people: six employees, three volunteers, one trustee and representatives of four of the organisations that the CareGM worked in partnership with. These interviews gave a context and broadened the perspective of my ethnography.

## 4.13 Table of How my Research Methods Met my Objectives

|  |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>How my research methods met my research objectives.</p> | <p>To examine the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester from a Macro, Meso and Micro perspective using participatory feminist research techniques.</p>                              | <p>To explore the experience of one Adult Social Care VCS homelessness organisation during the term of the Coalition government 2010-2015.</p>   | <p>To advance knowledge regarding VCS experiences of Coalition policy using feminist emancipatory research techniques.</p>  | <p>To develop a new understanding of the impact of Coalition Policy upon the gendered workforce of the VCS.</p>  | <p>To adapt and refine Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis for use within VCS organisations, and in so doing support VCS practice.</p>  |
| <p><b>Field Work</b></p>                                   | <p>Spending time within the VCS, attending adult social care forum meetings, supporting the day-to-day running of the homeless hostel gave me an in-depth view of the working of the voluntary sector.</p> | <p>Spending the majority of my time in an adult social care homelessness organisation gave me a comprehensive picture of the day-to-day running of the organisations. Ethnography offered me an opportunity to gather research that was holistic and detailed.</p> | <p>Ethnography fits well with feminist research techniques in that it encourages reflexivity. By using ethnography I gained an in-depth knowledge of the response of VCS organisations within Greater Manchester and CareGM to austerity.</p> | <p>Using ethnography as a research technique I could observe discussions and one-off comments made by women within Greater Manchester and CareGM. I could observe how the gendered nature of care was performed within a conflict situation at CareGM or how the school holidays, and working mothers care</p> | <p>By using ethnography I could reflect and observe the impact of research tools on members of the VCS and reflect on which tools would be of most use in a participatory toolkit.</p> |

|                                |  |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
|                                |  |   |   | responsibilities, affected forum meetings in Greater Manchester.  |   |
| <b>Participatory Workshops</b> | Participatory workshops enabled me to set the initial objectives. My final workshop enabled me to confirm my research findings but also, in line with my social justice ideology offer something back to the voluntary sector; an assets based organisational toolkit. | The sustainable livelihoods Workshop enabled me to gain a detailed picture of CareGM. | My Women, Work and the Voluntary Sector workshop enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of women that work and volunteer within the VCS. | My Women, Work and the Voluntary Sector workshop enabled a detailed examination of the impact of Coalition policy on women and an opportunity to examine in depth the gendered experiences of women in the VCS. | In facilitating four participatory workshops I gained experiences of the needs of the VCS. I delivered an organisation specific SLA workshop for Care GM. From this I developed an SLA toolkit specifically focussed on VCS assets based organisational evaluation. This toolkit was piloted during my final participatory workshop and is now being rolled out with eight VCS organisations within |

|                                   |   |   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
|                                   |   |   |  |   | Greater Manchester.  |
| <b>Semi-Structured Interviews</b> | Semi-structured interviews allowed me to delve into and focus on my research questions. Semi-structured interviews offered the opportunity to speak to people one-to-one away from colleagues and discuss their experiences of the effects of Coalition policy. | Semi-structured interviews offered an opportunity to focus on particular issues such as conflict, love, gender with key informants within CareGM. | Semi-structured interviews offered me an opportunity to clarify and draw out my research findings from my ethnographic research and participatory workshops. | Semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask specific questions about women and gender within the VCS and to draw out thoughts from interviewees that confirmed my ethnography and participatory workshops. | Semi-structured interviews offered me an opportunity to draw out more detail on the different capitals that VCS groups held and perceptions of these capitals within different staff, trustees and volunteers. |

#### **4.14 How my Research was Conducted: Methodology in Practice**

My PhD research is made up of multiple qualitative research methods. The research phase of the PhD commenced in January 2014 upon my return from maternity leave. The data was collected in thirty-five research interactions by December 2014<sup>39</sup>, with the exception of the final PAR toolkit workshop in which the research findings were verified. This toolkit workshop took place in July 2015. Write up and the final participatory workshop were completed by the PhD completion date of December 2015.

These thirty-five research interactions were made up of four participatory research workshops, twelve participant observations and nineteen semi-structured interviews. The research into the national context of the VCS was conducted as a literature review. I conducted three participatory workshops, two participant observations and five semi-structured interviews to research the meso level VCS experience. At a micro level, I conducted ten participant observation research visits between March 2014 and December 2014. I conducted one participatory workshop and fourteen semi-structured interviews with key informants within CareGM, the VCS organisation in which my ethnography was based.

I chose to use a variety of qualitative research methods in order to draw research data from a variety of perspectives. In order to build the quality of the research, construct validity (Yin 2009) – or to use a more feminist phrase, authenticity of voice (Manning 1997) – was ensured by the use of multiple sources of evidence: participant observation, participatory workshops and semi-structured interviews. Yin states that using a variety of commentary sources is ideal in a research project (2009:101). Section 4.3 provides a diagram of my methodological approach in order that it can be visualised by the reader. The diagram represents my interrelated

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix Five for a list all research interactions.

ethnographic and participatory approaches that interconnect to produce my research findings. The next section describes my approach to research analysis.

## 4.15 Research Analysis

As part of my commitment to feminist emancipatory techniques, reflected in research objective four, I wanted to analyse my research using a participatory tool. SLA was originally used within international development and was brought into UK usage by Oxfam GB (May et al. 2009). SLA is usually used at household level. My research used SLA at organisational level as I believe, as discussed in chapter one, that the small-scale, community-based nature of many VCS organisations replicates, in terms of social and human capitals especially, the experiences of household relationships. The SLA examined a fivefold series of categories that a VCS organisation might use to adapt to change or crisis. I feel that livelihoods analysis can be adapted to organisational level in the case of VCS organisations.

The SLA first considered the policy context of the research, the macro level. When considering the macro level I examined the historical and ideological context in which the VCS sits. I then examined the meso level, Greater Manchester's adult social care VCS experience of Coalition policy. This meso level research was based on three participatory workshops, participatory observation of two VCS infrastructure meetings and five semi-structured interviews with key informants. I then conducted an SLA at micro level. This SLA was conducted using an ethnographic approach with nine participant observation visits, alongside a PAR workshop and fourteen semi-structured interviews with key informants. The SLA is in Appendix Seven. The micro level ethnography formed the core of my research, providing key insights into the opportunities and challenges faced by Greater Manchester's adult social care VCS during austerity. It is at this level that I identify my contribution to original knowledge. My examination of SLA in this micro organisational context has enabled my original contribution to knowledge: my sixth SLA capital, Caritas.

#### **4.15.1 Voluntary and Community Sector Adaptive Strategies**

Scoones (1998) suggests that SLA can be applied at a range of different scales with sustainable livelihood outcomes assessed at different levels. VCS organisations have developed a range of adaptive strategies over the last century to react and respond to changes in government policies. I am interested in how austerity has affected VCS organisational strategy and its responses. Sustainable livelihoods is a useful unit of analysis as it takes a more holistic approach to adaptive strategies. VCS organisations have always had high social capital, for example, but have traditionally been low on financial capital (NCVS 2015, NCIA 2015, VSNW and CLES 2014, CLES 2014, Milbourne 2013). Therefore I chose to adapt SLA for use with VCS organisations as part of my commitment to feminist emancipatory research. This is reflected in my fourth and fifth research objectives. Nicholson (1992) suggests that the home and the family cannot be clearly separated, drawing connections between the two spheres. These familial linkages link into Myrdal and Klein's (1956) notion of women's dual roles and Ramazanoglu's 1989 notion of women's triple roles. The dual (homemaker, mother) or triple (homemaker, worker, mother) roles are strongly based on a woman's social and human capitals (Chambers and Conway 1992) that I argue are particularly strong in a feminised workforce.

The VCS has employed a range of adaptive strategies to take advantage of the combined opportunities presented by the Coalition government. Adaptive strategies can be defined thus:

the mix of traditional livelihood systems, modified by locally or externally induced innovations, and by the incorporation of coping strategies that have become permanent.

(Rennie and Singh 1996:18)

I have used thematic analysis (Tuckett 2014, Higginbotham et al. 2001, Rice and Ezzy 2000) in order to consider the range of adaptive strategies that the VCS of Greater Manchester has used

to respond to austerity. Using thematic analysis I identified themes within my research notes from my PAR workshops, participant observations and semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.15.2 Thematic Analysis**

Once the findings are collected, there are many ways to analyse how informants talk about their experiences (Mahrer 1988, Taylor and Bogdan 1984, Spradley 1979). Thematic analysis is a process of organising, interpreting and analysing data according to themes (Aronson 1995). Thematic analysis is informed by grounded theory (Tuckett 2014, Ezzy 2002, Glasser 1999, Kellehear 1993), social constructionism and symbolic interactionism (Tuckett 2014, Crotty 1998, Charmaz 1990, Berger and Luckmann 1966). Data organisation in preparation for thematic analysis is essential (Van de Heide 2001). Thematic analysis began at the beginning of the thesis (Rice and Ezzy 2000) and was an 'iterative process of coding, writing, theorising and reading that "took" place simultaneously' (Higginbotham et al. 2001). Thematic analysis begins by reading and theorising, auditing, transcript production and consideration of marginal remarks (Tuckett 2014).

The first step in data analysis involved creating a literature review (Rice and Ezzy 2000; Coffey and Atkinson 1996). An initial review of literature was important to identify my research aim. Whilst my participatory approach meant that the VCS set my research objectives at the first PAR workshop, my overall research question was identified by the literature review. The literature review process was iterative, permitting a 'creative interplay among the process of data collection, literature review and researcher introspection' (Patton 1990:163). The iterative approach to the literature review was also important as 'it is impossible to know prior to the investigation what the salient problems (would) be or what theoretical concepts (would) emerge' (Strauss and Corbin 1998:49). This iterative process was also important to counteract critiques of an *a priori* literature review (Tuckett 1998), in that an *a priori* review of the literature can be

perceived as potentially narrowing and influencing findings. Indeed, as my research was concurrent with welfare reform and policy changes led by the Coalition government my iterative approach to the literature review was an opportunity or challenge and added to the literature (Strauss and Corbin 1998:51). My literature review reflects the SLA approach to data analysis in that SLA prioritises understanding of the macro policy and the institutional setting before focussing on community level analysis (May et al. 2009).

After the initial literature review, I began my ethnographic research in January 2014. Ethnography involves the study of people's action and accounts in everyday contexts, with research taking place 'in the field' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:3). I gathered data from a range of sources, as discussed in this chapter: participatory workshops, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The majority of my data collection was 'unstructured'; (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:3) it did not involve following a fixed research design specified at the start. My initial participatory workshop established the questions for my semi-structured interviews. The categories that were used to interpret what people said or did were not built into my data collection process; instead they were generated via an iterative process of data analysis.

Each research interaction, participant observation, semi-structured interview and participatory workshop was audio taped using a digital voice recorder that I received as part of my personal learning plan<sup>40</sup>. Broader reflections were recorded in my reflective diary<sup>41</sup>. I chose to record my data collection in order to study the conversation at a research visit or an ethnographic interview (Spradley 1979). Although the use of audio tapes can be critiqued, as they do create a sense of formality and can result in a person self-censoring their involvement, they are also useful to record the entirety of an ethnographic research visit or research interview (Kalhof et al. 2008).

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<sup>40</sup> **Personal Learning Plan** I am dyslexic and my personal learning plan details my support needs as a disabled student.

<sup>41</sup> A screen shot of my reflective diary is in Appendix Two.

These audio tapes were especially useful in participatory workshops where I was also leading the session, or in participant observations where I was expected to take meeting minutes. For me as a dyslexic student they were particularly helpful, as I struggle to write quickly and accurately when note taking (Reid 2012).

After each research interaction, participatory workshop, semi-structured interview or participant observation I wrote up the transcript of the audio recording alongside my reflective diary. Themes developed during the research and my analysis ran parallel to the research, with the themes developing throughout the ethnographic process. The process of reading and theorising at this stage complemented the 'data reduction' (Miles and Huberman 1994:10-11) and conclusion drawing and verification (Boyatzis 1998) which were initiated in my field notes. The transcription of audiotaped data provided me with an early sense of the data, an 'appreciation of its richness' (Boyatzis 1998:11). Once I had transcribed the audio tape, I read the complete transcript several times. During the reading and re-reading I coded the data and made 'marginal remarks' (Miles and Huberman 1994:66) and continued 'memoing' (Miles and Huberman 1994:72). During the research process I undertook three modes of note taking: copying by hand my field notes, indexing them and summarising. Field notes are 'always selective: it is not possible to capture everything' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:142). I spent time considering what to write down, how to write it down and when to write it down. I recorded notes during each visit; this was possible because most participant observation visits also included writing meeting minutes, in a space where others were taking notes. I also jotted down ethnographic notes on the top or around the sides of each semi-structured interview record. I made notes by hand and then very shortly after each research visit I wrote up these notes. In participatory workshops note taking was different, as I jotted down notes during the workshop where possible and used flip charts generated during workshop discussions as well as audio recordings to create detailed field notes after the event. My initial notes were a series of jottings in the course of observed

action which included enough detail to ‘trip off’ (Schatzman and Strauss 1973:95) memories and recollections when writing up my field notes later.

This represented the first coding of data. Coding in this sense was a process whereby labels were used to assign ‘units of meaning to the disruptive or inferential information’ (Miles and Huberman 1994:56) within the text. These labels or ‘open codes’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998:63) were generally assigned to a paragraph or two. Whilst coding and making marginal comments (marginal remarks refer to the writing of ideas directly into the transcript) I continued the process of data analysis via memoing. My reflexive notes were where most of my memoing took place<sup>42</sup>.

Indeed, as my analytical ideas developed and changed what I considered significant, the field notes reflected this change, becoming reflective of some of the emerging themes I had begun to identify. However, field notes ‘cannot possibly provide a comprehensive record of the research setting’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:147) and I also relied on more tacit knowledge, on memories, to re-contextualise recorded events and utterances. Despite critiques of this use of memory (Agar 1980), the use of memory is important to contextualise and re-live field notes. Here again reflexivity is important; ‘there is a constant interplay between the personal and emotional on the one hand and the intellectual on the other’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:151). This process of coding, writing and theorising represented a process where I refined the data and began to draw conclusions from it (Miles and Huberman 1994, Boyatzis 1998). This process extended the ‘theme identification’, (Boyatzis 1998:46-47) improved ‘theme comparison’ (Charmaz 1990:1162) and included a mechanism to ‘promote trustworthiness’ (Tuckett 2014:81).

The process of my analysis resulted in the active reorganisation of the data into themes and categories, often separating field note text into sections and identifying them using a coding

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<sup>42</sup> See Appendix Two for a screen shot of my reflexive notes.

system. I selected the categories for coding using themes developed through a process of thematic analysis, and often data was assigned to more than one category

We code [the field notes] inclusively, that is to say if we have any reason to think that anything might go under the heading, we will put them in. We do not lose anything. We also code them in multiple categories, under anything that might be felt to be cogent. As a general rule, we want to get back anything that could conceivably bear on a given interest ... it is a search procedure for getting all of the material that is pertinent (Becker 1998: 245)

For ethnographers, analysis is not a distinct stage of research, and 'writing up' is not a mechanical exercise that can be performed routinely at the end of the 'real' research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:193). Analysis for me began in the pre-fieldwork stage, formulating research questions and themes alongside the VCS groups attending my participatory workshops. My analysis started to take shape in analytic notes and memos throughout my field notes and informally my analysis was 'embodied in [my] the ethnographer's ideas and hunches' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:158).

The iterative movement between ideas and data developed my analysis. I became engaged in a sustained process of interpreting data, demonstrating relationships between data and concepts and theory. I moved from initial codes, which I reviewed and considered, to a progressive focus which involved a gradual shift from describing events and circumstances in field notes towards developing and testing theories. Much of my data comprised unstructured, open ended, verbal descriptions in my field notes, and the process of progressive focussing involved 'the development of a set of analytic categories that capture relevant aspects of these data, and the assignment of particularities of data into those categories' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:161). Here it was very important for me to know my data, and developing my analysis

involved close reading of field notes, reflection and remembering. Features and patterns were identified; often these had been notes and identified too during participatory workshops by members of the VCS. I then elaborated and developed these themes. My ethnographic analysis became a work of synthesis, partially accomplished through writing.

During this review process, I re-read the data 'with the intention of determining what relationship existed both between other data and within the coded data' (Tuckett 2014:82). Data was reconsidered from different perspectives, at first considering themes such as VCS silencing and then re-reading the data to search for themes around VCS opportunities (Aronson 1992). As part of this process coded data were then linked and gradually unified. The result of this process of code consolidation was the emergence of 'data display' (Miles and Huberman 1994:10) and a more cohesive sense of the relationship between the themes that had emerged from the data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

Useful analytical concepts often arose spontaneously, used by participants themselves: partnerships, voice, identity, funding concerns. Participant terms often mark theoretically important phenomena (Becker 1993, Wieder 1974, Becker and Geer 1957). Central to ethnographic analysis is understanding the meanings of what people are doing and why. Ethnographic analysis focusses on how people interpret and evaluate the situations they face and their own identities. The VCS has esoteric knowledge and practices that are repositories for situated meanings:

Much emphasis has therefore come to be placed, rightly, on ethnographers seeking to understand the meanings that are generated in, and that generate, social action; and avoid imposing their own meanings. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007)

Other more nuanced concepts, those of love, bifurcation and isomorphism, which I develop in chapter eight were observer identified (Loftland et al. 2006, Loftland 1971) I developed them by

drawing together 'under the aegis of a single type what for members are diverse and unrelated phenomena' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:163). In some cases these themes developed from my reflexive interactions arising from the field notes. Other themes of social and human capital were developed by utilising themes from my adaptation of SLA<sup>43</sup>.

The choice of themes, and the priority assigned to them, will always be one of the most significant decisions that an ethnographer needs to make. It cannot be done successfully at the start of the writing process, as it requires continual reflection on possibilities. It is 'not a process in which the writer is in full control. Instead it is more like finding one's way through, or creating a path that leads to a worthwhile destination' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:194). I have used a variety of quotes from interviews and field notes throughout my data chapters in order to illustrate these themes and develop my analysis.

I used a mixture of emic and etic categories (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) to code my research. Emic categories are the terms that the VCS used to speak about its sector: terms, images and ideas that are current to the VCS as a sector. Etic themes are the terms that I developed, that reflected my ideas as a researcher. The emic categories included partnerships, communication, identity, and campaigning. As my research continued key terms such as partnerships and identity began to repeat within my research interactions and I began to identify themes such as identity:

*We don't know who we are. Wolf in sheep's clothing? Some VCS Organisations don't have the voluntary sector ethic – don't know who they are anymore.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

*What [organisation] are trying to do is build up what had been taken down ... to keep volunteering in the sector alive.* John, Interview

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<sup>43</sup> A full SLA of CareGM is available in Appendix Seven

*Austerity makes it more important that we manage our resources well, respond to sector needs; we need to measure our impacts, we need to be more transparent about how we use our resources than ever. Alison, Interview*

These quotes reveal the importance to the VCS of maintaining its identity, of being clear about how it manages its resources and stays close to its key volunteering missions. As these themes emerged, shared freely and often self-identified by VCS interviewees, I began to identify additional, more nuanced, themes.

Etic categories also emerged from the data and they reflected my ideas as a researcher. Examples of these themes were isomorphism, privatisation, symbolic violence, and social, human and cultural capitals. These themes were not indigenous terms; instead they summarised key analytic issues that I used to organise my findings and link those findings to theoretical arguments:

*We need to slim down, prioritise what we do. [Organisation] does a huge amount: service provision, policy and information, research, communications, information sharing. It risks being a jack of all trades. That doesn't imply that we are not good; we are, we get good feedback, but it puts us at risk. In times of austerity we need to prioritise, cut staff, we can't rely on people's good will to work in the charity sector forever. Sophie, Interview*

*There is a constantly changing policy environment. This impacts on a client's ability to navigate through to get benefits. The landscape and movement is different for different organisations within the partnership. Big organisations can change the way that they operate, increase their sale presence, become more competitive. Rebecca, Interview*

*We need to shape resources to enhance organisational learning. Austerity is not just about better organisational distribution of what we have, we need to think about solutions.* John, Interview

From these quotes and others, I began to tease out themes around isomorphism, the changing and morphing of VCS groups to enable them to adapt within the current policy environment. In effect, through my analysis I used an interweaving of both emic and etic categories throughout the work.

The process of coding and analysis for me involved a recurrent process; as new categories emerged, previously coded data needed to be re-read for examples of new codes. Eventually I reached a point where I felt that I had a set of promising categories, and had carried out a systematic coding of data in terms of those categories. My approach to data analysis was informed by the 'constant comparative method' (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I examined each item of coded data in terms of a particular category, noting similarities to and differences from other data that had been categorised. New categories emerged throughout this process, and data was frequently reassigned among categories (Boeije 2002, Dey 1993).

For me, research was an active process, in which analysis was produced through selective observation and theoretical interpretation of what is observed, through asking questions and interpreting replies, through the writing of my field notes and transcribing of audio recordings. My research recognises my role as a researcher, and the impact that this has on my surroundings. Reflexivity is used throughout and is woven through my research. As this process developed I began to see how the mutual relationships and internal structures of categories emerge. Here I also used SLA to inform my analysis. Pre-existing theories can be used to aid data comprehension; 'here theories were not simply taken as off-the-peg solutions to research problems, but were used to provide focus for the analysis and for further fieldwork' (Hammersley

and Atkinson 2007:165). The approach of applying existing theories to ethnographic research has been critiqued, with some ethnographers seeing the two approaches as mutually incompatible, or ruling out some theoretical approaches with ethnography (Silverman 1993). However it was important for me to utilise whatever resources are available which help to make sense of the data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:166). This approach is therefore useful to my analysis in assisting me to think not only about my data but also with and through the data.

As I developed categories and began to make sense of the data I also began to focus on the meanings that underpinned and infused them, and the wider situations that these actions responded to and shaped. Very often the categories that emerged during my analysis were used to offer an explanation of my research findings. I began to develop relationships between these categories, to consider why particular strategies are adopted by particular VCS groups and the people within them. Central to ethnographic analysis is understanding the meanings involved in what people are doing and why.

This process of data analysis was complemented by a comparison of data within and across the themes and within the context of a simultaneous literature review:

The coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together. (Leininger 1985:60)

I built a valid argument for using the themes that I chose by validating my findings with research participants and supporting my choice of themes via my interactive literature review process (Aronson 1992). Having discussed how themes developed throughout my research, through a process of thematic analysis, I will now consider how my findings were structured.

### **4.15.3 Structuring the Findings**

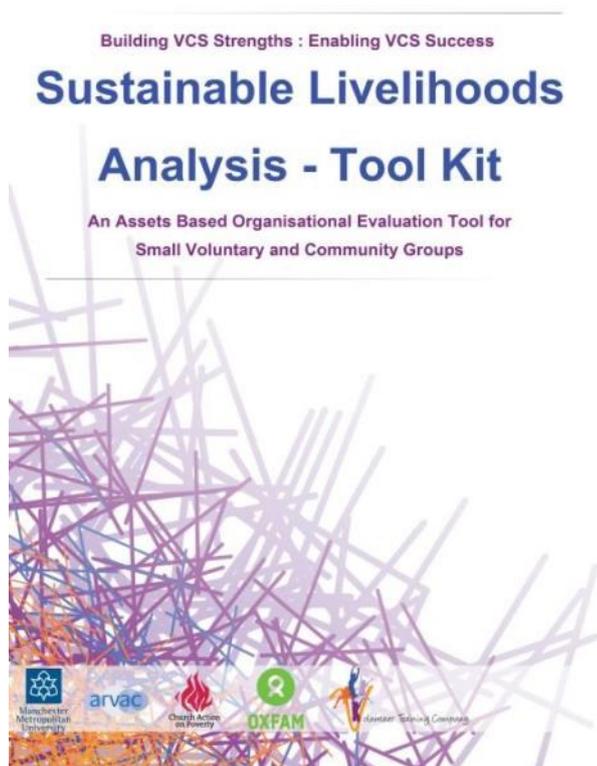
There are three analysis chapters within this thesis. The first analysis chapter considers my Greater Manchester research, the second considers my research at CareGM and the third draws out my original contribution to knowledge: love. The chapters introduce my original contribution to knowledge and my sixth livelihoods capital, consider the role of women within the VCS and integrate my macro, meso and micro level research. My final chapter is also an analysis of my research findings, integrating my macro, meso and micro research. This chapter links national, Greater Manchester and organisation level experiences of austerity to consider the opportunities and challenges faced by the VCS of Greater Manchester. A key principle of the SLA is to 'recognise that these assets are interlinked and need to be considered together, in order to understand ... [a] livelihood strategy' (May et al. 2009). By considering Coalition policy in focus I link trends and decisions made at a national level into the experience of the VCS of Greater Manchester.

## **4.16 Building Knowledge in a Participatory Setting – Creating a Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis Assets Based Organisational Evaluation Toolkit**

As part of the participatory research process I wanted to ensure that my research gave something back to the VCS, as reflected in my third research objective. CareGM, the organisation in which my micro level study was based, requested an assets based organisational evaluation. Feminist participatory ethnographers state that they work to make their values explicit in their research; they see research as a political act because it both relies on value systems and changes value systems (Usher 1996). Ethnography can involve the study of participants as co-researchers, who combine investigation, education and action (Maguire 1987); here my feminist social justice ontology becomes action. The research process becomes part of an emancipatory journey via the analysis of the organisation's structural oppression. This is why I chose participatory research and ethnography as research methods; the naturalistic, reflexive nature of ethnography builds a rapport with the VCS participants and develops trust in order that emancipatory action can develop (Glesne 2006, Lincoln 1997, Maguire 1987, Hall 1981).

I conducted an SLA assets based organisational evaluation and wrote this up into a report for CareGM. I presented this report to the board of trustees in October 2014. The workshop and accompanying report were well received and CareGM found the evaluation a useful tool. Following this positive response to the SLA assets based organisational evaluation I then developed the concept of an SLA assets based organisational toolkit for the VCS of Greater Manchester. I am currently working in partnership with Oxfam GB, Church Action on Poverty and Manchester Metropolitan University colleagues to create this toolkit. This toolkit is intended to enable the VCS to identify organisational assets and in so doing develop strategies to adapt

and evolve during austerity. The initial pilot for this toolkit was in July 2015. The toolkit, the front page of which is pictured below, is still in development and is a long-term partnership project that has evolved from my PhD thesis<sup>44</sup>.



#### **4.16.1 Analysing my Research: My Role as Insider and Outsider**

A tension that I experienced within my research at both Greater Manchester and organisational levels was my multiplicity of roles within the VCS and academia. Within the research process, I was simultaneously an insider and an outsider. I was an insider due to my volunteering within the VCS and my past employment and an outsider as in this role I was an academic analysing the VCS. Ethnographers typically focus on the need to understand the perspectives of the people being studied in order to consider the activities in which they engage. In the context of their study ethnographers value for the purposes of the inquiry the understanding of people's own perspectives, suspending their own inferences, assumptions and theoretical

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix Six

presuppositions in order to take full account of what people say about their world and what people do. The challenge of working in a space where one is at once both an insider and an outsider is that:

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned in to the experiences and meanings systems of others – to indwell – and at the same time to be aware of how one's biases and pre-conceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand. (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:123)

It was important for me to adopt this stance in studying the VCS as a familiar setting, for there is a danger that familiarity with the setting could lead to assumptions. My inferences and familiarity needed to be suspended in some sense in order to develop an analytic understanding of the research. Ethnographers seek to consider perspectives of several groups of people involved in the situations that they are studying, without treating any as automatically true (Becker 1967). My role as an ethnographer involved the recognition of multiple perspectives, noting behaviour that is below people's level of consciousness and seeking to locate people's behaviours in a wider socio-historical context. There are inevitably tensions in drawing conclusions: 'a reflexive ethnography implies a commitment to the value of understanding human social life, even while recognising the limits to such understanding and to its power in the world' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:236).

It was important for me as an insider researcher to gather data with my 'eyes open' (Asselin 2003), with an open mind, recognising that whilst I may feel familiar within the VCS, I may not understand the subcultures within it (Asselin 2003, Rose 1985). Three membership roles of insider researchers were identified by Adler and Adler (1987). The first role was that of a peripheral researcher; I would place myself here, part of the group but not a regular participant in the core activities of the VCS. The other membership roles were active members of the group

and complete members. As part of recognising the importance of my context as a researcher within the research, of my role as part of the narrative of interpretation (Angrosino 2005), it is important that I make known my multiple roles and my membership identity with the VCS. As I began the analysis I realised that I sometimes shared experiences, opinions and perspectives, and at other times I did not. Here Dwyer and Buckle (2009:56) share my experience: 'it is not that I sometimes saw myself as an outsider instead of an insider. Rather not all populations are homogenous, so differences are to be expected.'

My role as an insider/outsider therefore created tensions. Tensions existed around my commitment to reciprocity, in that I wanted to create action research and research of value to the VCS. I also held the role of outsider, of an ethnographer keen to step outside VCS consciousness and analyse VCS experiences and behaviour. The process of analysis, in creating a sustainable livelihoods based toolkit, also involved stepping outside of the VCS to gain a higher-level analytic understanding. This challenge was aided by reflexivity: 'the well-informed ethnographer needs to recognise the reflexive relationship between the text and its subject matter'(Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:205).

Other tensions arose around my role as an insider and outsider. Having worked within the VCS for a long period of time, as a researcher I share an identity, a language, with participants (Kanuha 2000). This shared experience allowed me more rapid and complete acceptance by participants (Talbot 1998). However, being a relative insider was not without its problems. I struggled with role confusion, and analysing the data objectively was difficult given my loyalty to participants. Holding loyalty to the VCS as a sector meant that critiquing organisational behaviour felt hard for me, as I was keen not to offend. Other difficulties arose when participants assumed I held knowledge about the VCS as a sector and therefore in some interviews did not fully explain their viewpoints. The challenge here is that the interview was shaped and guided

by my experience and not by the participants (Armstrong 2001, Watson 1999). However, I sought to overcome these challenges by openly discussing them with my research participants and engaging in reflexive writing. Indeed, Dwyer and Buckle argue that

The core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience. (2009:59)

Engaging in research from a feminist perspective involves not intentionally creating boundaries between researcher and researched, although each person has a different relationship to the research being done (Lloyd, Ennis and Alkinson 1994). The notion of a space in between insider and outsider research challenges the dichotomy of insider versus outsider research status, for 'as qualitative researchers we have an appreciation for the fluidity and multi-layered complexity of human experience' (Dwyer and Buckle 2009:60). This space in between (Dwyer and Buckle 2009) sits well with my participatory feminist stance that aims to produce 'non-hierarchical, non-manipulative research relationships which have the potential to overcome the separation between the researcher and researched' (Reinharz 1992:594). Having spent time discussing how my thematic analysis evolved and the challenge of my insider versus outsider research role, I will now consider my ethics as a participatory researcher.

## **4.17 Ethical Considerations for the Study**

Research ethics are an integral aspect of the act of research and of each of the phases of the research process. It was integral to this PhD research project that the research was ethical, as ethical research empowers participants, ethical research benefits participants and ethical research prevents harm to participants and those involved in the research project (Peled and Leichtentritt 2002, Clifford 2000, Denzin 1989). Ethics were a continuous consideration throughout the research project and they should be considered in the context of the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Clifford 2000, Denzin 1989).

### **4.17.1 Defining Feminist Ethics**

I take a feminist communitarian approach to ethics (Clifford 2000, Denzin 1989). Feminist communitarian ethics 'hold the community as ontologically and axiologically prior to the person' (Clifford 2000, Denzin 1989). A community is considered to have common morals and these common morals morally guide the researcher. Community morals in this context can be seen as conceptions of care, shared governance and neighbourliness. Researchers, as moral individuals working with a community, need to

create and modify their moral acts through non-hierarchical dialogue with research participants within the social context in which the research is conducted. (Clifford 2000, Denzin 1989)

In a feminist communitarian approach to ethics, ethics are considered contextual. The ethical obligation for the researcher is not simply to their professional code of ethics but to 'situated moral rules that are grounded in the local community and group understanding' (Denzin 1997:227). A feminist communitarian approach argues that responsibility for proper ethical

conduct lies with individual researchers. This research project adheres to the British Sociological Association (2004) code of ethics and the Manchester Metropolitan University (2011) code of ethics.

#### **4.17.2 Prevention of Harm**

Prevention of harm is a general ethical rule. Harm in the context of a qualitative study could be seen as an invasion of privacy, unwanted identification, breach of confidentiality and trust, misrepresentation and exploitation (Punch 1994). Peled and Leichtentritt (2002) focus on the need of ethical research to achieve informed consent. They state that ethical research should avoid coerced participation in the recruitment of participants; they remind the researcher of the power dynamic between researchers and researched when recruiting participants. My PhD research project gained informed consent from all persons to be part of the study<sup>45</sup>. At each stage of my research I asked for written informed consent. At each PAR workshop consent was obtained as part of the workshop registration process. Each semi-structured interview began with an explanation of the research and individual written consent forms were signed. The trustees of the organisation in which my ethnography was conducted signed a written consent form. Verbal consent was also sought from staff during each of my participant observation visits. All data collected is securely stored on my university H drive and on a USB memory stick in a locked cabinet in my home.

#### **4.17.3 Confidentiality**

The privacy and confidentiality of the participants are maintained through the anonymity of both individual participants and organisations. Pseudonyms are used instead of real organisation and individual identities (Punch 1994). The research focussed at organisational level and as such did not focus on vulnerable groups. Organisations and their employees were the focus of the

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<sup>45</sup> A copy of this consent form is in Appendix Three

research. Service user groups and clients of the adult social care organisations were not involved in the research project. I have provided a list of my research interactions in Appendix Five. All names have been changed to pseudonyms.

#### **4.17.4 Ensuring Authenticity**

A participatory workshop towards the end of the PhD research in July 2015, enabled the VCS to reflect and feed back on my research findings (Yin 2009, Stake 2006). This ensured authenticity of voice (Manning 1997) and catalytic validity (Lather 2009). This workshop offered a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit. This was an opportunity for organisations to use my PhD research in order to conduct their own assets based organisational evaluation. This workshop fits with my social justice research ontology, reflected in research objective three: the objective of making my research empowering to the VCS of Greater Manchester. At this workshop research participants were asked to feed back on my research findings. This ensured that the study avoided any deception and that the participants could confirm or question the interpretations of the study. Reiman (1979) states that the outcome of ethical research should enhance the freedom of the participants more than it enhances the careers of the researchers. The PAR focus of this PhD and the workshop at the end of the study empowered VCS participant organisations (Buchanan 2007, Farrington 2001) to develop adaptive strategies by which they can better respond to the challenges of Coalition policy. These adaptive strategies, discussed and developed in participatory workshop four, were developed and written up into the Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit, which is available in Appendix Six.

## 4.18 Chapter Summary

This chapter first considers my theoretical approach and then considers how my research was conducted, and how my research was analysed. The chapter, in line with feminist research methodologies, situates me as a researcher within the research process. The chapter considers the ethical considerations of my research project.

In taking a feminist emancipatory approach to my methodology, the VCS's experience of austerity was explored. By examining the opportunities and challenges specific to Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives, my PhD builds on the theoretical perspectives of NCIA (2015), Rochester (2014), Milbourne (2013), Ishkanian and Szreter (2012), Hilton and McKay (2011), Malani and Posner (2007), Wolch (1990) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) to develop a Manchester specific field of academic knowledge on the adult social care voluntary sector's reaction to Coalition policy. My hope is that the research will contribute to Manchester VCS's policy development and practice. By developing a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit for small VCS organisations, in partnership with CAEC<sup>46</sup>, Oxfam GB<sup>47</sup> and Church Action on Poverty<sup>48</sup>, which can be used to conduct an assets based evaluation of an organisation, I hope to contribute to Greater Manchester VCS's policy and practice.

My research considered the opportunities and challenges that the VCS of Greater Manchester faces, and many of these are reflections of those experienced by the VCS nationally. Having considered my methodology I now consider the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester. This next, meso level, chapter is an analysis of my research findings.

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<sup>46</sup> **CAEC** Community Audit and Evaluation Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University <http://www.ioe.mmu.ac.uk/caec/>

<sup>47</sup> **Oxfam GB**. Oxfam's British anti-poverty department <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>

<sup>48</sup> **Church Action on Poverty**. A Christian anti-poverty charity <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

## **CHAPTER FIVE: The Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Greater Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to consider the experience of the Greater Manchester adult social care VCS. I have developed three layers (macro, meso and micro) of analysis in order to explore the effects of Coalition policy on the adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester, reflecting research objective one. Having considered the experience of the adult social care VCS from a macro, national level, perspective, I now consider my research findings. My next chapter analyses the micro level experience of one adult social care VCS organisation. In this way the macro, meso and micro context of the VCS experience of Coalition policy is built.

This chapter begins with a reflection of my experiences of conducting the research, the research process and how I analysed the research, before focussing on my research findings. The chapter considers my research findings from ten research interactions. This research was made up of three participatory workshops, two participant observations of adult social care infrastructure groups and five semi-structured interviews with adult social care VCS organisations.

## **5.2 How my Greater Manchester Research was Conducted: Reflections, Rituals and Processes**

I reflect here on the process of doing the research within Greater Manchester's VCS.

### **5.2.1 Workshops**

I undertook three workshops within the research at the Greater Manchester level. These workshops were one-off events but carried rituals of organising and setting up. I arrived early, having reconfirmed room and food bookings and sent confirmation e-mails to participants. I moved the tables and got set up. I created a sign-in table and ensured all materials were ready and on the tables for the workshops. Each workshop had a similar set up. Participants introduced themselves. With the exception of the livelihoods workshop for CareGM, I invited one or two guest speakers. This was a draw to attendees who were all there on a voluntary basis. I then introduced the participatory group exercise. This exercise was usually recorded using flipchart pens and paper. It is important in participatory research to use tools and equipment that participants are familiar with (Chambers and Conway 1992) in order that they feel comfortable and therefore able to participate fully in the activities. VCS participants were used to participating in training workshops that worked with flipcharts and pens. In the first workshop, I introduced a Ketso Kit<sup>49</sup>. This is a fuzzy felt participatory development tool intended for group discussion. Participants did engage with the tool but I extracted less information from this method of recording group discussions than from the more traditional (in this context) flipchart methods. I made the decision to stick with a method that participants felt comfortable with.

The VCS in Greater Manchester is made up of over fourteen thousand organisations (Dayson et al. 2013) and as such is diverse and large. However, it is also made up of many staff and

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<sup>49</sup> **Ketso Kit**. A participatory research tool [www.ketso.com](http://www.ketso.com)

volunteers that have worked with the sector for a number of years. As such, in each workshop many people knew each other or knew of each other. This built a sense of solidarity among participants and a sense of shared voice, which was evident in the informal feedback that I received after the sessions, recorded in my field notes:

*Great session, good to see [organisation] here and really good to have senior management of [infrastructure organisation] here.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop

*It was really useful to share views, thoughts and ideas. Good to see so many people here.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop

I broke discussion groups into small table-sized groups (4-6 people) in each workshop, as I wanted to break down the sense of one large group and to try to enable less confident participants to speak. This worked in some groups and not in others. In my first workshop I had a couple of stronger voices that dominated discussions. Interestingly, by chance it was women only in my 'women, work and the VCS' workshop. This session was more collegiate and all the women spoke in the larger feedback session, as noted in my reflections in my field notes:

*This workshop session had a different feel. There were less 'leaders' in the feedback, it felt much more informal, like a freely shared chat than a workshop. Everyone spoke, some often sharing quite personal experiences.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop

This may have been because it was a smaller group or it could have been because the louder (white, male) voices from the previous discussion group were not there (Kagan and Duggan 2012). Each workshop spent time in a larger group discussing thoughts and feedback from participants.

After each workshop I wrote a brief summary of discussions and sent this out to participants in order that they could comment on my notes; this ensured authenticity of voice (Manning 1997). I

also wrote up detailed reflections on the sessions. This writing up of notes became a ritual of the research. A short time (a few days) after each workshop, participant observation or interview I transferred the audio recording to my computer and transcribed my notes from the research. I then gathered these notes into a research folder in chronological order.

At the first workshop I invited organisations to stick their contact details up on Post-it notes if they wished to become involved in the research. From the organisations that contacted me I chose the one that, after discussions, seemed the most interested and enthusiastic about the research as the organisation in which my micro level study would be based. I then contacted the other organisations to request semi-structured interviews.

### **5.2.2 Participatory Observation**

I attended two participant observations as part of my meso level research. These were both with the same infrastructure organisation and both in the same building. Two sessions were not enough time to develop a ritual, although as I interviewed members of the infrastructure organisation and they attended workshops at other points I developed a working relationship with them.

### **5.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews**

I undertook five semi-structured interviews with members of VCS organisations that offered similar types of services to CareGM, the organisation in which my micro level research was based. CareGM delivered adult social care to a vulnerable client group. They worked with and signposted to a wide variety of partners. I therefore sought to locate interviewees that represented the VCS subsector that my ethnography organisation signposted to or was working in partnership with.

I initially made contact with all of these organisations via my first participant workshop. I then visited the staff members, having set up the meetings via e-mail at their organisational base.

This allowed me to see how the organisation operated, under the guise of conducting an interview. These interviews were usually quite formal, as there was little time to develop a working relationship with the interviewees. They did, however, have a set structure. I introduced the consent form and discussed research ethics with them and they signed the consent form. Then I began the series of six questions that the VCS had set during the first participatory workshop. I concluded by thanking participants and telling them that I would write up the notes and let them have a copy for comment.

After each interview I fairly quickly wrote up the transcript and e-mailed it back to the interviewees. Interestingly, nobody replied to my e-mail asking for changes. I also recorded detailed reflections such as how the office smelled or felt, attending to sensory ethnographic approaches (Pink 2009). The organisational spaces that I visited were very different. One organisation had a very vibrant, open feel. There was an open-plan office and a kitchen space with a table. Staff were sitting having lunch as I walked through to a meeting room to conduct my interview. Another organisational space, smelling musty, was piled high to the ceiling with donations; it smelled like a mixture of damp and cheap men's deodorant but equally had a feeling of care and respect about it. The most professional building, a converted factory in which several VCS organisations are based, had a tired, downtrodden feeling to it. I recorded these feelings and thoughts in my reflective diary<sup>50</sup>. They have informed my analysis of how the VCS of Greater Manchester is responding to austerity. Having taken time to reflect on the research process, I now consider how my analysis developed before focussing on my research findings.

#### **5.2.4 Developing my Analysis**

Within Greater Manchester I undertook a range of research activities including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and participatory workshops. From these research

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<sup>50</sup> See Appendix Two for a screen shot of my reflective diary.

interactions I produced detailed field notes. As my research progressed and each time I wrote these field notes up I began to see themes developing. Some themes, as I discuss in chapter four, were emic, and the VCS used terms such as partnership working and communication with great frequency. Other themes related to etic themes that developed from my reflections as a researcher and interaction with the literature. These themes were bifurcation, isomorphism, and silencing. The VCS spoke about these issues but not in these terms. As my research developed alongside my reading I began to see the interaction between the VCS identified emic themes and the etic themes discussed in the literature. As I developed themes I located and restructured my field notes into indexed sections that reflected themes as they arose. Indexed themes began to emerge. From these indexed themes I located sections of field notes and interview transcripts that evidenced the themes. The research findings began to tell a story of VCS experiences.

My research findings highlight that there is a range of opportunities that the VCS might utilise in response to austerity. These opportunities range from the emergence of new relationships with local authorities and health infrastructure to the development of partnership working within networks and the utilisation of key staff. Digital technology has opened up new methods of communication with supporters and organisational stakeholders (VSNW and CLES 2013). Privatisation and links with businesses have created new funding opportunities. The VCS of Greater Manchester faces significant challenges during austerity. These challenges range from a radically changed funding environment to increased complexity of service users' needs, to new relationships with local authorities and health bodies. The multiplicity of challenges combined with reductions in funding alongside increases in need have had a significant effect on Greater Manchester's VCS. I will now discuss the experiences under the Coalition government of the VCS groups of Greater Manchester that participated in my research.

## **5.3 Research Findings**

This section discusses the themes that emerged during my research. I begin with themes identified by VCS groups that participated in my research. As my research became more established, more nuanced themes emerged. These are discussed towards the end of the chapter.

### **5.3.1 Acute Poverty**

The first theme that emerged during the first participatory workshop was focussed on acute poverty. The VCS of Greater Manchester in 2014, when I began my research, was operating in a radically changed environment. At my first participatory workshop the VCS was introduced to my research before engaging in interactive discussions considering the effect of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester. As I discuss in chapter four, the first participatory workshop was held in a room within the business school at the university. It was a bright open room. I had moved tables around in advance to create several large square 'cabaret style' tables. VCS groups had had a networking lunch where they had got to know the others sitting at their table. Some participants already knew each other, evidenced by shared hugs and kisses of greeting, and others were introduced. The workshop began and I introduced my research.

Once I had given a short talk about my research question and my assets based approach I asked participants to split into small groups and discuss opportunities and challenges that the VCS of Greater Manchester experienced under Coalition policy. This discussion was lively and passionate. Participants expressed anger at what they saw as increased need at precisely the point at which their funding, as VCS groups who could respond to the need, was being reduced.

Theo, an experienced volunteer within Greater Manchester's VCS and involved in the creation of a migrant support charity, discussed the mood music of austerity:

*There is a constant 'mood music' around welfare reform right now, a constant drip drip drip, a rhetoric of hostility towards people on welfare. People are called scroungers, politicians quote Benefits Street [television programme].* Theo, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

The VCS has always operated in situations of poverty (Hilton and McKay 2011). However, the poverty of the areas in which it is operating had significantly increased (Landsley and Mack 2015, CLES 2014). Throughout my research VCS organisations were reporting an increase in absolute poverty<sup>51</sup>, as evidenced by the quote below. One interviewee from an Infrastructure organisation, Alison, an experienced worker, reflected on her perceptions of poverty:

*This is not my first recession, I remember the 1980s and the 1990s but I can't remember them being as bad ... the poverty gap and inequality is worse than I can remember in my whole lifetime.* Alison, Interview

The first participatory workshop revealed that there had been a significant increase in the use of food banks<sup>52</sup> within Greater Manchester. Theo shared his thoughts during the first participatory workshop:

*There is more acute poverty. There are new challenges. There's more hunger and a growth in food banks.* Theo, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

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<sup>51</sup> **Absolute poverty** The United Nations in 1995 defined poverty using two categories: absolute and relative (Townsend 1979). Absolute poverty is characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs <http://www.poverty.ac.uk/definitions-poverty/absolute-and-overall-poverty>

<sup>52</sup> **Food banks**. These are charitable food schemes. The Trussell Trust runs a national food bank project [www.trusselltrust.org.uk](http://www.trusselltrust.org.uk)

This correlates with increased poverty rates nationally (Lansley and Mack 2015, Bunyan and Diamond 2014a) and the use of food banks nationally (Lambie-Mumford et al. 2014, Cooper et al. 2014, Lambie 2011).

The cuts to local authority budgets had forced the tightening of local authority eligibility criteria (CLES 2014). This, as VCS groups shared during the first participatory workshop, had led the VCS of Greater Manchester to experience greater demand in terms of volume and complexity at the same time as it experienced diminishing resources. One member of the feedback group, Theo, shared this view during the workshop discussions:

*The state is the one who shares the resources out. There are fewer resources to share out in times of austerity. It's like the 1980s sitcom 'Bread' – the mother and her chicken with money in it. The state shares out the resources but with fewer resources do priorities need to change? ... people are paying the same level of taxes but services are being cut.*

Theo, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

VCS organisations shared that as the poverty increased, the needs of the people that used their organisations were becoming greater and much more complex. Organisations stated that their resources were no longer able to meet the needs placed upon them. VCS organisations were having to refer on to other organisations, as they were no longer able to meet all of the clients' needs themselves. This experience reflects wider research undertaken within Greater Manchester (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, CLES 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, GMCVO 2012a, Davidson and Packham 2012).

The second participatory workshop was focussed on women, work and the voluntary sector, and was also held in the university's business school. This was a smaller session attended by fifteen women. The session had been open to men as well but only women booked onto the event. This session, perhaps because it was smaller or perhaps because it was only women,

had an open, more relaxed feel. A participant in this workshop, Annie, who volunteered for a charity that had previously specialised in providing in-house support, shared that they were now having to signpost on to other organisations. She shared her sadness that this was the case, although she tried to place a positive spin on it. Annie had worked previously within the VCS in a variety of senior employed roles and was volunteering with a women's charity, having been made redundant recently:

*We have had to be more proactive; you know, encouraging people to seek help for themselves, signposting to other organisations, you know.* Annie, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

A member of an equalities organisation that provided telephone advice and guidance shared in participatory workshop two that she had found that the number of calls they were logging had reduced. This was because each call took more time to respond to the caller's needs. This organisation had had to change the way that it monitored organisational activity for funders in order to reflect this changing workload.

The impact of austerity had affected the type of service users that VCS organisations were seeing. Sophie, a young worker who had recently completed a Master's degree in voluntary sector management, described clients as presenting with much higher levels of need. She described seeing clients before austerity for issues of social isolation and signposting. After austerity measures started to impact on people's lives, VCS groups found that clients were presenting with increasing levels and complexity of need. Clients were presenting with high levels of psychiatric need yet not meeting the criteria to be assessed by the NHS, hence they were accessing VCS resources. The reduction in services and the impact of local authority closures upon the VCS are reflected in wider research (CLES 2014, WBG 2013). The increasing complexity of client need was impacting negatively on staff stress levels:

*The impact of austerity has affected the type of service users that [organisation] are seeing. We are now seeing clients with an increasing complexity of need. They are coming into [organisation] not with just one issue but with complex needs. They are coming to [organisation] because they have no one else to turn to, with high levels of psychiatric need. But are [organisation] the right people to meet their needs?* Sophie, Interview, Equalities Adult Social Care Charity

In the organisation where Sophie was based, previously all staff had answered helpline calls and calls would be short, consisting of signposting and advice. Sophie was now taking calls from very complex and mentally unwell clients. Despite the organisation being a supportive environment, Sophie shared there was a need to develop more formal supervision.

### **5.3.2 Inequalities and Working Conditions**

The next theme that emerged out of acute poverty was inequalities in working conditions. Austerity, and its consequential reductions in VCS organisational resources at the same time as increasing demand, had had detrimental effects on women working within the VCS. This was a significant finding from my research with women who were working within the VCS and is reflected in wider research (CLES 2014, WBG 2013). In participatory workshop two women working within the VCS, although they might expect equality, shared that in fact they do not in reality experience it. This is evidenced in this quote by Annie:

*You expect working in this sector, in the VCS, that you will be treated equally, fairly, you know, but as funding cuts are starting to hit, we are expected to work longer hours and work harder for the same money. Flexible working goes out the window.* Annie, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

Women working in the adult social care VCS are working in a setting that is both horizontally and vertically gendered (Ryle 2012, McDowell and Pringle 1992). Working conditions have been

significantly affected, and reductions in working hours, changes in flexitime arrangements, and increased workplace stress have all directly affected women within the VCS (WBG 2012, Teasdale et al. 2011).

Participants of workshop two felt that the assumption that the VCS had a more egalitarian workforce under conditions of austerity should be challenged. Discussions regarding care responsibilities and both sexes needing flexible working to respond to care responsibilities were set against a discussion regarding the reduction of flexible working within the VCS. Organisations were reducing or stopping flexitime. Participants shared that people were scared to ask to go home early, for instance. It was felt that because of austerity the working terms and conditions of the VCS have changed. Organisational culture had been affected by this change in terms and conditions.

The dual roles of women (Myrdal and Klein 1956) were discussed at length in participatory workshop two. Participants shared that at some point women have to work part time and care for children and possibly grandchildren or older relatives. Participants felt that this was where austerity has really affected women:

*We have a male/female balance but it's harder for older workers to use digital media and work as quickly. At some point us women have to work 'part time' and care for children/grandchildren and older relatives – austerity has really affected women. I had to go 'part time' to four days per week but I still work five days but I am not paid for it.*

Alison, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

Alongside this discussion was the view that male workers increasingly needed hours that are more flexible, maybe to look after children after school, something that these participants felt was a new phenomenon. This research reflects research nationally by WBG (2013) and CLES (2014) regarding austerity and changed working conditions.

### 5.3.3 Women Working in the Voluntary and Community Sector

The participatory research workshop in February 2014, which worked with twenty-seven attendees from the adult social care VCS, raised gender as an issue that should be explored. Given that the VCS workforce is so heavily gendered (WBG 2013, NCVO 2012, Teasdale et al. 2011), I decided that the second participatory research workshop should focus on women, work and the VCS. The workshop was focussed on organisational responses to austerity and considered whether the heavily gendered nature of the VCS workforce affected its ability to respond to austerity. The attendees were all female. Some were academics, and seven attendees were either volunteers or employees from the adult social care VCS. These women came from a variety of organisations: women-specific abuse charities, immigration-related support, homelessness support, equalities-based organisations and FBOs.

When participants booked onto participatory workshop two they were asked, through the electronic booking system Eventbrite<sup>53</sup>, what they felt the major issues facing women in the VCS are today. A range of responses were shared that reflect existing research findings about women, work and the VCS. Analysis of the responses developed themes around the dual roles of women (Myrdal and Klein 1956), their caring responsibilities and the impact of these responsibilities upon their work. Organisational culture was shared as an issue facing women in the VCS, and this was linked with the statement that there is a lack of recognition that the VCS is not necessarily a more equality based sector to work in. Issues were shared around identity, role acknowledgement, professionalism, feeling undervalued and being patronised in the work environment. Inequality and discrimination were cited by several women. Other themes offered in response to the Eventbrite question were around the effects of austerity on female VCS employees in particular, including lack of career development and less flexibility with working

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<sup>53</sup> **Eventbrite.** Eventbrite is a free online booking system that can be used to organise events and communicate with participants. [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

hours. Lack of opportunity to progress into a leadership role was also cited. Pay parity with other sectors was offered as an important issue for women in the VCS. Women shared that due to a lack of funding there had been an increase in workload.

#### **5.3.4 Effects of Austerity on Women**

Women that attended the second participatory workshop were asked what effect austerity had had on their VCS organisation. These women felt that they were being asked to deliver more services with fewer resources, and were being put under more pressure. Participants from VCS organisations felt that client needs were more complex, and there was more pressure on VCS organisations to meet these needs. There was, however, more recognition of the services that their VCS organisations provide, due to the public sector making more referrals. The VCS organisational response was to be more proactive in trying to encourage clients to be more self-sufficient. The discussions from the workshop are supported by wider research (Davidson and Packham 2015, CLES 2014, WBG 2012).

The VCS was discussed in participatory workshop two in terms of how it provides alternative care, bypassing the public sector altogether. This discussion reflects research conducted by Dickinson et al. (2012) and Glasby and Dickinson (2014). Organisational challenges were addressed within the workshop; one organisation felt that because of austerity it was almost being forced into providing generic services, as opposed to the gender-specific support that it had built its mission upon. Indeed, Annie commented:

*We [organisation] have dropped the term 'feminism' when campaigning as if it was a dirty word.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

My research evidenced that the effect of austerity was putting more pressure on organisations in which women worked to reduce staffing costs and to operate on reduced budgets, and the women felt that this was leading to a loss of equality. This is evidenced by Annie's comment that

her organisation had dropped the term 'feminism' when campaigning, as if it was a dirty word. A discussion took place within the workshop around the questions 'Where is your politics?' and whether modern feminists are too fatigued by austerity to campaign. Participants shared that, as feminists, they were scared to look for a new job as they were being seen as political, which led to a feeling of being 'gagged'. However, in contrast to this, more service user groups were accessing larger VCS organisations, asking for support to challenge issues such as welfare reform.

This feeling of being silenced by fear of the impact of organisational campaigning was set against a backdrop where organisations did feel that

*campaigning is firmly back on the VCS agenda because everyone is so angry.* Alison,  
Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

The lack of women in VCS leadership was felt to be an issue, shared by participants of participatory workshop two. This is reflected in research by Teasdale et al. (2011) that suggests that although the VCS is better at employing women in leadership positions, vertical segregation still exists. It was felt that there were men higher up in organisations within Greater Manchester, and that they were the ones who were making the decisions. It was felt that gender segregation in the VCS was as bad as in the business sector. Job roles were discussed. It was felt that certain types of jobs were labelled 'women's jobs' and hence not valued. One participant, Hope, shared that her role as a support worker, because it did not have an obvious title, was not valued:

*[when you share your job title] so you get a response from people; you must enjoy that!*  
Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

It was agreed by participants of the workshop that women are the majority of the volunteers within the VCS, whereas most organisations felt that they had an equal number of male and female paid workers. Women's behaviour within the VCS workplace was addressed. Women were seen as being supportive of each other in the workplace, although it was recognised this was not always about gender but about organisational culture too. One woman, Teagan, shared an example of when she worked in an equality VCS organisation and that she had not seen a difference in male or female staff, because the organisational culture was centred on equality. Hope spoke of a period of extreme financial challenge when her organisation had faced closure. In this example the all-female team of trustees had stuck together and kept the organisation going; they had created a sense of solidarity, even when its funding had all but disappeared.

### **5.3.5 Power and Isomorphism: Propping up the State**

The next theme that emerged from the research was the notion of propping up the state. Upon further analysis I developed a more nuanced understanding of this VCS identified theme, adding power and isomorphism into my analysis. The first participatory workshop shared information about the state's lack of resources. There were fewer resources to distribute at a time of austerity, when need and poverty were increasing (Bunyan and Diamond 2014a, Hills et al. 2013, Dorling 2013). Participants of the first workshop shared that they felt that the VCS was propping up the state. There was a rationing of care and funding for the poor. There was a real anger that people were paying the same level of taxes but that return in the form of services was going down. Participants felt that state money was being used for other priorities, such as propping up the banks.

Participants of the first workshop shared that organisations felt that there was more basic need and more pressure on VCS organisations to meet this need. The VCS participants shared that they did not feel valued by statutory agencies and a culture of competition for funding was

affecting organisational culture. John was a manager within an infrastructure organisation. He had worked within the sector for a number of years, had good connections with the local authority and health bodies, yet his frustrations around not being heard were evident. This is shown in an excerpt from my field notes:

*John spoke of trying to give the VCS a voice. He was congratulated on trying by a colleague at the forum, for trying to 'chip away' at the board. John initiated a discussion engaged in by most people in the forum. Ideas were shared that the VCS still felt like a younger sibling or second cousin first removed to the [Local Authority]. VCS groups within the forum spoke of trying to respond; there was a feeling of the need to proactively engage with the council, to gather evidence, case studies, narratives of complex need and the effects of poverty on those needs, to give voice to the people. Field Notes, Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation*

My research illustrates the perception that the VCS had of not being valued yet being expected to provide services that were previously supported by the state was regularly enacted in the behaviour of public sector bodies. In a VCS infrastructure meeting, a representative from Public Health Manchester, Jill, further contributed to the sense that the VCS of Greater Manchester had of being asked to prop up the state yet not being taken seriously. Jill was unable to respond to a question on how VCS feedback might be used. She was slightly unsure in her reply regarding how VCS feedback on a joint strategic needs assessment<sup>54</sup> (JSNA) would be used, simply saying:

*Err, that is something that I kind of need to address going forward. Field Notes, Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation*

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<sup>54</sup> **Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.** These were set up as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. JSNAs are intended to be a mechanism by which local leaders work together to understand and agree the needs of all local people, with the joint health and wellbeing strategy setting the priorities for collective action.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/215261/dh\\_131733.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215261/dh_131733.pdf)

The discussion with the representative from Public Health England then moved on to the Greater Manchester Compact<sup>55</sup>, and the VCS shared its intentions behind the Compact. The Compact was set up so that the VCS did not become lost in bureaucracy and it held the shared aim that the VCS and Manchester City Council would work together for the population of Greater Manchester. The response from Jill was:

*Well, you have got to keep trying haven't you?* Field Notes, Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation

This response suggested that perhaps only lip service was being paid to VCS involvement in Manchester's Healthy City Plans. This very much suggested that the VCS of Greater Manchester was not being taken seriously by public sector bodies. This reflects research nationally by Milbourne (2013).

My research suggests that the VCS was being asked to produce data for oblique purposes by public sector organisations. At the infrastructure body meeting with Public Health England the VCS produced a range of research within the communities that they represented and fed this into the JSNA. There was confusion regarding if or how Public Health England had used this data; their representative, Jill, stated:

*It should be ... this is what we need to work through.* Field Notes, Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation

There was a sense that the VCS was being kept busy whilst the real decisions were being made by the City Council.

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<sup>55</sup> **Greater Manchester Compact**. The Compact is a document signalling an agreement on how public sector and VCS organisations may work together <https://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/briefing/manchester-compact>

### 5.3.6 Localism and Cross Boundary Issues

The next theme, linked to power and propping up the state, was localism. It was difficult for organisations to identify whether some changes were caused by austerity or by other policies such as localism<sup>56</sup>. As Lone and Silver (2012:23) state:

under the auspices of localism, we are seeing a centralisation of power and the emergence of a democratic deficit as politics are rooted in reality that many people in the north do not recognise.

Services that are delivered across local authority or health boundaries were seriously challenged by Coalition localism policies.

Localism has created communities of geography whereby if a VCS group delivers services to a community of identity (Clarke, S 2008), then localism poses significant challenges to these services. Rogers and Gravelle state that the Coalition policy of transferring power to local areas could be difficult for partnership working and the local community: 'community agencies and individuals may not be sufficiently organised to enable the process to come to fruition' (2011:29). My research confirmed this. For example, one organisation I interviewed offered a sexual health service across Greater Manchester; however, this service was at significant risk because it covered a wide geographical area which spanned several local authority and NHS boundaries:

*LGBT [Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender] communities live everywhere but will travel to services. This makes the localism agenda difficult ... LGBT communities are at Greater Manchester level, people will travel from Bolton for our condom and lube scheme*

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<sup>56</sup>**Localism Act 2011** The aim of the Act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils <http://www.local.gov.uk/localism-act>

... [ but] ... *cross boundary issues are difficult to argue in a climate of cuts*. Sophie,  
Interview

Funders were reticent when approached to fund services that spanned areas outside their boundaries.

### **5.3.7 Partnership Working**

The VCS has always been adept at partnership working (Dayson et al. 2013). This ability to work across boundaries (Williams et al. 2012) has enabled the VCS to respond proactively to austerity. Partnership working within the VCS has a broad definition, and it has been interpreted to mean anything from working together on a project to formal service delivery partnerships. The reality of partnership working can be both 'frustrating and messy' (Glasby and Dickinson 2014:xvi). Rees et al. define partnership working as 'inter-organisational collaborative relationships – both horizontal and vertical – to achieve outcomes in service delivery' (2012:8).

My participatory observation with the adult social care forum based at the infrastructure group revealed that VCS organisations within the homelessness subsector of the adult social care VCS have created excellent support networks that share donations, expertise and care. This reflects wider research nationally (Cloke et al 2010). In several cases small VCS office space was hosted by larger organisations. The partnership working allowed smaller organisations either to have office space gifted to them by larger VCS organisations or to pay a minimum ground rent. This partnership working enabled smaller organisations to deliver shared services in order to meet clients' needs or simply to co-exist in a supportive environment. Donations were distributed throughout the homelessness sector to where they could be best used. For example, sleeping bags were collected at one homelessness organisation, Soup Outreach, then re-distributed to organisations within Greater Manchester that offered night shelter facilities. This is illustrated by an excerpt from my field notes:

*We walked through a smaller lounge area that was piled high with bin bags labelled [homeless support organisations] centre and various other homeless organisations. These were to be re-distributed to other homeless support organisations.* Field Notes, Soup Outreach

Other donations, such as furniture, collected at CareGM were shared with Soup Outreach as they supported clients to set up home, when homeless clients had been allocated housing. Food banks<sup>57</sup> across Greater Manchester are coordinated so that donations are shared across various organisations that offer food bank facilities. Food bank usage increased during the Coalition government (Trussell Trust 2015, Lambie-Mumford et al. 2014, Cooper et al. 2014) and is one of the few areas of the voluntary sector nationally that is expanding (Lansley and Mack 2015, JRF 2014 ).

The Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation had taken on a capacity-building role during austerity. It has used its influence within the city to build up the visibility of the VCS and to enable VCS organisations to develop partnerships and new relationships with the private sector, academic sector and civic institutions. As John, a manager within the infrastructure organisation, shared:

*[organisation] is trying to build something, to build resources for the VCS ... it is not a short-term challenge. Parts of Manchester have never been out of recession.* John, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

John shared that he was an enthusiastic manager and that that he was committed to his work within the sector. It was clear from his comments that he genuinely cared about the sector, yet

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<sup>57</sup> **Food Banks.** These provide food to people in need. The Trussell Trust operates food banks nationally but several informal schemes exist across Greater Manchester, in addition to the Trussell Trust food banks (Cooper et al 2014, Lambie-Mumford et al 2014, GMPC 2013). <http://www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-projects>

as a manager he was also expected to prioritise the survival of his organisation. John frequently referenced this tension:

*I have seen a lot of stress within the organisation. There is a pressure to work harder and the pressure of responding to change.* John, Interview

John spoke of his role within the infrastructure organisation as rebuilding an economic model and linking the VCS into alternative models of partnership and developing social enterprises.

Indeed, this notion of building partnerships with those in power was suggested by other VCS interviewees during my research as a means of improving VCS performance and offering improved services. Rebecca was a young senior manager within her organisation who did not have the history of working within the VCS that other interviewees shared. Her knowledge of the sector was learned from university and VCS managerial courses, and her perceptions as a result were often more strategic than her pay grade:

*Good conversations need to be had with decision makers in the city as to how we can use our knowledge and information to make things better and more efficient. Not conversations for cash [funding] but knowledge sharing for good. [we need to consider] how to influence policy and strategy with localised evidence and knowledge sharing with the sector.* Rebecca, Interview, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

Rebecca went on to share that she felt that good conversations were needed with decision makers within Manchester in terms of how the VCS could use its knowledge and information to improve services and make them more efficient. These conversations with the holders of power, Rebecca suggested, were not about funding but about sharing knowledge and creating partnerships for service users. Partnerships could be used to influence policy and strategy using localised evidence and knowledge within the sector:

*we have got to be realistic this is where we are at ... the sector needs to adapt. Adapt quickly.* Rebecca, Interview, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation was actively seeking to engage and build partnerships with new health bodies. Changes in Coalition policy had created a new health and social care infrastructure. I found that the VCS had utilised this change to develop new opportunities with local authorities and clinical commissioning bodies. This development was reflected in wider research within the sector (CLES 2014). During the period 2010-2015 VCS organisations also became involved in Greater Manchester's Devolution (Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Devolution 2015) project DevoManc<sup>58</sup>, and through this developed partnerships with health and local authority bodies.

Here my research highlights that there were both challenges and opportunities for the VCS as a result of the current NHS restructuring. As clinical commissioning groups<sup>59</sup> (CCGs) were finding their feet and starting to develop their remits, some of them were also starting to engage much more innovatively with the VCS than their primary care trust predecessors. Alison was an experienced worker within the VCS, having worked within her organisation almost from its inception, over a decade ago. She was inspiring, challenging and very committed to working with VCS groups. She was committed to getting a fairer deal for VCS groups within health and local authority relationships and spent much of her working hours engaged in this:

*They [CCG] know that I want to try to gain trust and engage the charity sector besides service provision. There is a need to engage the VCS re knowledge, communities. GPs want to know what VCS organisations there are in the area, so that they know which*

<sup>58</sup> **DevoManc.** This is a project to devolve health and social care budgets to Greater Manchester Combined Authority <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2015/03/devo-manc-health-social-care-wellbeing-greater-manchester?gclid=CLPAicWWnsYCFWjmwgodzocAEQ>

<sup>59</sup> **Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)** were set up as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. CCGs are made up of doctors, nurses and other professionals who use their knowledge of local health needs to plan and buy services for their local community from any service provider that meets NHS standards and costs – these could be NHS hospitals, social enterprises, voluntary organizations or private sector providers. The aim of the CCGs is to provide better care for patients, designed with knowledge of local services and commissioned in response to their needs. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-and-care-system-explained/the-health-and-care-system-explained>

*organisations exist for referral ... [infrastructure organisation ] see this as a 'way in' to say yes, we are here to help. We would love them to get to know the VCS, to know the experience that we have.* Field Notes, Participant Observation Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation

Here I discovered that Greater Manchester infrastructure organisations were considering new ways of engaging with GPs in terms of encouraging signposting and exploring commissioning possibilities. Their experience was that GPs knew very little about the VCS. One GP that met with the Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation was surprised at the response when he shared an example about an elderly male gay patient who was experiencing isolation and loneliness. He did not know where within the NHS he might find support for his patient, but the Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation was able to signpost the GP to the Age UK LGBT 'out in the city' support group. This is an example of how the VCS has been able to develop new working relationships with CCGs and build signposting partnerships with them.

During my discussions with some of the Greater Manchester VCS, a website was discussed as a means of signposting GPs to contacts and services available within the VCS. Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation felt that they did not need a website with all VCS groups on as they already have one, but it is not regularly updated<sup>60</sup>. Information on the website in mid-2014 had not been updated since 2012. It was suggested that there was an opportunity for the VCS to innovatively engage with health services, as the VCS does not need a website but 'navigators'. These navigators would know the VCS well and be able to signpost CCGs to VCS groups. Here my research findings are consistent with work by Walsh et al. (2012) who argue against creating directories whereby people are simply treated as informants and argue for

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<sup>60</sup> **My Manchester Website** <http://mymanchesterservices.manchester.gov.uk/>

meaningful cross-sector engagement. My research found that Greater Manchester infrastructure organisations were developing this concept in order to begin an innovative signposting partnership with newly created GP-led CCGs.

There was a disparity between the city council, public health and various other public bodies, such as CCGs wanting just one representative of the VCS to sit on their boards, and the reality of the VCS of Greater Manchester, which is a diverse and multifaceted sector (Dayson et al. 2013). The 'Good Life'<sup>61</sup> board requested one representative from the VCS and a VCS infrastructure organisation has taken the role. This produced some tensions as not all of the VCS felt that that organisation represented their mission. Alison was based within an infrastructure organisation, and at the adult social care forum she shared her concerns around not being listened to:

*[name of colleague] has been asked to sit on the [Good Life] co-production group. They haven't traditionally been open to VCS involvement and are quite protective of their creation of governance structures. I am suspicious of the [Good Life] co-production of knowledge statement. Although lots of organisations are feeding into the co-production group, it would make sense if [infrastructure organisation] fed into it. Although not all groups see why it should be us that sits on the board.* Alison, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

Infrastructure organisations were trying to overcome this silencing by giving the VCS a voice at local authority board meetings; however, this process was considered to be frustrating and to have had limited success in influencing local authority policy. The changes in health and wellbeing infrastructure had significantly affected VCS power, voice and influence. The new

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<sup>61</sup> Pseudonym

health systems that include CCGs and volunteer Health Watch<sup>62</sup> groups are made up of people that have not had to consider the VCS before. The VCS was new to these groups, in particular to GPs, which has led to VCS infrastructure groups having to spend a lot of time sharing and promoting the role and extent of the sector within Manchester.

The VCS of Greater Manchester was working to counteract this lack of knowledge. The VCS was still learning how to engage with new localism and health structures. Confusion on both sides limited communication between health and wellbeing boards and the VCS. Here my research findings are supported by national research (Rochester 2014, Aiken 2014ab).

### **5.3.8 Communication Within the Sector: Digital Opportunities**

A further theme that developed during my research was communication. With the development of digital opportunities some VCS groups had developed their strengths through austerity. Some VCS organisations were using alternative approaches to social justice. My research suggests that communication within the VCS is key to impacting change. As John explained:

*[Organisation] puts meetings up online, to reduce expectations for VCS organisations to attend meetings in person. We use a meeting hash tag and tweet meetings and conferences. Training is webcast, making it more accessible and reducing travel costs for organisations.* John, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

It was evident that the VCS in Greater Manchester had really engaged with free social media to improve its communication with stakeholders and partners. This reflects national research which states that digital technology has enabled VCS organisations to respond and develop during austerity (Amar 2014).

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<sup>62</sup> **Health Watch.** Patient involvement groups set up as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 [www.healthwatch.org.uk](http://www.healthwatch.org.uk)

VCS organisations in Greater Manchester were utilising social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and free websites such as WordPress<sup>63</sup>. The Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation had made significant digital investments in order to set up a website that was a home for the VCS in Manchester. The website focussed on getting many resources in one place in order that VCS organisations could access support. The development of digital technology has been an important part of VCS organisations' ability to make savings and communicate with service users. The infrastructure organisation had invested a lot of money in technology, renewing computers and networking them across the office. The organisation would not clarify what they meant by a lot of money as they did not wish to attract criticism from other less wealthy VCS organisations. The infrastructure organisation had also invested in new machines and a new server, and it shared that investing in computer systems allowed them to think differently about how they operated as an organisation and to develop new ways of working. They had begun to put meeting notes online and had accessed training in order that they could begin to webcast their meetings. This allowed a wider audience of VCS organisations to access infrastructure support and information.

Another VCS organisation had developed digital advice shops. This had changed the operating style of the organisation. The first point of contact with this organisation was no longer a human being, but guided self-help using three digital access points across the city. The aim of this digital re-ordering of service provision was to increase efficiency in response to hugely increased need. As Universal Credit<sup>64</sup> was introduced in Manchester in the summer of 2014 this

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<sup>63</sup> **WordPress.** WordPress is a free online blogging and website building tool <https://wordpress.com/>

<sup>64</sup> **Universal Credit.** The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced Universal Credit. Six working age benefits (Job Seekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit) are merged into one monthly payment. <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

VCS organisation was aiming to respond to expected increases in demand by offering digital support, to offer preventative advice before people reached crisis point. Rebecca told me:

*When you walked in you walked past the telephone room, there is no face-to-face advice. People phone for advice. From April 2014 [organisation] have a digital shop front. Clients' first access to [organisation] advice service is supported use of the computer, guided self-help.* Rebecca, Interview, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

Twitter had opened up lots of new connections and allowed VCS organisations to have an online presence without any cost. This Greater Manchester experience is reflected in research nationally (Amar 2014). Digital media had enabled the VCS to have a visible presence. VCS organisations shared how successful it has been in influencing people and building partnerships.

### **5.3.9 The Importance of Infrastructure Bodies**

Linked to the theme of communication, the theme of the importance of infrastructure organisations developed. A key finding from my five semi-structured interviews with the adult social care VCS was that individuals who are committed to the VCS and hold power have provided an important opportunity for the VCS. Greater Manchester infrastructure organisation had made links with Manchester City Council's director of adult social care. The ability of the infrastructure body to form these links and develop working relationships with those in power within the public and sometimes the private sector has been an important part of developing VCS support within the council, and of the VCS finding new opportunities. In some cases infrastructure organisations, like other larger VCS organisations, had been able to develop and expand during austerity. In one case an infrastructure organisation won a large contract from the council to deliver a volunteer centre in the city. This large contract was difficult to achieve:

*On paper it looks like a big opportunity, but we have had to go through the mill.* John,  
Interview Infrastructure Organisation

The infrastructure organisation was at pains to state that the value of its contract was significantly reduced compared to previous capacity-building funding from the local authority that had enabled the organisation to build resources for the VCS. John shared that this funding and austerity had arguably enabled the infrastructure organisation to

*rise to the challenge but it isn't a short-term challenge; parts of Manchester have never been out of recession.* John, Interview Infrastructure Organisation

Indeed, the long-term implications of running VCS capacity-building services within recession were yet to be fully faced when I conducted my research interviews in 2014. Austerity itself is a long-term challenge (Lansley and Mack 2015, Bramall 2011). John shared that the cuts expected within local authority funding streams had not occurred in March 2011, due to staff cuts within the local authority. These staff changes within the local authority, John shared, had resulted in several short-term funding extensions during council restructuring. This meant that there was not the sudden cut to funding that the VCS had expected, but instead a slow decline.

### **5.3.10 The Importance of Key Individuals**

The importance of infrastructure organisations was echoed by the next theme that emerged from my research, the importance of key individuals. My research found that key staff and volunteers within VCS organisations were an invaluable resource for the VCS during austerity. Throughout my research I found that the existence of key charismatic and dedicated staff and volunteers enabled the organisation to succeed and develop despite facing the challenges posed by austerity. These staff and volunteers were not bureaucratic or bounded by role descriptions but offered commitment, dedication and significant work/volunteer hours in the development of their organisation. One key staff member, Alex from Soup Outreach, described

how she intended to work forty-eight hours over the Christmas Day and Boxing Day period, offering full on-call support for a Christmas night shelter.

Alex had set up Soup Outreach in response to a family tragedy and was personally and professionally devoted to her role. Founder syndrome (Block and Rosenberg 2003) is an aspect of organisational governance that is criticised as the commitments of key individuals cannot be realistically sustained long term. She and her partner, despite both experiencing health issues, worked tirelessly within the organisation to ensure service users' needs were met. She told tales of driving to collect clients from hospital late at night so that they did not spend a night on the streets, and of setting up a Christmas night shelter, as recorded in my field notes:

*[Alex] is running a Night Shelter 21st Dec -3rd Jan out of the lounge area. She needs two volunteers to volunteer twenty-four hours a day to support those sleeping in the night shelter. The lounge is literally just turning into a place where people can lie down. She will be on call for forty eight hours over Christmas and Boxing Day herself so she can respond to any emergencies. Field Notes, Soup Outreach*

Gail, another key volunteer within a homelessness VCS organisation, had volunteered full time over the summer months in order to ensure health and safety requirements were met in the kitchen area of the project, and to build the kitchen up to a position where they could employ a staff member. This commitment to success and development goes far beyond what any job or volunteer role description would require; however, in these examples this selfless commitment to their VCS organisations has enabled these projects to survive and develop during austerity. My research that locates the importance of key individuals to VCS organisational success during austerity reflects wider research findings (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, Davidson and Packham 2012).

### 5.3.11 Identity, Voice, Silencing

As themes around propping up of the state and power and the importance of communication and key individuals emerged, a more nuanced analysis developed. Identity, voice and silencing began to emerge as themes within my analysis. My research found that VCS identity has been challenged by Coalition policy in Greater Manchester. The first participatory workshop spent a lot of time considering the identity of the VCS. It was felt that the VCS did not know what it was anymore. The feeling was that some VCS organisations had lost their voluntary sector ethic. As Theo shared in participatory workshop one:

*We don't know who we are. Wolf in sheep's clothing. Some VCS organisations don't have the voluntary sector ethic anymore ... years ago charities spoke of working themselves out of existence. What are charities doing today to work themselves out of existence?* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

Feedback from a discussion session in participatory workshop one questioned whether VCS organisations were to accept public funding (where it was available) and become service providers or were they to become social enterprises and self-fund their missions? A discussion at the first participatory workshop considered what the purpose of charity was; participants shared that years ago charities spoke of working themselves out of existence. Participants of workshop one believed that this was no longer within VCS conversational vocabulary. VCS groups spoke of maintaining their own existence.

I found, however, that the VCS's role in voicing the lived experience was silenced by public health's bureaucratic response. It emerged during my participant observation of the VCS adult social care forum that the VCS of Greater Manchester had spent a lot of time gathering evidence about the lived experiences of people experiencing fuel poverty. However, this evidence was silenced by bureaucracy. The Head of Public Health Manchester had met the

Head of Environment Strategy but there was no dedicated resource to follow it through. The representative from Public Health at the participatory observation at the adult social care group meeting gave another unsure reply:

*It's kind of in limbo at the moment.* Jill, Field Notes, Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation

There were no resources to follow up the examples of lived experiences of fuel poverty that the VCS had collected. There was no resource to utilise the evidence to improve people's real life outcomes. My research found that there was a real contradiction in VCS experience. The local authority and health services were increasingly signposting to VCS services as local authority provision was cut. However, in direct contradiction the VCS was being excluded from decision making.

Participants at my first participatory workshop shared that the voice and campaigning arm of many VCS organisations in Greater Manchester had been suppressed as they competed for public funding. Some services were disappearing. The VCS participants shared during the workshop feedback session that some specific types of services such as advocacy were becoming hard to find:

*The voice of charities is being suppressed ... it's political.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

The voices of larger organisations were changing, arguably being silenced. Larger organisations spoke of challenging from within. Campaigning had become a word that began with a small 'c'. Campaigning with a small 'c' for John meant that his organisation campaigned within the town hall rather than campaigning outside the town hall with placards. John described how campaigning for his organisation had changed under Coalition policy:

*Campaigning is in the DNA of [organisation] ... however [organisation] now campaigns with a small c. We don't campaign holding placards; we are in the inside in the right places, we are involved in subversive campaigning ... we stand up for the VCS ... we don't campaign on single issues with placards and go all out to make a point against [local authority] because we need to consider our role within council groups and funding. We are campaigning for the long game ... if I go hell for leather on a single campaign I alienate other stakeholders.* John, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

John's story reflected others shared with me during participatory workshops one and two. Larger organisations had stopped campaigning with placards, and moved to insider campaigning. This was explained as trying to move to the right place on the inside of funding arrangements, to enable subversive campaigning on behalf of the VCS. The larger organisations described this change to campaigning as in the interests of the VCS. They no longer campaigned on single issues because they needed to consider their role within council groups and funding, and they justified this as campaigning for the long game. This change in campaigning tone and style was justified as no longer simply criticising but as offering constructive solutions. This could be considered as the silencing of the VCS's traditionally (Milbourne 2013) strong campaigning voice.

There was a concern that organisations that are reliant on the council for contracts were reticent about speaking out, despite having campaigning within their mission. Alison shared this concern:

*This is not a good time to raise awkward questions [it was all right to campaign] as long as it doesn't open up sore wounds.* Alison, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

One large VCS organisation felt that it still campaigned around its core mission but had been silent around the broader themes of austerity which were affecting its service users. It had

campaigned on equality but not on the 'bedroom tax'<sup>65</sup>. Campaigning on the bedroom tax was considered too politically challenging, given its funding relationship with the council, as this excerpt from my field notes evidences:

*Austerity hasn't affected the voice of [organisation] but [organisation] has two voices ... Here Sophie shared the dual roles of the organisation firstly around equality and secondly around service provision. It was here that she shared a sense that campaigning had perhaps been silenced. She appeared nervous, uncertain of criticising her organisation in this way. She was clearly proud of the work that the organisation did and spoke with enthusiasm about its equality campaigns. Where she was uncertain was how [organisation] had chosen not to speak out on wider policy issues such as the bedroom tax. This was an issue for clients yet Sophie wondered if the wish not to offend major funders [local authority] or to become overtly political were reasons why [organisation] had chosen to remain silent. Field Notes, Equalities Adult Social Care Charity*

Here I found that this silencing of organisational voice had a significant impact on the role and scope of the organisation in terms of campaigning.

### **5.3.12 Bifurcation, a Changing Policy Environment**

A more nuanced theme emerged from my analysis of identity, voice and silencing: bifurcation. Here, the concept of the isomorphic behaviour required of VCS organisations engaged in purchaser-provider contracts has led to the bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the VCS. Bifurcation is the concept that the VCS has been split into two sectors: one large service delivery sector and a second smaller, community orientated sector:

The voluntary sector has been divided into a core of purely voluntary activists (voice) and a second part consisting of non-profit operated services. (Johansson 2003:213)

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<sup>65</sup> 'Bedroom Tax' is a colloquialism for the Spare Room Subsidy, enacted as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012

Bifurcation emerged from my analysis as participants frequently differentiated between the behaviours of small and large VCS organisations. A constantly changing policy environment had impacted on the landscape of the VCS differently. Large and small VCS organisations have had different experiences of austerity. Rebecca described the variety of experiences that she was aware of within the sector. The organisation Rebecca worked for was a large organisation that offered services within Greater Manchester within a partnership:

*Across the [organisational] partnership there has been a massive change. It's a constantly changing policy environment .... [Rebecca went on to discuss the impact of welfare reform on clients before returning to the impact of Coalition policy on the VCS] ... the landscape is different for different organisations within the partnership. Big organisations face challenge but can be more resilient, they can change the way that they operate, increase their sale presence, be more competitive. As different contracts emerge, they can take more risk. Smaller organisations physically can't do it, they have to then come under large organisations.* Rebecca, Interview, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

Rebecca considered the impact of Coalition policy as resulting in the different experiences of small and large organisations. My analysis led me to understand Rebecca's experience using the concept of the bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the sector. Larger organisations, although facing challenges, arguably can be more resilient. These organisations can change the way that they operate, increase their sale presence and be more competitive. As different contracts emerge then they can take more risks. Smaller organisations often have to merge with larger organisations.

The concept of the bifurcation of the sector, as described using terms to depict the experiences of small and larger VCS organisations, was supported by Sophie. Sophie shared that some

smaller VCS organisations have arguably been less affected by the cuts, given that they were too small to receive local authority funding:

*We [organisation] are part of a national network of [type] organisations and this has caused some tensions. Smaller organisations see [organisation] as the organisation that can help them, other small organisations see us as the organisation that takes the cash, but there are others that are just too small to be affected – they didn't receive funding anyway.* Sophie, Interview, Equalities Adult Social Care Charity

Competition and tension around funding had increased. Sophie shared that as a younger staff member she did not have experience of previous recessions. She had begun her work in the sector with an unpaid internship with a (large) charity before taking a paid post in her current role. She spoke of an awareness of cuts and recession in 2010 when she began work but that it was:

*A waiting game. It [the funding cuts] didn't suddenly hit but it felt different. [organisation] are mainly contract funded but [funding] threats have resurfaced recently and now [organisation] are facing cuts. It's starting to impact on service delivery. Austerity is starting to pinch.* Sophie, Interview, Equalities Adult Social Care Charity

This waiting game was also how John described the delayed impact of the cuts on the VCS of Greater Manchester due to staff changes within the local authority which delayed decision making regarding funding cuts to VCS groups. This experience is reflected in wider research conducted by CLES (2014). The tendering process for funding was becoming more difficult for VCS groups. The effect of this was to create more competition, with the VCS becoming a much more competitive market. The assumption was that VCS organisations can produce more for less. The business model approach to adult social care that has created a market where care

recipients are customers (Glasby and Dickinson 2014) was described by the VCS within my first participatory workshop as the local authority having created a:

*Tesco approach to illness.* Theo, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

By this, Theo meant a sense that care was being subcontracted out to the cheapest provider with an eye to economic efficiency rather than care quality.

Partnership working was changing during the course of my research. Two types of VCS groups were emerging: big organisations and smaller organisations. The funding environment had become increasingly competitive:

*Organisations are expected to work together to compete for funding. Some organisations are used to this and others are not comfortable. Larger organisations can employ contract managers. The smaller organisations that do not have contract management expertise are pushed out of the marketplace.* Rebecca, Interview, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

As my research continued I began to discover that the VCS in Greater Manchester had been split by austerity. The larger sector had strategic capacity, and smaller groups had much less strategic capacity. Alison, an experienced worker with an activist background, suggested that the VCS should be appointing its own representatives into strategy groups and then feeding accountability through the VCS infrastructure body. She shared this perspective within our semi-structured interview but also shared it during my participant observation of the adult social care group at the infrastructure organisation. Attendees at the group nodded and indicated agreement with her suggestion. However, the suggestion also revealed some dissent and there was a discussion within the forum that there were challenges in doing this, as resources have shrunk and organisations are more competitive and more private about what they do.

Alongside this shift in focus had come a shift in the complexity of contracting. Smaller community groups reported in participatory workshop one that they are not seen as professional. I noted down feedback shared during participatory workshop one:

*The statutory sector are contracting services but only certain sized organisations can bid. Do they want to bid for contracts? Small and medium sized charities are being squeezed out. Serco and G4S can run loss leaders. These contracted companies are paying front line workers less.* Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One.

The smaller community groups struggled with auditing and gathering the evidence required for funding bids, as they lacked staffing to gather this evidence. This inability to provide adequate evidence for funding bids led to them losing money, as they reported they were unable to bid for public funding. This experience suggests that only the larger organisations that have funding and research teams can compete in the public funding environment. My research is reflected in wider national research (Milbourne 2013, Rochester 2013).

### **5.3.13 Bifurcation, Privatisation and Funding Opportunities**

The VCS of Greater Manchester has experienced unprecedented funding cuts during austerity (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, GMCVO 2012a, Davidson and Packham 2012). However, the VCS of Greater Manchester has found some opportunities within this greatly reduced funding environment. VCS groups that attended my first participatory workshop felt that in respect to funding there were some opportunities and there was some room for flexibility. This is evidenced by more entrepreneurial groups who were able to be more flexible in response to funding challenges in the shifting and changing funding streams. Isla, an experienced worker and now volunteer in an FBO, shared that:

*Entrepreneurial groups can be more flexible. Shifting/chasing funding streams, changing the face of your organisation. The idea of creating targets, frameworks, combining*

*organisations to provide one overarching service to an area for a particular service user group (e.g. young people). This is a challenge/opportunity – the VCS can at least provide for some.* Isla, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

The VCS within the timeframe of my research was shifting, creating targets and frameworks and combining organisations to provide some overarching services to an area for a particular service user group, for example young people. This, for those VCS organisations that were able to be flexible, was an opportunity to develop their organisations. A VCS infrastructure organisation shared that they were better off during austerity, as they had won a major funding contract:

*austerity could be seen as a bonus ... it's a difficult seat to be in.* John, Interview, Infrastructure Organisation

John shared that this placed pressure on his organisation to work harder and to become an advocate for the VCS. The effects of austerity for this infrastructure organisation have been to improve resource management and efficiency.

Some small organisations had been too small to be affected by funding cuts and had continued to operate almost in isolation from the wider funding environment. Naomi, based in a small migrant support organisation, shared that the group had never relied on grants or service delivery contracts and that they take on projects by need, rather than fitting into funding requirements:

*[our VCS group has] not been terribly affected, we have never relied on pots of money. We take on projects by need, rather than fitting into funding requirements. However, we have noticed needs are changing for others and this can have an impact on BME communities, i.e. the luncheon club now needs to make money rather than just funding lunches for those in need.* Naomi, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

This group shared that they had noticed that needs were changing for others and this was going to have an impact on BME communities; for example, their small luncheon club needed to make money rather than just funding lunches for those in need. Austerity was forcing minority and specialist services into the mainstream, as evidenced by this excerpt from my field notes:

*Austerity is forcing minority/specialist services into the mainstream. The complex needs of service users for services such as the South East Asian domestic violence unit have been overlooked in order to gain mainstream funding ... leading to a loss of equality.*

Annie, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

One organisation felt that specific and minority groups were especially challenged by austerity, experiencing cuts as funding was assigned to groups that catered for a wider demographic. This reflects existing research findings by Abbas and Lachman (2012).

All but one of the organisations that I visited during my research were registered as charities with the Charity Commission<sup>66</sup>. Soup Outreach was not a registered charity. They were registered as a not-for-profit company. They were funded entirely by crowd funding, although this was not a term that the founder recognised. The founder of Soup Outreach located funding via the use of the digital media Facebook<sup>67</sup> and Twitter<sup>68</sup>. Soup Outreach had over five hundred likes on Facebook and when the organisation needed funding or donations in kind they appealed via digital media for these items. Funding opportunities existed within the VCS to develop private sector working relationships and innovative funding models such as crowd funding. As yet the VCS of Greater Manchester has not fully explored these possibilities.

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<sup>66</sup> **The Charity Commission.** A national governance body that holds a voluntary registration of charities [www.charitycomission.org.uk](http://www.charitycomission.org.uk)

<sup>67</sup> **Facebook.** Facebook is a free online social networking service [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

<sup>68</sup> **Twitter** Twitter is a free online social networking service that enables users to send and read short messages [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Alternative funding streams seemed to be moving away from the public sector towards the private sector and crowd funding<sup>69</sup>, as evidenced by this excerpt from my field notes:

*[Soup Outreach] is not a registered charity. It is a not-for-profit company. It is funded entirely by crowd funding although [Alex] did not recognise that word. She put the bank details on Twitter and on Facebook and asked people to donate. This funds the organisation. If she puts a call out for something in particular she knows that she will get it in one or two days from people's donations. She had over 500 likes on Facebook and communicates directly with donors through Facebook and Twitter – when she has people's permission then she shares people's stories to get donations.* Field Notes, Soup Outreach

Changes in funding availability and criteria have led to organisations needing to work together to apply for funding bids. Organisations shared that there was a need for capacity building within the sector. Improved networking had enabled organisations to access training from other organisations, and share organisational expertise and resources. Some private sector organisations have become involved in supporting the VCS of Greater Manchester. A graduate recruitment agency based in London moved up to Manchester in early 2014. It is a private sector company that places interns into the charity sector<sup>70</sup>. When I arrived at Sophie's organisation, I noted in my field notes that:

*The director of [organisation] wasn't available when I arrived as she was on a conference call with Charity Works, a graduate recruitment and internship company moving into the Manchester recruitment market from London.* Field Notes, Advice Adult Social Care Charity

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<sup>69</sup> **Crowd funding.** Crowd funding is the practice of obtaining funding for a project from a large number of people. This often occurs via social media. There is a variety of crowd funding websites available. *The Telegraph* (11.11.13) provided a list of the best crowd funding websites.

<sup>70</sup> **Charity Works** <http://www.charity-works.co.uk/>

This was an opportunity for the sector to expand its staff and link into private enterprise. Engaging with the private sector, either in order to gain intern staff or to achieve funding, is as yet an underused resource. Dayson et al. (2013) identified that the VCS had not developed strong links with the private sector and my research supports this.

Competition for contracts was a significant concern, mentioned at all of the participatory workshops and interviews. Larger and national organisations, alongside private companies, were entering the contracting arena. G4S<sup>71</sup> was a company that VCS groups felt particularly threatened by. During participatory workshop one groups were asked to consider the challenges that they were experiencing. Feedback from a discussion group during participatory workshop one was shared by Theo:

*With larger and national organisations as well as private companies such as G4S competing for contracts, competition for contracts is changing. There are changes in commissioners, our relational links have altered and sometimes are being removed. Funding criteria are changing, we [the VCS] moved towards local authority funding some years ago, then this approach was removed with the Coalition government. There has been a movement in policy, it feels hostile. The emphasis has moved from 'support' to 'self-resilience'. There is an increasing complexity to contracting and at the same time increasing demand for our services.* Theo, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop One

Local authorities were contracting out but only certain sized organisations could bid for the contracts. The first participatory workshop suggested that medium sized charities were being squeezed out of the bidding process. Private sector companies such as Serco<sup>72</sup> and G4S were bidding successfully for what were previously VCS funding contracts. These large private sector

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<sup>71</sup> **G4S** G4S is the leading global integrated security company, specialising in the provision of security products, services and solutions. <http://www.g4s.com/>

<sup>72</sup> **Serco** Serco is a service delivery contractor <http://www.serco.com/about/vision/index.asp>

companies were bidding for contracts and choosing to undercut the VCS, as they were able to take on some loss leaders. VCS groups in the first participatory workshop questioned if priorities had to change because of the privatisation of services. A question raised by the VCS was that if the government was developing a smaller non-interventionist state then should the VCS look to privatise or to locate private funders in order to maintain its services. There were considerable differences of opinion within the workshop over this issue. Short-term contracts and reduced funding were causing significant stress within the VCS workforce. There was pressure to work harder and pressures associated with responding to change.

Changing commissioners of services and the altering of relational links has had a significant impact on the funding environment. Changing funding criteria and the shifting focus of funding were a challenge for the VCS groups. In the first participatory workshop, feedback groups shared their concerns regarding the changing nature of funding, as this excerpt from my field notes evidences:

*The statutory sector are contracting out services but only certain sized organisations can bid ... medium sized charities are being squeezed out. Serco, G4S they can bid for contracts as loss leaders, this means that they can bid very low. Then the contracted companies are paying front line works less.* Theo, Field notes, Participatory Workshop

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Groups in participatory workshop one gave the example that there had been a move towards local authority funding some years before, but that the Coalition government had removed that approach. These VCS groups shared that they had found the shifting policy focus difficult to manage. The funding emphasis had moved from 'support' to 'self-resilience'. The experiences shared in the participatory workshops by VCS groups were reflected in those of people I interviewed individually. Sophie shared that the VCS organisation in which she was based was

heavily reliant on contracts from the local NHS and the local authority and was facing significant cuts in 2014, and this impacted on their service delivery:

*austerity is starting to pinch.* Sophie, Interview, Equalities Adult Social Care Charity

Globalisation was a concern shared by the VCS within participatory workshop one. A European Union objective requires any contracts over £100,000 to be opened up for bids across the EU<sup>73</sup>. The VCS of Greater Manchester felt threatened by this, although it could not give examples of when a local contract had gone to an EU rather than a British VCS organisation.

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<sup>73</sup> **EU Funding.** It was unclear which European Union funding policy the participants were referring to; however, it seems they were referring to the EU Public Procurement Directives, with principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency. Contractors should not be favoured because they are local, small or from the VCS. Information on EU funding can be accessed from this website: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/funding-debt/european-regional-development-funding>

## 5.4 Chapter Summary

As my research developed and participatory workshops, participant observation and semi-structured interviews gathered pace, I began to develop a sense of how the VCS of Greater Manchester was experiencing Coalition policy. The VCS spoke of emic themes: propping up the state, partnership working and leadership. As I read through the literature and considered it in reference to my Greater Manchester VCS research data, I was then able to develop etic themes: bifurcation, isomorphism, silencing. VCS organisations have adapted and sought opportunities through austerity using networks and partnerships to develop services and apply for funding. VCS groups were starting to link into private sector funding and resources, although my research discovered no examples of where private sector funding was successfully supporting VCS service provision. This finding supports Dayson et al.'s (2013) findings that the private sector was an as yet underused resource. Crowd funding was being used successfully by some organisations, such as Soup Outreach. Digital media were a real opportunity for the VCS, and the emergence of free communication tools such as Facebook and Twitter have enabled even the smallest of organisations to engage with funders and supporters, as reflected in national research (Amar 2014).

The VCS of Greater Manchester was facing a multiplicity of challenges (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, GMCVO 2012b, Davidson and Packham 2012). These challenges often stem from funding and contracting constraints yet they permeated the very identity of the sector, causing it to question its identity, mission and voice. Some have linked threats or constraints imposed by purchaser-providers to alternative sources of funding, though engagement contracts have had wide-ranging impacts, in many cases silencing the campaigning voice of the VCS. The adult social care VCS that participated in my research found opportunities within austerity to adapt and develop; however, this attempt at resilience can be

critiqued (Mayo et al. 2013). Resilience arguably should not be required, and the VCS should not need to adapt, develop isomorphic relationships with powerful public sector bodies and rely on the commitment of key individuals for survival. My research found that the small and large organisations in the VCS of Greater Manchester are currently facing major challenges of silencing, funding and identity. These research findings reflect national research on the challenges faced by the VCS (NCIA 2015, VSNW and CLES 2013, Milbourne 2013).

This chapter has considered my research findings regarding how the VCS of Greater Manchester has been affected by austerity, having considered the macro level context of the VCS experience from a historical and ideological context in my literature review in chapter three. This chapter has offered a meso level Greater Manchester analysis, based on my research findings. The VCS of Greater Manchester has experienced a range of opportunities during austerity, and it has shown resilience and drawn on those opportunities in order to respond and build organisational strength. Different sized organisations have had different experiences; larger organisations have arguably had the resources to be more sustainable and the capacity to access funding and to develop during austerity. Smaller organisations have struggled to access funding but have linked into alternative sources of funding through engagement with digital media. This fits with research into the experiences of the VCS at a national level (Milbourne and Murray 2011). Austerity has brought a range of challenges from funding to voice and equality.

The effects of new neoliberal public management strategies on the adult social care sector have been seen since the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act. The VCS has traditionally been presented as providing a distinctive approach to care (Macmillan 2013), in that it has offered a better quality of care. Organisationally, VCS care providers that have been

contract providers have in fact been required to operate as businesses, which has changed their organisational structures and arguably removed this distinctiveness.

The VCS of Greater Manchester is experiencing hard times, yet through these challenges it is negotiating opportunities (Milbourne 2013). At a regional level the issues around isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and privatisation (Cordelli 2012, Malani and Posner 2007) identified in my literature review are certainly present. There is a tendency to see the VCS organisations as 'subjects of modernisation' rather than 'agents for modernisation'. My research suggests that there is a tendency by public sector funders to overlook the importance of the VCS in civil society. The VCS can be and is an innovator, an agent of change, and is reacting in new ways to the challenge of austerity. My research findings evidence this. However, with this innovation comes the challenge of maintaining mission and remaining true to organisational values:

In their quest to be economically sustainable, VCOs may have to adopt the values and approaches of the commercial (for profit) sector to shape their government and management systems. These actions risk social mission drift, confused accountability and erosion of charitable values. (Bruce and Chew 2011:157)

The opportunities and challenges that the VCS is experiencing are, however, not equal. Wider research into the VCS of Greater Manchester suggests that contract arrangements and funding cuts have decimated the sector (Davidson and Packham 2015, Dayson et al. 2013), yet my research has found that the VCS has reacted and responded to these challenging times. It has utilised assets and reinvigorated networks in order to respond to austerity. Here the theme of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2000) might be applied to the Greater Manchester VCS's experiences of Coalition policy. Symbolic violence is the experience of violence that is not necessarily recognised by the victim. Symbolic violence is 'how institutional language and

implementation of procedural norms can be a form of symbolic violence' (Morgan et al. 2006:441). Bourdieu (2000) suggests that symbolic violence can be experienced at an institutional level. Arguably, the VCS is experiencing symbolic violence at an institutional level because of the simultaneously isomorphic and privatising tendencies of Coalition policy. I will return to consider institutional level symbolic violence in chapters seven and eight.

My PhD explores the opportunities and challenges for voluntary sector organisations in Greater Manchester posed by Coalition policy. This chapter has provided a Greater Manchester picture of the adult social care VCS. My next chapter will examine one Greater Manchester adult social care VCS organisation in detail, drawing on my analysis of my research findings within a small VCS group. This will build up a tri-layered picture of the national context, the Greater Manchester context and a detailed examination of one VCS organisational experience in order that I might explore the opportunities and challenges posed by austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester. Having examined my research findings on the experiences of the VCS in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government I now examine the experiences of one homelessness adult social care organisation, CareGM. I develop themes and experiences of CareGM under Coalition policy. I consider the experiences of CareGM in reference to the themes I develop from this Greater Manchester chapter and seek to draw out organisationally specific analysis.

## **CHAPTER SIX: The Experiences of One Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation, CareGM**

### **6.1 Introduction**

I have taken a tri-level approach to my analysis, examining the experiences of the VCS during austerity from a national, Greater Manchester and single VCS organisation approach. Chapters two and three reviewed the literature regarding the historical, ideological and policy context of the VCS from a national macro level perspective. I then moved on to examine my meso level research findings from the participatory research and interviews with the VCS of Greater Manchester in chapter five. This chapter now examines my micro level research findings. It first introduces my experiences of conducting research within CareGM, then CareGM as an organisation then moves to describing the organisational partnership in which it operates and its faith-based environment.

This chapter offers a detailed ethnographic examination of the effects of austerity on CareGM, a VCS organisation based in Greater Manchester, and my experiences of conducting the research. I have used pseudonyms for the organisations and staff that I discuss<sup>74</sup>. My research was carried out March 2014 until December 2014. This chapter is made up of the ethnographic research findings from one participatory sustainable livelihoods workshop<sup>75</sup>, nine participant observation sessions and fourteen semi-structured interviews with key informants.

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<sup>74</sup> A full list of my research interactions is available in Appendix Five

<sup>75</sup> A full copy of the SLA of CareGM is in Appendix Seven.

## **6.2 How my Research was Conducted: Reflections and Rituals**

I visited CareGM, the organisation in which my micro level study was based, ten times between March 2014 and December 2014. Most of the ethnography was a mix of observation and participant observation of meetings. My first visit began a series of very similar visits, with a similar structure to each visit. I arrived early as I live over 40 miles from CareGM. I would go to the local supermarket, buy lunch and think through what I wished to achieve from the visit. This process was a very important part of situating myself within the research. I had driven from a very middle class, rural area. I spent most of my time caring for my two young sons who were aged four years and six months when I began my ethnographic research. It was important for me to take some time to move from mother to researcher, because these are separate roles, although linked for me. Nicholson (1992) suggests that the home and the family cannot be clearly separated from each other, drawing connections between the two spheres. These familial linkages link into Myrdal and Klein's (1956) notion of women's dual roles and Ramazanoglu's (1989) notion of women's triple roles. The dual (homemaker, mother) or triple (homemaker, worker, mother) roles that I undertake are difficult to manage and require time to move between. The ritual of arriving early and taking time to situate myself in my research setting was important to my process of moving from my identity as a mother to my role as researcher.

### **6.2.1 Embodied Experience of Fieldwork**

Fieldwork is an embodied experience (Coffey 1999). After my first visit when I realised that wearing a dress in a predominantly male environment made me feel very uncomfortable, I made efforts to wear professional but very modest clothes. I chose never to wear jeans as I wished to be dressed as a researcher not a service user but chose instead trousers and

smart tops. My choice of dress was an attempt to recognise and adapt to my multiple self-identities as mother, student and VCS professional (Lincoln 1997). This also posed a challenge for me as a new mother, having gained weight during pregnancy, I did not fit into many of my work clothes in my wardrobe. Here my intersectional roles (Skeggs 2013, Ryle 2012, Phoenix 1994) as student, mother to an infant and professional proved to be a challenge.

Once the pre-arranged visit time arrived, I drove to the centre and left my car in the car park. I took time to put anything obvious from the car into the boot as signs in the car park warned of regular car theft. I was always welcomed by a support worker or another staff member, who buzzed me in through the door and then came to meet me. There was a ritual that developed around signing in and catching up on events since my last visit. Part of my welcome was always to offer me a cup of tea, so I would stand at the canteen section of the centre and discuss various pieces of small talk and family life with the volunteers behind the counter. Depending on if the weather was hot or cold, volunteers would often have made speciality drinks such as mango juice or hot apple juice. These were shared among volunteers, staff and service users. It was an important part of the rituals of welcome to the centre, so much so that the service user entrance was right next to the tea urn. Service users in the summer could sit outside on the grass but pop their head in through the door.

### **6.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

On each visit I tried to conduct two semi-structured interviews with staff, trustees or volunteers. The support worker arranged this with the interviewees in advance of my visit. Most of the time the support worker arranged the people that I would interview but I also requested to interview representatives from CareGM's partners. I interviewed these people

in a variety of places. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) discuss the impact of interview conditions, context and atmosphere on the interview.

A regular spot for interviews was the chapel. This was used by the Local Evangelical Mission (LEM) congregation but was really a large room with a big leather table at the end that was used as an altar. These interviews often felt quite formal, as it was a quiet room with few interruptions. Another regular spot when the centre was busy, or if they had a particularly violent service user in and staff wished to remain in the main section to support each other, was the mezzanine. This was at the top of some stairs that led off the main dining space. From here the interviewee could view the complete dining space and respond to any incident quickly. These interviews were very different. They were much more informal but also much more distracted. Service users and other staff would walk past and engage in small talk or the interviewee would answer my questions whilst looking out at the dining space, scanning for trouble. Other interviews were conducted in office and meeting spaces, which again created a more formal space but one in which the interviewee felt comfortable so often responded more authoritatively. When my interviews were finished I sat in the main dining space and made conversation with volunteers or service users. The conversations with service users were very interesting, but as I did not have ethical approval to research service user perceptions of the centre I was nervous of engaging in detailed conversation. Most interaction with service users was kept to small talk, playing board games and discussing the food on offer or the weather. I was asked on a date by one service user, which presented a very awkward moment until I shared that I was a student researching the centre and I was staying on after closing time to work with staff.

As the centre's closing time approached, service users were ushered out and the cleaning process began. All staff service users and trustees engaged in the centre cleaning. Norman,

the pastor, always cleaned the toilets and I would brush the floors or disinfect the tables. This shared culture of work broke down staff/volunteer boundaries and brought the team together (Jowett and O'Toole 2006, deLaine 2000). Banter and teasing were enthusiastically engaged in and laughter was shared.

### **6.2.3 Participant Observation**

From about 2pm the centre was closed. One Wednesday per month the staff and volunteer team held an afternoon meeting, called a debrief. This was a chance to discuss client development and organisational changes and generally download ideas and ways of responding to centre need. As the researcher I was taking notes anyway and at the first session it was just rather assumed that these were minutes. So my role as participant observer moved from brushing the floor to taking meeting minutes.

I took the minutes at each meeting. Hope, the support worker, prepared an agenda which usually consisted of client updates, updates on campaigning and ideas for service changes. The debrief meeting was attended by Dom, the Advice Clinic volunteer, the support workers and several volunteers. The volunteers tended to change at each meeting but the support workers and Dom were always there. The meeting took a similar format with informal discussion interspersed with planning. I noted that changes were piloted and decisions made were enacted swiftly. This was not an organisation that sat on its laurels. I was often asked for advice throughout this meeting – I moved fluidly between minute taker to adviser to student asking for clarification of acronyms (Lincoln 1997). This movement and positioning were aided by having attended many similar types of meeting during previous job roles as residential social worker and child and adolescent mental health worker.

After the meeting the centre closed. Everyone left for home. I said my goodbyes and signed out. I returned to my car in the car park and drove home. Meetings times were arranged so

that staff could leave in the daylight, as there was often discussion around not feeling safe in the car park after dusk.

Having discussed my reflections about the research process, I will now consider how my research developed.

#### **6.2.4 Developing the Analysis**

When I began my research at CareGM I expected similar themes to my Greater Manchester research to emerge, reflecting those themes developed during my literature review. In some senses I was right, and issues such as acute poverty, mission and silencing of campaign roles did emerge from my ethnography with CareGM. However, perhaps because of the unique nature of the organisation or perhaps due to the extended time that I spent as a researcher conducting the ethnography of CareGM, new themes began to emerge. CareGM was operating at a time of increased need with limited resources and with a chaotic and occasionally violent client group.

Themes began to emerge around symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1984) that were not present to the same extent at national or Greater Manchester levels. This next section explores these themes and the interrelationships between a close knit, supportive organisation and the threats that it experienced. As with chapter five, both etic and emic themes are interwoven, with etic themes emerging from the emic themes used by staff to explain and understand their experiences. From these interwoven themes I then develop my contribution to original knowledge, shared in chapter seven. I will now introduce CareGM as an organisation.

### 6.3 CareGM

CareGM is an adult social care VCS organisation based in Greater Manchester that operates within the homelessness subsector of the VCS. It is a faith-based drop-in centre that offers community services to a mainly homeless or vulnerably housed client group. The day centre is a complex partnership between CareGM (a registered charity which runs the centre) and LEM, which owns the building and uses it for other purposes at other times, e.g. a homeless night shelter, church on Sunday and meeting/prayer space. The day centre is open three days a week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday to clients, and on Tuesday as staff preparation day. Formal partnership documents exist regarding payment of shared utilities but the partnership is made real by the staff and volunteers of LEM and CareGM. Boundary spanning (Williams 2002) is a key skill of all staff and volunteers within the partnership; the client<sup>76</sup> would not necessarily see the boundaries between LEM, CareGM and other partners within the day centre.

#### 6.3.1 Mission

In its 2013/14 Annual Review CareGM gives its core values as embracing people, meeting needs, empowering individuals and offering hope (AR (Annual Review) 2014). These are not explicitly faith-based values. The organisational logo does not suggest an FBO. The day centre offers a café, showers, laundry services and clothing. After it had been based in the local cathedral for twenty-five years, the cathedral no longer wanted CareGM operating from its basement. Despite a professional tone in their Annual Review (AR 2014), staff speak of this experience, of the organisation being told to leave the cathedral's basement, as if they were evicted. My ethnographic research discovered a sense of bitterness and of being let

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<sup>76</sup> I have used the terms 'client' or 'service user' to refer to a person using the centre's services. I have used these words as they were the terms used at CareGM by employees, volunteers and trustees to refer to the people using their services. I am aware that the terminology used to refer to people using services is a contested space, fraught with emotional responses, notions of empowerment and disempowerment, and critiques regarding the transactional nature of care (McLaughlin 2009). However, I have chosen to use the terms used by the staff, volunteers and trustees with a view to authentically representing their voice.

down, feelings of 'not being good enough' for the cathedral anymore. Gail, a trustee and kitchen volunteer, shared her thoughts on leaving the cathedral:

*In 2007 we were in the basement of the Cathedral ... the cathedral felt that the homeless were not the sort of people that they wanted falling out of their cathedral at seven in the morning. [LEM] had a home and [CareGM] needed a home.* Gail, Interview

CareGM met LEM in 2007 and a partnership was formed to deliver a day centre from LEM premises in Greater Manchester. The partnership arrangement is described in the Annual Review as 'a collaborative agreement which forms the bedrock of this ecumenical venture and our management of the [day centre]' (AR 2014:2). It is impossible to discuss partnership without exploring the inequalities of partnership and power within partnership. The Annual Review 2013/14 states that both parties are responsible for the day-to-day running of the project. CareGM provides the project, finance, services and employees of the drop-in centre. LEM provides the building and its maintenance. The reality of collaborative partnership is messy, complex and varied but despite tensions and miscommunications it seems to work for its clients. The messy, often complex nature of partnership working is evidenced nationally by Williams (2002).

### **6.3.2 CareGM Clients**

The CareGM Annual Review states that clients that use the drop-in centre are eighty-four per cent male (AR 2014). Homelessness is a heavily gendered experience (Smith 1996). It is often argued that homelessness is a largely male experience (Higate 2000a), with homeless women avoiding street homelessness by remaining in abusive relationships or retreating to the shadows rather than engaging in street homeless behaviours such as using soup kitchens (Wardhaugh, 1999). However, May et al. (2007) traced the experiences of a wide variety of street homeless women: those who distance themselves from the wider street

homeless population for fear of violence, those who are highly visible on the street homeless scene and those who are visible members of street drinking groups. It is clear that homelessness is heavily gendered (Cloke et al. 2010) and my research findings at the CareGM drop-in centre reflect that.

### **6.3.3 Increasing Need**

CareGM was seeing an increase in poverty and need across the community but also specifically within their client group. Sarah, who held an administrative role within CareGM, shared that:

*Clients have been really affected by the funding cuts over the last few years. Clients have been affected in terms of increased need for food parcels and benefit support. I hear it a lot, more clients needing food parcels.* Sarah, Interview

This reflects increasing levels of poverty nationally (Lansley and Mack 2015). Throughout my research period staff shared that clients that used the day centre were accessing CareGM's support in greater numbers and with a greater complexity of problems. CareGM was aspiring to put support and proactive strategies in place to avoid difficult situations. Their aim was to anticipate questions, comments and strategies to avoid the recurrence of issues.

There were significant cuts to local authority services: mental health drop-in services were being shut down and CareGM was becoming the last place the clients could go. CareGM was working across its networks to try to respond as a collective. It had a strong mission focus, As Hope, an experienced staff member who had been with CareGM since its inception in 2007, shared during the first debrief meeting that I attended:

*we need to focus on the best way to help the service users.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, March

CareGM was starting to see people in deep distress, people with nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep. Norman, the pastor, shared that staff struggled with the emotional consequences of the need that they saw in their clients, saying that staff had been:

*broken-hearted, moved to tears, they have been shocked, appalled and angry at the levels of need that their clients were experiencing.* Norman, Interview

The number of people in desperate need increased so CareGM had to change the way that it served food. Previously if someone came in between twelve noon and 1pm in the day, they had to pay for food. After 1pm food was always free. As the recession continued more and more people had no access to food or access to the money to buy the lunch at CareGM. The increased levels of food poverty reflect national research (Landsley and Mack 2015, Lambie-Mumford 2014). CareGM changed their policy as a result of increased need; if someone came in at 12.15pm and kitchen staff saw they needed a free meal they had the discretion to give it to them. This had not caused any problems between paying and non-paying customers. Gail, a trustee, described the pride that people have in being able to pay; they had one client who when he received his benefits paid for his lunch in advance. CareGM charged sixty pence; this was not the actual cost, simply a contribution towards the cost. Gail was a trustee who had given up her summer to volunteer in the kitchen. She and her husband worked together, with the help of other volunteers, to achieve a five star hygiene rating for the kitchens in response to a previously poor rating:

*We offer quite a bit of free food. We have more people now that do not have a penny. We let the kitchen staff decide [who should have free food]. All food after 1pm is free anyway but if they come in at 12.15 then the kitchen staff decide. Before, the kitchen staff told people to wait until 1pm but that really divided people and it wasn't nice having to make people wait until 1pm and then get up for food. It identified them as different, so now*

*kitchen staff decide. It has not caused problems because clients take pride in being able to pay. There is a lad on benefits who pays in advance. When he gets his benefits he comes straight in here and says 'Here's me tenner.'* Gail, Interview

This change in food distribution reflected a broader increase in food poverty nationally (Trussell Trust 2015, *The Telegraph* 2013a).

Having briefly described CareGM, its mission and client group I will now focus on the themes that arose from my analysis.

## 6.4 Organisational Identity

A theme that was evident at the beginning of my research with CareGM was its strong sense of organisational identity. This changed as Coalition policy began to take effect. Recession and austerity had increased the profile of CareGM within the community and with partner organisations. Hope, an experienced support worker at CareGM, shared that:

*The service reduced [referring to a reduction in opening hours in 2010] as demand has increased. There is an increased intensity of people, you know. More people are using the centre with extreme needs ... [austerity] has raised the profile of [organisation]. [organisation] has always ticked by but suddenly ... well, councils and health workers didn't have a lot to do with us but now [CareGM] are invited to homelessness strategy meetings. Suddenly health workers are sending people to come to you for different services.* Hope, Interview

Before the recession the local authority and NHS bodies had less involvement with CareGM but after 2008 CareGM was invited to homelessness strategy meetings. CareGM was also receiving many more referrals from different public services. The increase in demand changed organisational responses. Hope shared that before CareGM was a:

*one-stop shop, clients could come to [CareGM] and they [CareGM] would look after me ... now we are not able to do that, we have to signpost [to other agencies],* Hope, Interview

CareGM had to change the way that it worked with clients. It had to develop relationships with other agencies. Recession had increased CareGM's organisational identity; it became aware of

the local VCS community and created partnerships locally to support campaigns such as No Second Night Out.

CareGM had tried to be more strategic in response to austerity, for example in its creation of the partnership with Advice Clinic. It recognised client needs then responded in a solution-focussed manner. However, as need increased under austerity measures, Tammy shared that CareGM felt the effects directly:

*There has always been need but now I do think that people have reached desperation. We [CareGM] are their lifeline. We can feel the change, the worry ... people are manic with the effects of benefit cuts.* Tammy, Interview

Tammy had worked with CareGM for a number of years, and having experienced other recessions during her working life offered a sense of perspective on client experience. CareGM decided that from January 2015 the day centre would start opening on a Friday, which Norman, the pastor, shared he felt would help raise staff morale:

*[organisation] will start opening on Friday in January. This will help raise staff morale as they can help people around them.* Norman, Interview

Norman felt that the opportunity to offer services on more days would at least offer the staff an opportunity to feel like they could offer continuity of care. He shared the staff sense of concern for clients on the days that the centre was closed, especially in the cold winter months.

## 6.5 The Building

The building was a recurring theme, discussed frequently by staff and volunteers in interviews and during participant observations of debrief meetings. From these discussions of organisational space and building maintenance emerged a more nuanced understanding of how staff understood the space as the material embodiment of care (Dale 2005, Lefebvre 1970). The building in which CareGM was based was purpose-built as a secular youth centre in the 1960s as part of the regeneration phase that saw back-to-back terraced housing demolished and high-rise flats built in its place (Nevell 2011). Greater Manchester was undergoing a new phase of regeneration which involved the demolition of many of the high-rise blocks of flats that towered around the drop-in centre.

The space was adapted for its new use by LEM. The building had seen heavy use over the years and it had a tired, institutionalised feeling to it. The building was originally a purpose-built youth club and as such was not really fit for purpose as a hostel or day centre. The buildings had not been maintained over the years so there were many maintenance issues. Tom, a senior manager with LEM, the organisation that CareGM worked in partnership with, shared a short history of the space:

*[LEM] own the building, we would love to bulldoze it and get a purpose-built one but it would cost a lot of money. It was originally a youth centre. The Night Shelter was originally a sports hall but after a trial period we created the mezzanine floor.* Tom,  
Interview

The staff and volunteers clearly tried to brighten it up as best they could with pictures on the walls and, when Alice volunteered in the kitchen, flowers on the tables. The faith-based nature of the building's current use was not overtly obvious as there were no signs and symbols of faith within the drop-in centre itself.

The client entrance to CareGM brought them off the street into the centre's kitchen space. Clients could queue for a cup of tea at one end of the counter and, as the counter swept around in a semi-circle, they could get food from the canteen end. There were tables and chairs set up café style in this main space. Around the edges of this central space were the prayer room, used by Norman, the pastor, and the support workroom, which was also used on Wednesdays by Dom, a volunteer from Advice Clinic, one of CareGM's partnership organisations. There was also a little room used by the GP's receptionist from NHS Health Matters as an initial consulting space. Just off the dining space was a lounge area. This lounge had a number of hard, very old and dirty seats and a pool table. Off the main dining space was a key-coded door that led through the CareGM office space to the church and the church toilets.

There was a corridor on the other side of the dining space that led to the night shelter dormitory. There were stairs that led up towards a mezzanine area where the NHS Health Matters GP and GP's receptionist had office space. LEM had a section of offices there too. There was a huge storage area that the night shelter used and a small caged section given to CareGM. This was used by CareGM to store donations of food and clothes. CareGM was supposed to keep all its donations in the caged area, but donations often spilled over at busy times, such as Harvest Festival<sup>77</sup>. The storage area was a relatively new mezzanine over what used to be a sports hall and was now used as a dormitory for the night shelter.

The building at CareGM was repaired and other maintenance work undertaken during the time of my research project. The centre shut down in August for three weeks during which significant maintenance and redecorating work was undertaken. However, prior to this redecoration and repair the building was physically in quite a poor state. After several periods of heavy rain that had caused flooding throughout the country, the CareGM building was quite damaged. In the

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<sup>77</sup> **Harvest Festival.** Harvest Festival is a Christian festival celebrating the traditional harvesting of crops in October. Christians then distribute the crops, fruit and vegetables (or in modern society any food stuffs) to the poor. <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Give/Harvest-Appeal-2015?gclid=CLb6seLeo8gCFWau2wodst0Cog>

staff-only office area, several fans were running during my May visit to dry out the staff room. The repairs to the damage caused by the flooding put a strain on the building's owner, LEM. Sarah, a part-time administrator for CareGM, suggested that LEM quite possibly could not afford to repair the flood damage immediately:

*During the recent flooding the water came through into the office. It is a challenge financially. [partner organisation] probably can't afford to fix it immediately. It hard to say if that's a direct impact of the recession though.* Sarah, Interview

In the office used by Advice Clinic I was warned not to sit in the corner. Part of the room was divided off and a big sign stated that the ceiling was likely to collapse. Water was dripping through the ceiling, causing a big stain, and the ceiling was very warped. By July, however, the hole in the ceiling had been repaired and bare plasterwork was drying. Due to the organisational history when CareGM was asked to leave its previous building, the cathedral, there was a sense of gratitude that they had found a new organisational home:

*[LEM] had a space ... which it very generous, we are grateful.* Gail, Interview

CareGM felt that it should not complain about the damp, the leaking roof or the lack of space. There were some tensions between CareGM and LEM over the speed of building repairs. LEM had spoken to their insurers who informed LEM that the roof was a maintenance issue and not covered by insurance. LEM had had a quote of over £19,000 to repair the roof and was considering how it might locate these funds.

The use of organisational space was constantly being reviewed. The shower space within the centre was reviewed in July and the creation of a new shower system was initiated. Previously clients had had to wait until 8am to buy fresh underwear from the shop before they could queue for a shower. Paul, the floor manager, identified this as an issue that affected client dignity. He

reorganised the system so that underwear was in the showers alongside shower gel, and clients could shower when they left the night shelter. Paul also proposed other shower developments for the building. He wrote a proposal for the trustees suggesting that they fit the showers with 'cowboy style' swinging cubicles to allow two people to shower at the same time, thereby reducing the shower queue. This idea was supported by CareGM trustees, although they expected a long process of negotiating the building work with the building owner, LEM.

Partnership arrangements with LEM often required significant negotiation and discussion regarding changes to the building or the addition of equipment. This reflects wider research regarding managing partnerships (Williams 2002). A long-winded discussion took place in the October trustee meeting about the addition of a second washing machine. The washing machine within the building was monopolised by the night shelter. Paul, floor manager at CareGM, and the night shelter manager worked well together to negotiate the use of the washing machine, but as the night shelter was at full capacity there was a lot of washing to do. However, it was not as simple as getting a new washing machine. There was an issue with the building's electricity supply, as it did not have the right supply for its current usage. The director of LEM, the owner of the buildings, had a quote to increase the electricity supply but this quote was £36,000. LEM were therefore very keen not to overload the electricity supply.

This constant renegotiation of partnership arrangements and the effects of limited investment on the organisational space affected how CareGM was able to operate. My analysis led me to an understanding of how the embodied materiality of a poorly maintained building, not built or really fit for purpose, impacted on how CareGM was able to respond to the challenges of Coalition policy. This embodied materiality fits a conceptualisation of 'social materiality' as developed by Dale (2005), whereby social processes and structures and material processes and structures are seen as mutually enacting. Dale's (2005) theory develops Lefebvre's (1970) work on the

'social production of space', and sociological and phenomenological approaches to embodiment. The space was important to CareGM staff, volunteers and trustees; it was a material embodiment of the support they offered to their clients. I shall now move on to their embodied support: CareGM's mission focus.

## 6.6 Mission Focus

A theme that was key to CareGM staff and volunteers was organisational mission. Staff and volunteers at CareGM stated that austerity made the organisational mission clearer. CareGM's organisational values were empowerment, hope and responding to need (AR 2014). Austerity made the organisation more focussed on empowering people and supporting people in a certain way. Several staff and volunteers did not know the organisation's four core values by heart but knew that there was a clear focus on supporting people and empowerment within the organisational ethos. Hussein shared that although he did not know the four key values off by heart, he knew that they were in the Annual Report:

*We do all those things [4 core values] and more. The cuts reinforce the need to meet our core values clearly.* Hussein, Interview

The way that CareGM supported people was about being on that person's side, offering clients hope and telling clients that CareGM believed in them. It was felt by several staff that whilst the organisational mission remained the same, its workload increased, and this affected the amount of support work that could be offered to clients. Tammy, an experienced support worker with Care GM, shared:

*We are busier and we do more. Where I would like to get back on track is on the pastoral side. Having more time to talk to people. We used to have time. For example, [female service user outside interview room] comes in three times a week for lunch. She is socially isolated. We are so busy ....* Tammy, Interview

Norman, the pastor, felt that in the two years that he had worked at CareGM the organisation had become more streamlined and more professionalised in its approach:

*I have worked here for two years. The organisation has become more streamlined. There is a more professional approach; people are moving towards a more professional approach. There has been the introduction of [name] as floor manager. The Kitchen has been turned around – it now has a health and safety rating of five. The centre is now much more on the ball regarding support work. There has been the introduction of Hussein. Hussein is very au fait re benefits and helps [advice organisation]. He is a volunteer with a specific interest.* Norman, Interview

### **6.6.1 Key Values**

Developing from CareGM's mission focus were its core values. Whilst CareGM had four key values, it lacked a mission statement. CareGM's mission was a broad one and fitted in with LEM's three-step mission: incarnation, compassion and proclamation. Incarnation was about being alongside people in the centre, being part of a community, being personal and having familiarity. Compassion was allowing personal relationships, exploring poverty within these relationships and putting oneself on the line and responding to people's needs. Proclamation was proclaiming the gospel. Paul stated that they very rarely got to the proclamation part of the mission as staff were so busy with steps one and two. For Paul, faith was part of his approach and who he was.

As a result of the recession changes were twofold. The breadth of need increased and there was a greater variety of people using the centre, as well as a greater throughput of clients. Paul shared that individual client needs had also changed with austerity. There were a lot more clients with complex mental health and addiction issues wrapped up together. The ability to respond to any one issue was harder. The local mental health drop-in facility had closed so there were a lot more people with mental health issues but no support. Paul, floor manager with

CareGM, had volunteered with them in 2007, then moved abroad to work in a homeless shelter overseas for a few years. He had recently returned to CareGM in a paid role:

*There has been a change; there is less of the third step [proclamation] than there used to be. Steps one and two [incarnation and compassion] are demanding. The felt needs are so great that you can exhaust yourself there really ... [effects of austerity] the changes are twofold. Firstly the breadth of need, there are a greater variety of people using the centre. In 2007 there was more stability, you knew who would be in. Now there is a great throughput of clients, the centre has a wider reach. Secondly, individuals have changed. There are lots more clients with complex mental health and addiction needs all wrapped up together. Our ability to respond to any one issue is harder. The mental health drop-in has closed, there are a lot more people facing mental health problems. Paul, Interview*

I return to the theme of the praxis (Freire 1974) focussed faith-based nature of CareGM in chapter seven. Having considered CareGM's organisational mission I will now consider their organisational voice.

## 6.7 Organisational Voice

As I spent time with CareGM, organisational voice emerged as a theme. When asked, most staff volunteers and trustees did not think of CareGM as a campaigning organisation. CareGM was described as a service delivery organisation that wanted to sit within a network of local authority and NHS bodies:

*[CareGM] is not really a campaigning organisation. We want to sit within a network; between the local authority and the PCT, as it was before [Primary Care Trusts had recently become CCGs]. We don't want to speak up, [CareGM] is about delivering services ... staff have expressed concern about cuts to services in a letter, where cuts will have a direct impact on service users, but are careful not to be political. We try to express concern where cuts are going to have a local impact.* Hope, Interview

I was informed right at the end of my research period by the LEM director that the chair of CareGM was a local councillor:

*[CareGM] do more on the campaigning side than [LEM] not saying individuals don't stand up but the [LEM] tool is the gospel versus political resistance. [Name of Trustee], chair of CareGM is a councillor. Sister [nun] is an activist.* Tom, Interview

Other CareGM staff, when interviewed, either did not know that she was a local councillor or did not connect my question regarding organisational voice and campaigning with local government. CareGM did not consider itself to be a campaigning organisation and, when asked, key informants all stated that it did not really campaign; they could find only limited examples of helping Advice Clinic with surveys or having an article in the local newspaper.

### 6.7.1 Messy Middle Grounds

Resistance exists in ‘messy middle grounds’ (Sparke, 2008: 423), with a mixture of control and opposition, structure and agency, incorporation and alternativeness. CareGM welfare provision existed within this messy middle ground:

Romanticised, yet often in practice deeply unromantic; easily dismissed as merely upholding the status quo, yet powered by an urge to do something about the injustice of the status quo. (Cloke et al. 2010: 42)

Advice Clinic volunteer Dom came from a campaigning organisation and had a personal commitment to campaigning. He initiated the gathering of evidence of the effects of austerity on service users. Coming from a secular background, he experienced some frustration with the faith-based nature of CareGM. Dom felt that:

*The days when you could have a heaped meal and a cup of tea, well, that's not enough and not why I'm here.* Dom, Interview

CareGM was developing its voice and beginning to campaign against the effects of austerity on its clients. Some campaigning groups used CareGM as a base. One group that met at CareGM had made a film about austerity. The wish to be both proactive in supporting client needs and supportive of clients was shared at every debrief meeting:

*As long as we are doing something ... [it's] about thinking ahead.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, March

Welfare reform and supporting clients to navigate new and constantly changing welfare arrangements took up a significant proportion of support worker time at CareGM. Advice Clinic was brought in as a partner for this reason and it held an advice service in an office at CareGM each Wednesday. The advice service saw approximately twelve clients each Wednesday and

was starting to see trends around gaps in benefit. A big issue was the failure of the Work Programme provider to give accurate information to people in the programme; clients were receiving benefit sanctions if they were ten minutes late for the Work Programme course or for failing to inform the Department of Work and Pensions<sup>78</sup> (DWP) of a change of address. The experience of CareGM in terms of welfare reform reflects national research on Universal Credit (Jee 2014).

### 6.7.2 Gathering Evidence

CareGM was gathering data on the clients that attended sessions with their Advice Clinic partner. Two sets of service users were identified: one set that attended sessions weekly until an issue was resolved and another set that attended a crisis meeting once then disappeared. This data analysis was completed by Hussein who did it at home as an extra volunteer commitment. Throughout my research there was a shared need to record patterns of client experience, in order to advocate for clients:

*... We don't just need to be outraged all the time.* Hope, Field Notes

The feeling from CareGM and Advice Clinic staff was that they needed to respond to the situation to make people aware of the implications of their decisions. Advice Clinic also offered CareGM staff and volunteers training in offering basic guidance on welfare reform and benefit sanctions. CareGM took a very proactive response to the changes in benefits, offering poster advice and leaflets to clients. CareGM and Advice Clinic worked together to build case studies of what it was like to be a service user. They were building a case study of the

*spider's web of issues affected by the Welfare Reform Act and sanctions. It is not simply Jobcentre Plus payments/sanctions but health. It's the effects of not being able*

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<sup>78</sup> **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** This government department is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

*to afford heating, the long-term effects of drug use, and the effects of homelessness, depression and anxiety.* Dom, Field Notes

The aim of this gathering of evidence was to demonstrate the far-reaching effects of benefit reform and to try to offer a proactive response to government policy. By May 2014 two support volunteers, Justin and Hussein, had collected over twenty questionnaires on the effects of cuts on their clients. They continued to collect questionnaires throughout my research. Dom, the Advice Clinic volunteer, collated them and was planning to draw them together as evidence. I obtained verbal permission from Dom to read these questionnaires. However, as I did not have full written permission I have summarised and anonymised their content.

I read many of the questionnaires at my June visit. The stories were desperate: people with no food, homeless hostels full and no mental health or addiction support. Tales were shared of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and the severe effects of the cuts on people's lives. As I was reading the questionnaires a service user approached me and told me his story. He was a painter and decorator, and he was depressed and had attempted suicide on several occasions. On his last attempt he jumped from a bridge. Whilst he recovered in hospital he lost his home and became a client of CareGM. CareGM supported him throughout and he had just returned to the centre that day to thank the staff and show them what he had made of himself. He had accommodation and was feeling positive. CareGM and Advice Clinic were gathering his and other people's stories to evidence the effects of welfare reform on people's lives.

Having considered the CareGM organisational space, mission and voice I will now consider some of the more nuanced themes that emerged during my research analysis. An overriding

theme, to which I return in chapter seven, was the sense of togetherness and support that staff had with each other.

## **6.8 Being Part of Us, Picking up the Broom. Social Ties and Human Relationships. Being Part of Something.**

CareGM had a real sense of togetherness, of responding to austerity with a bit of blitz spirit (Bramall 2011). This theme was clear from my first visit to CareGM and developed through my research period. On my first visit to CareGM I was welcomed by a volunteer who held my hand, looked for a long time into my eyes and told me that if I was in I was in and if I wanted to be part of CareGM I was to 'pick up the broom'. I discuss picking up the broom in detail in chapter seven when I draw out my conclusions on love at CareGM, but the sense of all working together, mucking in and sharing work was key to what CareGM was as an organisation. Both staff and volunteers were very much valued by the trustees. Gail, a trustee and kitchen volunteer, shared her passion for her colleagues:

*Staff are our strongest capital ... the volunteers and staff are brilliant with the clients.*

Gail, Interview

### **6.8.1 Volunteers**

Trustees spoke of the very strong human capital within CareGM. Human capital 'is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways' (Coleman 1988:100). Trustees stepped in to cover staff holidays. When staff or volunteers were asked they worked an extra session, and volunteers were happy to cover shifts if they needed to. Gail, a trustee, stated how volunteers called in if they could not make a session. Volunteer retention was high, with many volunteers having been with CareGM for the full seven years of its organisational existence. Volunteer retention is often an indicator of a cohesive organisation, Mountain et al. (2015) discuss the difficulties of recruiting and training volunteers to work with vulnerable clients. Mountain et al. (2015) reinforce the need to set up a

complex and well-integrated infrastructure to support volunteers, especially when they are working in a community setting with vulnerable clients.

CareGM negotiated their volunteer management with humanity and care. Volunteer motivations were listened to and support was offered on an individual basis rather than expecting each volunteer to have specific training needs. This is evidenced by volunteers sharing their experience of volunteering with CareGM:

*We are truly blessed, the staff and volunteers are all fantastic. The volunteers and staff are brilliant with the clients. We have a strong staff team ... when volunteers/staff are asked, they pitch in and work an extra session. Volunteers are happy to cover shifts if they need to.*

Gail, Interview

*[CareGM] is an impressive team, a cohesive unit. I have a genuine appreciation for the teamwork that they take on a daily basis.* Dom, Interview

The experiences of these volunteers reflect wider research by Rochester et al. (2010) and Harflett (2015) who link volunteer motivation and volunteer retention. If volunteers are involved for pragmatic reasons such as career development or supporting a child, then when the period beyond which the volunteering is useful to them ends, they too finish volunteering. Rochester et al.'s (2010) research finds that when people volunteer and get something more personal and intangible in return for the volunteering, such as a sense of being part of a community, they are much more likely to continue volunteering on a longer-term basis. My research suggests that this is what CareGM's volunteers were finding in their volunteering with CareGM. CareGM very much valued its volunteers:

*We are truly blessed, they are fantastic.* Gail, Interview

Volunteers I interviewed spoke of how much they valued their volunteering role and how they felt supported and valued by CareGM. Volunteers at CareGM came from a diversity of backgrounds. Gail, a trustee, shared that about ten per cent of volunteers had been homeless themselves. CareGM was not short of volunteers, and one volunteer talked of missing being able to volunteer the previous Christmas as there was a quick sign up for Christmas volunteering. Indeed, Sarah, in the admin office, confirmed that they were never short of volunteers:

*We have never had a problem recruiting volunteers [there has been ] consistent recruitment.* Sarah, Interview

Justin, a relatively new volunteer to CareGM, described the high quality training that he had received in his induction to volunteering with CareGM. Induction training had included the structure of the organisation and was thorough and professional. Justin described his volunteer journey:

*My first Christmas I didn't get a volunteer place, I wasn't quick enough. All the volunteer places were full. [CareGM] is walking distance for me. I started last year on Christmas day. There was no pressure; it was very much based on if you want to. The onus was on me if I wanted an induction in February. It was up to me to book on the induction. The Induction was good. It explained the structure of the organisation. It was thorough and professionally done. I have an induction pack and everything. It covered a lot, roles and things, what volunteering involved and responsibilities. It gave a bigger idea of what it is ... I am so glad I joined. People are caring, I feel as though I am in good company and safe hands. I feel safe here. Welcoming is brilliant. It has helped me build my confidence. It's calm and relaxed. People are here for good. It's good to take my eyes off myself.*

Justin, Interview

The human kindness within the centre was felt by all participants to be the driving force of the organisation. The approach of volunteers, trustees and staff was considered to be central to the organisation. The non-judgemental, empathetic dedication of all those who volunteered and worked within the centre was shared as the most important thing about the centre: its heart and soul. The group dynamic between staff, trustees and volunteers was very much valued. People cared for each other, respected each other and supported each other. Alan, a volunteer who had begun volunteering with CareGM as part of a university placement and then continued over the summer, shared how he felt valued by CareGM:

*As a volunteer I feel my skills are used, they let me take team leader on minor cases and I work together with staff. They teach me how to support service users and fill in forms. This is special. I worked at another volunteer place and I didn't feel I was used effectively.* Alan, Interview

The variety of personalities within the organisation team was felt to be beneficial as it gave them the skills to focus on working with the variety of clients that the centre welcomed. The SLA workshop offered an opportunity for staff to share how they felt about the team. Participants of workshop three shared that teamwork, compassion, good humour and listening ears were all important to being part of the organisation. Other important values were shared; social justice, advocacy and campaigning were all considered valuable aspects of the organisation's human capital<sup>79</sup>.

During my research period volunteers were split into teams. When CareGM first began, volunteers were all managed by a support worker, Hope. There were thirty people on the volunteer team and previously everyone had just mucked in. Hope explained at the debrief meeting in May that as the volunteer team expanded she found this difficult as everyone came

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix Seven for a copy of the SLA.

to her at the start of a shift and she then had to direct their tasks. In response to this, Hope had separated volunteers into teams, and volunteers then had a team leader: support team, floor manager for day-to-day tasks, kitchen team and office team. Volunteers then worked directly with their team leader. The idea seemed to make sense to all staff and volunteers. However, when I asked volunteers which team they were in some volunteers stated that they were multi-team based. One volunteer, Justin, was multi-team based and seemed to be unclear as to his volunteer role.

New volunteers were supported as part of their training. Justin was in the process of training as a support worker volunteer, and in June led a support session with a client. For this support session, although it was led by Justin, Tammy supported him in its delivery. The purpose of the support session was to refer a street homeless man for a bed in the night shelter. Later, once the referral had been made, Justin expressed the difficulty and emotional impact upon him as a volunteer of having to ask a client during the referral process if they felt suicidal. In terms of volunteer management a more formal, supervision-style debrief may have been appropriate after his first support worker referral. Instead, Tammy and Justin came straight from the referral into the debrief meeting which meant little or no emotional processing time for Justin.

### **6.8.2 Developing People**

CareGM and Advice Clinic frequently worked in partnership to access and deliver training to staff, volunteers and trustees. Universal Credit<sup>80</sup> was rolled out in the area whilst I was carrying out my research. CareGM support worker Hussein and Advice Clinic volunteer Dom often attended training together around welfare reform and benefit sanctions. This enabled them to

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<sup>80</sup> **Universal Credit.** This is a new benefit that was rolled out across Greater Manchester during my research period. It offers one monthly payment. It replaced Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

build their knowledge of changing welfare legislation and offered an opportunity to plan a proactive response. Advice Clinic was also rolling out training in various organisations to update them on benefits changes.

Dom devised budgeting training for clients in preparation for Universal Credit, which makes monthly benefits payments rather than weekly, and also pays housing benefit into the claimant's account (rather than, as with previous benefits, the property owner's account). It was felt that empowering clients to budget monthly might require some training. CareGM was speaking to clients to understand what they found useful rather than offering training that was patronising. The training offered by Advice Clinic was to include pressure points (Christmas and the start of the school year) as well as changing patterns of behaviours. As Dom shared during the April debrief meeting:

*I am working on devising budgeting training for clients in preparation for the forthcoming Universal Credit. Monthly budgeting versus weekly. I want to know what clients would find useful not patronising. Previous budget training has been too patronising, too top-down. I want this training to be proactive, participatory. I will ask clients what they would find useful, it's about thinking ahead.* Dom, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, April

Two trustees were very involved with the kitchen during my research period. It became clear at a management committee meeting in July 2014 that the kitchen had had an unsuccessful health and safety assessment from the local authority. Two trustees, Keith and Gail, stepped in to turn the kitchen around. They worked alongside the volunteers to introduce hygiene practices and initiate food preparation training for volunteers. Keith and Gail restructured the kitchen volunteering and kitchen preparation practices in readiness for a new local authority assessment. This took place later in my research period, and CareGM gained a level five for food hygiene, which is the highest level awarded by the local authority. During my research

period, Luke, a kitchen volunteer, was recruited into the role of paid kitchen supervisor. Luke shared the impact his involvement had had on CareGM, his commitment to CareGM and how much he enjoyed being involved with the project, how he felt valued:

*It's about working hand in hand ... since I started I have cut the food bill in half. I've changed the menus so that there is less waste; we now buy only what we need.* Luke, Interview

Throughout my research period, committed and supportive volunteers were trained, developed and very often employed within CareGM.

The support and care offered to volunteers reflects research by Studer (2015) on best practice in volunteer management. Studer (2015) suggests that principles such as balance of interest, strategic commitment towards volunteers, role clarity, team spirit and respect are all essential criteria for successful volunteer management. In addition, Studer (2015) found that job characteristics and the resources available for volunteer management significantly contribute to the effectiveness of that management. In offering long-term support for the kitchen volunteers and extensive training for support volunteers CareGM reflected the volunteer-led ethos of the organisation but also reflected wider research around the importance of investing in volunteers.

### **6.8.3 Maintaining Mission**

Changes in welfare reform under the Universal Credit arrangements potentially stood to affect volunteering and volunteers at CareGM. In the past, volunteering had allowed a fifty per cent reduction in the number of working hours that a claimant had to seek if they were on Jobseekers Allowance<sup>81</sup>. The focus of current welfare reform seemed to be on the number of hours spent seeking work. There is no limit to the number of hours that can be spent volunteering, but if a claimant volunteers for more than six months and there is no progression or promotion then

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<sup>81</sup> **Jobseekers Allowance** This is a welfare benefit for the unemployed. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/jobseekers-allowance>

Jobcentre Plus starts to question the value of the volunteering. CareGM, during their debrief meeting in June, discussed whether this threatened their volunteering policy, as evidenced by my field notes:

*The Jobcentre Plus have asked if [organisation] want job centre volunteers but [pseudonym.] Hope worries that this will affect the volunteer team: if people do not want to volunteer but have to it will change the value and makeup of the volunteers. Field Notes, Participatory Observation, June*

CareGM expressed that what was special about its volunteers was their care, commitment and passion. Those attending this debrief meeting feared that losing this passion would affect the whole focus and cohesion of the staff and volunteer team. Jobcentre Plus had asked Hope if she wanted job centre volunteers. Hope was worried that this would affect the volunteer team, as if people joined CareGM who did not have the same values it could destabilise the existing volunteers. This reflects the work of Corden and Ellis (2004) that considers the role of volunteering by people in receipt of benefits in enhancing their employability, and the more recent work of Ellis-Payne et al. (2013) that suggests that the relationship between volunteering and employability is complex. Ellis-Payne et al. (2013) argue that volunteering may have a positive effect on the labour market position of some individuals in some circumstances, yet for others it may have a negative, or no, effect. The fear within CareGM was that engaging with volunteers who had been mandated into volunteering via the auspices of welfare reform would fundamentally change the culture of the staff volunteer team.

One volunteer suggested that CareGM worked with Jobcentre Plus to develop a new volunteer programme. Hussein managed his volunteering in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus in order that his volunteering met Jobcentre Plus requirements, yet at the same time he offered a useful commitment to CareGM. Hussein suggested that CareGM develop a structured volunteer

programme to reflect the changes in the nature of volunteering. This programme would have a clear view of what volunteering could offer a Jobcentre Plus volunteer and what skills and benefits the volunteer could gain. Hope was worried by this suggestion and reluctant to develop such a programme, as she wanted the volunteering to be a partnership, with the commitment led by the volunteers, and the volunteering, if people took it on, to be about individual responsibility. The focus of the team – the care and support of volunteers, staff and clients – was a positive contribution to CareGM's human capital.

#### **6.8.4 Volunteer Skills**

Different volunteers brought different skills and knowledge to the centre. Volunteers led the art group at the centre. Although I did not meet her during my research, Anita was described as having the right attitude and experience regarding arts and crafts, but was interested in the people that she worked with too. Clients were described as having to be:

*wrestled in.* Hope, Field Notes

However, once people had become involved they wanted to keep going back. Clients could work on the same thing each week. A health and social care student on placement who also happened to have done an art foundation year was supporting them. The art groups were very much valued by clients and by staff, volunteers and trustees. Trustees reminded the group of the importance of arts in therapy and recovery at their meeting in October.

Another volunteer, Bobby, offered literacy support. This was very much appreciated by clients as well as by CareGM. The work conducted by Bobby was valued but she was unwell, so was often unable to attend. There was a difficulty therefore in continuity of literacy support. There was a wish by CareGM trustees to expand the literacy support work, but there was a volunteer capacity issue given Bobby's illness.

One volunteer, Hussein, offered support work. On my first visit I met Hussein in the café section of the day centre. He ate in the same space as the service users, using the same cups and plates. He was a full-time volunteer at the time, although later during my research he was offered a paid position. He volunteered and later worked as a support worker, and his particular interest was in benefit changes and sanctions. He and Dom, from Advice Clinic, worked regularly together to support clients facing benefit challenges. Hussein had a great deal of emotional intelligence and was able to link with the community locally as he lived in the area. He described how people would approach him for advice whilst he was in the shopping precinct:

*Oh [Hussein], I've been sanctioned.* Hussein, Interview

*[for that people would point him out in the precinct] Oh, he'll know.* Hussein, Interview

Hussein's local links and relationship with the community built CareGM's community links and further established its reputation as a community resource.

A further volunteer, Alan, was a university student and had begun working with CareGM on a student placement via Manchester Metropolitan University's Social Work and Social Care Department. He was taught by one of my supervisors, Jenny Fisher. He continued to volunteer with CareGM after his placement was completed and was building experience before he commenced a Master's degree in social work in September 2014. Alan was welcomed into the debrief meeting in July so that he could gain a wider picture of welfare reform and client support in preparation for his Master's degree:

*As a volunteer I feel my skills were used; they let me take the team leader on minor cases and I work together with staff. They [support worker staff] teach me how to support service users and fill in the forms. This is special. I have worked at another volunteer place and I didn't feel that I was used as effectively.* Alan, Interview

Alan felt that his skills were used at CareGM; he had volunteered elsewhere but he had not been used as effectively in his other volunteer role. CareGM had taught him how to support service users and to complete benefit and support forms and it had accessed a range of training with partner organisations. When I interviewed him in July, Alan was looking forward to attending training on alcohol and drugs, safeguarding service users and EU immigration via links that CareGM had with another larger homeless organisation. This organisation had free training places that it had opened up to CareGM volunteers. CareGM, through its support of Alan, played a positive role as a learning mentor within the wider Greater Manchester community.

One volunteer, Justin, had in-depth disability rights knowledge and was able to signpost support workers at CareGM to a Disability Rights Handbook that was regularly updated with legislation changes. He also was a qualified alternative therapist, and still owned much of the equipment needed for alternative therapy, including a massage bench. Justin had qualifications in Indian head massage and reflexology. Here, CareGM could have supported Justin to offer alternative therapy services for clients:

*I'm glad I joined. People are caring ... I used to be a holistic therapist. I'm very interested in mindfulness and CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] and CAT [Cognitive Analytic Therapy]. I'm interested in kindness meditation ... reflexology. I have a massage bench in my flat and still have all the kit you know.* Justin, Interview

Luke was a kitchen volunteer and then a paid cook at CareGM. He offered a lot to the kitchen and shared that he was passionate about the project and about growing, preparing and cooking food. He had his own allotment and volunteered in the CareGM garden. In a conversation that he had with me in June, he revealed he was a qualified hairdresser. Here, CareGM could have supported Luke to offer hairdressing to CareGM clients.

Given the examples above – Justin a qualified alternative therapist, Luke a qualified hairdresser – it seems that there were opportunities that were being missed in terms of volunteer skills that could be utilised. It may have been that the volunteers did not want to offer these skills to CareGM but I got the impression that the skills were not always known about by centre management. Perhaps if the volunteers were asked, then hairdressing and therapy services could be developed. This reflects research by Waikayi et al. (2012) with British Red Cross volunteers, where they found that people decide to volunteer for many reasons such as social interaction, to carry out work that is valued in the local community and for self-satisfaction. Waikayi et al. (2012) found that volunteer satisfaction is derived from helping their organisation to help others and being part of the organisational team; ‘volunteer retention is attributed to a proactive management style in terms of creating a favourable work environment’ (Waikayi et al. 2012:349). The failure to respond to volunteer skills and talents perhaps was a missed opportunity for CareGM.

#### **6.8.5 Overseas Volunteers**

CareGM worked with two charities that provided volunteers from overseas: the Jesuit Volunteer Scheme (JVS) and the Vincentian Volunteers. At CareGM, they regularly received volunteers from Eastern Europe and South East Asia. The volunteers received basic food and accommodation in return for volunteering full time. CareGM staff and volunteers regularly shared in debrief meetings that they very much valued these volunteers, and their full-time contribution and youthful enthusiasm added vibrancy to the centre. Many clients had not travelled outside of the north west of England so meeting two volunteers from overseas was an opportunity. This reflects research conducted by Zahra and Gard-McGehe (2013) that argues that tourist volunteers contribute bridging social capital (Putnam 2000) and that in turn affects every form of community capital.

On my first visit to the centre, I was introduced to Jonny, a JVS volunteer from Hungary. He was male, white and in his twenties, and volunteered at CareGM and another larger homelessness charity:

*[CareGM] feels more like a family, [larger homelessness organisation] has two hundred clients at lunchtime but they have too few staff and staff do not have the time to do proper support work.* Jonny, Interview

The scheme that he volunteered with provided accommodation and coordinated his volunteer placements. Jonny had volunteered for just under a year, and he shared that he very much enjoyed volunteering at CareGM. In comparison with the larger homelessness charity, Jonny preferred volunteering at CareGM as it had a familial feel. The JVS programme that Jonny volunteered with was experiencing funding difficulties itself and Jonny was in its last year of international volunteering. The Jesuits could no longer afford to run the volunteer programme.

#### **6.8.6 Trustees**

The trustees at CareGM were volunteers. I have distinguished them from other volunteers, however, as their role within CareGM was quite different. Two trustees, Gail and Keith, volunteered in the kitchen as well as taking on leadership roles. Other trustees simply took on leadership positions. One trustee, it emerged, had newly joined the board and as the board met elsewhere had not yet visited CareGM.

The board had made a good effort to ensure that all skills were covered within the trustee mix, reflecting best practice regarding trustee governance (Coule 2013). Trustees had worked hard over the previous two and a half years to ensure that the board was skills-based. Board members were made up of a psychoanalyst, an accountant, a civil engineer, a retired social worker, a solicitor, a retired teacher and a school governor. There were many married couples

involved in CareGM, LEM and the night shelter, from trustees to paid staff and volunteers within the building partnership project run by LEM.

Meetings when trustees were present had a very different feel. Staff debriefing sessions were very informal and non-critical. Staff were compassionate with each other and took time to offer each other emotional support. Management group meetings and trustee meetings were different. It became apparent during a management group meeting and a trustee meeting that not all trustees had read the papers or had prepared for the meeting. In the management group meeting that I attended in July, after Norman, the pastor, had been assaulted, it was implied by some trustees that the police should not have been called and that Norman himself should have diffused the situation. I discuss the assault in more detail in chapter seven. This negotiation of power, beliefs and practice within and between trustee/management relationships is reflected in research by Coule (2013), who draws on comparative case studies to critique the positioning of accountability as a benign and straightforward governance function. Coule (2013) offers a conceptualisation of the relationship between governance and accountability in which issues of power, beliefs about the nature of organising, and social relations are integral features. Coule's (2013) research reflects some of the complexity of the management/trustee relationships at CareGM.

### **6.8.7 Mucking In**

A theme that developed from the notion of being part of something was a sense of mucking in, of working together. There was a real sense of mucking in, of shared work and of shared values. This shared work, for example the shared cleaning duty, broke down barriers and built shared social capital among workers, whether paid and unpaid (Rodger 2012). CareGM staff and volunteers created spaces of care through the practice of care, embodied through shared completion of chores (Conradson 2003, Johnsen et al. 2005a, 2005b). After the day centre shut

at 2pm all staff – partnership project, church, paid workers, trustees and volunteers – participated in the clean-up. As a researcher, I took part in the cleaning of the chairs, tables and floors, often sweeping up and disinfecting tables before the debrief meeting started. The building of social capital and ties was supported by everyone sharing the chores; these shared work tasks involved a variety of cleaning duties. Social capital is not a single entity but a variety of entities (Coleman 1988). Social capital is ‘productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible’ (Coleman 1988:98). Putnam (2000) describes two types of social capital: bridging and bonding. Bonding takes place between and within social groups and bridging capital links out into wider social networks. Mucking in at CareGM involved the development of both bridging and bonding social capital, as I discuss here.

CareGM had links and social ties with organisations such as businesses, banks, local authority run organisations and other VCS organisations. Social assets are the social contracts that can be drawn on in a crisis: the organisations, partners and informal community groups. The third participatory workshop focussing on CareGM’s organisational livelihoods revealed that CareGM had some really positive social networks. The list of social links and ties produced by participants was by far the longest of the five capitals that they were asked to contribute to. In just a few minutes participants of the SLA workshop listed forty-five organisations that CareGM maintained social links with<sup>82</sup>. These social links and ties had great value for the organisation, sometimes in the form of reciprocal arrangements and at other times in terms of donations of cash or in kind. Other relationships that the organisation had were with long-term volunteer brokerage organisations. These social ties offered bridging social capital (Putnam 2000). Social links and ties within the organisation provided support and pastoral care for volunteers, trustees and staff, as well as for clients. Friends of staff, volunteers and trustees were also cited as

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<sup>82</sup> Full details of the SLA with CareGM are written up within Appendix Seven

providing pastoral support that enabled staff and volunteers to care for a vulnerable and challenging client group; these social ties offered bonding social capital (Putnam 2000).

An informal partnership, a social link that existed with a local church, was a linkage of social ties rather than a more formal linking of VCS organisations. This was an under-the-radar (McCabe 2010) partnership. I was informed during an organisational debrief meeting in May, that I would not find it in an inventory or online. McCabe (2010) discusses under-the-radar VCS groups, referring to micro groups that operate without funding streams or formalised governance, yet these groups none the less make up four-fifths of Greater Manchester's (Dayson et al. 2013) proportion of VCS groups. This under-the-radar community organisation was more under the radar than those McCabe (2010) discusses. You knocked on the door, it was run by a local woman and she operated what was in effect an under-the-radar homeless hostel. The hostel was not registered, and did not formally exist; people just went there if they had nothing else. It was not an organisation that had accounts or an operating system or a group of trustees that was small and community focussed (McCabe 2010). It was simply an altruistic woman, with a key to a community building. The woman had a sign-in book and people slept on the floor on mattresses. CareGM signposted clients there if the night shelter in their building was full. CareGM also shared donated goods to the project on an informal basis, for example if they had too much fresh food or a surplus of blankets. This sharing was based on mutual care and respect, and on social ties rather than organisational formalities.

Research on social capital can be categorised into four distinct perspectives: communitarian, networked, institutional and synergy (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). A communitarian perspective on social capital would map local organisations within a locality. A networked view of social capital would give a sense of the intra-community ties within a community; notions of bonding and bridging social capital (Gittel and Vidal 1998) would fit here. A networks view of

social capital suggests that communities can be characterised by their endowments of these two dimensions of social capital, and the variety of combinations accounts for the variety of outcomes associated with social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). The institutional view of social capital relates to a view that argues that the very capacity of social groups to act in their collective interest depends on the quality of the formal institutions under which they reside (North 1990). Institutional social capital theory stresses the importance of good government for local civil society (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). Here Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence can be drawn in at an institutional level for CareGM. Arguably the Coalition's rolling back of the state during austerity could be perceived as an act of institutional symbolic violence. I will return to this concept in my conclusion.

The synergy view of social capital that attempts to integrate work emerging from institutional and networks positions (Evans 1992, 1995, 1996) concludes that synergy between government and citizen action should be based on complementarity and embeddedness. CareGM enacted institutional and networked social capital, as evidenced by this quote:

*[CareGM] the value is in the people, staff are our strongest capital ... you can't qualify it but it's there ... [CareGM] have made good links with businesses for sponsorship ... locally we do really well for sponsorship. Gail, Interview*

*Our board covers all skills; we've built up the skills over the last two and half years after the period of crisis. On our board we have a psychoanalyst, an accountant, a civil engineer, retired social worker (who brings a gentle aspect to the way we run), solicitor, retired teacher and a school governor. We never have any problems getting anyone to chair a meeting! Gail, Interview*

Effective norms 'can constitute a powerful form of social capital' (Coleman 1988:105); this social capital, however, not only facilitates certain actions, but can also constrain others

(Coleman 1988). Arguably social capital can create norms that perpetuate forms of symbolic violence. In the next section I will introduce the theme of symbolic violence before discussing the gendered nature of CareGM.

## **6.9 Staying in Touch. Holding Hands or Institutional Isomorphism?**

A sense of mucking in and shared work developed into a further theme through my research period: a sense of staying in touch, of holding hands and maintaining communication. This related to the sense of creating a proactive response to need, as I discuss earlier in the chapter. From this theme I developed a deeper analysis, which I seek to draw out in this section about how CareGM responded to institutional silencing and exclusion (Topper 2001) and macro level symbolic violence via isomorphic threats.

### **6.9.1 Holding Hands. Partnerships.**

The theme of holding hands, of working in partnership, emerged through my participatory observation of debrief meetings. CareGM had good relationships with the local council, social services and children and family services. Partnership working by the organisation across other organisations had had some success in certain areas in response to austerity, and good partnerships had been formed with local businesses, charities and public sector organisations. Vulnerabilities to organisational public capital were felt around government policy decisions. Central government and local authority funding cuts and changes to welfare reform legislation had a significant impact on CareGM's clients and therefore a significant impact on the centre's workload, as evidenced by this excerpt from my field notes:

*[Hussein] and [Dom] had attended an event run by the job centre: implementing Universal Credit: North West Expansion Event ... the event discussed the trials of Universal Credit at [a town in the North West] job centre which give CareGM an idea of what might happen. There was a reliance on voluntary organisations to provide vulnerable clients with support. Field Notes, Participatory Observation, June*

These changes were out of the hands of CareGM; however, they significantly affected the services it was able to provide and signpost clients to. Partnership working was a key strategy

at CareGM and it had good links with public bodies. Welfare reform and supporting clients to navigate new and constantly changing welfare arrangements took up a significant proportion of support worker time at CareGM. It worked with and signposted to many services in Greater Manchester, and worked particularly closely with NHS organisations such as Safe Haven<sup>83</sup>, a GP service that accepts challenging service users, and mental health nursing teams.

### 6.9.2 NHS Partnerships

CareGM had a range of partnerships with NHS bodies. The primary partnership was with a GP practice offering a service on site funded by the local NHS trust. This GP service operated on the days that the centre was open and was staffed by a doctor's receptionist and a GP. Clients visited to receive prescriptions and long-term care as well as for treatment of wounds. Not only was the existence of the partnership with the GP practice valued but the specific staff were also very much valued by their colleagues at CareGM:

*We had another GP receptionist before, but [Dan] is the best, he says it how it is, he lets the clients know – he doesn't beat about the bush. He's what we need. He is very good. Tammy,*  
Interview

The GP service was managed and supported by the receptionist, Dan. Dan was very committed to his role and very keen to ensure that procedures were correct. He described how he had adapted common NHS prescription practice. Usually a client would get a re-prescription a few days early and be given the script to take to the pharmacy themselves. Given the vulnerable nature of the client group, Dan took the script to the pharmacy himself and ensured that the tablets were counted out to the day. This enabled him to know that the client got only the correct number of tablets for their condition and could not 'lose' the prescription en route to the

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<sup>83</sup> **Safe Haven.** A GP service within Greater Manchester that accepts onto its patient list people with challenging behaviour and homeless clients. <http://www.nhs.uk/Services/GP/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=38533>

pharmacy and get a second script, thereby doubling their tablets. Dan was fearful that if clients got double tablets they might sell them to other drug users:

*[CareGM] is organised chaos, it's probably the best that it could be. The clients are chaotic, the only way the GP clinic could work is drop in. I herd the patients in to see the doctor, I manage the appointments and remind the clients. He [the doctor] sees a full surgery.* Dan, Interview

The partnership, although considered by both sides to be successful, was not safe from threat. There had been discussion by the NHS funder that it might move the service out of CareGM. Other NHS partnerships existed and NHS nurses and support workers frequently held appointments at CareGM with clients. A drugs worker was also based at CareGM. On my first visit to the centre, I arrived at the same time as two mental health nurses. As we signed in these nurses explained that they were there to meet a client in the day centre. They found it easier to come to where the client was rather than expect the client, with a chaotic lifestyle due to drug and alcohol addiction, to attend appointments on an NHS site. Hope, the support worker, welcomed us all.

### **6.9.3 Advice Partnerships**

The advice partnership at CareGM had developed over a number of years. Advice Clinic was brought in as a partner and it held an advice service in a spare office in CareGM each Wednesday. The advice service saw approximately twelve clients by appointment each Wednesday and was starting to see trends around gaps in benefits. Partnership working with Advice Clinic was considered very positive. CareGM had devised a proactive system alongside Advice Clinic, where CareGM did some preparatory work with each client to get their benefits and other relevant information ready before their appointment with the volunteer, Dom. He then had all the correct paperwork that he needed to support a client and offer the best advice. This

partnership working also significantly benefitted CareGM staff. It reduced the time that they spent on the telephone to government departments and took away the false hope of clients who believed that CareGM could sort out their problems immediately. It reduced staff time spent chasing government departments and the stress when they were unsuccessful, and empowered service users. The partnership project enabled CareGM to say:

*You are in control, you arrive for your appointment at the advice service on Wednesday, then you and Dom can work on solving the issue.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, March

There were, however, challenges with the partnership. The volunteer at the advice service, Dom, was very committed to his role and he devoted a significant amount of his free time to CareGM:

*We only pay [Advice Clinic] one day a week and we phone him most days.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, May

Advice Clinic was a national charity and CareGM paid the charity for their expertise to cover a volunteer adviser, Dom, for one day a week. Dom seemed happy to volunteer the extra time, and CareGM was extremely grateful; however, it was recognised in the May debrief meeting that boundaries needed to be created to protect both Advice Clinic as a charity and CareGM.

CareGM felt that in entering into partnership with Advice Clinic, it had changed its procedure, but this had been done in a caring, pragmatic and honest way. CareGM staff could tell clients that they could not do anything about their benefits on that day, saying:

*Never mind the barricades, come and have a brew.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation March

They would then invite clients to share a cup of tea and a meal whilst staff gathered the paperwork required for the advice appointment on Wednesday.

The advice service had had a few issues with clients not attending appointments. One client, who was described in the debrief meeting in March as chaotic, unwell and very nice, had had a negative Employment Support Allowance<sup>84</sup> decision. The advice service organised an appeal for him. He was supposed to come in for an advice service appointment on several occasions at 10am but often turned up at the end of the session at 1.45pm. Dom, the Advice Clinic volunteer, kept broadening the goal posts for him but when the date of the client's appeal arrived, Dom was on holiday and his support worker Hussein was also off that day. The client did not turn up for his appeal. However, he appeared at another office of the same charity in Greater Manchester later the same day. There was genuine care for this individual but a questioning of where to draw the line when supporting people:

*[client's behaviour is] ridiculous, he's gone too far. That is his pattern of behaviour. Dom,*

Field Notes

There was a discussion in the debrief meeting regarding how CareGM could manage the client in this situation. The discussion was inconclusive but reflective and engaged all staff opinions.

The empowerment of clients was a key mission of CareGM staff and its partners. CareGM staff felt that they needed to be able to say 'Come on Wednesday', and if the clients could not attend on Wednesday with all their paperwork then Advice Clinic was not able to offer support. It was important to CareGM that the clients did attend with the paperwork essential for Advice Clinic to support them, as the interactions with partners were based on good will. CareGM and Advice Clinic worked in partnership to address client-related issues. One client had accessed the

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<sup>84</sup> **Employment Support Allowance.** A welfare benefit for those not currently able to seek employment due to illness or disability  
<https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance>

advice service and Dom had commenced a medical appeal of a welfare decision and, in the short term, had arranged some funds for him. The client, having received the short-term funds, had not returned to the advice service for his appointment to address the longer-term issue of his medical appeal. CareGM and Advice Clinic discussed how they could better support the client, and other clients. They came up with the idea of an advice diary so that CareGM could book clients in for advice appointments as they saw the clients more regularly and could remind them of the importance of longer-term funding for welfare decisions.

During my research period, the effect of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms, including changes to the administration of housing funding, significantly affected Advice Clinic. As my research period progressed the Advice Clinic volunteer, Dom, expressed increasing concerns regarding the barriers he faced in supporting clients and the deliberate obfuscation by local authority staff about housing legislation. The result was that clients were increasingly street homeless, without housing decisions by the local authority.

#### **6.9.4 Police Partnerships**

CareGM generally had a tense relationship with the police<sup>85</sup>. As a building partnership, LEM, the night shelter and CareGM wished to improve their working relationship with the police; however, their organisational ethics sometimes clashed. LEM, the night shelter and CareGM focussed on care and support of clients, recognising that often clients engaged in criminal behaviour in order to survive or to support an addiction. The police focussed on arresting individuals engaged in criminal behaviour. Both police and the centre were keen to improve strategic working. Paul, CareGM floor manager, and Tom, LEM director, attended a meeting in July to examine joint strategic working with the local police. The police wanted the centre to share information, for example on which clients were banned from the centre, and for centre staff to provide evidence

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<sup>85</sup> This tense relationship referred in some sense to the interactions between specific police officers and police community support officers and their attitude to homeless people. In a broader sense the tense relationship was a reflection of the conflicting missions of the two organisations; supporting people with chaotic, often substance misusing behaviours conflicts sometimes with the police's mission to arrest offenders.

to police to support ASBO convictions. This was a controversial area for the centre as it affected their relationship with the police – should they say no to the request or should they say yes, which would then affect their ethos and supportive, non-judgemental relationship with clients.

These tensions are reflected in national research by Cloke et al. (2010) which discusses the revanchist state and street homelessness. In July a subcommittee was formed by the centre to seek staff and volunteer input in order to make a decision. I am not aware of what decisions were formally made regarding this partnership with the police; however, informal discussions with staff suggested that they would not be sharing information about clients for fear of harming the supportive and protective role that they held in clients' lives.

#### **6.9.5 Other Partnerships**

Partnership working was built up with other homelessness organisations and food banks<sup>86</sup> as the realities of Universal Credit emerged. Changes in welfare and reductions in local authority funding led to situations from May 2014 onwards where hardship payments for those who had had benefits sanctioned did not exist in some areas of Greater Manchester. CareGM, alongside sharing resources with less formal organisations, also shared food from their donated stock with other large homelessness organisations:

*[Homeless VCS organisation] are running out of food. [CareGM] have given them some of our food to keep them going. Hope, Interview*

It was a relatively regular occurrence for CareGM to share its donations with other local projects.

A partnership project was developed with another department of Advice Clinic, although this partnership was not attracting the same amount of client interest. At their May 2014 meeting

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<sup>86</sup> **Food Banks.** These are projects that distribute food to those who are in need. The Trussell Trust coordinates many food bank projects nationally. There is also a wide variety of informal food bank projects running within Greater Manchester. <http://www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-projects>

CareGM was concerned that the volunteer that was leading the partnership would withdraw from their centre as she was not getting enough client interest. The partnership project centred on helping people to get white goods such as fridges and freezers, and flooring. The volunteer in question was based within Advice Clinic but had links with British Gas<sup>87</sup>. She visited CareGM monthly and CareGM had tried various ways to get clients interested in seeing her. She could have been very useful for clients in accommodation, in terms of accessing free white goods and supporting clients to get reduced gas bills and free carpets. In the May meeting CareGM was concerned that due to client disinterest the volunteer might stop coming. It planned to try a poster campaign and leaflets and to talk to clients to persuade them to engage with the volunteer. By June CareGM had encouraged three clients to work with the partnership volunteer and she had supported them to access white goods.

CareGM attended various partnership groups, often around welfare reform. These partnership meetings were attended by local housing trusts, private sector property owners and the VCS. CareGM was engaging with local partners through information and advice meetings within the area, with attendance focussed on information gathering for the benefit of clients. The partnerships that CareGM had developed gradually emerged as my research continued. In June I was offered some fresh pineapple by trustee and kitchen volunteer Keith. During the course of our conversation it emerged that the fruit was from FareShare<sup>88</sup>, a scheme that CareGM paid into at the rate of £25 per week, and then they were gifted food from the supermarkets in the area. The FareShare project gathers the food and distributes it among various charities. Keith felt that they received at least a hundred pounds' worth of food per week from the project so from his point of view it was well worth their £25. The kitchen had received peaches, pears and pineapple on that particular day; it was all very ripe and bruises had to be cut out but CareGM volunteers had prepared a fruit salad for service users with it. Keith expressed the value of

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<sup>87</sup> **British Gas**. British Gas Energy Trust supports those in need to access white goods <http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/>

<sup>88</sup> **FareShare**. A charity that distributes unused food within the sell by date from businesses to charities. <http://www.fareshare.org.uk/>

being able to offer fresh fruit to a client group that rarely eats fresh food. Other partnerships had been built up with companies. Nando's, a fried chicken restaurant, donated frozen chicken weekly to CareGM<sup>89</sup>. This was collected by Keith, and then made into various chicken dishes by the kitchen throughout the week:

*Nando's donates chicken. [CareGM] freezes it. [Keith] collects it on a Thursday morning, over a hundred pieces of chicken. We eat a lot of chicken, we serve chicken twice a week. We get quite imaginative with it.* Gail, Interview

Additional partnership working was on a much more ad hoc basis. Links had been formed with large organisations. Barclays Bank, for example, as part of their corporate volunteering, tidied and planted up a small flowerbed by the entrance to the building and the main garden. However, this was not maintained by CareGM, and by July the flowerbed was full of weeds and overgrown again. Here, CareGM could have made more out of the partnership, and the financial skills of Barclays volunteers could have been developed. This reflects national research by Pfeiffer (2015) who finds that corporate volunteers are often underused. Pfeiffer refers to the 'dirty truth of corporate volunteer projects' (2015:1) where skills are often misused in favour of a photo opportunity.

### **6.9.6 Food Parcels**

CareGM gave out food parcels from a variety of sources, such as their Advice Clinic partner. This partner had a payroll scheme whereby staff donated money from their monthly wages, and this money was used to buy food and create food parcels which were distributed within Greater Manchester. In June CareGM gave out eighteen food parcels that had been provided by Advice Clinic. The food bank run by the Trussell Trust had a policy for clients of three consecutive visits only (Cooper et al. 2014, Cooper and Dumbleton 2013), and identification was required to

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<sup>89</sup> **Nando's**. Nando's is a chicken restaurant chain; they have a corporate social responsibility policy entitled 'there's no chucking our chicken'. <http://www.nandos.co.uk/blog/>

access the food bank. CareGM shared that this had led to some clients walking three miles to a food bank as they had no money for a bus, only to be sent home to get identification. CareGM held vouchers for the food bank and could refer clients to it. However, it was a tight process as to who was allowed to refer to them; the food bank was quite restrictive as to which organisations it gave vouchers to, and how many vouchers it gave to each organisation. The food bank would deliver to the door if a person was not able to leave the house, for example if the person was older or disabled. My field notes evidence some of the challenges of food poverty for CareGM:

*[Organisation] have made their first referral to [area] food bank. They have only been given ten vouchers. [other local homelessness organisation] are running out of food. CareGM have sent them some food. Advice Centre has food parcels. Alice at CareGM links into [local area] food network. There is not enough food. People are in dire need ... Care GM have sent clients to food bank with a CareGM standard letter. This was effective. The formatting of the letter has been identified as needing improvement by Hussein. He is going to adapt the format so that it can be more easily used as a template letter.* Field Notes, Participatory Observation, May

CareGM wanted to be proactive about the difficulties their clients were facing in accessing food and created a template letter for staff at CareGM to complete when referring clients to the food bank. When the food bank staff refused to give out food parcels, the clients asked the staff to tick standard boxes to explain why they had refused. CareGM was using this to gather evidence as to why people were refused food parcels.

In conclusion, CareGM had very good partnerships with most organisations, the only notable exception being the police. Good partnership working was a key asset for CareGM. Here we can see the development of distinctiveness (Bourdieu 1984). As Care GM built and developed

links with other organisations they were also placed in a position where they were required to question their own identity. Would they conform to police requests regarding freedom of information or would they join with the advice centre and begin to take on a campaigning role. As distinctiveness (Macmillan 2013) evolves, arguably the threats of isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powell 1983) begin to have an effect on CareGM. Do they choose the path of mimetic isomorphism in order to begin campaigning, joining hands with Advice Clinic? Do they choose to legitimise their role with the policy and begin to mimic a more public sector approach to their services? These tensions are discussed as I consider the gendered nature of CareGM.

## 6.10 Its OK, Love: Being a Woman

As my research at CareGM continued a more nuanced analysis developed, and here Bourdieu's (2000) concept of symbolic violence becomes useful to my analysis. CareGM had a mixed gender staff and volunteer team. This team fluctuated throughout my research period, with volunteers recruited into paid roles and new volunteers being recruited. During each of my fourteen semi-structured interviews with volunteers and paid staff I enquired about the male to female ratios of staff and volunteers. I received different answers at each enquiry. Most staff, like Tom, felt that the male to female balance was roughly equal:

*For a long time we needed to challenge the maternal culture. All the trustees were women and all the employees women ... before we threw [Norman] the pastor into the mix.* Tom, Interview

Some staff felt that they needed more male role models within the staff and volunteer team as the majority of their clients were male. For a long time CareGM had an all-female trustee board and an all-female staff.

### 6.10.1 Personality

Despite staff often answering my research questions by stating that they felt that CareGM was much more about personality and organisational culture than gender *per se*, there was a gender pay gap that was rectified towards the end of my research period. Paul, the floor manager, more recently employed than Hope, the support worker, was paid more than her. During the trustee meeting in October staff salaries were increased by five per cent. This was adjusted so that Paul received an increase of five per cent but Hope received a seven per cent pay increase. This gender pay gap reflects national research regarding gender pay gaps within the VCS (Teasdale et al. 2011). The extra two per cent pay rise for Hope was nominally given to reflect

her lone working responsibilities, but anecdotally within the trustee meeting it was agreed this was to achieve pay parity between roles.

### **6.10.2 The Practical Value of Men**

There was a feeling that CareGM needed more men, from a practical perspective. Arguably, there is no singular femininity or masculinity to identify with; rather, there are a variety of femininities and masculinities, and these are then discursively and practically reproduced and maintained (Mehta 1999). However, multiple discourses and practices may co-exist within a setting, and they are hierarchically ordered (Lovibond 1996, Weedon 1987). Mehta (1999) suggests that the discourses between men and women produced at any one time may not be neutral. We need to consider how and why men and women might produce their own domination as well as resist it. Most clients were male and CareGM staff often shared in interviews and participant observation that they needed male staff and volunteers to complete male roles, such as supervising showers. Hope felt that it would be inappropriate for a woman to supervise the male shower area:

*We need more men. [Justin] is on showers today. He is a new volunteer but if there are no men on a day then no one can shower. To access the men's shower you have to go through the men's toilets. It is not nice. I would go in there if I was concerned but it is not nice.* Hope, Interview

There was a sense that having a majority female staff group made life easier, by diffusing tensions, and female staff were able to respectfully challenge clients with less conflict:

*In another sense having majority of women staff makes it easier. It diffuses tensions created by having a big male group. You can say things as a woman, respectfully challenge, without feeling that you are going to get punched.* Hope, Interview

There were more male volunteers starting to filter through from April 2014 onwards as a result of a specific volunteer recruitment drive. As the client base was largely male, many staff felt that this worked well. Here Bourdieu's (2002) notions of symbolic violence become relevant. Symbolic violence is 'how institutional language and implementation of procedural norms can be a form of symbolic violence' (Morgan et al. 2006:441). The staff group, although recognising the threat of violence, did not describe CareGM as being a violent workplace; 'thus the insidious and invisible nature of symbolic violence as a mode of domination which acts upon the women but which goes unrecognised' (Morgan et al. 2006) becomes relevant:

*The client base is largely male. It works well. Some men respond to the motherly caring approach. Women are good at diffusing volume; it's rare there is violence. Generally, people respect the role of the centre and self-police.* Hussein, Interview

Several forms of violence can co-exist; importantly symbolic violence may accompany or precede physical violence. The staff spoke of how women diffused physical and verbal abuse:

*There is more female staff. There are many female volunteers. We need both. Men and women have different approaches, roles; people respond to men and women differently.* Tammy, Interview

*Women find it easier to do the support role, to help people. The service users are mostly men, women support men.* Alex, Interview

Whilst staff seemed to see the female influence in diffusing violence as a positive attribute, feminist research stresses the need to bridge the gaps between ways that gendered violence is 'lived' and the ways in which we (feminist academics) theorise it (Hester et al. 1996, Maynard 1993). Feminist research recognises the multifaceted nature of violence, the interrelationships of power which

structured the interaction between men and women in all aspects of social life and explicit force/violence as a response to the failure of, or resistance to, other forms of control. (Morgan et al. 2006:442)

In considering how gender was embodied within CareGM, I gained an important understanding of the impact of how the lack of attention to staff safety, the acceptance of the 'white knuckle' (Baines and Cunningham 2011) aspect of CareGM's care work in which they were involved, reflected the reality of working conditions for staff. In resisting wider pressure on the VCS to isomorphasise, to develop standardised policy and procedures for VCS homelessness projects, CareGM were also choosing to operate in a 'white knuckle' (Baines and Cunningham 2011) environment where symbolic violence was tolerated.

### **6.10.3 Mothering**

The theme of mothering developed as a gendered theme to my analysis. Women were described and valued as taking a motherly approach to supporting clients, and being good at diffusing verbal conflict and, in rare cases, violence:

*In a way female staff are important because many of the clients are single males – it is easier for women. If a man becomes aggressive women can calm them down and make things all right.* Jonny, Interview

In almost every semi-structured interview, when I asked about the effects of the male to female balance in the organisation, interviewees suggested that men and women deal with things differently, and women's motherly role was referenced frequently. It was felt that it was easier for female staff to say to clients:

*Can you keep it down please?* Justin, Interview

There was no recognition by staff, volunteers or trustees of the 'relations and mechanism of domination and power which do not arise from overt physical force or violence on the body' (Bourdieu 2002: 465). Staff did not perceive symbolic violence as a concern for them, being often much more concerned with a person-centred vision of client support.

Symbolic violence clearly lacks the intentional and instrumental quality of brute violence, and works not directly on bodies but through them ... by extending the concept of violence to the symbolic domain, Bourdieu spotlights an often unnoticed mechanism for instituting or reproducing relations of domination. And to the extent that such mechanisms go unnoticed they remain outside the purview of political deliberations or remedial action. (Topper 2001:48)

Baines and Cunningham (2011) discuss this gendered response to violent clients, referring to 'white knuckle care work' and suggesting that the gendered nature of care requires a level of acceptance of violence that is not extended to other male dominated roles.

Violence and symbolic violence can co-exist and arguably do so at CareGM. Kelly (1988) argued for the concept of a continuum which could enable women to make sense of their experiences. Kelly's (1988) continuum, rather than focussing on different forms of violence as discrete issues, recombines the similarities in women's experience theoretically, as forms of violence underpinning patriarchal power and control. Kelly (1988) argues that this continuum does not imply a straight line but instead validates the shifting boundaries between several forms of violence. Here the notion of symbolic violence can be used to understand not only the gendered experiences of the women within CareGM but also the experiences of CareGM within the 'macro politics of intuitional silencing and exclusion' (Topper 2001:31). I will now move on to discuss partnerships and organisational threats. Here the notional of symbolic violence might be used to consider how CareGM relates to and with other organisations and how it responded to

intuitional threats such as isomorphic pressures. I will return to symbolic violence throughout this section and in chapter seven, as I argue CareGM responded with love to these threats.

## **6.11 Feeling Threatened, Staff, Trustees, Volunteers, Researcher**

As I explored the themes of gender and symbolic violence at CareGM a further theme around threat emerged that can be linked to both gender and symbolic violence.

### **6.11.1 Safety**

The issue of my safety and that of staff and volunteers emerged frequently throughout my research. The trustee meeting was not at CareGM but at a community meeting room a few minutes' walk from CareGM. When I arrived in October to present my SLA workshop report to the trustees I was told by Dom, Advice Clinic volunteer, not to walk over on my own as I would not know where to go and it would be dangerous for me to walk over alone. I walked over with another trustee, a nun in her seventies or eighties who was registered blind. I am not sure who was supposed to be protecting whom in that situation, although I was assured that the Sister was formidable. We walked past the church that operated the under-the-radar hostel and the sister told me a little about it. There was a big jumble sale outside the church as we walked past. Within CareGM I began to see that the social dynamics of everyday practices are often governed and shaped by gendered inequalities and 'micro contexts of local power which enable forms of normative violence against women to continue with impunity' (Kleinman 2000:227). Here, the 'violences of everyday life' (Kleinman 2000:227) which have become normalised and naturalised led me to a situation where I was walking to the trustee meeting, 'protected' by an eighty-year-old nun.

The trustee meeting was in a local authority run building that housed a library, community meeting rooms and a doctor's surgery. Many of the CareGM clients kept warm in the library, as CareGM shut at 2pm and the night shelter did not open until 7pm, so clients used the library until it closed as a warm space. The building was protected by a big burly security guard. The

area felt dangerous. There were a lot of people around who had nothing, and were street homeless: nothing to lose but a night in warm dry cells to gain if they were to assault you.

Security was strict on my first few visits to CareGM. To enter through the staff entrance one had to be buzzed in by the office and had to sign in by the door. Interestingly, when I visited in June the weather was very warm and all security was forgotten – the fire door was propped open to cool the dining area.

### **6.11.2 Gender Differentiated Responses to Violence**

During my research period an issue arose that became gendered. Norman, the pastor, was attacked in June 2014. There was a gendered response to Norman's attack. The female night shelter manager had been threatened by the same client on the same evening and all staff volunteers and trustees were clear that she was right to call the police. At the management meeting in July there was some questioning by the chair of CareGM trustees as to whether Norman, as a male, should have dealt with the situation himself. Violence is discursively contracted as gendered and sexualised (Mehta 1999). Femininity is associated with passivity (Bartky 1990, Young 1990) whilst conversely men undermine their 'hegemonic masculinity' if they respond with passivity (Connell 1995, Segal 1990). CareGM staff member Hope immediately responded to the notion that Norman should have managed the attack himself, stating at the management committee meeting in July that they would always report all violence to the police and were very supportive of Norman's reaction. The chair of the trustees, however, seemed to intimate in her response that Norman's masculinity was important in how he responded to conflict.

Orange attack alarms were available to staff and volunteers that worked directly with clients. However, when I first arrived, before Norman was attacked, only the women wore the alarms

around their necks, like necklaces. When I asked about this Tammy replied that she thought that there was something about women wanting additional 'easy reach' support:

*I think it is something about women wanting easy reach support. [Paul] has his in his trouser pockets. I think that this would be too difficult to get to in an emergency. I prefer to be able to reach for it around my neck.* Tammy, Interview

After the attack on Norman, I observed that most staff were wearing the orange alarms visibly about their person. When asked about the orange alarms, Norman stated that he did not want to wear his, and he had not had to use it, but he did have a feeling that it may have modified the behaviour of clients:

*I don't wear mine [orange attack alarm]. It is there to be visible, I've not had to use it. Partly because it's become so practised to keep your eyes open and to head things off before it reaches a stage where we would need to press the panic button. It is good to have as an option. I have a feeling that it may have modified the behaviours of clients. It might have contributed to a change in behaviour.* Norman, Interview

Here we can see that the ways in which women and men manage threats and fears of violence are shaped by their investments in subject positions (Mehta 1999). These subject positions have effects of power. The negotiation of danger 'is in many ways the negotiation of power' (Mehta 1999:79). Social interaction, language and symbols reproduced structures of domination and hierarchy within CareGM. These are perhaps best explained by Bourdieu's (2000) notions of consent, complicity and misrecognition. Understanding the invisible nature of some forms of violence enables an understanding of why and how violence against women is able to continue.

The coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination), when their understanding of the situation

and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination makes this relation appear as natural ... (Bourdieu 2000:170)

Consent, as Bourdieu (2000) sees it, is not suggesting that individuals are intentionally placing themselves in positions of violence but where individuals are unable to consciously decode words, gestures and initiations of domination. Jenkins (1992) develops this notion of consent in a broader institutional setting, seeing symbolic violence as the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning upon groups so they are experienced as legitimate. Here, power relationships are

obscured but also indicate the paradoxical nature of practices and social spaces that are created for women: while they resist the lived experiences/norms/expectations of them, they also subject themselves to these norms. (Morgan et al. 2006:446)

Overall, within CareGM, despite frequent references to the motherly value of female staff and volunteers and the practical value of male staff and volunteers to supervise the showers, there were no clearly gendered roles. Here, everyday interrelationships often reflected power dynamics, via chosen language (Henley and Freeman 1979), acts of joking and teasing and what CareGM would have called 'banter'. Support staff were both male and female, kitchen staff likewise. In terms of how the gendered nature of the organisation impacted on its response to austerity, on the surface CareGM's organisational culture of love, care and faith appeared more important. The complicity described by Bourdieu in relation to symbolic violence is neither 'the passive submission to external constraint nor free adherence to values' (1977:51). Intimidation, for example, may only be experienced by someone predisposed to feel it. I will now move on to how CareGM as an organisation experienced intimidation or threat around organisational survival. Here, symbolic violence may be a useful lens to analyse it.

## **6.12 Institutional Symbolic Violence; Feeling Threatened as an Organisation**

As my research continued, beyond the sense of personal and symbolic violence there emerged a linked theme, of institutional symbolic violence, via a sense of financial threat. The theme emerged around a sense of concern over the organisational finances. CareGM received its main funding from over fifty-three other sources of support, as reported in its 2013-2014 Annual Review (AR 2014). Some sources were public, others were trusts, and a large donor was a Catholic trust. CareGM as an organisation was financially solvent, and in comparison with much of the VCS within Greater Manchester which was experiencing significant hardship and threats to existence (Davidson and Packham 2015, Dayson et al. 2013) it was coping well. To some extent, the variety of funding sources allowed CareGM freedom from the isomorphic tensions of service delivery contracts. I return to this notion of CareGM's freedom from the pressures of isomorphism and privatisation in chapters eight and ten.

### **6.12.1 Finances**

CareGM was in a good financial position. Its Annual Review (AR 2014) revealed that it had positive reserves and a strong income stream from a diversity of funders. The organisational turnover was £105,000 per annum (AR 2014). However, there was concern from trustees that if CareGM did not get its usual regular funding from NHS sources and two local trusts it could very quickly end up in the position it was in a few years ago. In 2010 CareGM had nearly had to close due to a major financial crisis. However, it recruited new trustees and reduced centre opening hours and staffing (it lost the centre manager) and gradually recovered:

*About three to four years ago it was worse in terms of finances – we were more worried about our jobs. We did get funding bids and it has been OK since. The trustees do the funding bids and it is hard because they are trying to do it and then asking for policies and information for this and that bid. It gets in a rush; they are trying to do it alongside all their other jobs. I know from the trustees that it is better to apply for smaller bids rather*

*than larger ones. Small funding bids keep coming in and I think that we are OK for the next couple of years. I'm not really sure who the funding's from; you will have to ask the trustees.* Tammy, Interview

It was a difficult time in 2010 for CareGM because it was a new centre (other homeless organisations had been going for more than twenty years) and it felt like it was just developing and building trust in the community when it had to scale right back. After losing the centre manager, the trustees took on line management of support workers. It took CareGM twelve to eighteen months to recover:

*CareGM opened up in 2007. These were the end of the good times, there was cash about. We set up in 2007 and it was OK. CareGM built up from opening three days a week to five days a week ... in 2010 they discovered a big hole in their finances ... the service nearly folded. We lost the centre manager ... it felt like we were going backwards as we had to return to opening three days a week. It took us twelve to eighteen months to recover. It made us sharpen up a bit.* Hope, Interview

Unfortunately, the timing of the 2010 CareGM financial crisis during the global financial recession meant that the service CareGM offered had to reduce as demand increased, with more people using the centre with more extreme needs. However, in 2014 CareGM was financially solvent and was doing so well that it was able to increase staff salaries by five per cent.

### **6.12.2 Insecurity**

The SLA participatory workshop in July revealed specific issues that the organisation faced in response to austerity, these financial concerns are detailed within the SLA in appendix seven. The organisation felt that it was in a reasonable financial position after its funding difficulty a few years previously, and there was money in the organisation's bank account. However, some

participants of the SLA workshop expressed concerns regarding funding and its continuation. This might have been because of a communication issue between board leadership and employees, or it might have been a representation of the precariousness of funding during austerity. Here we can return to the notion of threat, drawing out again notions of symbolic violence. Staff experienced threat to their jobs and to the continuation of the centre despite CareGM actually being in a relatively stable financial position. Thompson considers symbolic violence and suggests that domination in the form of symbolic violence 'must disguise itself beneath the veil of an enchanted relationship, lest it destroy itself by revealing its true nature and provoking a violent response from the victims or forcing them to flee' (1984:56). Here this threat of funding cuts is arguably an experience of symbolic violence, as evidenced by quotes from Sarah and Alex:

*We have been affected by the funding cuts over the last few years.* Sarah, Interview

*Financially funding is difficult. They just have a few staff and are not able to employ any more. They use volunteers to support services.* Alan, Interview

Here, CareGM was potentially in a position where symbolic violence was being enacted by the trustees upon the staff and volunteers. Trustees may be aware of the stable financial position of the organisation but staff and volunteers have not absorbed this information and still experience a sense of threat to CareGM's finances and ultimately their own roles. Staff and volunteers did not have a sense that CareGM was financially sound. Many staff discussed CareGM as struggling, as existing on a knife edge. Most volunteers and staff I interviewed expressed the concern that CareGM existed on very little funding:

*It feels OK ... nothing feels like we are here forever ... They find funding but you cannot rest on your laurels.* Luke, Interview

One volunteer, Jonny, cited the fact that CareGM offered small meal portions and often ran out of food as a reason for believing that funding was tight within the organisation. However, this feeling of threat, of existing in a constantly reducing funding environment, was not felt by all volunteers. Another volunteer, Justin, felt that CareGM was very good at fundraising:

*Things have picked up. CareGM are very good at fundraising. I will find out more at the volunteer meeting next month. I'll learn more about how that all connects.* Justin, Interview

Therefore, although CareGM finances were in a positive condition and the diversity of funders allowed a degree of operational freedom, perceptions among staff were that the organisation was in a precarious financial position. The organisational financial situation was not clearly communicated to staff and volunteers.

### **6.12.3 Funding Applications**

Funding, although stable during the period of my research, was a continuous concern for staff and trustees. Funding applications were discussed at the trustee meeting in October. Mental health funding via NHS sources was discussed, as the tendering process was very long and complex. Within the mental health fund there was not a clear category for homelessness. CareGM had applied for funding but the application took three trustees – a nun, a retired psychotherapist and a retired nursery nurse – days to complete. The trustees shared that a local community organisation that had existed for twenty-five years had had to close recently as it had not been successful in applying for funding. The trustees discussed at their October meeting the complexity and time-consuming nature of completing local authority and NHS funding bids. Some funding, even though awarded to CareGM in March 2014, had only just arrived in their bank account in October 2014. This delay had affected their ability to finance their plan.

Funding applications were made by the local Council for Voluntary Service and a consortium of VCS organisations had put in a bid for some money in July 2014. The aim was to use this

money to prioritise and formalise support work within the centre. On one of my visits, in May, funders were being shown around the centre. They were a small group of three smartly dressed individuals. This visit affected the atmosphere of the centre, and staff and volunteers seemed eager to please. The funders did not sit and engage with clients, but simply toured the centre as outsiders looking in.

CareGM received some money annually from small-scale fundraisers. It had a diverse range of funding sources, from the creation of a regular giving scheme (set up in the hope of financial independence from funders) and bucket appeals to placing reserves with Virgin Money to gain interest. They utilised their good relationships with local business to generate donations, which ranged from opened (so unsellable) packets of underwear via the community developments coordinator at Tesco to bread from a local bakery. A chance online search had resulted in grant funding from Pret A Manger and that funded CareGM's cook's salary. A Catholic charity fund gave CareGM £20,000 a year.

The director of LEM stated that in fact the recession had resulted in an increase in giving by churchgoers:

*We've actually done quite well out of the recession; the recession has been good for us.*

*Yes, there has been an increase in need but there also has been an increase in giving churchgoers who have responded to the need by increasing the amount that they give.*

Tom, Interview

Annually some of the funds raised at a cathedral carol service were donated and trustees completed supermarket bag packing. CareGM had also set up its own fundraising project based on a 'one hundred club' format. The idea was to get enough people giving monthly to support the project long term. Gail, a trustee, had calculated that if CareGM was to get 7,500 people giving £10 a month they could run the project full time without any need for external funders:

*Funding and fundraising came out of panic. In 2011 we had two and a half thousand pounds in the bank when I started. I started going to churches, doing bucket appeals. I set up a five hundred club, similar to hundred clubs that you get in schools but a five hundred club. You don't win anything like in the schools' hundred clubs but five hundred people donate ten pounds per month. This gives the charity a regular £1,250 income every month. If you combine this with funding appeals .... Gail, Interview*

This project was in its infancy but developing.

#### **6.12.4 Banking and Accountancy**

CareGM was struggling with its bank. This bank had a branch very close to CareGM and the nun trustee had always had a good relationship with the bank manager. Unfortunately this manager left and setting up an online banking system had taken Gail and the office administrator Sarah four months to arrange. In direct contrast to the value and support for volunteers operationalised by CareGM within the centre, the trustees had not extended the same support to their volunteer accountant. The CareGM accountant had threatened to leave, citing not being valued as a volunteer. Gail, a trustee, had spoken to her and persuaded her to stay. The accountant had simply felt that her contribution of doing the accounts without charge had not been valued, but she agreed to volunteer for a further twelve months. Here, I return to research on best practice in volunteer management, a theme I mentioned earlier in the chapter. Studer (2015) states the importance of valuing volunteers and integrating them into the team. If CareGM had valued the accountant and integrated her into the volunteer team this issue could have been avoided.

#### **6.12.5 Donations**

Donations of physical items such as food and money were very much valued, as were the donations of time and skills by volunteers. Pro-bono services of the board members who have

skills such as accountancy, legal knowledge and auditing were recognised as a financial asset to the organisation. A further asset was the local public who donated money and were supportive of CareGM.

Concerns were shared at the participatory workshop regarding ongoing funding and the vulnerability of VCS organisations during austerity. Worries were shared regarding reductions in food donations. There was a concern that personal financial pressure might prevent or reduce local generosity and a concern regarding increasing competition from other charities and services over funding. Personal pressures of reduced finances on employees, volunteers and trustees were shared and consideration given to the impact that the pressures have had on their roles within the organisation. It was felt that establishing and maintaining financial independence was an important priority for the organisation, and that CareGM should be creative in its search for new sources of money. A discussion was held at the third participatory workshop as to whether a smaller organisation was better and if operating on a smaller budget but providing good quality care was better than expanding and being unable to deliver the same services.

#### **6.12.6 Social Enterprise**

CareGM had embraced social enterprise, having several trustees on the board that came from a private sector background. Social enterprise within the wider voluntary sector is a developing field (Nicholls 2010) and is often linked both nationally and within Greater Manchester to service delivery contracts and developing partnerships with the private sector (Huckfield 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, Fisher et al. 2012). However, many of the social enterprise projects at CareGM were on a micro scale. Trustees were knitting jam pot covers and Christmas decorations for sale as fundraisers. There was a clothes shop on site, where second-hand clothes were sold for fifty pence each item. The sales were intended to raise some money to fund other projects such as

the showers, shower gel and clean underwear. Also charging for the clothes was intended to encourage financial responsibility and care for the clothes that were purchased.

A further small-scale social enterprise that CareGM initiated was a food bank scheme. Due to the high number of food parcel requests and the need to subsidise the funding of food parcels, CareGM came up with a 'pay us back when you've got it' system. Hope shared that the system was working during a debrief meeting in June:

*We have had a big uptake on the food parcels. We need to make up some more. [clients name] popped into today – his benefits have come through – he gave us a fiver for last week's parcel.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation

Food parcels were given to clients for free at the point of access but then £5 was requested once the client received their benefits. This was administered on an honesty basis and if the client did not pay the £5 upon receipt of benefits the debt was not chased.

### 6.13 Feeling Threatened, Welfare Reform and Symbolic Violence

The theme of threat arose again during my research when discussing welfare reform. The threat from a wider institutional perspective arose as a result of Coalition policy, specifically the Welfare Reform Act 2012. CareGM was seeing an increase in poverty and need and was aspiring to put support and proactive strategies in place to avoid difficult situations. Their aim was to anticipate questions, comments and strategies to avoid the recurrence of issues, as evidenced by quotes from Hope and Tammy:

*Obviously the service has reduced as demand has increased. We are seeing an increased intensity of people. More people are using the centre with more extreme needs.* Hope, Interview

*We are busier now, we do more ... We have two sittings of food. Paid for and leftovers (freely shared). More and more people are getting leftovers.* Tammy, Interview

There were significant cuts to local authority services and mental health drop-in services were being shut down<sup>90</sup>. Crisis Loans<sup>91</sup>, a social fund that had transferred into local authority control, was not available. CareGM was becoming the last place the clients could go to, as my field notes from March illustrate:

*Significant cuts to [local authority] services. Home improvement services and [local authority] services for vulnerable adults – local authority has removed funding. Mental health drop-in has shut down. CareGM is the last place people can come.* Field Notes, Participatory Observation Debrief Meeting, March

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<sup>90</sup> **Cuts to Local Services.** Greater Manchester local authorities have experienced huge cuts in funding and as a result many services have been reduced or closed (*Manchester Evening News* 2015)

<sup>91</sup> **Crisis Loans.** These loans, set up to support people in crisis and previously administered by local authorities, ceased to be available during the period of my research. <https://www.gov.uk/crisis-loans/overview>

CareGM was working across its networks to try to respond as a collective. Hope stated that CareGM had a strong mission focus:

*we need to focus on the best way to help the service users.* Hope, Field Notes, Participatory Observation, March

### **6.13.1 Outreach Work**

The mission focus discussed earlier in this chapter was renewed here when considering the broader theme of centre outreach. As I began to consider and reflect on my analysis, I began to see CareGM's outreach work as the extension of loving hands towards the community. During my research period CareGM began to accompany some clients to appointments, their aim being better to support service users. These appointments were psychiatric, probation and benefits appointments. Before the Coalition cuts to the VCS, advocacy services would potentially have accompanied clients to their appointments. However, advocacy services were significantly reduced under Coalition funding cuts and CareGM felt that it should take on this role in order to support its clients. This response was piloted by CareGM staff. One example given was of a service user who frequently banged his head; CareGM was able to explain in the appointment that this was due to anxiety and depression and was caused by his extreme distress due to benefit sanctions.

A paper was written for the CareGM board and approval was gained from the trustees. CareGM staff then began to support some clients to attend appointments. This support was offered to some stabilised service users rather than all service users. Which clients to support was decided on a case-by-case basis by support workers, and this seemed to depend on existing relationships with clients. Whilst the trustees were happy to support this new venture, there was, however, some anxiety from them that the core services of the centre should not be affected by this extra support role.

The anxiety of the trustees that the competing demands of staff and volunteer time should not detract from the core mission of the centre was responded to sensitively by CareGM staff. They created a policy regarding lone working. Support visits were to be carried out with two support staff. The centre also had to be fully staffed in their absence. However, the staff put it to the trustees that this support role enabled CareGM to support clients to achieve their benefit decision or to get support from NHS sources. It saved the time involved in supporting a client and then the client attending an appointment but not being able to articulate their needs. As discussed by Tammy during a debrief session:

*it's common sense ... [it] ... saves going back to the start.* Tammy, Field Notes, Participant Observation

There were some issues with the new support role at the start of the project. The realities of dealing with complex clients that lead chaotic lives had challenges. Dom, Advice Clinic volunteer, and Hussein, CareGM volunteer, had both taken time to support a client at court, but the client did not attend. However, the support attendance still had some success, as Dom negotiated with the judge to get another court date. A different support visit was much more successful, when Dan, the GP receptionist, and Tammy, a CareGM support worker, worked with a client who had Huntington's Disease<sup>92</sup> and supported him to attend a consultant appointment. The importance of partnership is evident here, as without the support of Advice Clinic or the GP surgery neither of these visits would have been possible. The outreach work was at an embryonic stage. CareGM used the debrief meetings to reflect on the project. The difficulty with unsuccessful or less successful support appointments was that people (those supporting the client) felt let down and negativity soon accumulates. The debrief sessions discussed at what point support workers would say no to clients, whilst recognising the unpredictability and

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<sup>92</sup> Huntington's disease Huntington's disease is an inherited condition that damages certain nerve cells in the brain. [www.nhs.org.uk](http://www.nhs.org.uk)

unreliability of the client. Discussions at debrief meetings often covered how much support workers should 'parent' the client. As my research period went on, there were more successful off-site support visits, and experience and confidence grew among support staff.

### **6.13.2 Reciprocity**

The proactive response was continued in CareGM's involvement with me as a researcher. In writing up the notes for their debrief meeting I offered a reflective account of the organisation throughout my research period. CareGM shared that they found it helpful to have my notes on the meetings; it helped the organisation to focus on progress, what it had done and what it should do next. I also offered an organisationally specific SLA workshop. The findings of the workshop are integrated into the SLA analysis in Appendix Seven. This fitted well with my feminist communitarian research ethics and my commitment to reciprocity and emancipatory research, reflected in my third research objective.

### **6.13.3 Developing the Centre, Developing Love**

CareGM were keen to be proactive, to respond to need and to develop new ways of working with client groups. It is here that they responded to the complex, chaotic and occasionally violent needs of their clients in a unique way. The focus on a proactive response to need, of creating and developing the centre despite an increasingly difficult operating environment, was part of a process of developing love. It is here that I feel CareGM moved beyond the human, social, public, physical or financial capitals of an SLA analytical approach<sup>93</sup> (Chambers and Conway 2000) or the human social or cultural capitals espoused by Bourdieu (2000). Through their proactive loving response to the symbolic violence at an institutional and policy level they offered something unique.

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<sup>93</sup> See Appendix Seven

## **6.14 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has offered an ethnographic analysis of the key themes that emerged from my research with CareGM. This chapter has mapped organisational vision, mission and voice and discussed key themes such as partnerships, violence and gender as part of its analysis.

### **6.14.1 Assets and Vulnerabilities**

CareGM is a faith-based VCS organisation based within the homelessness subsector of the VCS. Its organisational voice has been affected by austerity although its core mission remained strong. CareGM was keen to be proactive in its response to austerity and regularly developed the services that it offered to clients. This chapter has considered the identity, mission and proactive focus of CareGM. Having considered the key themes that came out from the research within CareGM, I have built a picture of CareGM as it responded to the opportunities and challenges posed by the Coalition government. It was CareGM's focus on organisational assets and on building proactive strategies for clients that made SLA a particularly appropriate tool to analyse their VCS organisation. My next chapter introduces the notion of love as a response to austerity.

CareGM had good social and human capital. Relationships were strong with organisations that it had informal ties with. In terms of human capital staff and volunteers valued each other highly. Trustees very much valued staff and volunteers. There were some communication challenges between operational and strategic management levels, with trustees not always fully understanding the realities of how CareGM operated. CareGM had very strong public capital with strong links to NHS and VCS partners. Links and working relationships with the police were still being negotiated during my research period. In terms of physical capital the building in which CareGM operated was barely fit for purpose, with significant challenges in terms of how

space could be used and maintenance issues. However, CareGM was continuously working to find new ways to solve some of these practical challenges. A deep sense of gratitude existed between CareGM and LEM for the use of the building and this softened some of the difficulties with physical infrastructure. Financial capital was strong despite many staff and volunteers fearing that funding was scarce. The 2013-14 Annual Review revealed a strong financial situation, so fears about security existed perhaps due to a memory of the organisation's funding crisis when it faced closure (AR 2014).

There were, however, vulnerabilities, as social and public capital vulnerability was a real concern for CareGM. The organisations that CareGM listed as partners were facing cuts because of central and local government funding reductions, and there was a fear among staff, volunteers and trustees that this would affect the social and public capital links that they could develop with CareGM. A lack of knowledge of public interest was shared as a concern. Participants were worried that a loss of sponsors would significantly affect the service that the day centre could provide. Financial austerity was hitting all areas of the public and private sectors and there was a concern that financial pressures might reduce sponsor generosity. An overdependence on networks and signposting to services was also shared as vulnerability. CareGM's social, human and public capitals overlapped to create personal and organisational bonds. Key to the CareGM SLA was the partnership with LEM. The physical capital challenges were negotiated within the messy reality of the partnership.

In using SLA to map assets, Bourdieu's (2000) notions of 'field' and 'distinction' become relevant. As I discussed in chapter one, the VCS, although often discussed as a distinctive sector, is in fact heterogeneous (Alcock 2010ab). For Bourdieu the field is an area of struggle among agents, involving these agent-developing strategies in order to play a complex and dynamic game (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992). The existence of a field develops from a shared

interest or understanding among participants in terms of forms of capital, and this shared understanding or interest link the agents to each other. Capital can be a source of power for its possessors (Macmillan 2013). Macmillan (2013) suggests that this source of power in a VCS context could be the pursuit of tangible resources such as finance and physical assets, but also intangible assets such as legitimacy, status, reputation, information, influence and connection.

Bourdieu (1984) distinguishes between four types of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Economic capital can be discussed in terms of finance. Social capital is concerned with connections, information and networks. Cultural capital relates to education and social skills. Symbolic capital is concerned with status, legitimacy and authority. Bourdieu (1984), in his study of French culture and social class, develops an argument whereby social groups attempt to distinguish themselves from others based on a social hierarchy (Bennett et al. 2009).

Here, Macmillan (2013) argues that this concept of distinction, as a strategic orientation by participants in a field, offers an explanation of how the VCS operates. For Bourdieu (1984) fields are uneven, favouring some groups and organisations over others, hence some groups have greater influence over money or time or perhaps capacity and expertise than others. Here, Macmillan suggests 'the third sector is just as characterised by resource and status hierarchies as other fields' (2013:41). Bourdieu's (1984) framework suggests that different agents possess different levels and qualities of capital and take steps to preserve or advance their position in relation to these capitals. Macmillan (2011) extends Bourdieu's framework and introduces the idea of creating 'room' for third sector organisations to exist and operate. Macmillan (2011) explains 'room' as a spatial and ecological metaphor. The notion is of an acknowledged role and position for an organisation 'based on a context specific, ongoing, sometimes awkward and contested accommodation between similarly placed organisations operating in a given

catchment area, and second, a capacity to continue its activities to pursue its aims' (Macmillan 2013:42).

The SLA within appendix seven, reveals that at the micro level CareGM generally did not experience the isomorphic and privatising pressures to the same extent that the wider national and regional VCSs were experiencing. However, in mapping these capitals I feel they miss something of the organisational ethos, the constant weaving of humanity through organisational bureaucracy, that staff and volunteers engaged in daily. Themes began to emerge, some shared by members of the organisation and other more nuanced themes as a result of my reflections and analysis.

#### **6.14.2 Emerging Themes**

In creating and developing this SLA alongside my ethnographic research and semi-structured interviews, themes began to emerge. These themes, like those of my research at Greater Manchester level, were at first emic themes, around a sense of threat to the organisation and the sense of care that staff had for each other. As my research continued I began to sense etic themes; these etic themes sometimes related to my Greater Manchester and literature research. These themes were of human and social capitals whilst other etic themes were specific to CareGM. The sense of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2002 ) that I saw within CareGM was not so evident at the Greater Manchester level. Centrally, the organisational response of CareGM to this symbolic violence, love, as I discuss in chapter seven, is a unique response.

Arguably, symbolic violence for staff at CareGM who loved and felt loved within the organisation would not reflect the understandings espoused by CareGM. For despite emotional, psychological and occasionally physical violence, staff and volunteers often failed to recognise the sense of threat they described, perceiving the organisation as 'enchanted', at least initially (Morgan 2005). The concept of symbolic violence 'directs us towards a reflection on the forms in

which relations of communication are interwoven with relations of power' (Thompson 1984:43). Symbolic violence, however, is powerful precisely because it is misrecognised (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), precisely because of its lack of visibility. In order to fully understand the intransigence and permanence of violence I have analysed, considered and reflected in specific contexts how symbolic violence, threats of physical violence and the effect on emotionality can co-exist. I have used Bourdieu's (2000) concepts of symbolic violence that are embedded in everyday life, such as consent, complicity and misrecognition, the 'subtle inculcation of power relations upon the bodies and dispositions of individuals, is what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic violence' (McNay 1999).

Here, in relation to the VCS theories of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) can be drawn in. My literature review in chapter three and my research findings in chapter five suggest that as VCS groups have sought to defend and build capitals, during austerity larger groups have chosen to adapt mission statements, reduce campaigning and increase service delivery. Smaller groups have arguably been less affected by austerity (Alcock 2010a). Coalition policy for smaller groups has resulted in them relying on social ties and capitals to maintain projects. Under-the-radar activities 'operated in a distinctive fashion and worked in a markedly different way to the more mainstream sector' (Phillimore et al. 2010:1. Macmillan states that organisations are ultimately placed in a competitive relationship with each other for various forms of capital, 'even though much of this rivalry is disguised, implied or latent' (2013:42).

My analysis of CareGM has drawn on Bourdieu's (1984) notions of capital and of symbolic violence. Bourdieu's notions of capital link to SLA as a form of analysis. However, my research revealed another aspect of the organisation, as I share in my reflections around social ties and staff and volunteer support for each other. It is this aspect that I wish to develop and explore in

my next chapter. It relates to the faith-based nature of CareGM but offers an alternative narrative to that of violence. My next chapter argues that despite experiencing great hardships under Coalition policy and experiencing symbolic violence as an institution and as individual staff, trustees and volunteers, CareGM chose to respond to this experience not with violence or submission to violence but with action: with love.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: Developing the Sixth Capital

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter complements my ethnographic chapter and unpacks notions of faith, volunteerism, love and care within the policy context of FBOs and homelessness. The chapter develops the notion of shared love and work as a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital, and in doing so meets research objectives two, four and five. This chapter also develops my original contribution to knowledge, after considerations of the policy and organisational context of faith within CareGM.

My research was based at the day centre run by CareGM. The day centre was a collaboration between CareGM and LEM. A variety of other partners had also been brought in by CareGM to support their work with homeless clients. These partners were made up of The Homeless GP service (funded through NHS Health Matters), a drug and alcohol service, a specialist stop smoking advice service (through the NHS Health Improvement Service) and Advice Clinic. The day centre arguably offered a post-secular space of care for homeless clients (Cloke et al. 2010). LEM is an evangelistic organisation, CareGM is a Catholic organisation, and the day centre is operationally a post-secular space where secular service providers (Advice Clinic and NHS) work collaboratively with FBOs (LEM and CareGM) to offer drop-in centre services for homeless clients. In this chapter, I explore faith and homelessness and offer a sixth SLA capital which I feel contributes to my analysis.

I begin by exploring faith at CareGM. I then examine the notion of Caritas, which I intend to add as a capital to the SLA<sup>94</sup> (Chambers and Conway 1992) of how CareGM as an organisation was affected by austerity. I examine how Caritas, as a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital (Chambers and Conway 1992), enables a more nuanced analysis of the CareGM response to

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<sup>94</sup> A detailed SLA of CareGM is in Appendix Seven

austerity. Chapman (2012) explores the ways in which the secular VCS and the faith-based VCS are similar and argues that it is the faith dimension in itself that is the most distinguishing feature. What this faith dimension entails has been discussed in terms of social capital (Baker 2009; Furbey et al. 2006; Putnam 2000) and spiritual or religious capital (Baker, 2009). I develop these notions of religious or faith capital into my own capital: love, or Caritas, capital.

## 7.2 Faith at CareGM

During my first few research visits to the CareGM drop-in centre, faith was not clearly visible as part of the organisation's day-to-day operations. There was a prayer room situated next to the support room. The support room was used on Wednesdays for advice appointments and on Mondays and Thursdays for one-to-one support work. Norman, the pastor, used this prayer room on Wednesdays for a noisy prayer group, when music permeated throughout the drop-in centre. Norman was present during the drop-in centre day, drinking tea from his 'keep calm and pray' mug. However, his calm and quiet approach to ministry means that it is not immediately obvious that CareGM is an FBO. Norman's choice of old band T-shirts, jeans and long hair meant that he blended in with the client group who were mainly of a similar age and gender to him. Faith, although clearly part of LEM and CareGM core values, was not explicit within the centre.

Speaking to staff and volunteers within the centre, day-to-day their faith was not shared or offered. My research found that the centre did not have an evangelistic focus, as evidenced by this quote by Paul:

*My hope is to proclaim the gospel; however, I don't often get to that point. I am often too busy with incarnation and compassion. Not all staff are Christian ... there is less proclamation than there used to be. The felt needs [incarnation and compassion] are so great that you can exhaust yourself really.* Paul, Interview

When I have worked in other faith-based care settings, prayer has been a compulsory part of the daily routine. At this drop-in centre, staff and volunteers came from a wide variety of backgrounds and faith experiences. Some volunteers had come to faith via their work at CareGM. Luke, initially a volunteer and then the centre cook, got involved as a volunteer after

his son was given community service in the garden. He and his wife became involved with the drop-in centre and night shelter initially as volunteers, finding their faith and becoming Christians through the experience. Jonny shared that

*[CareGM] offer a cup of tea, support, so you don't go backwards. That makes a difference.* Jonny, Interview

CareGM became a family project built on family ties. Other volunteers and trustees who ran the kitchen over the summer of my research project travelled in from a wealthy area in an expensive four-wheel drive vehicle but had chosen to volunteer in their retirement as an expression of their faith. Gail shared her experience of volunteering with her husband:

*[Keith] can be serving tea and saying 'You alright, mate?' [to clients] and then discussing strategy in the boardroom. [Keith] is used to dealing with clients [Gail cites his work experience in construction]; they [clients] talk to Keith and say 'that posh wife of yours'. They [clients] have taken more getting used to me.* Gail, Interview

I discuss the need to include more ex-service user volunteers in chapter six; however, the capacity and willingness of volunteers from all backgrounds to offer time to CareGM was an example of how love was operationalised within the centre.

Some staff, Hope and Tammy, were churchgoers and attended church services on Sundays, but only shared this information in the context of a story about a service user bringing a pet rabbit to the service. They did not share their denomination or the type of church that they attended. Some staff, those from partnership projects such as Advice Clinic and the GP service, were not Christian. Partnership working between faith-based and equality based organisations has caused some operational issues. In one instance the GP receptionist was asked not to display health advice for gay men and abortion information outside the surgery. This caused

significant difficulties for the NHS which holds equality as a core value and for LEM which had its organisational interpretation of the Christian faith. There was real tension over this issue between LEM and the GP receptionist. However, CareGM responded to this issue with love and understanding. A CareGM trustee mediated between LEM and the GP receptionist, which resulted in LEM accepting the posters being displayed. Humanity was woven through organisational conflicts with love.

### **7.3 What Type of Faith-Based Organisation is CareGM?**

I will now consider what type of FBO CareGM is. Organisations vary in governance style, size, complexity and funding type. I return here to analyse the literature on FBOs, specifically focussing on how it relates to CareGM. This review develops the discussion that began within the faith section of chapter three, my literature review. FBOs and groups also vary in terms of how they connect to their faith communities and their relationships to denominational networks regionally and nationally (Polson 2008; Sosin and Smith 2006; Pipes and Ebaugh 2002; Demerath et al. 1998). Coles (1997) suggests that there are three organisational ideals of charity: Christian Caritas, secular humanism and post-secular charity. However, Cloke et al. (2007:1090) question if there can be any neat distinction between faith-based and secular ethics of generosity and service:

service provision for homeless people in England involved Christian organisations functioning in a secular humanist world often engaging in partnership projects involving Christian and non-Christian organisations and individuals.

#### **7.3.1 Defining a Faith-Based Organisation**

FBOs are difficult to define (Smith and Sosin 2001; Sider and Umruh 2004; Tomalin 2012). Smith and Sosin (2001) argue that the term 'faith-based' excludes many organisations whose faith is implicit rather than explicit, preferring the term faith-related organisations. For Smith and Sosin (2001), the term faith-related recognises that faith intertwines organisations in a diversity of ways, places and reasons. Sider and Umruh (2004) focus on the multidimensionality of FBOs. A very broad definition of FBOs is offered by Clarke and Jennings: 'any organisation that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith' (2008:6).

There is a huge variety of types of FBO and due to this complexity a number of typologies exist that attempt to categorise organisations, from 'faith saturated' to 'secular' (Smith and Sosin 2001; Sider and Umruh 2004; Tomalin 2012). When considering organisational culture, one can consider a range of organisational development scholarship: open and closed communities (Redfield 1964), grid group matrix (Douglas 1978) and institutional ethnography (Heyman 2004). Such starting points can be considered alongside theories of organisational leadership and evolution from within organisational development scholarship (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Leadership itself is an area to be considered within FBOs; themes such as charismatic leadership and founder syndrome are key issues in organisational development literature. For example, there are several studies of FBOs that problematise the leadership of the FBOs that they study (Lambert-Pennington 2010, Kline 2010, Greenfield 1973). Hefferan and Foggarty (2010) state that a gender analysis of FBOs is needed as most of the formal leadership of FBOs is almost exclusively male. Interestingly this is not the case with CareGM who have a mixed board of trustees, the chair of the trustees being female.

### **7.3.2 Types of Faith-Based Organisation**

In an international development context, G. Clarke (2008) describes five types of FBOs: representative organisations; charitable or development organisations; socio-political organisations; missionary organisations; and radical illegal or terrorist organisations. Clarke (2008) states that in an international context donors are most typically engaged with charitable or development FBOs and these are usually Christian. Sider and Umruh (2004) create eight categories, examining FBOs in terms of the extent to which faith is manifest in different aspects of their work. The eight factors are: mission statement; founding; affiliation; controlling board; senior management; other staff; and sources of support (financial and non-financial). Using this categorisation Sider and Umruh (2004) suggest that at one end of the scale are 'faith permeated organisations', in which faith is manifest across all dimensions of an organisation,

and at the other end of the scale are 'secular' organisations. I consider CareGM in terms of these factors later in this section. Hefferan et al. (2009) adapt this typology for use in an American context, adding in a consideration of the professionalism and formal organisation of FBOs.

### **7.3.3 Three Types of Faith-Based Organisation: Institutionalised, Congregational, Networked**

Three different organisation types are identified by Sinha (2013): institutionalised, congregational and networked. These systems differentiate faith groups by their relationships to their founding communities and the impact on organisational culture and administrative structure. Institutional FBOs are institutionalised groups governed by highly centralised systems (often Jewish and Catholic groups). Congregational groups are governed at a local level, often proselytising and evangelical. Networked groups are member-based and often evangelical.

CareGM was originally based at the Catholic cathedral and then moved location in 2007 to a building owned by LEM, which described itself as an FBO and was itself an evangelical church with several community projects. LEM's community projects ranged from the day centre and the night shelter to children's outreach and hospital chaplaincy. CareGM still received funding from a Catholic organisation. It linked into a huge variety of networks, as evidenced by the six major funders and fifty-three supporters listed in their Annual Review (AR 2014). CareGM, however, was governed at local level by CareGM trustees and the LEM/CareGM management committee. CareGM networks were linked through the Catholic church, LEM and secular organisations. CareGM would, using Sinha's (2013) organisational typology, be most easily categorised as networked.

### **7.3.4 Three Forms of Identity for Social Movements: Legitimising, Resistance and New Identities**

Organisational identity forms much of organisational culture. I feel it is important to consider CareGM's organisational identity as part of my examination of their organisational response to austerity. CareGM was a community-based, adult social care organisation. It may be useful here to consider Castells' (1997) three forms of organisational identity building by social movements in order to consider what type of FBO CareGM is:

in a world of global flows of wealth, power and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes a fundamental source of social meaning.  
(Castells, 1996:3)

Castells (1997) suggests three forms of identity for social movements to transform society: legitimising identities, resistance identities and new identities. Legitimising identities are forms of identity taken in by institutions, which Castells suggests are principally capital and state (1997), in order that 'they encourage participation with the approved insertions and processes of civil society' (Furbey and Macey 2005:100). Here faith organisations sit within other large organisations such as trade unions and political parties. Resistance identities are created outside of institutions and counter the legalising forces of institutions. Resistance identities are defensive, an expression of the 'exclusion of the excluders by the excluded' (Castells, 1997:9). New identities move beyond the defensive to build a new identity; these identities involve social subjects working together to achieve a different life. The latter is where CareGM most easily fits although it could also be described as a hybrid of a resistance and a new identity.

Castells' (1997) forms of social identity scheme have applications for many faith groups, their social missions and their responses to increasing interest from the state in official regeneration programmes (Farnell et al. 2003). The Third Way capacity-building, community cohesion

narrative links faith groups closely with Castells' (1997) legitimising forms of social identity. However, attempts at cohesion can build resistance within faith communities and the frequently frustrating experience of applying for funding or partnership projects where faith groups are perceived as subordinate 'can serve to de-legitimise dominant definitions of civil society and provoke demands for new priorities and processes' (Furbey and Macey 2005:107). LEM and CareGM have, by both exclusion and choice, avoided the isomorphic effects of major funding streams, allowing them a social organisational identity that is self-created.

In their collaborative ecumenical partnership, LEM and CareGM are representative of an increasing number of boundary-crossing experiments in new ways of 'being church' (Wier 2002; Davey 2001). The complexity of faith is not recognised by government policy which is resource-based and functionalist in its approach to faith communities: 'religion operates in various, sometimes quite radical ways and contrary to official expectations' (Furbey and Macey 2005:102).

### **7.3.5 Organisational Expression of Religious Values**

The expression of religious values within organisations can be explored using categories such as board composition, staff composition, proportion of revenues from public sources, strategies for seeking resources from the wider community and use of religious elements in service provision (Jeavons 1998; Unruh et al. 2004). CareGM board members were mostly people of Christian faith but not exclusively from LEM's or the cathedral's congregation. In terms of staff composition, staff and volunteers were also mostly Christian but from a mix of denominational backgrounds. Some staff and volunteers did not have a faith. Staff and volunteer recruitment at CareGM did not seem to be based on faith; however, one staff member from a partner organisation shared an experience of discrimination in volunteer management on faith grounds. This staff member felt that being gay was discriminated against covertly in terms of staff and

volunteer promotion but not necessarily recruitment: FBOs can require their staff to abide by rules and values that do not reflect their beliefs (Kanter 1972).

In terms of revenues from public sources, one-sixth of CareGM major funders were public sector, three-sixths were voluntary sector and one-sixth private sector, with one-sixth coming from donations (AR, 2014). In terms of strategies for engaging with the wider community, CareGM was very active in seeking sources of funding from the wider community. In particular, as a day centre that provided food daily to sixty or seventy clients, support in kind from the local secular VCS and private business was a major part of the CareGM food budget. By accessing a diverse range of funding opportunities CareGM avoided the isomorphic effects of purchaser-provider contracts and mediated the challenges of privatisation. Here my findings regarding the experience of CareGM differ from my findings regarding the experiences of the national or regional VCS.

As regards the use of religious elements in service provision, staff training or meeting procedures, each trustee meeting, management group meeting and AGM began with a prayer. Operational meetings such as the debriefs I attended between CareGM and Advice Clinic did not and were much more secular. The 2013-14 Annual Review (AR 2014) focussed mostly on function and contained limited reference to spirituality or prayer. Using Sinha's (2013) approach to analysing FBOs I could see that faith permeated CareGM's organisational structure, from those that sat on the board of trustees to the prayers at the start of the management meetings. However, CareGM was also well integrated into secular VCS and private sector networks.

### **7.3.6 Recognising Different Channels of Religiosity**

FBOs can be considered insider or outsider organisations within the spheres of Coalition neoliberal governmentality. Insider organisations operate with a great degree of diversity. Agency is used differently by FBOs to employ a number of 'strategies and tactics to satisfy state

mandates and at the same time satisfy the objectives and values outlined in the organisation's mission' (Trudeau and Veronis 2009:4). For example, Barnardos presents itself as a professional secularised organisation; Faithworks adopts a specifically faith-based approach to social activism; and the Salvation Army, whilst Christian in approach, allies itself with post-secular ideals of service delivery (Williams et al. 2012, Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). Not all isomorphic pressure on FBOs can therefore be seen as coercive, via formal and informal requirements of state purchaser-provider contracts, but can also be seen as reflective of imitative or mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Many FBOs are outsiders of neoliberal service provider contracts:

some of these outsider organisations pursue philosophies and objectives of care which contravene the state's insistence on responsible neoliberal subject citizenship. (Williams et al. 2012:1488)

Examples of this are the homelessness outreach and 'soup runs' led by many FBOs which directly contravene a government policy focussed on target-orientated reductions in street homelessness. One might assume that neoliberal, contracted-out welfare would lead to a process of isomorphic secularisation of FBOs. However, this has not been the case (Cloke et al. 2010; Conradson 2003): faith motivated activity has been shown to create an ethical politics from within. FBOs have created a

localised fragrance of care that can deviate from professionalised uniformity and a groundswell of experience which at national levels can cumulatively stand in counter cultural opposition to the edicts of neoliberalism. (Williams et al. 2012:1489)

### **7.3.7 Interconnections Between Faith Discourse and Practice**

The importance of interconnections between space, discourse and practice are important considerations when considering how faith interacts within an organisation (Conradson 2003; Knowles 2000; Parr 2000; Crang 1994; Philo 1989, 1997). Conradson (2003) analyses how a recognisable faith-based ethic of social care of volunteers is 'woven through' with personal and collective forms of Christian belief which permeates the organisational environment. This suggests that when considering FBOs one needs to consider that organisational spaces are performatively brought into being within the 'emotionally heightened spaces' (Anderson and Smith 2001:8) of care. It is this, the consideration of faith within CareGM, that leads me to the development of Caritas as an addition to the five capitals of SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992). The next section of this chapter covers faith and spiritual capital in the context of CareGM before examining Caritas as an organisational capital.

## 7.4 Faith and Spiritual Capital at CareGM

Faith in the context of CareGM can be seen as a kind of 'social glue' (Furbey and Macey 2005:104) that links individuals and organisations into the social and cultural order (Durkheim 1915; Parsons 1965). Within CareGM, faith provides a phenomenological framework, a symbolic universe and sacred canopy (Berger 1967) that provides meaning in the chaotic and complex world of homeless clients. Faith is not at the forefront of CareGM as an organisation, an evangelical utopia. My research leads me to conclude that faith at CareGM is a sacred canopy, a background to the organisation's core that influences and affects the motivations and commitment of its staff and volunteers.

All organisations reflect, enact and propagate values (Chen et al. 2013). Organisational culture offers a range of actions that are supported by inspirational logics in order to delineate goals. Organisations collectively enact shared values (Milkman et al. 2013; Gitlin 2012; Berrett 2011). Shared values can be defined as 'moral beliefs to which people [appeal] for ultimate rationales of action' (Spates 1983:28) or 'choice statements that rank behaviours or goals' (Peterson 1979:137). Values are manifest in how organisations are run and what outcomes they produce (Chen et al. 2013). All organisations have values and they are shaped by the social worlds in which they are embedded. Values shape how organisations and their fields, made up of other organisations and the state, operate (Chen et al. 2013). Organisational values are a toolkit made up of the skills and styles that people use to construct strategies of action. Through their actions, people constantly negotiate institutions and adapt ideas about what constitutes the organisation. In stable conditions people follow the common logic, resulting in institutional isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powell 1983) but the existence of multi-logics offers the opportunity for change, especially during uncertainty (Chen et al. 2013). It is in this context that I

offer the sixth capital, Caritas. CareGM have renegotiated the organisational culture within CareGM, in direct contrast to the institutional isomorphism that has 'hollowed out' (Milbourne 2013) the secular VCS, to operationalise love.

#### **7.4.1 CareGM: Offering a Different Value System**

Bureaucracy has become a rationalised myth (Meyer and Rowan 1977, Meyer and Rowan 1991) that has legitimised the primacy of managerial control (Perrow 1986). Taylor's (1911, 1919) principles of scientific management, focussing on management control and division of labour, have offered primacy to the bureaucratic organisational form. FBOs offer a potential critique of this pursuit of efficiency by offering another value system: Caritas. Bureaucracy in its pursuit of efficiency can be recognised as failing to acknowledge alternative value systems and implying that the inequalities established by capitalism, bureaucracy and the division of labour are necessarily inevitable (Gramsci 1992, Burawoy 1979; Marx 1867,1977). Bureaucracy as rationalised myth (Meyer and Rowan 1977) fails to question which values are privileged within it and how the social structures that maintain power within democracy privilege these structures (Lukes 2004; Rueschemeyer 1994; Foucault 1980).

FBOs offer an alternative value structure with which to respond to social justice challenges. There have been numerous studies that have considered whether religion and FBOs strengthen civil society and social capital because of their value-based approach to organisational operation (Johnston 2010; Ra and Rees 2010; Yeung 2004; McRoberts 2003). Most of these studies are based in United States of America but do seem to suggest that FBO values can help to guide organisations (Schneider 2013a).

#### **7.4.2 CareGM's Alternative Value System**

CareGM had faith as its organisational value system, its organisational ethos and sacred canopy (Berger, 1967). Faith was not deliberately offered to clients in terms of space or service.

The drop-in centre did not have symbols of faith overtly on display; the pastor did not wear a dog collar; there were no images of faith displayed on the walls. Catholic social teaching underlies the work of Catholic-based organisations. The concepts of the dignity of every person as made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1) and the preferential option for the poor (Matthew 25) were implicit within CareGM's values<sup>95</sup>. CareGM as a Catholic social justice organisation had these ideas at the core of its work even if they were not explicitly stated. Clients were not required to perform rituals of faith yet faith permeated the values of the organisation. Faith offered the organisational values through which the service was delivered.

The next section of this chapter builds on the concept of Caritas as an organisational value, adding a sixth capital, love, to the five capitals of SLA<sup>96</sup> (Chambers and Conway 1992).

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<sup>95</sup> **The Bible**. All Scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1987)

<sup>96</sup> The five capitals are explored in detail in Appendix Seven

## 7.5 What is Love?

Greek philosophy separates love into four types: *philia*, *storge*, *eros* and *agape*. *Philia* is friendship, *storge* is affection, *eros* is romance and *agape* or *Caritas* represents Christian charity. *Caritas* is

the traditional lasting name for altruistic love but which more prosaically can be interpreted as caring, but a sense of caring grounded in social solidarity and altruism. (Rodger 2012:418)

*Caritas*, Vattimo (1999) and Zizek (2000) suggest, is charity and love, which are self-surpassing duties that represent hard work. It is *Caritas* that I saw exhibited in the work of volunteers, trustees and staff at CareGM. Partner organisations and CareGM staff worked together, in a collaboration that was often complex with its inevitable tensions, focussing on shared love and care.

### 7.5.1 Evidence of Love Within CareGM

My research findings evidence that there was a strong sense of support and care among staff at CareGM; friendly teasing, care for each other and support of fellow staff and volunteers were evident throughout the centre. Love existed within CareGM in a variety of forms. Humanity was woven through bureaucracy with love. If a client's lift home had not arrived then the client would be made a cup of tea and allowed to sit in the centre until the taxi service arrived. If a client arrived after the kitchen had closed then they were made a cup of tea and given a slice of cake, before being reminded of the opening hours for tomorrow. Clients were spoken to and supported. They were cared for and interacted with using kind, informal language. For example, as one client left a GP appointment, a support worker said goodbye:

OK, see you, love. Hope, Participatory Observation

Food parcels<sup>97</sup> were shared with clients, not using the formal criteria of Trussell Trust food banks but on an informal basis, if there was a need:

*People are more aware of the centre. We are getting lots of enquiries about food parcels. We are now referring many people to the food bank as many people are asking. We give out our own food parcels too – to those who can't use the local food bank.* Luke, Interview

When clients who used the showers in the centre had dry skin, the GP's receptionist had a store of cocoa butter lotion so that clients could moisturise:

*[Paul interrupts interview to ask Dan for cocoa butter] I always have cocoa butter; lots of clients get dry skin, sleeping out. Cocoa butter helps stop it get cracked.* Dan, Interview

These little examples of care added up within CareGM to an organisational culture that operated on love.

Care and love were not only extended to human clients. On a warm day in June a client brought in his pet rabbit. The rabbit was wet through and covered in what looked like gravel. The client was also wet through. The client shared that some boys had thrown water on the rabbit and the rabbit had run away, so the client had had to crawl into a hole to catch it. The staff patiently explained that they had a 'no pet' rule but that the client could sit on the grass outside; they took a drink out to him and some water so he could wash the gravel from the rabbit that was enjoying eating the grass outside the centre. In this way care and love were extended to clients, no matter how unusual their care needs were.

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<sup>97</sup> **Food Parcels.** The Trussell Trust runs a national formal food bank project. CareGM had vouchers for the Trussell Trust. CareGM also had various other sources of food parcels that they shared with clients in need (Lambie-Mumford 2013)

In an interview with Gail, a kitchen volunteer and trustee, we spoke about love. She was passionate about CareGM; her whole face brightened and her eyes sparkled when she described the love that she saw within the centre. To Gail this love was operationalised daily, by the staff and volunteers that worked within the centre. She was quite clear that this love was not best practice, although she felt that the centre was well organised; it was not a policy of good care delivery but it was something special:

*a little bit of magic.* Gail, Interview

within a crisis in street homelessness, caused by austerity, that was affecting the day centre.

When I presented my initial report from my sustainable livelihoods workshop to the trustees at the October trustee meeting, they asked me what my impression of the centre was. I presented my report, the findings of which are woven into my seventh chapter about the SLA of CareGM, and then shared that I felt that SLA needed a sixth capital, love. Trustees immediately agreed; they too felt that there was something special, a care, passion and love, that was operationalised within CareGM as an organisation.

## **7.6 Love, Care and Power**

Care and power are linked:

The reality of our everyday lives is conveyed to us through social and political institutions. They are a skeleton, the framework, on which the flesh of our reality hang. (Maguire 1994)

Care can be defined as involving the 'proactive interest of one person in the wellbeing of another' (Conradson 2003:508). CareGM created 'spaces of care' through the practice of care (Johnsen et al. 2005, Conradson 2003). Care can be 'paid or unpaid, formal or informal and may result from social obligation, love, fear or because of a need for income' (Bowlby 2011:606). Care should involve the recognition of the needs of others, acceptance and responsibility to meet those needs, provision of care and assessment of effective provision (Tronto 1993). It is from this narrative, in the care and love that CareGM offered clients and each other as staff and volunteers, that I draw out my sixth capital, my original contribution to knowledge, Caritas.

### **7.6.1 Conflict and Love**

CareGM worked with a client group that was frequently under the influence of drugs and alcohol and often experiencing crisis. CareGM had a policy of no alcohol or drugs on the premises (AR 2014). However, anecdotally, as long as you left your bottle outside then you were welcomed in. I was often serenaded by drunken service users whilst waiting for tea and had many a confused conversation with a client under the influence of drugs. Conflict was present on many of my visits to CareGM. Paul, the floor manager, kept a log of incidents over a year. He had logged approximately twenty incidents of note, some aggression-related and some alcohol-related. In terms of the footfall of CareGM, which saw sixty to seventy people eating there daily, with support workers seeing twenty people daily (there were some repeat clients so roughly forty

people weekly) and Advice Clinic seeing twelve to fifteen clients a week, these incidents were rare (AR 2014).

### **7.6.2 The Tea Counter**

Often clients would be under the influence of substance misuse. Whilst I was talking to a volunteer, Luke, at the tea counter, I became aware of an aggressive client. The client was aware of how the tea was being made; he wanted the milk to go into the cup first. He was very aggressive with the volunteer behind the tea counter, swearing at the volunteer. The floor manager, Paul, intervened, asking him not to talk to the volunteers like that. The client became quite argumentative and I stood back from the conflict. Support staff stepped in to back up Paul and the conflict was resolved, with a disgruntled client heading outside, complaining about his incorrectly made cup of tea. Staff responded to the client's challenging behaviour with love, care and support, backing up their colleague in a calm and caring way.

### **7.6.3 The Stabbing**

On a particularly stressful day, staff drew together. A client stabbed someone outside the centre and then returned to the centre as he himself had cut his hand. CareGM made him a cup of tea then sent him to the hospital. The response to the perpetrator of what I gathered was a serious stabbing was love, care and support. There was an acknowledgement by staff that desperate people do desperate things, to obtain basic needs (Maslow 1943). If you have no food or shelter then, to be imprisoned, you need to commit a serious offence. Prison at least offered accommodation and food. The impact of supporting the perpetrator of the stabbing, however, was not without risk for CareGM, as Hope shared in a debrief meeting in March, the day of the stabbing:

*I think we got away with it today.* Hope, Interview

There was a risk attached to letting the hospital call the police rather than calling them to the centre, and there was also a risk to supporting a violent and desperate client. Here contradictions in care and love can be seen; arguably CareGM had a duty of care towards other staff and volunteers at the centre, to protect them from a violent client. CareGM could have very reasonably decided to contact the police. The management of complex levels of risk was a constant juggling act for CareGM. This juggling act was managed with care and love. Love was operationalised in this example through the quiet supporting approach taken towards the client, the understanding of the situation that led to the client becoming violent and the care taken with the client to ensure that he accessed hospital care.

#### **7.6.4 The Argument**

Another example of how conflict was managed with love was in the staff response to another violent client. On my arrival in June, I walked in and although welcomed by the pastor and Hope, I clearly had interrupted something. The tension was later explained; a very aggressive man had been in the centre, and he had taken some calming down. Hope and Tammy had had to create a human barrier between him and another man to mediate the situation. This willingness to risk themselves in order to diffuse conflict was a regular occurrence during my research visits. If there was tension or a client who was known to be challenging was in the centre, all staff would be visible and respond immediately to support each other.

#### **7.6.5 Orange Attack Alarms**

A third example of love being operationalised through conflict was that in the debrief meeting in July, I noticed that more staff were wearing their orange attack alarms. To begin with I only noticed women wearing the alarms but by my visit in July, Justin, a volunteer, was wearing his alarm around his neck and Dom, the Advice Clinic volunteer, also had his alarm visible. When I asked about this, I was informed that there had been a physical assault on Norman, the pastor.

This was why staff were much more wary and had decided to use the alarms as a visible indication to service users that physical attacks were unacceptable. After the attack on the pastor, the client was excluded from the centre for six months. Norman had chosen a restorative justice<sup>98</sup> route in collaboration with the police community support officer.

### **7.6.6 Formalising a Loving Response**

Through this attack the operationalising of love became formalised in response to conflict. The attack on Norman led to a discussion in the management committee group in July around needing a clear policy regarding staff assault. The aim behind a clear policy was that staff did not need to decide whether to prosecute or to take a restorative justice route because the organisational policy was clear: CareGM, LEM or the night shelter would not tolerate violence against staff. Any assault on staff would be referred to the police, but restorative justice would be followed. This policy recognised that violence was not acceptable but it aimed at not prosecuting clients where possible. The attack on the pastor was dealt with with humanity and understanding regarding the difficult situation that the client and Norman. the pastor. were in. Despite some lack of support from trustees, staff and volunteers cared for Norman and were clear in their solidarity supporting his decision to call the police.

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<sup>98</sup> **Restorative Justice** Restorative justice enables victims to meet or communicate with their offender to explain the real impact of the crime. This is part of a wider field called restorative practice <http://restorativejustice.org.uk/what-restorative-justice>

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## 7.7 Developing a Sixth Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis Capital: Love ‘Picking up the Broom’

The involvement of FBOs offers new ways of performativity, bringing care and welfare into being within the drop-in centre (Conradson 2003). It is this notion of care (Conradson 2003) that leads me to develop Caritas or love as an additional sixth capital to SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992). CareGM offered a different approach to care that was not based on formal scientific delineations of work and job role (Taylor 1919) but on love, solidarity and shared work. Caritas moved beyond organisational values, towards a space of care within CareGM where love was operationalised.

### 7.7.1 Picking Up the Broom – An Addition to the Five Capitals of Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis

Through this chapter I develop the sense of care that I saw within CareGM into what is my original contribution to original knowledge: ‘picking up the broom’. The phrase ‘picking up the broom’ was shared with me by an elderly volunteer, Brian, on my first visit to CareGM. He shook my hand and held eye contact as he welcomed me to the centre and explained how things worked from his point of view. He shared that people came to CareGM and did not leave; everyone worked together and once you had ‘picked up the broom’, you were hooked. The broom that he was referring to looks a little like Trigger’s broom from the BBC TV programme *Only Fools and Horses*<sup>99</sup>; it had clearly had several handles and brushes. This struck me as a metaphor for the VCS in that, over the years, the VCS has had many iterations and has been engaged with central and local government in a variety of partnerships. However, despite the changing policies of successive neoliberal governments, the VCS has maintained an approach

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<sup>99</sup> **Only Fools and Horses** Only Fools and Horses was a BBC television programme about a rogue market trader called Del Boy. In one episode his friend Trigger describes having owned a broom for many years – and then goes on to state that the broom’s handle and brush had been replaced many times. Whilst the story has comedic effect, the philosophical question, What is a broom? is left open.

to care that is responsive to the needs of homeless clients (Cloke et al. 2010). As 'Britain's voluntary sector organisations have found ways to operate in the interstices of government policy' (Cloke et al. 2010:244), refocussing central government mandates of rehabilitation and change towards an ethos of empowerment, so CareGM found a praxis (Freire 1974) of shared work, love and care that met clients' needs. CareGM stepped aside from the isomorphic pressures and pressures to privatise felt by the wider national and regional VCS (Milbourne 2013) in order to create a distinctive (Macmillan 2013) alternative approach to service delivery. I use this section of the chapter to develop this notion of love and care through shared work.

SLA, usually used at household level, considers five capitals: social, physical, financial, human and public. I want to develop Chambers and Conway's (1992) analytical model to include a sixth organisational model: love. This sixth capital, love, is a key contribution of my thesis. This capital moves beyond social capital (Putnam 2000) and human capital (Chambers and Conway 1992) towards a capital that represents a shared ethos, a sense of shared work. This shared ethos and shared work rejects Taylor's (1911) notion of the scientific division of labour, of professionalised job roles and differentiated task-based organisational operation. This shared ethos saw Norman, the pastor, at the end of his CareGM shift put on rubber gloves and clean the drop-in centre's toilets. This shared ethos saw trustees, who initially joined to have a strategic input, working every kitchen shift over one summer in order to change kitchen practice and attain a level five kitchen hygiene certificate from council environmental health inspectors. This shared work is the extra organisational capital, the messy reality (Sparke 2008) of an organisation that changes a professionalised service into a space of care, love, work and solidarity.

This capital is what I will term love capital or Caritas. I have decided to simply refer to the capital as love capital, or Caritas, whilst recognising the variety of types of love, which in Greek

philosophy are referred to as philia, storge, eros and agape. Love is an uncomfortable word, neither comfortable in academic accounts of VCS service provision (Cloke et al. 2010) nor in vernacular conversation. However, love is a term that came up in several interactions throughout my ethnographic research:

*It's difficult to say how the organisation has responded to austerity – overall it has improved. We have needed to pull together to get more support. We work together.*

Sarah, Interview

*The organisation [CareGM] is very good. You do have to have rules and regulations, e.g. clients have to have a top on. You need them here ... it is well run as it is. It is not patronising, it is [a] welcoming, loving and kind place. I like the sense of humour that the place has. The kitchen staff have a good sense of humour.*

Justin, Interview

*We have a strong staff team ... It's like believing in God, you don't know what it is but you have it – we have love. It is love and care, you can't qualify it but it's there.*

Gail, Interview

*The staff are an impressive team, a cohesive unit. [CareGM can be ] genuinely appreciated for [its] teamwork, that's clearly my take on what they try to do on a daily basis ... The gender balance works well here because of people's strengths. I think that it is that positive emotional contribution that is important and the practical approach is of equal value ... it is quite obvious from the relationships with support workers that clients are happy to share their difficulties because there is a lot of confidence in the support worker.*

Dom, Interview

Love, I feel, is an appropriate term as it reflects the messy reality (Sparke 2008) of caring for homeless clients: love in the sense of shared work, of patience and of care:

We must unpack the varied and shifting meanings that actors assign to religiosity, volunteerism, 'doing good', development, charity, justice and how these notions intersect with faith and propel intervention into 'other' communities. (Hefferan and Fogarty 2010:5)

CareGM's organisational response offered a collaborative approach to care that I suggest can be described as love. CareGM had formal staff policies, health and safety requirements and partnership documents. Yet CareGM was able to offer performances of care (Conradson 2003) and love that went beyond performance-managed service provision. The unusual and sometimes violent behaviours of clients were responded to with love and support. Violent and complex clients were cared for and their mental health needs supported, and the staff response was of love. At the end of each session clients were guided out of the centre with love. For example, one volunteer Alice hugged clients as she guided them out of the door and explained that the session had ended. Support worker Hope walked a client over to the local library, in her own time after the shift had finished, so that the client had somewhere warm to sit until the night shelter opened. This shared love was played out within the everyday operations of the organisation. At the end of the session everyone, including the pastor, support workers, trustees, volunteers and floor manager cleared up at the end of the day. Everyone 'picked up the broom' and pitched in to clean the centre ready for its evening use as a night shelter.

The post-secular response to homelessness offers a space for care where previously divisive barriers between the worlds of faith and secularism are broken down (Cloke et al. 2010). Two philosophical traces are emerging within post-secular homelessness organisations. Firstly, theological collaborations between philosophy and theology invoke a call to love that envisages

equality with difference through the ontological lenses of faith, hope and charity (Cloke et al. 2010, Milbank 2005). Secondly, postmodern theology involves a deconstructive grasp of religiosity that represents a radical departure from traditional religion (Derrida 1996). Arguably, neoliberalism has made space for post-secularism (Cloke et al. 2010). It is this space that CareGM used to offer love to homeless clients.

### **7.7.2 Caritas Structurally Coupled to Economic Systems**

CareGM's sacred canopy (Berger, 1967) was translated into practical caring love through what Rodger (2012:422) discusses as the blurring of system boundaries. The VCS medium of operation (Caritas) is structurally coupled to the political and economic systems that provide for its main operating environment. Rodger (2012) discussed the blurring of system boundaries between the isomorphic effects of regeneration policy and purchaser-provider contracts which affects the to the independence and passion that the VCS can offer. Structural coupling in this sense is that way in which the faith-based VCS is required to exchange altruism for the performance management required of government grants.

The approach of successive governments since 1979 to new public management purchaser-provider contracts rather than state welfare provision has led to a heavily managed, contract-driven approach to welfare. Indeed, state policies that shift governance towards 'governmentality' have led to 'isomorphic pressures, especially in terms of market forces and government requirements [that] may drive equivalence in program effectiveness between FBOs and secular organisations' (Bielfeld and Cleaveland 2013:471). Many FBOs encounter obstacles to funding and support, often due to the values of faith organisations conflicting with secular equal opportunities agendas (Farnell et al. 2003).

### **7.7.3 Love as Resistance**

Even within the purchaser-provider environment of neoliberal governance, the performance of love and care can be understood as a site of subversion:

in coproducing neoliberal structures of welfare governance, the ethical performance of staff and volunteers in FBOs rework and reinterpret the values and judgements supposedly normalised in the regulatory frameworks of government policy, bringing alternative philosophies of care into play. (Williams et al. 2012:1496)

In offering love rather than rehabilitation and change, as the policies of successive homelessness strategies from the Rough Sleepers Initiative to the Homelessness Action Plan have required, CareGM offered a space for resistance. Love replaced performance management within their drop-in centre. As institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) has affected other VCS homelessness organisations, and as public funding, via successive neoliberal inspired governments, has required performance-managed accountability, CareGM instead responded to client need with love.

This ability to respond with love, to resist institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and instead offer a different form of organisation based on love, was arguably because CareGM was free from reliance on public funds. Only one-sixth of CareGM funding came from public sources (AR 2014).

### **7.7.4 A Space for Solidarity and Love**

CareGM benefitted through not being in receipt of any major purchaser-provider contracts. CareGM therefore had the operational freedom to prioritise Caritas. CareGM received its main funding through the local authority and fifty-three other sources of support in its Annual Review (AR 2014). This diversity of funders allowed CareGM a freedom from some of the isomorphic effects of major purchaser-provider contracts, allowing them, arguably, to focus on independent

mission. This lack of reliance on one major funder was a result of a funding crisis in 2007; staff and volunteers told a story of crisis where the centre faced closure but for the solidarity of the trustees and their determination to continue the work of the centre. As a result of this funding crisis, new trustees were recruited and new funding sought. In its rejection of structural coupling (Rodger 2012) or secular government funding, CareGM found freedom in vulnerability which allowed it to return to its focus of organisational Caritas. Arguably, the forcible return to independence restored power alongside Caritas to the heart of CareGM as an organisation.

#### **7.7.5 Faith as Resistance to Neoliberalism**

FBOs could be considered to offer paths of resistance against neoliberalism, resisting government partnership in order to focus on alternative philosophies of care and to meet the needs of those ineligible for state support or to engage in activism (Williams et al. 2012). LEM, after having the housing benefit cut for its night shelter, actively chose to reject government funding and pray for a solution. This radical, and some might argue risky, approach to funding provision led to several large donations from individual donors and foundations alongside crowd funding of the night shelter. CareGM chose, after losing state funding in 2007 and subsequently facing a significant funding crisis, to diversify its funding sources to include several non-state major funders. By using non-state funders, CareGM chose to offer a pathway of resistance (Williams et al. 2012) to state-controlled purchaser-provider services. This gave them the freedom to respond using alternative philosophies of care: agape.

#### **7.7.6 Developing Sustainable Livelihoods Capitals: Adding Love**

Religious or spiritual capital (Baker 2009) could be an addition to a livelihoods analysis of small community organisations. Baker (2009) examined religious or spiritual capital as a way of conceptualising not simply the material resource base of British religious groups but also the constitution of human trust and relationships. Toennies (Cahnman 1995) describes communities

based on affection and kinship and communities based on independence and exchange, and uses the term *gesellschaft* to describe this community approach to service delivery (Cahnman 1995). Here we can introduce the concept of solidarity and interdependence: ‘the communitarian conception of community is thus highly moral and focussed on the idea of the “social good”’ (Dinham 2010:537). Here solidarity comes from being ‘in’ a community rather than ‘being’ a community.

CareGM was made up of staff, trustees and volunteers: ‘ordinary people engaged in transforming an ordinary ethics of care into an “extraordinary” sense of ethical commitment to the other’ (Cloke et al. 2010:2). Caputo (2001) speaks of faith as enactment; as the ‘hyper real’; as a leap of love from real life to a reality beyond the visible. He describes the new sense of the sacred within the post secular as the

anarchic effects produced by re-sacralising the settled secular order, disturbing and disordering the disenchanting world, producing anarchic chasms of odd brilliant disturbances, of gifts that are shoring up like magic in the midst of scrambled economies. (Caputo 2006:291)

CareGM worked through shared work to offer solidarity, love and care to homeless clients. It was disordering the enchanted world (Caputo 2006) or neoliberal new public management professional praxis to offer a new form of theo-ethical praxis based not on professionalised role structures funded by public donors with the inevitable institutionally isomorphic (Milbourne 2013, DiMaggio and Powell 1983) consequences but on Caritas.

### **7.7.7 Caritas, Love and Theo-Ethical Praxis**

Should CareGM have had to rely on Caritas? Structural coupling (Rodger 2012) highlights the process of colonisation and exploitation of Caritas as a mechanism to dignify the flight from welfare obligations (Rodger 2012). Indeed, research on FBOs in America suggests that they

work with the most deprived communities and develop more bridging and bonding capital than their secular counterparts (Bielfeld and Cleveland 2013). Theologically inspired ethical approaches adopted by FBOs such as CareGM are challenging dominant rationalities that otherwise characterise a more secular approach to service delivery. The notion of care, Caritas, over outcomes is offered by CareGM. The focus on person-centred care over funder-driven neoliberal performance targets offers an emergent space of resistance (Williams et al. 2012). It is through theo-ethical praxis, 'theo-ethical prompting of extraordinary performances of care' (Williams et al. 2012), and 'going the extra mile' by staff and volunteers for the clients and the project that a challenge is offered to secularised welfare delivery.

#### **7.7.8 Critiquing Caritas: New Paternalism?**

Caritas is not without critique. Faith 'both enacts neoliberal formations and embodies resistance to them' (Williams et al. 2012:1494). Arguably, FBOs are providing care using a notion which Mead (1997) referred to as the new paternalism. By taking a faith-based approach to love and care for vulnerable homeless clients, Caritas could be critiqued as paternalism. In Mead's (1997) critique, FBOs do not offer empowerment through Caritas but simply a return to an anarchic sense of feudal pastoralism that existed before the separation of church and state in the sixteenth century.

Here CareGM can be challenged. Only a small percentage of volunteers and staff were ex-service users. Some staff and volunteers came from backgrounds that gave them some understanding of some of the issues faced by service users; others came from much more privileged backgrounds:

*[There is] a diversity of volunteer background. Ten per cent of our volunteers have been homeless. They have an empathy that I wouldn't have. Our volunteers are completely*

*different people – [Luke] used to be a hair dresser – they bring different perspectives.*

Gail, Interview

To avoid the critique of new paternalism in its approach, CareGM needed to involve service users much more in its organisational development. This is an area that support worker Tammy wanted to develop, whilst recognising the very vulnerable client group that had multiple and complex needs.

*Also we need more service user involvement. I get the health and safety stuff around who can do what in the centre. But I know in America service users get involved in the centres – sweeping up, painting. It is their centre, for them. It would be good to get them more involved.* Tammy, Interview

Practices of care are politically and geographically varied. Kittay (1999) discusses the nested dependencies of power: people, carers, move in and out of different roles. Social justice, feminist and disability literature has presented oppression of carers and oppression of those who are cared for (Bondi 2008, Fine and Glendinning 2005). Twigg et al. describe care work as ambivalently positioned in terms of power, ‘caught in a dynamic that can tip either way’ (2011:172). Kittay (1999) introduces the notion of the power of the care provider – whether this is the state or the private or VCS sectors. One must also consider the micro politics of care (Twigg et al. 2011), the ways in which the institutional power of healthcare providers is embodied within their relationships with service users.

### **7.7.9 Critiquing Caritas: Legitimising Poverty?**

Further critique can be made of CareGM’s Caritas approach by suggesting that by offering empowerment and love to homeless clients CareGM as an organisation legitimised neoliberal government policies. Cloke et al. (2010) argue that the VCS can be criticised as providing a sticking plaster over the complexities of homelessness whilst failing to address its root causes.

This critique suggests that the work of organisations such as CareGM should be rejected because it does little more than legitimise the continued failure of government to address the structural issues behind homelessness. CareGM as an organisation did not campaign, which is an area that its partner organisation Advice Clinic would have liked to improve. CareGM was starting to get involved in Advice Clinic-led campaigns, gathering survey information for example which would help to develop a space for resistance.

#### **7.7.10 Critiquing Caritas; Caritas as Symbolic Violence?**

A critique of Caritas can be made, questioning if it is instead a further form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2000). Emotions such as love can become viewed as cultural products that are reproduced in the form of embodied experience (Mehta 1999) and that can be interrogated for their role in social relations. Symbolic violence, as discussed in chapters five and six, can be seen within the institutional and personal experiences of organisations, staff and volunteers. For a feminist, arguing for love as a response to symbolic violence could become problematic, as feminist research focusses on the need to correct the 'invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal position' (Lather 1986:68). Love is an emotion and emotions have traditionally been treated as distinct from and 'conceptually subordinate to' cognition (Csordas 1989:37). However, there is a move to collapse this distinction:

Emotion and discourse should not be treated as separate variables, the first pertaining to the private world of the individual consciousness and the other to the public social order.

(Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990:11)

The interplay of resistance and determination (Mahoney and Yngvesson 1992:63) produces meanings and practices that are both dependant on and shaped by the pre-existing order and reimaginings of it.

That subjects want to resist [or comply] must be understood in the context not only of an acting or speaking subject but of a reacting or listening subject. The interplay of the two – what we have called ‘recognition’ ... is what affords the potential for resistance and creativity as well as for conformity ... misrecognition or failure of recognition by others may set the ground for disempowerment. (Mahoney and Yngvesson 1992:70)

Arguably, therefore, love as a response to the violence of austerity both in physical and symbolic form cannot be a valid response for it is an emotion and subordinate to the reality. However, I argue, drawing on Mahoney and Yngvesson (1992), that love as an emotion can be used to create the potential to resist the symbolic violence of austerity, to disorder the enchanted world (Caputo 2006) and to creatively respond to austerity with a proactive challenge. Indeed, as bell hooks (1994:5) states:

the moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others.

Here, I argue that love as a response to austerity offers a unique way of understanding the response of CareGM to the symbolic violence the staff and volunteers experience, and in so doing it ‘empowers the oppressed to come to understand and change their own oppressive realities’ (Lather 1986:68).

## 7.8 Chapter Summary

Despite recognising the critiques of Caritas as potentially new paternalism or as legitimising poverty or as symbolic violence, I assert that love or Caritas offers an explanation for the successful operating environment of CareGM. CareGM, as I detail in chapter six and in appendix seven; had excellent human and social capital and had successful and developing public capital based on a selection of well sought out partnerships with public, voluntary and private sector bodies (Coleman 1988). It managed more fragile physical capital with care and sensitivity and, given the broader financial situation in which it operated, had very positive financial capital. However, when I sat within CareGM, watching how the organisation operated, these five capitals merely facilitated the core organisational value or capital, love. Caritas or love operationalised the five SLA capitals to create and negotiate a successful organisation.

This chapter examines CareGM as an FBO and considers how humanity is woven through bureaucracy within organisational practice. Love is not often talked about in academic accounts of homelessness (Cloke et al. 2010). However, it is clear that the care offered in homeless hostels and day centres is a key marker of post-secular compassion, which runs counter to, and sometimes in explicit resistance to, neoliberal governance (Cloke et al. 2010). CareGM, alongside professional practices, formal staff management and policies and procedures, offered an approach to organisational operation that was based on love:

This disregard to the messiness of the empirical can lead to totalising accounts of the way rationalities and technologies automatically realise and normalise themselves in organisational practices and subjectivities ... the assemblage of neoliberalism within these spaces is contingent on the inculcation of government rationalities and technologies on the ethical agency of both the practitioner and client whose performance

is inextricably a space of neoliberalism, interpretation and potential subversion of the intended processes and outcomes of government policy. (Williams et al. 2012:1487)

This love, through shared work and solidarity that surpassed organisational hierarchies to see all staff, trustees and volunteers cleaning tables at the end of each session, is the additional capital that I offer in my SLA of CareGM as an organisation.

My next chapter compares my findings at national, regional and organisational levels, drawing together themes and building a conclusion.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: Conclusion**

### **Austerity in Focus: Drawing Together Macro, Meso and Micro Level Research Findings**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the conclusion to my thesis. It summarises my research and offers my original contribution to knowledge. The chapter links my macro, meso and micro findings to examine the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester during the period of the Coalition government 2010-2015.

The chapter begins with a review of my research aim and objectives before summarising my research findings from macro, meso and micro perspectives. I then draw together themes from my macro, meso and micro level research, considering similarities and differences. I return to my original contribution to knowledge, my sixth livelihoods capital, love (Caritas). I consider if or how my sixth capital might be generalisable to the VCS more broadly. I discuss my SLA toolkit, which has been created as part of my commitment to social justice research, before considering the limitations to my study. The chapter ends with the election of the Conservative government in May 2015 and recommendations for future research. Firstly, I review my research aim and objectives.

## 8.2 Reviewing my Research Aim and Objectives

I now re-examine my research aim and objectives and consider if I have successfully met them.

### **Aim:**

- To use participatory feminist analysis in order to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS in Greater Manchester under the Coalition government 2010-2015.

### **Objectives:**

1. To examine the effects of Coalition policy on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives using participatory feminist research techniques.
2. To explore the experience of one adult social care VCS homelessness organisation during the term of the Coalition government 2010-2015.
3. To advance knowledge regarding VCS experiences of Coalition policy using feminist emancipatory research techniques.
4. To develop a new understanding of the impact of Coalition policy upon the gendered workforce of the VCS.
5. To adapt and refine SLA for use within VCS organisations, and in so doing support VCS practice.

My research successfully meets my research aims and objectives. My research takes SLA and adapts it as a tool for analysis for the VCS at an organisational level. SLA considers the institutional and policy context, before focussing on micro level findings:

prevailing trends and decisions taken at national (and sometimes international) level can have a profound impact on low income ... [organisations] in the UK. The approach also seeks to identify the opportunities and barriers that emerge from these interactions. (May et al. 2009:11)

This adaptation of the SLA tool alongside my addition of a sixth capital is my original contribution to knowledge. My research examined the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro level perspectives. I begin the PhD thesis by examining the historical context of the VCS. My second chapter examines the ideological and policy contexts within which the VCS operates. These macro level chapters set my situated Greater Manchester research within a wider national context. This gives a broader picture to my research which is important in setting the scene for my place-based research findings. The meso level analysis provides insight into the experiences of the VCS of Greater Manchester and is based on my participatory research and semi-structured interviews. The micro level analysis is primarily focussed around an ethnography of one small VCS organisation. This ethnography is supported by semi-structured interviews with key informants within the organisation.

The micro level approach at CareGM provides a detailed analysis of one organisation's experience of austerity. In taking this approach to research I offer a multi-level picture of how the VCS is responding to the opportunities and challenges posed by the policies of the Coalition government 2010-2015. By situating my research within a national context, then examining the Greater Manchester experience before focussing on an in-depth examination of one VCS organisation I offer a highly detailed multi-level picture of how the VCS is responding to the opportunities and challenges of Coalition austerity.

I successfully meet my research aim of conducting a piece of feminist participatory research. I considered the role of women throughout my research using a feminist reflexive writing style throughout my thesis. In facilitating four participatory workshops and developing a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit as part of the PhD project I meet my participatory research aim.

### **8.2.1 Contribution to Original Knowledge**

My contribution to original knowledge is in my adaptation of SLA analysis, previously used at a household level, to create an assets based evaluation research tool for the VCS, and in my addition of a sixth SLA capital, love, to my livelihoods analysis of CareGM.

The addition of a sixth capital was not part of my original research aim but emerged as my research progressed. As I began to analyse my data using SLA as a tool I began to see that the fivefold assets based evaluation did not entirely fit CareGM. As a result I developed the sixth SLA capital concept which forms my original contribution to knowledge.

I now summarise my macro, meso and micro research findings before examining interlinkages and trade-offs (Chambers and Conway 1992) between them.

## **8.3 My Research Findings**

### **8.3.1 Macro: The National Voluntary and Community Sector**

The VCS nationally is in transition (Milbourne 2013). UK Coalition welfare reform has brought both opportunities and challenges for the national VCS. Whilst generalisations have to be made when summarising a national picture, broad conclusions can be drawn regarding the opportunities and challenges faced by the adult social care VCS under the Coalition government.

From the workhouse to the work programme at Tesco's, themes can be drawn from the British approach to welfare across the last four hundred years (Frazer 2013b). Coalition policy, with its focus on the undeserving and deserving poor, work in exchange for benefit and the rolling back of state welfare, has strong echoes of the 1834 Poor Law. Coalition policies such as the Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014 have created a welfare environment that has prioritised the privatisation of the VCS, encouraging social enterprise, private funding provision and managed partnerships (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). A discourse of an adaptive and responsive voluntary sector can be drawn from historical analysis (Hilton and McKay 2011). However, Coalition policy can be critiqued as silencing the VCS (Rochester 2014), enacting welfare reform that has increased poverty (Bunyan and Diamond 2014c, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009), and as having refocused its relationship with the VCS into one of purchaser-provider (NCIA 2015).

Larger organisations have had the capacity to withstand reductions in funding and take on new service delivery contracts. Smaller organisations have found making and succeeding with funding applications much more challenging (Milbourne and Murray 2011). My research at national level suggests that the bifurcation of the VCS (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) has been exacerbated by welfare reform and changes to purchaser-provider contracts. The isomorphic

effects of successive governments' neoliberal inspired policies have created a substantive VCS shadow state (Wolch 1990) of service delivery organisations. Large isomorphic VCS organisations have taken on large-scale service delivery contracts, often developing relationships with private sector organisations in order to diversify funding streams (NCIA 2015, Rochester 2014, Whitfield 2014, Milbourne 2013). The neoliberal focus on reducing the role of the state and the increasing outsourcing of service provision has continued at a record pace. Larger VCS organisations have successfully engaged with the outsourcing process yet smaller organisations have often been excluded (Milbourne 2013). The smaller VCS, unable to access large funding pots without applying as a consortia of small organisations, has at national level been excluded from service delivery (NCVS 2015). Coalition policy has continued New Labour's drive for partnership working (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). The terminology has changed from 'partnership working' to 'integrated care.' 'Personalisation' has become 'client-centred practice'; however, the policy narrative has remained.

Key themes can be drawn from my literature review research findings. The changing identity of the VCS from voluntary group to independent social enterprise has affected VCS autonomy, voice and identity (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013, Rochester 2014). As organisations have become service providers the traditionally strong campaigning ethos of the VCS has been affected, and VCS organisations, previously a strong alternative voice, have become silenced (NCIA 2015). These themes are mirrored in the experiences of Greater Manchester's VCS. Issues of organisational voice, identity and mission were key concerns expressed throughout my Greater Manchester research.

### **8.3.2 Meso: Greater Manchester's Voluntary and Community Sector**

The opportunities and challenges experienced at a meso level within Greater Manchester echo those of the VCS nationally. VCS organisations have adapted and developed new opportunities

through austerity, using networks and partnerships to develop consortia in order that they can apply for funding. Whilst VCS groups were starting to approach private funding sources, my research at Greater Manchester level revealed no examples of where the VCS had been successful. My research findings reflect those of Dayson et al. (2013), whose research found that the private sector was an as yet underused funding resource.

There is a range of new partnership opportunities for service delivery with new local authority and health bodies that have been brought about by welfare reform. Other opportunities have developed through the increasing accessibility of digital technology. Twitter, Facebook and free websites like WordPress have opened up new methods of communication with supporters and organisational stakeholders. Privatisation of service delivery, emerging social enterprises and links to business funders have created new opportunities for the VCS.

Integrated care and client-centred practice have developed as policy agendas during the Coalition's term in office (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that partnership working has enabled larger organisations to work with consortia of smaller VCS groups to create new service delivery models. The VCS of Greater Manchester has worked with its infrastructure bodies to build new working relationships with public sector organisations. My research, quoted within chapter five further illustrated that funding streams were moving away from the public sector towards the private sector and crowd funding. The VCS had found some opportunities through austerity, and the more entrepreneurial groups within the VCS were able to adapt, shift and respond to new funding opportunities.

My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that key individuals were invaluable to the developing opportunities arising through Coalition funding cuts. The charismatic, dedicated and supportive response that key individuals made within the Greater Manchester VCS allowed organisations to succeed despite the challenges posed by austerity. The importance of key

individuals to the success of VCS organisations during austerity reflects wider research findings (Davidson and Packham 2015, Davidson et al. 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, Davidson and Packham 2012, GMCVO 2012b). These key staff, my research in chapter five, illustrates negotiated humanity within bureaucracy and dedicated significant work and volunteer hours to the success of their VCS organisations. It is this response to austerity that I weave into my contribution to original knowledge, my sixth SLA capital, love.

My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that the VCS of Greater Manchester faced significant challenges. Acute poverty and a significant increase in service user need reflected national research regarding the increase in poverty as a result of welfare reform (Lansley and Mack 2015, Bunyan and Diamond 2014a, Dorling 2013). My research found that VCS identity was being challenged by Coalition policy. The resulting bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the sector alongside competition for contracts and the silencing of campaigning roles significantly affected VCS identity. My research at Greater Manchester level reflected my national research findings in that large and small organisations had very different experiences of austerity (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013). My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that larger organisations, although still facing challenges, were arguably able to be more resilient. These large organisations could change the way that they operated, increase their sale presence and become more competitive. As competition and tension around funding increased smaller organisations that did not have contract management experience were 'pushed out' of the marketplace.

My research found that the loss of the VCS voice and the silencing of its traditionally strong campaigning role was a significant challenge faced by the Greater Manchester VCS. This VCS silencing is reflected within my national level research findings (NCIA 2015, Baring Foundation 2014, Milbourne 2013). As organisations became more insecure about funding streams, they

justified their campaign silence by arguing that they campaigned from within public sector funding streams. My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that organisations did not overtly state they were fearful of losing funds but instead suggested that they were offering constructive criticism from within.

The VCS of Greater Manchester that participated in my research also revealed the effect of funding cuts and austerity upon the operating environment of its organisations. Austerity had increased inequalities in working conditions; this was particularly felt by women working within the VCS. Working conditions were significantly affected; reductions in working hours, changes in flexitime arrangements and increased workplace stress directly affected women working within the VCS of Greater Manchester. The experience of women, especially within the VCS of Greater Manchester, was not reflected in national research on VCS working conditions. National research on VCS working conditions suggested that the VCS offered improved working conditions (Teasdale et al. 2011). Organisational culture was affected by changes in VCS working conditions. My research found that the organisational sense of community and supportiveness within the staff team was not so clear during austerity for the VCS of Greater Manchester.

The VCS of Greater Manchester was experiencing hard times, yet through these challenges were negotiating opportunities (Milbourne 2013). The effects of neoliberal new public management policies on the adult social care VCS have been seen since the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act. My research, quoted within chapter five illustrated that the VCS presented itself as providing a distinctive, more caring, approach to care (Macmillan 2013, Dickinson et al. 2012). However, the effect of purchaser-provider relationships with public sector funders had meant that in reality VCS care providers have been required to operate as

businesses, and this has changed their organisational cultures and arguably affected their distinctiveness.

The multiplicity of challenges combined with reductions in funding, alongside increases in need, have had a significant impact on the VCS of Greater Manchester. Despite the VCS identifying and enacting opportunities within austerity, the challenges faced by the VCS far outweighed the opportunities. Indeed, the very search for opportunity within austerity can be critiqued (Milbourne 2013, Mayo et al. 2013), as resilience or the need for VCS resilience within austerity cannot mask the immense challenge that the VCS faced and continues to face during austerity.

### **8.3.3 Micro: CareGM**

My micro level research considered the organisational experience of one adult social care organisation within Greater Manchester. My CareGM findings, shared in chapter six, echoed some issues experienced by the national and regional adult social care VCS in terms of the challenges austerity created for organisational voice and identity. Other experiences during the Coalition term varied from the national and regional experience.

Opportunities that CareGM were able to develop, in terms of good social and human capital, were reflected within the experiences of the national and Greater Manchester VCS (NCIA 2015, Milbourne 2013, Davidson et al. 2014, Dayson et al. 2013). For the organisations that CareGM had informal ties with, relationships were strong. In terms of human capital, staff and volunteers valued each other highly. Trustees very much valued staff and volunteers. CareGM had very strong public capital with strong links to NHS and VCS partners. Links and working relationships with the police were still being negotiated during my research period. It is from this strong social and human capital that I develop my sixth capital, Caritas or love. The strong bond, care and love that the staff and volunteers offer each other within the organisational environment were, my research suggested, a distinctive VCS offering.

Unlike the experience of much of the national and regional VCS, which was experiencing unprecedented funding cuts (NCIA 2015, Dayson et al. 2013), CareGM had comparatively strong financial capital. Financial capital was a concern for many staff and volunteers, who feared that funding was scarce. The 2013-14 Annual Review revealed a strong financial situation; fears existed perhaps due to a memory of the organisation's 2007 funding crisis when it faced closure (AR 2014).

CareGM's organisational voice was affected by Coalition funding cuts. My research, as illustrated with quotes in chapter six found that, CareGM was concerned not to offend or affect future funding streams by campaigning about the housing crisis or 'bedroom tax.'<sup>100</sup> The service delivery focus of the organisation was the primary work of staff and volunteers; the increase in need and client poverty resulted in little time for campaigning. Campaigning was considered an addition to CareGM's work rather than a core organisational role. My research on organisational voice reflected national and regional research regarding the reduction in campaigning and VCS silencing (NCIA 2015, Dayson et al. 2013).

CareGM reflected the regional and national experiences of the VCS in terms of the challenges that it faced. My research, as illustrated with quotes in chapter six found that in terms of physical capital the building in which CareGM operated, in line with the experience of VCS organisations regionally, was barely fit for purpose, with significant challenges experienced in terms of how space could be used and maintenance issues. Social and public capital vulnerability was a real concern for CareGM. The organisations that CareGM listed as partners were facing cuts as a result of central and local government funding reductions and there was a fear among staff, volunteers and trustees that this would affect the social and public capital links that they could develop with CareGM. An overdependence on networks and signposting to services was also

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<sup>100</sup> **Bedroom Tax.** This term coined by the media refers to conditions imposed by the 2012 Welfare Reform Act. Persons in receipt of some benefits are required to pay a surcharge for a spare bedroom.

shared as a vulnerability. Financial austerity was hitting all areas of the public and private sectors and there was a concern that financial pressures might reduce sponsor generosity.

Uncertain working conditions and inequalities in the working environment were not as obvious within CareGM. However, when questioned staff discussed the financial crisis in 2007 and how their working hours had been cut. The removal of a manager post in 2007 due to a funding crisis had resulted in trustees having to manage the staff. This led to communication errors and limited staff supervision. My research, as illustrated with quotes in chapter six found that the lack of clear management and limited opportunities for supervision and support alongside an increase in client poverty and need as a result of cuts to welfare led to a situation where several staff were concerned about working conditions. Staff discussed workplace stress and the need for clearer line management. This reflected some of my Greater Manchester VCS research, although the VCS of Greater Manchester was much more concerned about the impact of working conditions on staff morale and VCS identity.

In line with the experiences of the national and Greater Manchester VCS, CareGM was seeing a significant increase in client need and poverty as Coalition welfare reform was enacted across Greater Manchester. This impacted on the organisational working environment, and staff stress levels and working conditions were affected. There was an increase in violent incidents as my research period progressed. However, due to strong financial, human and public capital CareGM was able to expand and develop, recruiting volunteers into the paid staff team during my research period. The multiplicity of challenges, from isomorphism to privatisation, faced by the broader national and regional VCS was reflected in CareGM's experience, yet CareGM also differed significantly in terms of its response to these challenges: it operationalised love within austerity.

I now draw together my national, regional and organisational level research findings.

## **8.4 Caritas, Faith and the Sacrificial Role of Women**

Examining the VCS from macro, meso and micro perspectives, it becomes clear that the VCS is a heavily gendered workforce (CLES 2014, VSNW and CLES 2013, WBG 2013, NCVO 2012, Dayson et al. 2013). The gendered nature of the workforce is exacerbated when one considers the care subsector of the VCS, as the field of care work is also heavily gendered. I review the literature on women, work and the VCS at national level in my literature review in chapter three and consider the findings of my research at both Greater Manchester and organisational levels within chapters five and six. I now link national, regional and organisational experiences considering the notions of Caritas, faith and the sacrificial role of women.

### **8.4.1 Poor Working Conditions**

Despite research (Teasdale et al. 2011) suggesting that the VCS offers improved working conditions, improved leadership opportunities and improved opportunities to progress compared to the public and private sectors, this experience was not felt by workshop participants, who saw male leadership figures earning more and making organisational decisions that did not always reflect their predominantly female workforce's needs.

Many adult social care VCS organisations provide care to vulnerable service users, and sometimes workers experience violence in providing the care. Violence against workers is treated differently in men's and women's workplaces (Baines 2006). Women are expected to care for violent service users as part of their caring role, as part of their feminine self-sacrifice (Baines and Cunningham 2011). Violence against a predominantly female workforce in the VCS is 'excused', using medical models of client disability or societal barriers, and the response of the workforce is often focussed on the needs of the perpetrator. Violence in this female-dominated VCS workplace often goes penalty free due to the gendered power dynamic present in the workplace.

### 8.4.2 Gendered Work Environments

VCS management established a climate of shared values with employees, focussing on the service user (Baines and Cunningham 2011). The acceptance of this behaviour was reinforced in recruitment, selection and training. The comparatively low levels of unionisation within the VCS workforce compared to local authority employed caregivers (Dayson et al. 2013) further contributed to the tolerance of poor working conditions. This gendered dynamic could not continue without the acceptance of its existence in each agency:

the larger power and gender dynamics that keep it in place, reproducing and reflecting gender roles as well as management's expectations of female workers and expectations workers have of themselves and each other. (Baines and Cunningham 2011:761)

### 8.4.3 Lack of Equality

In summary, although women working within the VCS might expect equality, attendees of the second participatory workshop illustrated that they do not in reality experience it:

*We have a male/female balance but it's harder for older workers to use digital media and work as quickly. At some point us women have to work 'part time' and care for children/grandchildren and older relatives – austerity has really affected women. I had to go 'part time' to four days per week but I still work five days but I am not paid for it.*

Alison, Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

Women working in the adult social care VCS are working in a setting that is both horizontally and vertically gendered. Austerity, and its consequential reductions in VCS organisational resources at the same time as demand increases, has had detrimental effects on women working within the sector. Working conditions have been significantly affected, and reductions in working hours, changes in flexitime arrangements and increased workplace stress have all directly affected women within the VCS.

#### 8.4.4 Sacrificial Care

It is here that the subordinate role of women can be considered. Women are bearing the brunt of the recession (WBG 2013, Swaffield 2011, TUC 2010, Rake 2009) and to a greater extent than their male counterparts. Women working within the adult social care VCS are experiencing poor working conditions (Teasdale et al. 2011), gendered work environments (Baines and Cunningham 2011, Baines 2006) and a lack of equality (WBG 2013). The women at the second participatory workshop were conscious of their role and position within the VCS and the VCS's role within society:

*Austerity is forcing minority/specialist services into the mainstream. The complex needs of service users for services such as the South East Asian domestic violence unit have been overlooked in order to gain mainstream funding ... leading to a loss of equality.*

Field Notes, Participatory Workshop Two

This leads me to consider the sacrificial nature of care. The women within the adult social care organisations that I spoke to, as illustrated above, understood their subordinate position, yet chose to care, work and volunteer within the adult social care VCS despite this awareness.

Here the notion of the sacrificial nature of care is useful, for it returns to the elemental nature of altruism:

altruism ought never to be discussed in terms of sacrifice because those who are true practitioners ... are glad to perform acts of kindness for others and see their acts not as denial but fulfilment. (Tillman 2008:551)

Love as a sacrifice is, for Tillman (2008), gratefully given. Helin and Lindstorm (2003:414) question whether sacrifice can be regarded as 'constituting a deep ethical structure in the

[caring] relationship'. The sacrificial role of the worker or volunteer can be perceived as an emotionally charged outlook and personal devotion, yet

the semantics of the concept of sacrifice reveal that it hides contradictory dimensions of meaning, which contain a hint of the complexity of the phenomenon of sacrifice. (Helin and Lindstorm 2003:416)

Sacrifice as a female volunteer or worker in the adult social care VCS is difficult, hard work and at times 'white knuckle' (Baines and Cunningham 2011), yet it is also the 'highest form of giving' (Helin and Lindstorm 2003:416). From an ethical and philosophical viewpoint sacrifice, accompanied by responsibility, respect for human dignity, faith and love, encompasses the values that form the totality of caring (Lanara: 1996).

This notion can, however, be critiqued, as 'a Janus face of sacrificing appears – a face that can change darkness to light or light to darkness' (Helin and Lindstorm 2003:417). Indeed, Smith (1995) questions whether women are educated or socialised towards altruism and whether this contributes to them self-sacrificing to a point of subordination, their wellbeing sacrificed for that of others.

From an ontological perspective three interrelated aspects of caring emerge: love, responsibility and sacrifice, and 'caritative ethics' (Helin and Lindstorm 2003:421). Here, love includes and involves sacrifice:

The core of love when caring ... encompasses sacrifice as an ethical dimension, sacrifice as the search for the patient's ontological suffering. (Thorkildsen et al. 2014:357)

The giving of love without the expectation of return, using what is important for oneself and sharing it for the benefit to others, relates to Saint Augustine's notion of Caritas:

Human beings are supposed to sacrifice themselves, an act that is carried out through the caritas synthesis, where human beings unite in love by loving and being loved ... caritas appears as a symbiosis of eros and agape, a synergism that reflects the depths of human interdependence. (Thorkildsen et al. 2014:357)

Here, sacrifice can be understood as a notion of giving and receiving each other as gifts. Here, arguably, Caritas, faithful sacrifice through love, offers a source of empowerment not subordination. Caritas in this sense 'provides a source of inner strength and opportunity, faith empowers women to act for their own liberation and that of others' (McGrory 2008:17). In operationalising love within austerity, in caring despite sacrifice, the women of the VCS of Greater Manchester are arguably knowingly enacting love as a gift to the communities that they serve.

## **8.5 Drawing Together Themes from Macro, Meso and Micro Research**

Since 2010 the Big Society has become what Corry (2012: 4) describes as a 'still-born phrase'. Coalition policies such as the Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014 created a welfare environment that has prioritised the privatisation of the VCS, encouraging social enterprise, private funding provision and mandated partnerships (Glasby and Dickinson 2014). The National Coalition for Independent Action (NCIA) have heavily criticised Coalition policy, suggesting that Coalition policy has led to a situation where VCS groups are experiencing a situation of 'fright or fright' (NCIA 2015:1). Larger VCS groups are developing and surviving as they have the capacity to develop and link into new funding opportunities. Medium sized groups, NCIA (2015) argue, are being pushed out of existence as they face funding challenges and lack the capacity to become business focussed. The future of genuine voluntary action, NCIA argue, is under threat from the combined challenges of isomorphic service delivery contracts and the government drive for privatisation:

the future of voluntary services, as part of authentic voluntary action, will lie in groups relying on small amounts of money and operating outside of business and contractual relationships. It is these groups which will carry the burden of change, and attempt to meet social and other needs not covered by shrinking public sector contracts. (NCIA 2015:16)

The future of the VCS perhaps does lie in returning to authentic voluntary action (NCIA 2015); in returning to love. In developing a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital, love, I offer a pathway for the VCS to return to authentic action.

A discourse of an adaptive and responsive voluntary sector has developed throughout the centuries, of a VCS that has developed its role through changes in party politics, during periods of rising and declining mass membership and on to a diversity of interaction from institutions of central and local government (Hilton and McKay 2011). Hilton and McKay (2011:4) state that 'the strength of the voluntary sector lies in its ability to respond to such challenges.' Beveridge himself stated that 'the capacity of voluntary action inspired by philanthropy to do new things is beyond question' (Beveridge 1948). He was also keen to note that the 'vigour and abundance of voluntary action in association with other citizens is one of the distinguishing marks of a free society' (Beveridge 1948). When linking today's experience of austerity into the historical context; Beveridge's concerns that the welfare state might crowd out voluntary action have proved unfounded. Indeed, as the state has expanded it has sought out new relationships with the voluntary sector, particularly in the form of service provision. This has led to the charge of isomorphism, and the questioning of the sector's independence.

Arguably the Coalition policy is simply another adaptation of the welfare state. Potentially the welfare state is not being diminished but remade:

the diverse struggles to transform welfare states – to abolish them, to create them anew, to preserve them and to remake them in the image of new needs – are continuing rather than concluded. (Clarke 2004:10)

Pursuing a discourse of renewal and adaptation, it becomes difficult to argue that an expanding state has necessarily encroached upon what was formerly voluntary sector terrain. Harris argues that it is 'perhaps better not to see the state and voluntary sector as entirely distinct entities, but as mutually co-constitutive' (Harris 2012:4). Arguably the Coalition policy is an attempt to roll up a set of older policy objectives centred on localism, marketisation of public services and the importance of civil society into something new.

There are key themes experienced by the adult social care VCS at national, regional and organisation levels. The opportunities and challenges that the VCS faces in its response to Coalition policy are mirrored at macro, meso and micro levels. Key challenges such as the isomorphic effects of contract culture and the threats of privatisation exist at national, regional and organisational levels. The nuances of how these challenges are responded to, however, reflect different organisational capacities. Larger organisations have a broader capacity to respond to funding bids, whereas smaller organisations are being often mandated (Glasby and Dickinson 2014) into partnerships for funding or service delivery purposes.

The VCS has the opportunity to develop its strengths through austerity. Opportunities exist regarding building new partnerships with newly formed public bodies, such as CCGs. Other opportunities can be developed through partnership working with other VCS organisations to build consortia. Many VCS organisations have adapted, and they have sought opportunity through austerity by utilising networks and partnerships to develop public capital in order to develop innovative service delivery models and access funding. Improvements in digital communication have offered the VCS an opportunity to directly communicate with stakeholders and to develop alternative funding sources such as crowd funding. The VCS has adapted and responded to change by utilising its strong social and human capital. The commitment, passion, charisma and sheer tenacity of VCS staff in responding to increased poverty and need cannot be underestimated.

Challenges experienced by the VCS reflect the realities of operating in a radically changed policy environment. The VCS organisations, both small and large, at national, regional and organisation levels, are facing challenges of silencing, funding and identity. Poverty has increased at national levels as well as within Greater Manchester (Lansley and Mack 2015, Bunyan and Diamond 2014b, Dayson et al. 2013, Lansley and Mack 1985 ). Service users with

increasingly complex needs within the adult social care VCS are accessing services. VCS identity has been challenged by Coalition policy. The resulting bifurcation (Fyfe and Milligan 2003) of the sector alongside competition for contracts and the silencing of campaign roles has affected VCS identity.

I now consider the differences between national, regional and organisation level experiences of Coalition policy.

### **8.5.1 Differences Between Macro, Meso and Micro Voluntary and Community Sector Experiences**

Many of the experiences of the national and regional VCS echo each other. The combined challenges of isomorphic contract culture inspired by neoliberal government policies intent on privatising the VCS, through thinly disguised social enterprise, have pervaded the experiences of national and local level VCS organisations. There are, however, differences between national, regional and organisational experiences of Coalition policy. CareGM, as discussed in chapters six, seven and eight, is an FBO. This in some senses changed its response to austerity. In other senses, its organisational aims were secular and its focus on client empowerment a secular goal. Potentially the faith-based nature of the organisation affected how it responded to Coalition policy despite my research finding that faith was not an obvious part of its service delivery.

CareGM, like much of the national and regional VCS, had strong social, human and public capital. Where CareGM differed was in terms of financial capital. CareGM, after a financial crisis in 2010, had diversified its funding sources and listed over fifty-three separate funders in its 2013-14 Annual Review (AR 2014). The variety of funding sources and the lack of reliance on one core funder allowed both organisational independence but also a sense of security unknown to much of the adult social care VCS. This allowed CareGM to resist the combined

challenges of isomorphism and privatisation. Much of the national and regional VCS is reliant on one or a few core funders and VCS independence was removed as organisations sought to adapt in order to meet performance management requirements of the major funder.

I linked similarities and differences in terms of the national, regional and organisational experiences of Coalition policy. I now consider interlinkages with a view to applying my sixth capital, love, across macro, meso and micro levels of VCS experiences.

## 8.6 The Interaction Between Capitals: Developing a Sixth Capital

SLA offers analysis from macro, meso and micro perspectives. My SLA is set within an analysis of policies and institutions (the macro and meso levels) in order that it can enable communities to promote the agenda of those in poverty. The SLA approach examines the experiences of people and organisations using five capitals, and in so doing considers VCS organisational assets in depth. This enables a VCS organisation to make connections between micro level coping strategies and macro level policies (May et al. 2009). The aim of conducting a detailed SLA is to

build up an understanding of the power dynamics underlying the different aspects of people's lives. Value what is often undervalued and invisible, for example non-financial assets. (May et al. 2009:5)

In examining the national and regional context in which CareGM sits, this analysis makes connections between micro coping strategies employed by CareGM and the wider policy and political context. In examining CareGM's organisational capital, I identified that they had excellent social, human and public capital. These were real organisational strengths. This was also the case for the wider Greater Manchester VCS. These capitals were then utilised to build financial capital. Those organisations that had good public capital, links to infrastructure organisations or were actively involved in a variety of partnerships appeared to be more successful at attracting financial capital. In CareGM's case, their variety of financial capital developed from their public capital, from links, ties and bonds that had been capitalised upon for funding. These five capitals, whilst offering an analysis of CareGM as an organisation, I felt did not fully explain CareGM's response to austerity. I therefore developed a sixth capital, love. This capital can potentially provide a new analysis of the VCS response to austerity.

Key to the VCS response to Coalition policy was the solidarity of its staff, its collective values and mutual support. My research revealed that key charismatic, committed and passionate individuals within the Greater Manchester VCS and CareGM were integral to organisational responses. It is here that I wish to discuss VCS distinctiveness.

### **8.6.1 Importance of Voluntary and Community Sector Distinctiveness: Linking Love into my Macro, Meso and Micro Analysis**

VCS distinctiveness as a sector is highly valued by policy makers and communities alike (Macmillan 2013). The VCS has a significant sixth capital, love. The community focus, love and caring approach of the VCS have always been considered as able to add the extra special something: the care and the passion that public and private service providers could not. The VCS can be considered distinct in its ability to offer connections to community and its focus on a grassroots level response to its service users (Davidson and Packham 2015, Mayo et al. 2013, Davidson and Packham 2012, Packham 2008). The VCS has been credited with offering a distinctive approach to adult social care (Dickinson et al. 2012). The care provided by VCS organisations has been perceived as person-centred and focussing on quality of care (Glasby and Dickinson 2014, Dickinson et al. 2012). This perception of care has been held up as what is distinctive and special about the VCS, as opposed to the more commercialised or process-orientated approaches of the private and public sectors respectively.

The voluntary sector offers a distinctive type of service within adult social care (Dickinson et al. 2012). Buckingham (2009) discusses distinctiveness in terms of voluntary sector service providers; distinctiveness is structural and operational. The third sector is distinct because it is self-governing, separate to government, and is value driven and is not for profit. The VCS has great scope to be innovative and personalised, it is more representative of local communities and has increased involvement of service users and volunteers (Buckingham 2009). A

publication on best practice in partnership working published on behalf of Department of Health states that voluntary organisations 'offer added value in comparison with providers in the commercial or statutory sector' (National Strategic Partnership Forum 2007:17). This distinctiveness that is widely claimed for the VCS has links to the love that I found at CareGM, although as I will conclude later in this chapter that love is not necessarily generalisable to the wider VCS.

### **8.6.2 Operationalising Love**

In order to offer a distinct, innovative and alternative response to austerity the VCS needs to address its strengths. My research findings identified the role of key individuals in building the organisational environment and responding to the challenges posed by austerity. Within CareGM these key individuals operated using what I have titled the sixth sustainable livelihoods capital, love or Caritas. Models can be developed to map an organisation's response to isomorphism. Oliver (1991) developed a model for analysis of an organisation's strategic response to institutional processes. She argues that organisations that have strong internal cultures are more likely to resist external expectations and beliefs; therefore some level of resistance to isomorphism is built into VCS organisations. Love perhaps can be utilised as a distinctive VCS characteristic to enable the VCS to resist austerity.

### **8.6.3 Threats to Voluntary Sector Distinctiveness**

Whether this sixth organisational capital can be broadened out into the wider Greater Manchester experience is doubtful. The faith-based nature of CareGM arguably allowed a freedom to express concepts such as love that often feel uncomfortable in more secular contexts. Threats to VCS distinctiveness at a national level from the isomorphic effects of purchaser-provider service delivery contracts seriously impact on the voice and activist identity of the VCS. Service delivery fails to recognise the role of the VCS to 'agitate for social change,

identifying social needs and devising ways of addressing them' (Aiken 2014a:11, 2014b). Dickinson et al. (2012:16) identify a number of threats to voluntary sector distinctiveness: 'these challenges were frequently linked to governance and funding.' If the isomorphic effects of contract culture are to be avoided then the VCS needs to consider its approach to the neoliberal policies of successive governments. It is perhaps here that my research is limited. Having based my ethnographic research within an FBO I have limited the generalisability of my research findings.

I now discuss the SLA toolkit before considering the difficulties, limitations and challenges of my research.

## **8.7 Participatory Research: Creating a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit**

My research methodology for this thesis was participatory. It was therefore integral to my methodology that I offer something back to the VCS. The notion of PAR emerged within international development (Chambers 1997, 1983), with a commitment to social justice that involved an avoidance of neo-colonial extractive research approaches and a commitment to empowering the communities that the researcher worked with:

Action for social change requires an educational process in which researcher and participants develop a critical awareness of circumstances influencing their lives, reflect on what this means in their individual and communal situation and decide what action would be most important and feasible to take. (De Koning and Martin 1996:5)

After consideration and discussion with VCS organisations, an assets based evaluation tool was agreed as a useful research output for the VCS. Participatory research, in its social justice goal, is distinctive and it is focussed on enabling action. Action is achieved through engaging in a reflective cycle: research participants collect data, analyse their data and then decide on appropriate action. Participatory research is considered a method to challenge power relations, which 'keep in place dependency and domination in the relationships between privileged dominant and marginalised groups of people' (De Koning and Martin 1996:4). Participatory research recognises a need to link research with empowerment, education and action (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991; Hall 1981).

In the case of my PhD, SLA is focussed on enabling VCS organisations to achieve their livelihood goals by building on their existing coping strategies. My SLA of CareGM, in taking an assets approach to research and focussing on VCS strengths, argued that VCS groups can respond to the multiplicity of challenges posed by austerity. In creating an SLA toolkit I am offering the VCS a practical method of evaluating their assets and empowering the sector in its

response to austerity. The toolkit will be useful to the VCS in that it will allow a holistic assets based evaluation of an organisation that a VCS organisation can use to create strategy, based on the assets that they have identified using the toolkit. The VCS can use SLA as an assets based evaluation tool to refocus its strengths and develop strategies to overcome the challenges of austerity. VCS organisations can analyse their organisation using an SLA as a tool; in doing so they can recognise their opportunities.

The SLA toolkit was piloted in July 2015 with the adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester. The pilot was delivered in partnership with Oxfam GB, Church Action on Poverty and the Community Audit and Evaluation Centre. In 2009 Church Action on Poverty produced an SLA toolkit for households (May et al. 2009). This toolkit, with the permission of the publishers, has been rewritten to reflect the experience of VCS organisations and to introduce assets based organisational evaluation tools that reflect the VCS of Greater Manchester. Once the toolkit had been piloted at the July 2015 workshop, the tools were written up into a booklet and distributed within the VCS of Greater Manchester. The toolkit is now being piloted with eight small community groups within Greater Manchester<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> See Appendix Six. To find the full copy of the toolkit online visit [www.arvac.org.uk](http://www.arvac.org.uk)

## **8.8 Conscientisation: Power and my Role as a Researcher**

Having examined the broader experience of women within the adult social care VCS, I will now examine my experience of research as a female researcher. When taking a feminist perspective to research, issues of power should be addressed (Skeggs 2013). It is impossible to discuss gender without also discussing power:

gender exists as a category that enforces differences that create and preserve power for one group while depriving another group of access to that power. (Ryle 2012:470)

Researchers affect the process of research, so as a researcher I too have an impact and am affected by intersectional ties of gender, class and race (Skeggs 2013, Ryle 2012, Phoenix 1994).

### **8.8.1 Negotiating Femininity**

Within my research I had to negotiate my femininity; being female sometimes was an advantage and at other times a barrier. My intersectional roles as a researcher impacted on my research (Skeggs 2013, Ryle 2012, Phoenix 1994). One of the research questions set by the VCS groups during my first participatory workshop was around the gendered role of the VCS and the impact of a gendered workforce upon VCS organisations. Being female both helped and hindered responses to this research question. When interviewing women, being female helped. Women felt comfortable sharing demands of caring responsibly and working conditions with another woman. Whilst my experience was not necessarily the same (Lemert 1992, Campbell 1984), commonalities of the feminine experience could be located in our discussions. Demands of childcare, less understanding male colleagues and work schedule pressures were shared freely between me and female interviewees.

When interviewing men, I felt that being female was a barrier. Men were keen to be politically correct. Two interviewees even referenced the need not to be sexist in their responses:

*The male/female balance is not something I have really thought about, but not to be sexist security wise it is better if there are no men about. If something kicks off then women diffuse it, women have intelligence that is more emotional.* Tom, Interview

*I come from a manual work environment that is principally male, my experience of this type of work is that it is predominantly female ... Be careful what you say [Dom!!!] [reference to himself].* Dom, Interview

Male interviewees became uncomfortable with their responses and answered in ways that referenced their need to be politically correct. I felt that perhaps being male and asking the same question might have eased the situation, as men might have felt more comfortable discussing male-female staff relationships in a same-sex situation.

### **8.8.2 The Mother Researcher: Negotiating my Multiple Roles**

Myrdal and Klein's (1956) notion of women's dual roles and Ramazanoglu's (1989) notion of women's triple roles are strongly reflected in my own experience of research. The dual (homemaker, mother) or triple (homemaker, worker and mother) roles as PhD student, mother, wife, homemaker, associate lecturer, small business owner and volunteer all interlink and have impacted on my research study. These roles (Ramazanoglu 1989) have led to a difficult balancing act. I work as an associate lecturer focussing on youth and community development. I work for two different universities, Edge Hill University and Manchester Metropolitan University. I teach for different departments within both universities, which led to a point in 2015 where I held seven different contracts for two different universities. Alongside this, I operate a small social

enterprise specialising in voluntary sector training and research<sup>102</sup> and I volunteer for the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC<sup>103</sup>).

My multiple roles often combine and overlap. I have been involved with a participatory research project in Rochdale<sup>104</sup>, building up my participatory research skills and developing my research approach. My ARVAC volunteer position has led to me leading a group of early career researchers interested in the VCS. However, managing the multiplicity of roles and responsibilities has been a significant challenge in terms of how I manage my time and income sources. My gender and multiplicity of roles (Ramazanoglu 1989) have impacted on my research significantly, in how I behaved, dressed and approached the research (Coffey 1996). Taking a post-structural feminist viewpoint throughout my PhD has enabled me to situate my role as a researcher throughout the PhD research.

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<sup>102</sup> **The Volunteer Training Company.** I run this business as a small social enterprise, specialising in voluntary sector capacity building. @TheVTC

<sup>103</sup> **ARVAC.** I volunteer as membership secretary. Mostly volunteering from home, operating much of the ARVAC website and marketing ARVAC Events. [www.arvac.org.uk](http://www.arvac.org.uk).

<sup>104</sup> **Rochdale Community Champions.** I have been working with Edge Hill University's Institute for Public Policy to deliver leadership and participatory research skills to volunteers from the Rochdale Community Champions project <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/files/2014/09/CS-1452c-Rochdale-60ppA4-Hi-rez.pdf>

## **8.9 Difficulties, Limitations and Challenges of the Study**

My research considered the effects of austerity on the adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester. It considered the opportunities and challenges experienced by the adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester. This research project has not been without challenges, personally, politically and operationally. SLA is an assets based evaluation tool that is usually used at a household level. Widening the tool to analysis of VCS organisations was to take a risk. In using a variety of qualitative methods I aimed to triangulate my research findings and ensure authenticity of voice (Manning 1997). However, there are limitations to this study, to which I now turn.

### **8.9.1 Catalytic Validity**

Issues of validity in openly ideological research are a key concern for feminist researchers (Lather 1986). The overt ideological goal of feminist research is to 'correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal position' (1986:68). Here, the emancipatory focus of my research becomes central;

the openly ideological goal is to blur the distinctions between research, learning and action by providing conditions under which participants' self-determinations are enhanced in the struggle toward social justice' (Hall 1981:30).

Participants become as important as the research in 'formulating the problem, discussing solutions and interpreting findings' (Hall 1981:30). It is here that catalytic validity was consciously built into my research process and can be seen throughout the development of the SLA toolkit.

My research is made up of thirty-five research interactions, supported by two literature review sections; the first is in chapter three, an ideological and policy review, and the second within chapter four, a theoretical consideration of my research approach. It cannot, however, be a full analysis of every VCS organisation's experience across Greater Manchester. My research is a reflection of the organisations I worked with and those organisations I interviewed. Had I based my micro level ethnographic study within a larger adult social care organisation that offered care for older people rather than support for homeless people, I may have discovered different responses to austerity.

Linking the broader national experience of the VCS into one specific organisation required significant analysis. Key themes such as purchaser-provider contracts and organisational identity whilst evident at a micro level were more difficult to distinguish and identify. The research, whilst attempting to consider the broader national policy and historical context of the VCS, was inevitably hindered by the huge range of VCS experience. The VCS as a sector struggles to define itself (Milbourne 2013) and even in its broadest definitions is heterogeneous (Alcock 2010a). My research therefore can merely suggest broad themes at national level.

At Greater Manchester level I was limited by the organisations that chose to attend my initial participatory workshop. I had advertised the event widely through VCS infrastructure organisations and twenty-seven participants attended. It was from these twenty-seven participants that I identified the host organisation for my ethnography. Once the host organisation invited me to research their project I then identified organisations within the wider Greater Manchester VCS that offered similar services to my host organisation. Therefore, whilst my research provides an insight into the experiences of the Greater Manchester adult social care VCS, and I took time to confirm my research findings during the SLA toolkit workshop, it cannot claim to represent the entire adult social care VCS of Greater Manchester. Here,

'approaches to validity must reach beyond the obfuscating claims of objectivity used by positivism to skirt the role played by researcher values in human sciences' (Lather 1986:66). Catalytic validity moves beyond notions of generalisability to seek validity in the empowerment of research participants. The creation of the SLA toolkit as an assets based organisational toolkit offers an emancipatory function to my research and in so doing builds catalytic validity.

My research with CareGM also had limitations. I attended the centre mostly on Wednesdays as I was invited to write up the Wednesday debrief meeting notes as part of my participant observation of the centre. Had I attended on another day when different services were offered I may have had a different impression of the centre. My research was also spread out over a nine-month period, and with the exception of July when I visited the centre three times, I usually visited monthly. Had I conducted my ethnography over a more concentrated period of time then again I may have drawn different conclusions. However, I made considerable efforts to ensure the accuracy of my findings by conducting fourteen semi-structured interviews. My semi-structured interviews with key informants within CareGM sought to inform and confirm my research findings.

Lather (1986) suggests four approaches to guard against bias within openly ideological research: triangulation, construct validity, face validity and catalytic validity. Triangulation for Lather involves the inclusion of multiple data sources, methods and theoretical schemes: 'it is essential that the research design seeks counter patterns as well as convergences, if data are to be credible' (1986:67). My research used multiple data sources, participatory workshops, participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Goffman (1959) critiques the research interview as providing data not for what is in the mind of the respondent but for what is a representation of what is happening in the interview. In the case of semi-structured interviews the researcher should be aware of the fact that an interview

is a forced scenario and so it may produce distorted memories of the past, and what Kalhof et al. (2008) refer to as 'on-stage effects' where the interviewees give answers they believe will please the researcher.

Participant observation or a combination of semi-structured interviews and naturalistic/participant observation may provide a solution to this concern. The naturalistic observation provides the researcher with what actually occurs in the research setting, then theories and meanings about this behaviour can be discussed in a more formal interview with the key participants. Freire (1974, 1972) discusses 'conscientisation' and reminds us that we should be aware that as researchers who we are, for example, female white middle class, will influence the interviewee and the dynamics of participant observation. I attempted to overcome these concerns by gathering evidence using a variety of qualitative research methods. This diversity of evidence collection is intended to confirm my research findings (Yin 2009).

Construct validity requires 'a systematised reflexivity which gives some indication of how a prior theory has been challenged by the logic of the data' (Lather 1986:67). Throughout my analysis I wove in comparisons and reflexive sections considering how my research related to and reflected existing theory. Face validity is what Guba and Lincoln (1981) refer to as member checks. Reason and Rowan state 'good research at the non-alienating end of the spectrum ... goes back to the subject with tentative results, and refines them in the light of subjects' reactions' (1981:248). As mentioned in my methodology chapter, I sent transcripts to all my interviewees for comment and held a fourth participatory workshop which shared my research findings and launched the pilot of my SLA toolkit. Catalytic validity (Lather 1986) is especially important to me as a participatory feminist researcher:

the central challenge is to formulate approaches to empirical research which advance emancipatory theory-building through the development of interactive and action inspiring research designs (Lather 1986:64).

The formulation of the SLA toolkit, an assets based organisational tool for VCS groups, was therefore essential to my catalytic validity as a researcher.

### **8.9.2 Time-Bound Research**

My research was very much time-bound, as throughout the course of my PhD legislation has changed and developed. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and The Health and Social Care Act 2012 were gradually being enacted within Greater Manchester throughout my research period. The Care Act 2014 and Greater Manchester Devolution<sup>105</sup> have affected the adult social care VCS situation since my research period ended. My research took place between January 2014 and December 2014 and can really only reflect a snapshot of VCS experience during those months.

### **8.9.3 Critiquing Resilience**

The value of using SLA is that, after analysing the historical and ideological policy context at a macro level, my PhD offers assets based strategic actions in the form of an SLA toolkit for the VCS. However, the focus on assets as a strategic response to austerity suggests the VCS can respond with resilience. Resilience as a response to VCS experiences of austerity can be critiqued (Mayo et al. 2013). Indeed, why should the VCS have to respond, utilising an assets based strategy in the face of budget cuts, increasing need and reduced capacity (Dayson et al.

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<sup>105</sup> **DevoManc** This is a process of devolving power and funding to the Greater Manchester City region <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-31656313>

2013). Should resilience be required or should the VCS be empowered to campaign against the cuts instead (NCIA 2015)?

An assets based evaluation, in the form of an SLA toolkit for the VCS, is only useful as a strategic tool for the VCS if it has the power to enact change. Not all VCS organisations hold power. Small VCS organisations do not always have the power to respond and build on their assets, as they are often limited by the policy context in which they sit (Davidson et al. 2014). Coalition policy makers are influenced by a variety of issues – institutions, ideology, interests and information (Huston 2008) – and VCS organisations are not always able to utilise their assets to respond to these challenges.

There are, therefore, difficulties in using SLA. In creating lists of capitals, the researcher risks quantitative list making rather than recognising and focussing on the interrelationships, the trade-offs, between capitals (Guyer and Peters 1987). Identification of assets needs a nuanced analysis; for example a physical capital, a building, might be an asset if it is owned by an organisation but a vulnerability if it is rented. In addition, asset ownership is a delicate topic. SLA requires a considerable level of trust, and strong bonds between the researcher and those involved in the research need to be developed if a true picture is to be gathered (Fox 2013, Cooke and Kothari 2001). These critiques are well-known critiques of evidence-based approaches (Sanderson 2002, Pawson 2006); however, they must be considered as limitations to my research.

In its fivefold tools, SLA offers an assets based image of an organisation. Using SLA enables small VCS organisations to see where their assets lie and where they can build up responses to vulnerability. SLA is useful to consider an organisation from an assets based framework, but critiques of SLA argue that it is little more than list making (Morse et al. 2009) and fails to fully engage with the complex power relations that make up a livelihood. I argue that SLA, although

useful to consider organisational assets, fails to fully analyse the distinctive love, care and compassion that the VCS offers. However, in focussing my organisational, micro level analysis on an FBO, I have reduced the generalisability of my research findings. Caritas and love may not exist in the same form within other more secular VCS organisations.

#### **8.9.4 Partnership Working**

Building the partnership in order to create the SLA toolkit workshop was a real challenge. Arranging times when all partners could attend was difficult. Managing different agendas has been harder. I have gained written permission from the creators of the 2009 Church Action on Poverty SLA Toolkit (May et al. 2009) and a good level of support from a woman as passionate as I am about SLA who is based at Church Action on Poverty. However, gaining funding for the workshop lunch and obtaining funding to print and produce the toolkit after the pilot proved very difficult. It took a good deal of enthusiasm and pushing through organisational bureaucracy to deliver the workshop and then to begin to compile the toolkit.

#### **8.9.5 Political Challenges**

The VCS organisations of Greater Manchester are heterogeneous, diverse and not always in agreement with each other (Alcock 2010b). Negotiating the internal and external politics of VCS organisations whilst asking difficult questions about austerity, organisational funding and gender was not easy. In many cases when I interviewed people they were concerned that their views remained anonymous and that their organisations were not identified.

Competition for funding and resources intensified during my research period, and as organisations closed fear of redundancy and organisational closure and the impact on service delivery were real concerns. This affected the organisations that could attend my participatory workshops and also affected what people were prepared to say or how honest they were prepared to be during semi-structured interviews.

I will now consider possibilities for further research and recommendations from my research.

## **8.10 The New Government and Suggestions for Further Study**

On 7th May 2015 a general election was held. My active research period ended in December 2014 and my research question very clearly states the terms of the research – that it was under the Coalition government. In the morning of 8th May 2015 it became clear that the Conservative government under David Cameron had won by a majority. It was later confirmed that he had won a majority of twelve seats (BBC News 8.5.15). What this new government plans for the voluntary sector is as yet unconfirmed. The Minister for Civil Society remained unchanged during the inevitable post-election cabinet re-shuffle (Ricketts 12.5.15). Beyond speculation about a return to the Big Society under a different guise the media have so far been silent on the future of the VCS post-election.

In terms of suggestions for future study, a comparison of the experiences of the VCS under the Coalition government and the new Conservative government would be an obvious suggestion. However, given Conservative commitments to welfare reform and reductions in state support, reviewing the impacts on CareGM of the Conservative government may not make positive reading. Love arguably can only stretch so far in conditions of absolute poverty.

### **8.10.1 Recommendations**

Having identified love as a sixth sustainable livelihoods capital policy, recommendations naturally focus on creating working conditions within VCS organisations where love can be operationalised.

**National Level:** Further invest in Investors in People<sup>106</sup> and Investors in Volunteers<sup>107</sup> initiatives where staff and volunteers can develop in caring and supportive environments. This focusses on human and social capitals, where the VCS already has a strong assets base.

**Regional Level:** Cross regional partnerships can be further developed to build VCS strengths. This develops social and public capitals, again building on existing VCS assets.

**Organisation Level:** Investing in staff development, training, support and flexible working in order to create an environment where staff feel valued and supported. This builds on the distinctive characteristics of the VCS, the love and care that the VCS offers clients, enabling and empowering staff to operationalise love in a supportive environment.

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<sup>106</sup> **Investors in People.** A human resources quality mark assessment scheme <http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/>

<sup>107</sup> **Investors in Volunteers** A volunteer management quality mark <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>

## 8.11 Conclusion

This chapter returns to my original research question and links my macro, meso and micro findings, examining the effects of austerity on the VCS of Greater Manchester during the period of the Coalition government. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model, and adapting SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992), I analyse the effects of austerity from national, Greater Manchester and an individual VCS organisation's experiences. This approach fits with my adaptation of SLA. SLA (Chambers and Conway 1992) first considers the institutional and policy context before examining the livelihood experiences at a household level. My research has taken SLA and adapted it as a tool for analysis for the VCS at an organisational level.

In this way, the VCS's experience of Coalition policy has been explored. By examining the opportunities and challenges specific to Greater Manchester from macro, meso and micro perspectives, my PhD builds on the theoretical perspectives of NCIA (2015), Milbourne (2013), Dayson et al. (2013), Ishkanian and Szreter (2012), Hilton and McKay (2011), Malani and Posner (2007), Wolch (1990), and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) to develop a Manchester specific field of academic knowledge on the adult social care voluntary sector's reaction to Coalition policy. What has been most interesting for me is how the pressures of isomorphism and privatisation felt clearly at national and regional levels within the VCS were negotiated within CareGM. My development of love as a sixth livelihoods capital, operating within CareGM as an organisational response to austerity, alongside my adaptation of SLA is my original contribution to knowledge.

My hope is that the research will contribute to Greater Manchester's VCS policy development and practice. In developing, in partnership with CAEC, Oxfam GB and Church Action on Poverty, a Sustainable Livelihoods Toolkit for small VCS organisations that can be used to

conduct an assets based evaluation of an organisation, I hope to contribute to Greater Manchester VCS policy and practice.

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## **Appendix One: Semi-Structured Interview Checklist**

### **Ethics – Consent – Anonymity of Information**

**Job Role:**

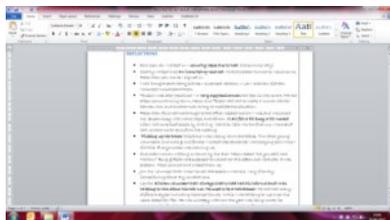
**Organisation:**

**Gender:**

**Age:** No need for a number (Is this your 'first' recession? – were you working age in 1980 / 1991 / 2009)

- What effects do you think austerity has had on your organisation's livelihood?
- What effects has the recession / austerity on your organisation's identity?
- Has austerity affected the voice of your organisation? Does your organisation still campaign? Has it ever campaigned?
- How / Has your organisation's finances / funding been affected by austerity?
- How has your organisation changed in response to austerity?
- What effects has austerity had on your organisation's mission? / users?
- What is the Male / Female balance of your organisation? How do you think that this impacts on the organisation's experience of austerity?
- How do you think your organisation can best respond to austerity?

## Appendix Two: Screen shots – excerpts from my reflective diary



## **Appendix Three: Organisational Consent Document**

### **ORGANISATIONAL CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

An analysis of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the voluntary and community sector in Manchester under the current Coalition Government (2010-2015). Katy Goldstraw

What you should know about research studies:

- This consent form gives you information about the study. It tells you about the purposes, risks, and benefits of this research study.
- The main goal of research studies is to learn more so that we can add to knowledge.
- You don't have to be in this research study. You can agree to be in the study now and change your mind later.
- Please read this consent form carefully. Ask any questions you have before you make a decision. The researcher will answer your questions.
- Being in this research study is up to you.

**Formal signed consent will be obtained by a representative of each organisation worked with.** Verbal consent will be obtained and recorded for PAR Workshops, semi-structured interviews, observation of staff meetings and organisational environment.

#### **1) Why is this research being done?**

The results of this study should further our understanding of VCS responses to austerity.

This understanding will help us, the VCS, with Katy Goldstraw PhD Student, to develop more effective organisational strategies in response to austerity.

## **2) What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this research activity is to examine the effects of austerity on the adult social care VCS.

## **3) Who is doing the study?**

The study is being conducted by Katy Goldstraw, a PhD student at MMU. Her Director of Studies for this PhD is Dr Jenny Fisher.

## **4) What will happen to you if you decide to be in this study?**

You or members of your organisation will participate in a Participatory Action Research Workshop, a semi-structured interview, be observed within staff meetings, or within your organisational environment about the effects of austerity in your organisation.

## **5) What are the possible risks of being in the study?**

There are no known risks to participating in this research.

## **6) What are the possible benefits of being in the study?**

All research findings will be shared with the organisation. The hope is that this will enable your organisation to better respond to the effects of austerity.

## **7) If you have any questions or problems, whom can you call?**

If you have any questions about this study, you can call the researcher, Katy Goldstraw, on 0161 247 2000 [k.goldstraw@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:k.goldstraw@mmu.ac.uk)

You may also contact her supervisor and director of studies, Dr Jenny Fisher at 0161 247 2000 [j.fisher@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.fisher@mmu.ac.uk) You can access MMU Ethics procedures <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/rke/ethics-forms/>

## **8) What information do I keep private?**

Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Interviews will be recorded on a Dictaphone and the data from this study will be coded

from these tapes. This data will be organized by a number assigned to you so that your identity will be available only to Katy Goldstraw and will remain completely confidential.

The data will be kept in a locked cabinet where it will remain for approximately two years following the completion of the project. The tapes will then be destroyed.

**9) Can you being in the study end early?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. You may elect to withdraw from this study at any time and the information we have collected from you will be destroyed. Any significant new findings developed during the course of the research, which may relate to your willingness to continue participation, will be provided to you.

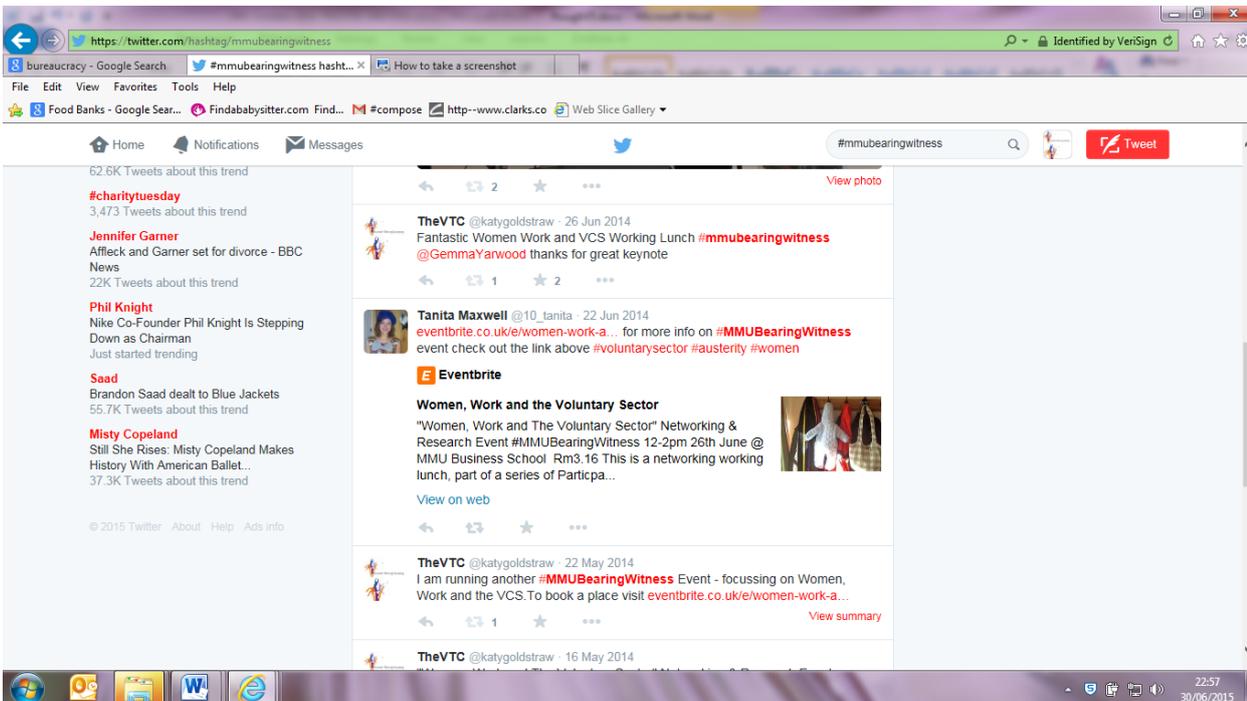
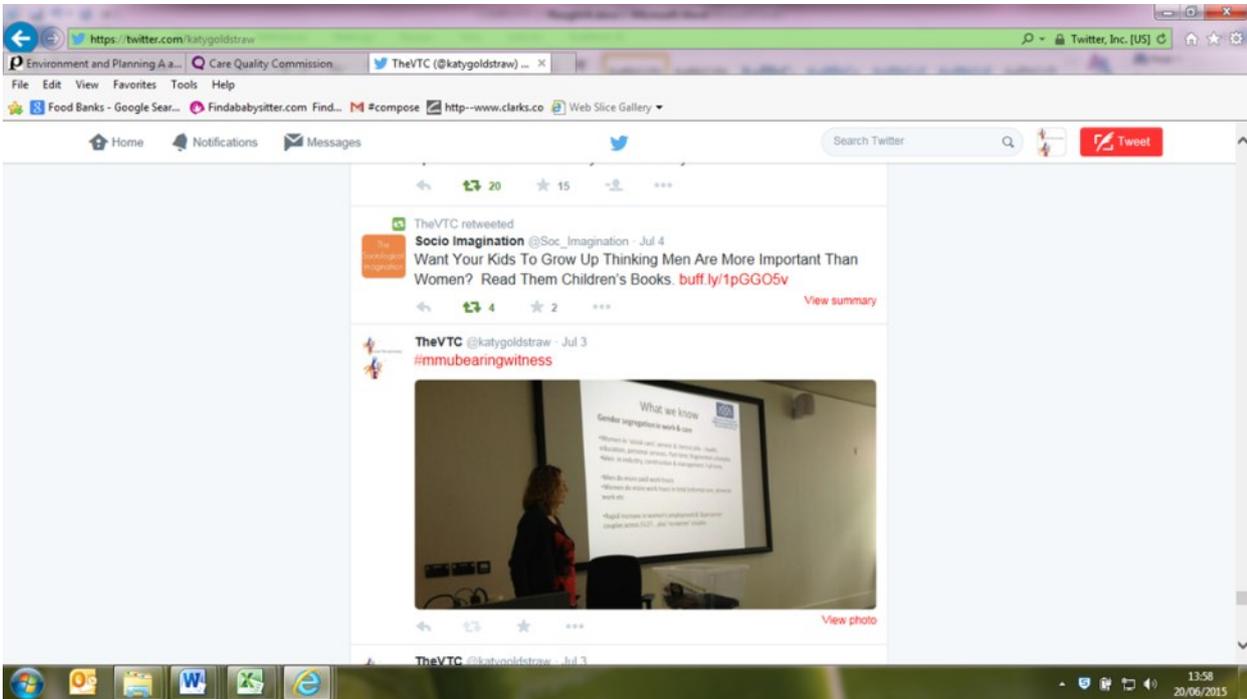
**12) Participant consent**

By signing below, you agree for your organisation / personally (delete as appropriate) to be in this research study. Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant; that your questions have been answered satisfactorily; and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Print Name:

Signature of Participant

## Appendix Four: Screenshot of Women, Work and the VCS Workshop



## Appendix Five: List of all Research Conducted During this Thesis

Each research interaction is coded. See brackets for codes. This enables the reader of my PhD to see where my evidence has come from. I then add the date and in the case of Semi-Structured interviews the initial of the interviewee; for example, from a participatory workshop (PO26.6.14) or a semi-structured interview (SSI16.4.14). This system maintains confidentiality as all names have been changed to pseudonyms but maintains clarity of information for the reader.

### Participatory Workshops (PAR)

1. Workshop One (PAR26.2.14)
2. Workshop Two (PAR26.6.14)
3. Workshop Three (PAR22.7.14)
4. Workshop Four (PAR 9.7.15)

### Participant Observations Greater Manchester (PO)

1. Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation (PO26.3.14)
2. Adult Social Care Group at Infrastructure Organisation (PO6.5.14)

### Semi-Structured Interviews Greater Manchester (SSI)

1. Infrastructure Organisation. Worker (F) (SSI6.5.14)
2. Advice Adult Social Care Charity. Worker (F) (SSI6.5.14)
3. Equalities Adult Social Care Charity. Worker (F) (SSI12.5.14)
4. Infrastructure Organisation. Worker (M) (SSI20.5.14)
5. Homelessness Charity. Worker (F) (SSI16.12.14)

### CareGM Participant Observations (PO)

1. PO19.3.14
2. PO16.4.14
3. PO14.5.14
4. PO18.6.14
5. PO23.7.14
6. PO29.7.14
7. PO17.9.14
8. PO29.10.14
9. PO13.11.14
10. PO26.11.14

### Semi-Structured Interviews CareGM (SSI)

1. 16.4.14 Worker (F) (SSI16.4.14)
2. 16.4.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI16.4.14)
3. 14.5.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI14.5.14)
4. 14.5.14 Worker (F) (SSI14.5.14)
5. 18.6.14 Worker (F) (SSI18.6.14)
6. 18.6.14 Trustee (F) (SSI18.6.14)
7. 23.7.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI23.7.14)
8. 23.7.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI23.7.14)
9. 7.7.14 (Telephone Interview) Volunteer (M) (SSI7.7.14)
10. 17.9.14 Worker (M) (SSI17.9.14)
11. 17.9.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI17.9.14)

12.26.11.14 Volunteer (M) (SSI26.11.14)

13.26.11.14 Worker (M) (SSI26.11.14)

14.26.11.14 Worker (M) (SSI26.11.14)

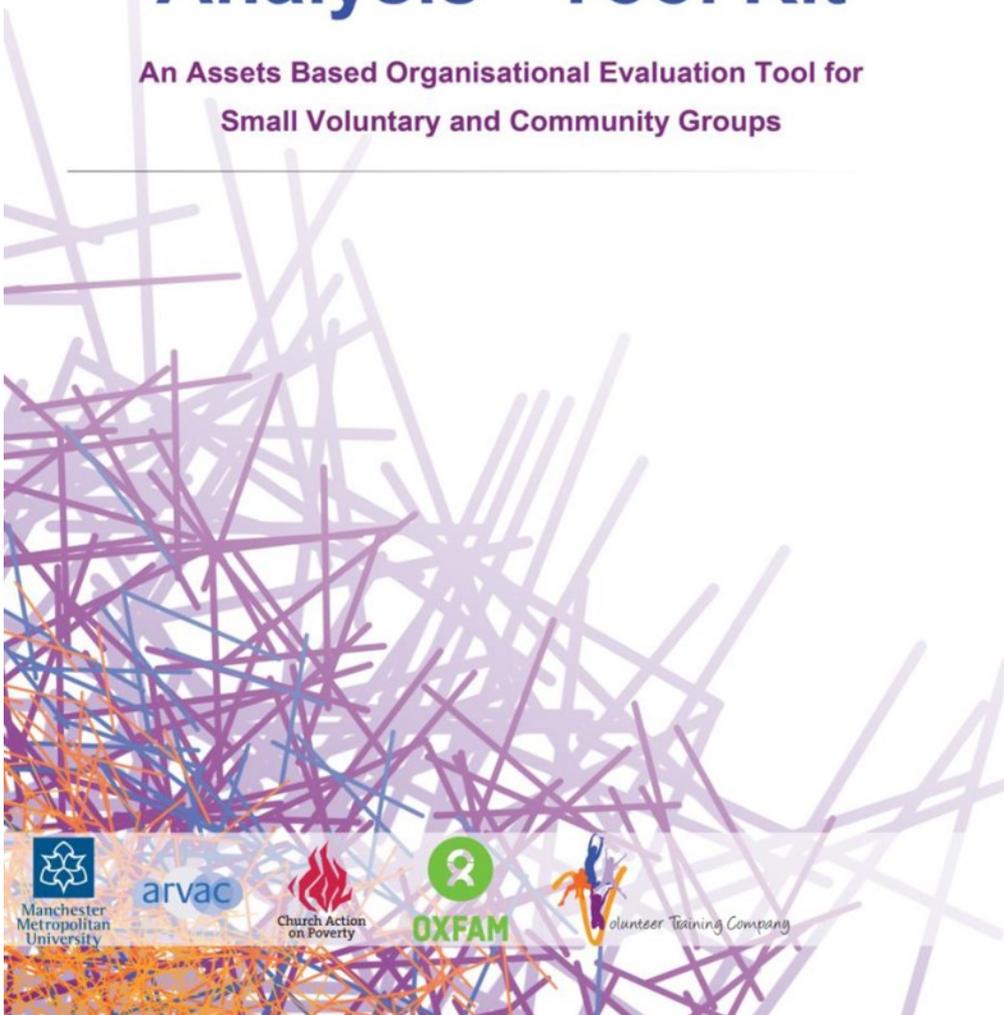
## Appendix Six: Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis Toolkit

Building VCS Strengths : Enabling VCS Success

# Sustainable Livelihoods

## Analysis - Tool Kit

An Assets Based Organisational Evaluation Tool for  
Small Voluntary and Community Groups



For a full copy of this toolkit please visit [www.arvac.org.uk](http://www.arvac.org.uk)

## **Appendix Seven. : Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis of CareGM**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This appendix section is my adaptation of SLA and as such meets my research objective five. The appendix separates the analysis of the organisation into each of the five SLA capitals: social, human, public, physical and financial. The concept of SLA is briefly discussed from a VCS organisational perspective. Chapter four, my methodology chapter, considers definitions, processes and critiques of SLA. This appendix focusses on my research findings from my ethnographic research with CareGM and my third participatory workshop with its staff, volunteers and trustees.

## 7.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations

Livelihoods have traditionally been used within a household context to assess vulnerabilities and assets in response to challenge. I assert that livelihoods analysis can be adapted for use at organisational level in the case of VCS organisations. Scoones (1998) suggests that SLA can be applied at a range of different scales with sustainable livelihood outcomes assessed at different levels. I believe that the distinctive (Macmillan 2013) networked, often familial, feel to the VCS enables SLA analysis to be applied to VCS organisations. A livelihood can be defined as comprising 'the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living' (Rennie and Singh 1996:15). For a livelihood to be sustainable it must be able to generate and maintain a way of living: '... it must be able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks' (Rennie and Singh 1996:15). A sustainable livelihoods approach is a grassroots approach focussing on people's everyday experiences and using information gathered at grassroots level to build up a picture of their livelihood strategies.

The sustainable livelihoods approach divides assets into five categories: human, social, public physical and financial. Human assets are the human skills, knowledge, levels of educational attainment and capacity to work. Social assets are the social links and ties that integrate VCS groups into the community around them. Public assets are the relationships with public groups such as local authorities, police or NHS. Physical assets are the tools and equipment that people need to be productive and the buildings, space or digital infrastructure required for production. Financial assets are the organisational income, access to credit, grants or savings. I have included a diagram in section 7.1.2 in order to offer an illustration of the assets.

## 7.2.1 Diagram of Sustainable Livelihoods Assets



VCS organisations have developed a range of adaptive strategies over the last century to react and respond to changes in government policies. I am interested in how Coalition policy has affected VCS organisational strategy and its responses. Sustainable livelihoods are a useful unit of analysis as they take a more holistic approach to adaptive strategies. VCS organisations have always had high social capital, for example, but have traditionally been low on financial capital. I now examine CareGM from the perspective of each SLA capital.

## 7.3 Social Capital

Social assets are the social contracts that can be drawn on in a crisis: the organisations, partners and informal community groups. The PAR livelihoods workshop revealed that CareGM had some really positive social capital (PAR22.7.14<sup>108</sup>). The list of social links and ties produced by participants was by far the longest of the five capitals that they were asked to contribute to. CareGM had links and social ties with organisations such as business, banks, local authority run organisations and other VCS organisations. Participants of the SLA workshop (PAR22.7.14) listed forty-five organisations in just a few minutes that CareGM maintained social links with. These social links and ties had great value for the organisation, sometimes in the form of reciprocal arrangements and at other times in terms of donations of cash or in kind. Other relationships that the organisation had were with long-term volunteer brokerage organisations. Social links and ties within the organisation provided support and pastoral care for volunteers, trustees and staff, as well as for clients. Friends of staff, volunteers and trustees were also cited as providing pastoral support that enabled staff and volunteers to care for a vulnerable and challenging client group.

### 7.3.1 Shared Work

The building of social capital and ties was further supported by everyone sharing chores; these shared work tasks involved a variety of cleaning duties. After the day centre shut at 2pm all staff – partnership project, church, paid workers, trustees and volunteers – participated in the clean-up. As a researcher, I took part in the cleaning of the chairs, tables and floors, often sweeping up and disinfecting tables before the debrief meeting started. This shared work, the shared cleaning duty, broke down barriers and built shared social capital among workers, paid and

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<sup>108</sup> See Appendix Five for an explanation of these references. Each refers to Participatory Observation (PO), Participatory Workshop (PAR) or semi-structured Interview (SSI) and the date that it occurred.

unpaid (Rodger 2012). Here CareGM staff and volunteers create spaces of care through the practice of care, embodied through shared completion of chores (Conradson 2003, Johnsen et al. 2005a, 2005b).

### **7.3.2 Informal Social Networks**

An informal partnership, a social link that existed with a local church, is a linkage of social ties rather than a more formal linking of VCS organisations. This was an under-the-radar (McCabe 2010) partnership. I was informed (PO14.5.14) that I would not find it in an inventory or online. McCabe (2010) discusses under-the-radar VCS groups referring to micro groups that operate without funding streams or formalised governance yet none the less make up four-fifths of Greater Manchester's VCS (Dayson et al. 2013) proportion of VCS groups. This under-the-radar community organisation was more under the radar than those McCabe (2010) discusses. It was just the church opposite, and you knocked on the door. It was run by a woman from the congregation and she operated what was in effect an under-the-radar homeless hostel. The hostel was not registered, and did not formally exist; people just went there if they had nothing else. It was not an organisation that had accounts or an operating system or a group of trustees that were small and community focussed (McCabe 2010). It was simply an altruistic woman, with a key to the church. The woman had a sign-in book and people slept on the church hall floor on mattresses. CareGM signposted clients to the church if the night shelter in their building was full. CareGM also shared donated goods with the church on an informal basis, if they had too much fresh food, for example, or a surplus of blankets. This sharing was based on mutual care and respect, and on social ties rather than organisational formalities.

To summarise, CareGM had high levels of social capital both within the organisation and within the community. I now consider CareGM's organisational human capital. Social and Human capital for CareGM often link (Coleman 1988) as the next section evidences.

## 7.4 Human Capital

Human assets are the skills, education, knowledge and ability to engage in employment. Human capital was very much valued by CareGM. Both staff and volunteers were very much valued by the trustees: “staff are our strongest capital ... the volunteers and staff are brilliant with the clients” (SSI18.6.14). Trustees spoke of the very strong human capital within CareGM. Staff at CareGM were described by a partner organisation as “an impressive team ... a cohesive unit” (SSI26.11.14). Trustees stepped in to cover staff holidays. When staff or volunteers were asked they worked an extra session, and volunteers were happy to cover shifts if they needed to. Gail, a trustee, stated how volunteers call in if they cannot make a session. Volunteer retention was high, with many volunteers having been with CareGM for the full seven years of its organisational existence (SSI18.6.14).

Human capital was felt to be the major asset of the organisation that participated in the SLA pilot. The human kindness within the centre was felt by all participants to be the driving force of the organisation. The approach of volunteers, trustees and staff was considered to be central to the organisation. The non-judgemental, empathetic dedication of all those who volunteered and worked within the centre was shared as the most important thing about the centre: its heart and soul. The group dynamic between staff, trustees and volunteers was very much valued. People cared for each other, respected each other and supported each other. The variety of personalities within the organisation team was felt to be beneficial as it gave them the skills to focus on working with the variety of clients that the centre welcomed. Team work, compassion, good humour and listening ears were all shared as important human capital. Other important values were shared; social justice, advocacy and campaigning were all considered valuable aspects of the organisation’s human capital.

### 7.4.1 Training and Education

CareGM and Advice Clinic frequently worked in partnership to access and deliver training to staff, volunteers and trustees. Universal Credit<sup>109</sup> was rolled out in the area whilst I was carrying out my research. CareGM support worker Hussein and Advice Clinic volunteer Dom often attended training together around welfare reform and benefit sanctions. This enabled them to build their knowledge of changing welfare legislation and offered an opportunity to plan a proactive response. Advice Clinic was also rolling out training in various organisations to update them on benefits changes.

Dom, devised budgeting training for clients in preparation for Universal Credit. Universal Credit makes monthly benefits payments rather than weekly, and it also paid housing benefit into the claimant's account (rather than, as with previous benefits, the property owner's account). It was felt that empowering clients to budget monthly might require some training. CareGM was speaking to clients (PO16.4.14) to understand what they found useful rather than offer training that was patronising. The training offered by Advice Clinic was to include pressure points (Christmas and start of school year) as well as changing patterns of behaviours.

### 7.4.2 Knowledge and Signposting

CareGM, during my research period, was trying to develop its approach and change its response to client crisis. It was aiming to develop as a support team (PO14.5.14). In that capacity it aimed to present the truth, and to do it with compassion but to be solution focussed with the client. The CareGM support team had found that excessive sympathy was not productive; truth and compassion were proving a better response. It was felt that there was a need for a more intellectual approach to client crisis. This was seen as part of learning that this

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<sup>109</sup> **Universal Credit.** This is a new benefit that was rolled out across Greater Manchester during my research period. It offers one monthly payment. It replaced Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

is our reality. CareGM need to learn to deal with it and build this response into the support team. However, CareGM found this difficult, and it was discussed in their May 2014 debrief meeting how difficult this was as support staff naturally have an emotional response, because they care deeply about clients.

In my first visit to CareGM (PO19.3.14), before the debrief meeting that I was due to attend and observe everyone gathered outside the room where the meeting was to be held. However, the meeting was delayed by an emergency client that the advice volunteer, Dom, took on. He talked her through her rights and responsibilities compassionately. He offered her some realistic solutions and some longer-term advice. She felt reassured and happy that her usual debt advice worker (who was on leave) would follow up with her. This supportive and caring approach to support and advice work was a constant throughout my research period.

### **7.4.3 Volunteers and Volunteer Management**

CareGM very much valued volunteers: “We are truly blessed, they are fantastic” (SSI18.6.14). Volunteers I interviewed spoke of how much they valued their volunteering role and how they felt supported and valued as volunteers by CareGM (SSI16.4.14, SSI14.5.15). Volunteers at CareGM came from a diversity of backgrounds. About ten per cent of volunteers had been homeless themselves (SSI18.6.14). CareGM was not short of volunteers, and one volunteer talked of missing out on being able to volunteer the previous Christmas as there was a quick sign up for Christmas volunteering. Indeed Sarah, in the admin office, confirmed that they were never short of volunteers: “We have never had a problem recruiting volunteers [there has been ] consistent recruitment” (SSI14.5.14). One volunteer described the high quality training that he had received in his induction to volunteering with CareGM. Induction training had included the structure of the organisation and was thorough and professional: “I got an induction pack and everything, it covered a lot – roles and things, what volunteering involved and responsibilities. It gave a bigger idea of what it is” (SSI14.5.15).

During my research period volunteers were split into teams. When CareGM first began, volunteers were all managed by a support worker, Hope. There were thirty people (PO14.5.14) on the volunteer team and previously everyone had just mucked in. As the volunteer team expanded, Hope found this difficult as everyone came to her at the start of a shift and she then had to direct their tasks. In response to this Hope separated volunteers into teams, and volunteers then had a team leader: support team, floor manager for day-to-day tasks, kitchen team and office team. Volunteers then worked directly with their team leader. The idea seemed to make sense to all staff and volunteers. However, when I asked volunteers which team they were in some volunteers stated that they were multi-team based. One volunteer, Justin, was multi-team based and seemed to be unclear as to his volunteer role.

New volunteers were supported as part of their training. Justin was in the process of training as a support worker volunteer, and in June (PO18.6.14) led a support session with a client. For this support session, although it was led by Justin, Tammy supported him in its delivery. The purpose of the support session was to refer a street homeless man for a bed in the night shelter. Later, once the referral had been made, Justin expressed the difficulty and emotional impact upon him as a volunteer of having to ask a client during the referral process if they felt suicidal. In terms of volunteer management a more formal, supervision-style debrief may have been appropriate after his first support worker referral. Instead, Tammy and Justin came straight from the referral into the debrief meeting which meant little or no emotional processing time for Justin.

Two trustees were very involved with the kitchen during my research period. It became clear at a management committee meeting in July 2014 (PO29.7.14) that the kitchen had had an unsuccessful health and safety assessment from the local authority. Two trustees, Keith and Gail, stepped in to turn the kitchen around. They worked alongside the volunteers to introduce hygiene practices and initiate food preparation training for volunteers. Keith and Gail

restructured the kitchen volunteering and kitchen preparation practices in readiness for a new local authority assessment. This took place later in my research period, and CareGM gained a level five for food hygiene, which is the highest level awarded by the local authority (PO29.10.14). During my research period, Luke, a kitchen volunteer, was recruited into the role of paid kitchen supervisor. Throughout my research period, committed and supportive volunteers were trained, developed and very often employed within CareGM.

Changes in welfare reform under the Universal Credit arrangements potentially stood to affect volunteering and volunteers at CareGM. In the past, volunteering had allowed a fifty per cent reduction in the number of hours that a claimant had to seek work if they were on Jobseekers Allowance<sup>110</sup>. The focus of current welfare reform (PO18.6.14) seems to be on the number of hours spent seeking work. There is no limit to the number of hours that can be spent volunteering, but if a claimant volunteers for more than six months and there is no progression or promotion then Jobcentre Plus starts to question the value of the volunteering. CareGM, during their debrief meeting in June (PO18.6.14), discussed whether this threatened their volunteering policy. CareGM expressed that what was special about its volunteers was their care, commitment and passion. Those attending this debrief meeting feared that losing this passion would affect the whole focus and cohesion of the staff and volunteer team. Jobcentre Plus had asked Hope if she wanted job centre volunteers. Hope was worried (PO18.6.14) that this would affect the volunteer team, as if people joined CareGM who did not have the same values it could destabilise the existing volunteers.

One volunteer suggested that CareGM worked with Jobcentre Plus to develop a new volunteer programme. Hussein managed his volunteering in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus and in order that his volunteering meet Jobcentre Plus requirements, yet at the same time he offered a useful commitment to CareGM. Hussein suggested that CareGM develop a structured volunteer

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<sup>110</sup> **Jobseekers Allowance** This is a welfare benefit for the unemployed. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/jobseekers-allowance>

programme to reflect the changes in the nature of volunteering. This programme would have a clear view of what volunteering could offer a Jobcentre Plus volunteer and what skills and benefits the volunteer could gain. Hope was worried by this suggestion and reluctant to develop such a programme as she wanted the volunteering to be a partnership, with the commitment led by the volunteers, and the volunteering, if people took it on, to be about individual responsibility. The focus of the team, the care and support of volunteers, staff and clients, was a really positive contribution to CareGM's human capital.

#### **7.4.4 Volunteer Skills**

Different volunteers brought different skills and knowledge to the centre. Volunteers led the art group at the centre. Although I did not meet her during my research, Anita was described (PO29.10.14) as having the right attitude and experience regarding arts and crafts, but was interested in the people that she worked with too. Clients were described as having to be "wrestled in" (PO29.10.14), then once people had become involved they wanted to keep going back. Clients could work on the same thing each week. A health and social care student on placement who happened to also have done an art foundation year was supporting them. The art groups were very much valued by clients and by staff, volunteers and trustees. Trustees reminded the group of the importance of arts in therapy and recovery at their meeting in October (PO29.10.14).

Another volunteer, Bobby, offered literacy support. This was very much appreciated by clients as well as by CareGM. The work conducted by Bobby was valued but she was unwell, so was often unable to attend. There was a difficulty therefore in continuity of literacy support. There was a wish by CareGM trustees to expand the literacy support work, but there was a volunteer capacity issue given Bobby's illness (PO29.10.14).

One volunteer, Hussein, offered support work. On my first visit (PO19.3.14). I met Hussein in the café section of the day centre. He ate in the same space as the service users, using the same cups and plates. He was a full-time volunteer at the time, although later during my research he was offered a paid position. He volunteered and later worked as a support worker, and his particular interest was in benefit changes and sanctions. He and Dom, from Advice Clinic, worked regularly together to support clients facing benefit challenges. Hussein had a great deal of emotional intelligence and was able to link with the community locally as he lived in the area. He described how people would approach him for advice whilst he was in the shopping precinct: “Oh [Hussein], I’ve been sanctioned” (SSI16.4.14) or that people would point him out in the precinct: “Oh, he’ll know” (SSI16.4.14). Hussein’s local links and relationship with the community built CareGM’s community links and further established its reputation as a community resource.

A further volunteer, Alan, was a university student and had begun working with CareGM on a student placement via Manchester Metropolitan University’s Social Work and Social Care Department. He was taught by one of my supervisors, Jenny Fisher. He continued to volunteer with CareGM after his placement was completed and was building experience before he commenced a Master’s degree in social work in September 2014. Alan was welcomed into the debrief meeting in July (PO23.7.14) so that he could gain a wider picture of welfare reform and client support in preparation for his Master’s degree. Alan felt that his skills were used at CareGM; he had volunteered elsewhere but he had not been used as effectively in his other volunteer role. CareGM had taught him how to support service users and to complete benefit and support forms (SSI23.7.14) and it had accessed a range of training with partner organisations. When I interviewed him in July, Alan was looking forward to attending training on alcohol and drugs, safeguarding service users and EU immigration via links that CareGM had with another larger homeless organisation. The larger homelessness organisation had free

training places that it had opened up to CareGM volunteers. CareGM, through its support of Alan, played a positive role as a learning mentor within the wider Greater Manchester community.

One volunteer, Justin, had in-depth disability rights knowledge and was able to signpost support workers at CareGM to a Disability Rights Handbook that was regularly updated with legislation changes. He also was a qualified alternative therapist, and still owned much of the equipment needed for alternative therapy, including a massage bench. Justin had qualifications in Indian head massage and reflexology. Here CareGM could have supported Justin to offer alternative therapy services for clients.

Luke was a kitchen volunteer and then a paid cook at CareGM. He offered a lot to the kitchen and was clearly passionate about the project and about growing, preparing and cooking food. He had his own allotment and volunteered in the CareGM garden. In a conversation that he had with me in June (PO18.6.14), he revealed he was a qualified hairdresser. Here CareGM could have supported Luke to offer hairdressing to CareGM clients.

Given the examples above – Justin a qualified alternative therapist, Luke a qualified hairdresser – it seems that there were opportunities that were being missed in terms of volunteer skills that could be utilised. It may have been that the volunteers did not want to offer these skills to CareGM but I got the impression that the skills were not always known about by centre management. Perhaps if the volunteers were asked, then hairdressing and therapy services could be developed.

#### **7.4.5 Overseas Volunteers**

CareGM worked with two charities that provided volunteers, Jesuit Volunteer Scheme (JVS) and the Vincentian Volunteers. These volunteers came from overseas; in the case of CareGM, they regularly received volunteers from Eastern Europe and South East Asia. The volunteers

received basic food and accommodation in return for volunteering full time. CareGM very much valued these volunteers, and their full-time contribution and youthful enthusiasm added vibrancy to the centre. Many clients had not travelled outside of the north west of England so meeting two volunteers from overseas was an opportunity.

On my first visit to the centre (PO19.3.14) I was introduced to John, a JVS volunteer from Hungary. He was male, white and in his twenties, and volunteered at CareGM and another larger homelessness charity. The scheme that he volunteered with provided accommodation and coordinated his volunteer placements. John had volunteered for just under a year, and he shared that he very much enjoyed volunteering at CareGM. In comparison with the larger homelessness charity, John preferred volunteering at CareGM as it had a familial feel. The JVS programme that John volunteered with was experiencing funding difficulties itself and John was in its last year of international volunteering. The Jesuits could no longer afford to run the volunteer programme.

#### **7.4.6 Trustees**

The trustees at CareGM are volunteers, I have distinguished them from other volunteers, however, as their role within CareGM is quite different. Two trustees, Gail and Keith, volunteered in the kitchen as well as taking on a leadership role. Other trustees simply took on leadership positions. One trustee, it emerged, had newly joined the board and as the board met elsewhere had not yet visited CareGM (PAR 22.7.14).

The board had made a good effort to ensure that all skills were covered within the trustee mix. Trustees had worked hard over the previous two and a half years to ensure that the board was skills-based (SSI18.6.14). Board members were made up of a psychoanalyst, an accountant, a civil engineer, a retired social worker, a solicitor, a retired teacher and a school governor. There

were many married couples involved in CareGM, LEM and the night shelter, from trustees to paid staff and volunteers within the building partnership project run by LEM.

Meetings when trustees were present had a very different feel. Staff debriefing sessions were very informal and non-critical. Staff were compassionate with each other and took time to offer each other emotional support. Management group meetings and trustee meetings were different. It became apparent during a management committee meeting (PO29.7.14) and a trustee meeting (PO9.10.14) that not all trustees had read the papers or had prepared for the meeting. In the management group meeting that I attended in July (PO29.7.14), after Norman, the pastor, had been assaulted, it was implied by some trustees that the police should not have been called and that Norman himself should have diffused the situation. I discuss the assault in more detail within chapter eight.

#### **7.4.7 Trustee-Staff Communication**

After the financial crisis in 2007, when CareGM nearly closed down, the manager post was removed and staff were directly managed by trustees. One trustee, Gail, stated that she used to run formal one-to-one supervision sessions with staff but found that it was easier just to have an open-door approach for staff to come to her if they needed support (SSI18.6.14). However, conversations with staff revealed that not all staff felt that this 'open-door' approach to line management was adequate (SSI19.9.14). Paul described how staff made day-to-day decisions, and that staff attended the management committee once a month. However, he also reported that he often submitted material to the management committee that was not responded to. Paul stated that he was happy to make the decisions but the decisions that he made involved risk. Paul did not think that trustees understood the responsibility that they were placing on staff. The responsibility for staff decisions lay with the trustees, yet Paul felt that trustees had not got a good understanding of how the centre operated (SSI19.9.14).

There were some communication challenges between trustees and staff and volunteers. Communication by CareGM staff was not always clearly understood by trustees. The two trustees that volunteered in the kitchen, Gail and Keith, seemed to have a good grasp of both operational and strategic level environments within CareGM. Other trustees seemed to find it more challenging to grasp operational issues. I delivered an SLA Workshop in July (PAR22.7.14), and when discussing this workshop at a management group meeting late in July (PO29.7.14) it seemed that trustees thought that they were receiving training on how to conduct SLA analysis rather than participating in an SLA workshop. There were some discrepancies in knowledge between the board and the staff and volunteers. During the Livelihoods PAR workshop (PAR22.7.14), one trustee questioned if there had been an increase in poverty and client support needs as a result of welfare reform. To staff working within CareGM there was no doubt that welfare reform had increased poverty (PAR22.7.15, Mack and Lansley 2015). They were quite shocked at the lack of understanding from one of their trustees.

Staff-trustee relationships were improved by the development of a more comprehensive staff team, and staff working relationships became more supportive as the team increased. Two posts were being advertised when I interviewed Paul in September 2014 which would have increased the staff team to nine. The 2007 financial difficulties had had a real impact on CareGM, with redundancies and a reduction in operating hours. CareGM was now able to expand, and to be more professional. Staff had job descriptions and clear roles within the organisation.

The great value within CareGM of the dedicated and committed staff, volunteers and trustees was also considered a vulnerability. It was recognised that working with a vulnerable and often challenging client group was a stressful work environment. Supporting those that worked within the centre was important, as stress and illness impacted on the organisation's capabilities.

Building on staff skills and developing staff were felt to be positive responses to these vulnerabilities.

Appointing the right staff, trustees and volunteers, those that understood the care and support of the organisation, was important. Recent changes to welfare reform may result in new volunteers with different motivations, but it was felt that this would not be positive. Volunteers and new staff and trustees needed to be recruited within the ethos of care, support and respect that existed within the organisation. Vulnerabilities were also felt around personal and organisational finances – the impact of these on the human capital of the organisation. Personal pressures, along with conditionality imposed by the DWP, may reduce people's time commitment, and sustaining a volunteer team in conditions of welfare austerity was a challenge.

In conclusion CareGM had excellent human capital with a good mix of highly skilled, dedicated and professional staff, volunteers and trustees. The skills of the volunteers could, however, have been developed further and utilised for the good of the project.

I now examine public capital.

## 7.5 Public Capital

Public assets are access to public services, other VCS infrastructure and regeneration groups. CareGM shared that they felt that they had good public capital as an organisation (PAR22.7.14). They had good relationships with the local council, social services and children and family services. Partnership working by the organisation across other organisations had had some success in certain areas in response to austerity and good partnerships had been formed with local businesses, charities and public sector organisations. Vulnerabilities to organisational public capital were felt around government policy decisions. Central government and local authority funding cuts and changes to welfare reform legislation had a significant impact on CareGM's clients and therefore a significant impact on the centre's workload. These changes were out of the hands of CareGM; however, they significantly impacted on the services it was able to provide and signpost clients to.

Partnership working was a key strategy at CareGM. CareGM had good links with public bodies. Welfare reform and supporting clients to navigate new and constantly changing welfare arrangements (PO19.3.14) took up a significant proportion of support worker time at CareGM. It worked with and signposted to many services in Greater Manchester. CareGM worked particularly closely with NHS organisations such as Safe Haven<sup>111</sup>, a GP service that accepts challenging service users, and mental health nursing teams (PO19.3.14).

### 7.5.1 NHS Partnerships

CareGM had a range of partnerships with NHS bodies. The primary partnership was with a GP practice on site funded by the local NHS trust. This GP service operated on the days that the centre was open and was staffed by a doctor's receptionist and a GP. Clients visited to receive

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<sup>111</sup> **Safe Haven.** A GP service within Greater Manchester that accepts onto its patient list people with challenging behaviour and homeless clients. <http://www.nhs.uk/Services/GP/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=38533>

prescriptions and long-term care as well as for treatment of wounds. Not only was the existence of the partnership with the GP practice valued but the specific staff were also very much valued by their colleagues at CareGM: “We had another GP receptionist before, but [Dan] is the best, he says it how it is, he lets the clients know – he doesn’t beat about the bush. He’s what we need. He is very good” (SSI14.5.14).

The GP service was managed and supported by the receptionist, Dan. Dan was very committed to his role and very keen to ensure that procedures were correct. He described how he had adapted common NHS prescription practice. Usually a client will get a re-prescription a few days early and be given the script to take to the pharmacy themselves. Given the vulnerable nature of the client group, Dan took the script to the surgery himself and ensured that the tablets were counted out to the day. This enabled him to know that the client got only the correct number of tablets for their condition and could not ‘lose’ the prescription en route to the pharmacy and get a second script, thereby doubling their tablets. Dan was fearful that if clients got double tablets they might sell them to other drug users. The partnership, although considered by both sides to be successful, was not safe from threat. There had been discussion by the NHS funder that it might move the service out of CareGM (SSI23.7.14).

Other NHS partnerships existed and NHS nurses and support workers frequently held appointments at CareGM with clients. A drugs worker was also based at CareGM. On my first visit (PO19.3.14) to the centre, I arrived at the same time as two mental health nurses. As we signed in these nurses explained that they were there to meet a client in the day centre. They found it easier to come to where the client was rather than expect the client, with a chaotic lifestyle due to drug and alcohol addiction, to attend appointments on an NHS site. Hope, the support worker, welcomed us all.

### 7.5.2 Advice Partnerships

Advice Clinic was brought in as a partner and it held an advice service in a spare office in CareGM each Wednesday. The advice service saw approximately twelve clients by appointment each Wednesday (PO19.3.14) and was starting to see trends around gaps in benefit. Partnership working with Advice Clinic was considered very positive. CareGM had devised a proactive system alongside Advice Clinic, where CareGM did some preparatory work with each client to get their benefit and other relevant information ready before their appointment with the volunteer, Dom. He then had all the correct paperwork that he needed to support a client and offer the best advice. This partnership working also significantly benefitted CareGM staff. It reduced the time that they spent on the telephone to government departments and took away the false hope of clients who believed that CareGM could sort out their problems immediately. It reduced staff time spent chasing government departments and the stress when they were unsuccessful, and empowered service users (PO19.3.14). The partnership project enabled CareGM to say, You are in control, you arrive for your appointment at the advice service on Wednesday, then you and Dom can work on solving the issue.

There were, however, challenges with the partnership. The volunteer at the advice service, Dom, was very committed to his role and he devoted a significant amount of his free time to CareGM. “We only pay [Advice Clinic] one day a week and we phone him most days” (Hope PO14.5.14). Advice Clinic is a national charity and CareGM paid the charity for their expertise to cover a volunteer adviser, Dom, one day a week. Dom seemed happy to volunteer the extra time, and CareGM was extremely grateful; however, it was recognised that boundaries needed to be created to protect both Advice Clinic as a charity and CareGM (PO14.5.14).

CareGM changed its procedure in entering into the partnership with Advice Clinic, but this had been done in a caring, pragmatic and honest way. CareGM staff can now tell clients, Well we cannot do anything about your benefits today, saying “Never mind the barricades come and

have a brew” (Hope PO19.3.14), and inviting clients to share a cup of tea and a meal whilst staff gather the paperwork required for the advice appointment on Wednesday.

The advice service had had a few issues with clients about attending appointments. One client who was described in the debrief meeting (PO16.4.14) as chaotic, unwell and very nice had had a negative Employment Support Allowance<sup>112</sup> decision. The advice service organised an appeal for him. He was supposed to come in for an advice service appointment on several occasions at 10am but often turned up at the end of the session at 1.45pm. Dom, the Advice Clinic volunteer, kept broadening the goal posts for him but when the date of the client’s appeal arrived, Dom was on holiday and his support worker Hussein was also off that day. The client did not turn up for his appeal. However, he appeared at another office of the same charity in Greater Manchester later the same day. There was genuine care for this individual but a questioning of where to draw the line when supporting people: “[client’s behaviour is] ridiculous, he’s gone too far. That is his pattern of behaviour” (Dom PO16.4.14). There was a discussion in the debrief meeting regarding how CareGM could manage the client in this situation. The discussion was inconclusive but reflective and engaged all staff opinions.

The empowerment of clients was a key mission of CareGM staff and their partners. CareGM staff felt that they needed to be able to say ‘Come on Wednesday’, and if the clients could not attend on Wednesday with all their paperwork then Advice Clinic was not able to offer support. It was important to CareGM the clients did attend with the paperwork essential for Advice Clinic to support them, as the interactions with partners were based on good will CareGM and Advice Clinic worked in partnership to address client-related issues. One client had accessed the advice service and Dom had commenced a medical appeal of a welfare decision and, in the short term, had arranged some funds for him. The client, having received the short-term funds,

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<sup>112</sup> **Employment Support Allowance.** A welfare benefit for those not currently able seek employment due to illness or disability  
<https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance>

had not returned to the advice service for his appointment to address the longer-term issue of his medical appeal. CareGM and Advice Clinic discussed how they could better support the client, and other clients. They came up with an advice diary so that CareGM could book clients in for advice appointments as they saw the clients more regularly and could remind them of the importance of longer-term funding for welfare decisions.

During my research period, the effect of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms, including changes to the administration of housing funding, significantly affected Advice Clinic. As my research period progressed the Advice Clinic volunteer, Dom, expressed increasing concerns regarding the barriers he faced in supporting clients and the deliberate obfuscation by local authority staff about housing legislation. The result was that clients were increasingly street homeless, without housing decisions by the local authority.

### **7.5.3 Police Partnerships**

CareGM generally had a tense relationship with the police<sup>113</sup>. As a building partnership, LEM, the night shelter and CareGM wished to improve their working relationship with the police; however, their organisational ethics sometimes clashed. LEM, the night shelter and CareGM focussed on care and support of clients, recognising that often clients engaged in criminal behaviour in order to survive or to support an addiction. The police focussed on arresting individuals engaged in criminal behaviour. Both police and the centre were keen to improve strategic working. Paul, CareGM floor manager, and Tom, LEM director, attended a meeting in July (PO29.7.14) to examine joint strategic working with the local police. The police wanted the centre to share information, for example on which clients were banned from the centre, and for centre staff to provide evidence to police to support anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) convictions. This was a controversial area for the centre as it affected their relationship with the

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<sup>113</sup> This tense relationship referred in some sense to the interactions between specific Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers and their attitude to homeless people. In a broader sense the tense relationship was a reflection of the conflicting missions of the two organisations; supporting people with chaotic, often substance misusing behaviours conflicts sometimes with the Police's mission to arrest offenders.

police – should they say no to the request or should they say yes, which would then affect their ethos and supportive, non-judgemental relationship with clients. In July (PO29.7.14) a subcommittee was formed by the centre to seek staff and volunteer input in order to make a decision. I am not aware of what decisions were formally made regarding this partnership with the police; however, informal discussions with staff (PO29.7.14) suggested that they would not be sharing information about clients for fear of harming the supportive and protective role that they held in clients' lives.

#### **7.5.4 Other Partnerships**

Partnership working was built up with other homelessness organisations and food banks<sup>114</sup> as the realities of Universal Credit emerged. Changes in welfare and reductions in local authority funding led to situations from May 2014 onwards where hardship payments for those who had had benefits sanctioned did not exist in some areas of Greater Manchester (PO14.5.14). CareGM, alongside sharing resources with less formal organisations, also shared food from their donated stock with other large homelessness organisations: “[Homeless VCS organisation] are running out of food. [CareGM] have given them some of our food to keep them going” (Hope 14.5.14). It was a relatively regular occurrence for CareGM to share its donations with other local projects.

A partnership project was developed with another department of Advice Clinic, although this partnership was not attracting the same amount of client interest. At their May 2014 meeting CareGM was concerned that the volunteer that was leading the partnership would withdraw from their centre as she was not getting enough client interest. The partnership project centred on helping people to get white goods such as fridges and freezers, and flooring. The volunteer

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<sup>114</sup> **Food Banks.** These are projects that distribute food to those who are in need. The Trussell Trust coordinates many food bank projects nationally. There is also a wide variety of informal food bank projects running within Greater Manchester. <http://www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-projects>

in question was based within Advice Clinic but had links with British Gas<sup>115</sup>. She visited CareGM monthly and CareGM had tried various ways to get clients interested in seeing her. She could have been very useful for clients in accommodation, in terms of accessing free white goods and supporting clients to get reduced gas bills and free carpets. In the May meeting CareGM was concerned that due to client disinterest the volunteer might stop coming. It planned to try a poster campaign and leaflets and to talk to clients to persuade them to engage with the volunteer (PO14.5.14). By June (PO18.6.14) CareGM had encouraged three clients to work with the partnership volunteer and she had supported them to access white goods.

CareGM attended various partnership groups, often around welfare reform. These partnership meetings were attended by local housing trusts, private sector property owners and the VCS. CareGM was engaging with local partners through information and advice meetings within the area, with attendance focussed on information gathering for the benefit of clients. The partnerships that CareGM had gradually emerged as my research continued. In June I was offered some fresh pineapple by trustee and kitchen volunteer Keith. During the course of conversation it emerged that the fruit was from FareShare<sup>116</sup>, a scheme that CareGM paid into at the rate of £25 per week, and then they were gifted food from the supermarkets in the area. The FareShare project gathers the food and distributes it among various charities. Keith felt that they received at least a hundred pounds' worth of food per week from the project so from his point of view it was well worth their £25. The kitchen had received peaches, pears and pineapple on that particular day (PO18.6.14); it was all very ripe and bruises needed to be cut out but CareGM volunteers had prepared a fruit salad for service users with it. Keith expressed the value of being able to offer fresh fruit to a client group that rarely eats fresh food. Other partnerships had been built up with companies. Nando's, a fried chicken restaurant, donated

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<sup>115</sup> **British Gas.** British Gas Energy Trust supports those in need to access white goods <http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/>

<sup>116</sup> **FareShare.** A charity that distributes unused food within the sell by date from businesses to charities. <http://www.fareshare.org.uk/>

fast frozen chicken weekly to CareGM<sup>117</sup>. This was collected by Keith, and then made into various chicken dishes by the kitchen throughout the week.

Additional partnership working was on a much more ad hoc basis. Links had been formed with large organisations. Barclays Bank, for example, as part of their corporate volunteering tidied and planted up a small flowerbed by the entrance to the building and the main garden (PO14.5.14). However, this was not maintained by CareGM, and by July the flowerbed was full of weeds and overgrown again.

### **7.5.5 Food Parcels**

CareGM gave out food parcels from a variety of sources, such as their Advice Clinic partner. This partner had a payroll scheme whereby staff donated money from their monthly wages, and this money was used to buy food and create food parcels which were distributed within Greater Manchester. In June (PO18.6.14) CareGM gave out eighteen food parcels that had been provided by Advice Clinic. The food bank run by the Trussell Trust had a policy for clients of three consecutive visits only (Cooper et al. 2014, Cooper and Dumbleton 2013), and identification was required to access the food bank. CareGM shared that this had led to some clients walking three miles to a food bank as they had no money for a bus, only to be sent home to get identification (PO19.3.14). CareGM held vouchers for the food bank and could refer clients to it. However, it was a tight process as to who was allowed to refer to them, the food bank was quite restrictive as to which organisations it gave vouchers to, and how many vouchers it gave to each organisation. The food bank would deliver to the door if a person was not able to leave the house, for example if the person was older or disabled.

CareGM wanted to be proactive about the difficulties their clients were facing in accessing food and created a template letter for staff at CareGM to complete when referring clients to the food

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<sup>117</sup> **Nando's**. Nando's are a chicken restaurant; they have a corporate social responsibility policy entitled 'there's no chucking our chicken.' <http://www.nandos.co.uk/blog/>

bank. When the food bank staff refused to give out food parcels, the clients asked the staff to tick standard boxes to explain why they had refused. CareGM was using this to gather evidence as to why people were refused food parcels.

In conclusion CareGM had very good public capital with most organisations, the only notable exception being the police. Good partnership working was a key asset for CareGM.

I now examine physical capital.

## 7.6 Physical Capital

Physical assets are the tools and equipment that people need to be productive, alongside the basic infrastructure needed to function, for example decent premises and access to the internet. The PAR workshop (PAR22.7.14) revealed that CareGM considered the use of the organisational building to be a major asset. CareGM is the only project like it locally and this was very much valued. Lists of physical assets were discussed during the pilot workshop, in terms of the benefits to service users. These physical assets were felt to be of real benefit to the services that the centre could provide. Musical equipment was seen as a valuable addition to the centre. Free car parking at the centre was also of value to trustees, employees and volunteers. Partnership services that operated alongside CareGM were also very much valued as physical capital assets, as the medical and advice services were very much central to the support that CareGM offered and the introduction of a dentist service was seen as a valuable addition to services. The ability to refer to other partners that also used space within CareGM was seen as being of great value to clients and staff.

However, physical capital was a difficult area for participants of the workshop to negotiate. There was a strong feeling of gratitude for the use of the building and the partnership with the building's owners was valued. It was also recognised that the building in which the CareGM project was based needed major renovation. Concerns were shared over whether the building was fit for purpose. Pressures were felt on financial and physical capitals regarding maintenance of the building. Lack of space affected the development of the organisation, and there were fears that the service might outgrow the building. There was also a concern regarding regeneration projects in the area. Participants of the workshop questioned if the vulnerable clients that they worked with would be wanted once the regeneration was complete

### 7.6.1 Buildings

The building at CareGM was repaired and other maintenance work undertaken during the time of my research project. The centre shut down in August for three weeks during which significant maintenance and redecorating work was undertaken. However, prior to this redecoration and repair the building was physically in quite a poor state. After several periods of heavy rain that had caused flooding throughout the country, the CareGM building was quite damaged. In the staff-only office area, several fans were running during my May visit (PO14.5.14) to dry out the staff room. The repairs to the damage caused by the flooding put a strain on the building's owner, LEM. It was suggested that LEM could not afford to repair the flood damage immediately (SSI14.5.14). In the office used by Advice Clinic I was warned not to sit in the corner. Part of the room was divided off and a big sign stated that the ceiling was likely to collapse. Water was dripping through the ceiling, causing a big stain, and the ceiling was very warped. By July, however (PO23.7.14), the hole in the ceiling had been repaired and bare plasterwork was drying. Due to the organisational history when CareGM was asked to leave its previous building, the cathedral, there was then a sense of gratitude that they had found a new organisational home. CareGM felt that it should not complain about the damp, the leaking roof or the lack of space. There were some tensions between CareGM and LEM over the speed of building repairs (SSI18.6.14). LEM had spoken to their insurers who informed LEM that the roof was a maintenance issue and not covered by insurance. LEM had had a quote of over £19,000 to repair the roof and was considering how it might locate these funds.

The organisational space was not ideal. LEM owned the building, and the night shelter and CareGM operated within the same space. The building was originally a purpose-built youth club (PO23.7.14), and as such was not really fit for purpose as a hostel or day centre. The buildings had not been maintained over the years so there were many maintenance issues (SSI23.7.14).

The use of organisational space was constantly being reviewed. The shower space within the centre was reviewed in July (PO29.7.14) and the creation of a new shower system was initiated. Previously clients had had to wait until 8am to buy fresh underwear from the shop before they could queue for a shower. Paul, the floor manager, identified this as an issue that affected client dignity. He reorganised the system so that underwear was in the showers alongside shower gel, and clients could shower when they left the night shelter. Paul also proposed other shower developments to the buildings. He wrote a proposal for the trustees (PO29.10.14) suggesting that they fit the shower with 'cowboy style' swinging cubicles to allow two people to shower at the same time, thereby reducing the shower queue. This idea was supported by CareGM trustees, although they expected a long process of negotiating building work with the building owner, LEM.

Partnership arrangements with LEM often required significant negotiation and discussion regarding changes to the building or the addition of equipment. A long-winded discussion took place in the October trustee meeting (PO29.10.14) regarding the addition of a second washing machine. The washing machine within the building was monopolised by the night shelter. Paul, floor manager at CareGM, and the night shelter manager worked well together to negotiate the use of the washing machine (PO29.10.14), but as the night shelter was at full capacity there was a lot of washing to do. However, it was not as simple as getting a new washing machine. There was an issue with the building's electricity supply, as it did not have the right supply for its current usage (PO29.7.14). The director of LEM, the owner of the buildings, had a quote to increase the electricity supply but this quote was £36,000 (PO29.10.14). LEM were therefore very keen not to overload the electricity supply.

### **7.6.2 The Cottage**

During my research period LEM were refurbishing a 'cottage'. This cottage was a small building that looked from the outside more like a shed or storage building. It was being refurbished by

LEM to become a halfway house facility for clients. The aim was to use two of the three bedrooms for clients and one for a support worker. The clients would live in a supportive environment close to CareGM before moving on to live independently. The cottage inside had been plastered and was being painted. It was awaiting flooring. It had a small garden that I was informed would be a place for clients to garden and build confidence and skills (PO17.9.14).

### **7.6.3 Digital and Communication Technology**

CareGM was a fairly technology free zone. Staff kept any personal telephones and iPads in secure lockers within a password protected staff zone. Within CareGM there was a TV in the lounge area and the GP receptionist had a computer. There were some telephones. At the management committee meeting in July (PO29.7.14) CareGM requested another phone line from LEM. They had only one organisational phone line, and if it was in use by Advice Clinic for client support the line could be blocked for over an hour whilst the Advice Clinic volunteer waited on the line to the DWP. Sarah, CareGM administrator, had contacted three companies to get quotes for telephone lines and to refurbish CareGM's computers. Sarah had clearly spent significant time researching quotes and getting estimates. Trustees at the management committee meeting had not read these quotes and displayed a real lack of understanding regarding the importance of digital technology in organisational development. The decision regarding improved technology was delayed again in July, due mostly to the trustees not reading their papers in advance.

After the attack on Norman, which is discussed in chapter eight, it was clear that communication between partners that used the building needed to be improved. The client that had attacked Norman had been banned from the day centre but this had not been clearly communicated to the night shelter. Therefore the client was allowed into the night shelter and was able to attack the pastor. Clients that were banned from one partner organisation needed also to be clearly banned from all services. Discussion around digital physical capital took place at a management

committee meeting in July (PO23.7.14) and the solutions discussed were a shared pager, a mobile phone or shared computer files.

#### **7.6.4 Storage**

Storage was a challenge for CareGM. When I arrived for my July visit, I saw Paul, the floor manager, in the car park. This was really a disused piece of tarmac next to the centre that was split in to two halves, for an unknown reason, by a high fence. Next to the centre, on three sides, high-rise flats were being demolished. There was significant noise and dust throughout my research. Paul was receiving donations of clothes, I helped Paul carry the donations upstairs. Paul was careful to thank the person donating the goods. After I helped Paul carry the bags upstairs he gave me a quick tour of the storeroom. It was a mezzanine level space used to store night shelter and CareGM goods above a space used as a sports hall. This space is also used by the night shelter and is set up dormitory style for night shelter users. The storage space was very neat and tidy. Paul explained that most of the goods belonged to the night shelter but that the cage in the corner was where CareGM stored things. They used the nearby tables for sorting through clothes.

Storage was a frequently discussed issue throughout my research. Donations were very much appreciated but storage of these donations was a challenge. At the management committee meeting in July (PO29.7.14) there was a discussion regarding which donations to keep and which to pass on to the under-the-radar church hostel that was operating close to the centre. Paul's new role in organising the donations was valued (PO29.7.14). Prior to Paul's involvement CareGM was unable to manage the volume of donations, but he had changed organisational systems and had been able to get donations in and sorted and either stored or re-donated within a week.

### **7.6.5 Summer Closure**

CareGM closed each year in August. Debrief meetings in July (PO23.7.14) centred on planning for that closure and preparing clients for the time that the centre was going to be closed. The closure took place annually for essential maintenance and planning. The night shelter that shared the same building space remained open during August. At the management committee meeting in July (PO29.7.14) plans were made for the refurbishment of the centre during the August shutdown. The multifunctional office just off the main dining area in the centre was to be remodelled into a multifunctional support space. It was still to be an open-door office but there was a need for confidential support space to work with clients. During August this office was cleared out; it had previously been used as an office and storage space for the clothes shop. The office was repainted in cheerful yellow and blue and tidied to give it a more spacious and calm feel (PO17.9.14). The support office tidy-up also allowed a clear view of the CCTV (PO17.9.14). It was unclear if this improved view of the CCTV was needed due to the incidents over the summer period (these are discussed in more detail in chapter eight), or was simply due to the new tidy office environment.

### **7.6.6 Local Landscape**

The local landscape in which CareGM was based impacted on the operating environment of CareGM as an organisation. On three sides of the CareGM building high-rise flats were being demolished during my research period. This caused noise and dust throughout that time but also some real operational difficulties for staff and volunteers. A further concern was the British Telecom junction box, which was within the demolition space (PO29.7.14). This fear was proved valid as the centre was left without telephone or internet connections for several days in July 2014 (PO17.9.14) due to a demolition contractor error. The demolition site attracted local young people who began throwing bricks and building materials at clients and staff. The police were called but with limited effect. On one occasion, a rock was dislodged by a large demolition

vehicle and it hit a volunteer's car. This caused over a hundred pounds' worth of damage and smashed the car windscreen. There were signs all over the car park warning of vandalism (PO29.10.14).

CareGM had a food bank close to its centre for the first half of my research period. During July (PO23.7.14) this food bank moved some distance away and the office space was taken over by Jobcentre Plus. It was useful for clients to have Jobcentre Plus so close to CareGM, but the food bank moving further away was a problem. In the July debrief meeting CareGM discussed increasing the number of food parcels funded by Advice Clinic for CareGM clients.

### **7.6.7 Safety**

The trustee meeting was not at CareGM but at a community meeting room a few minutes' walk from CareGM. When I arrived in October to present my SLA workshop report to the trustees I was told by Dom, Advice Clinic volunteer, not to walk over myself (PO23.7.14) as I would not know where to go and it would be dangerous for me to walk over alone. I walked over with another trustee, a nun in her seventies or eighties who was registered blind. I am not sure who was supposed to be protecting whom in that situation, although I was assured that the Sister was formidable. We walked past the church that operated the under-the-radar hostel and the sister told me a little about it. There was a big jumble sale outside the church as we walked past.

The trustee meeting was in a local authority run building that housed a library, community meeting rooms and a doctor's surgery. Many of the CareGM clients were kept warm in the library, as CareGM shut at 2pm and the night shelter did not open until 7pm so clients used the library until it closed as a warm space. The building was protected by a big burly security guard. The area felt dangerous. There were a lot of people around who had nothing, and were street homeless: nothing to lose but a night in warm dry cells to gain if they were to assault you.

Security was strict on my first few visits to CareGM. To enter through the staff entrance one had to be buzzed in by the office and had to sign in by the door. Interestingly, when I visited in June the weather was very warm and all security was forgotten – the fire door was propped open to cool the dining area.

To conclude, in terms of physical assets CareGM negotiated a complex and often difficult partnership with LEM. There were significant challenges in terms of the local landscape and buildings. I now examine the organisation's financial capital

## 7.7 Financial Capital

Financial assets are organisational income, access to credit, grants or savings. CareGM received its main funding through the local city council, the Booth Charities, Sisters of the Society of Holy Jesus, Henry Smith Fund, Pret Foundation Trust and the Tudor Trust. It also listed fifty-three other sources of support in its 2013-2014 Annual Review (AR 2014).

To some extent the variety of funding sources allowed CareGM freedom from the isomorphic tensions of service delivery contracts. I return to this notion of CareGM's freedom from the pressures of isomorphism and privatisation in chapters eight and ten. CareGM was in a good financial position (PO29.10.14) and the Annual Review (AR 2014) revealed that it had positive reserves and a strong income stream from a diversity of funders. The organisational turnover was £105,000 per annum (AR 2014). However, there was concern from trustees that if CareGM did not get its usual funding from NHS sources and two regular local trusts it could very quickly end up in the position it was in few years ago. In 2007 CareGM had nearly had to close due to a major financial crisis (SSI16.4.14). However, it recruited new trustees and reduced centre opening hours and staffing (it lost the centre manager) and gradually recovered. It was a difficult time in 2007 for CareGM because it was a new centre (other homeless organisations had been going more than twenty years) and it felt like it was just developing and building trust in the community when it had to scale right back (SSI16.4.14). In losing the centre manager, the trustees took on line management of support workers. It took CareGM twelve to eighteen months to recover: "It made us sharpen up a bit" (SSI16.4.14). Unfortunately, due to the timing of the 2007 CareGM financial crisis just before the global financial recession, the service CareGM offered had to reduce as demand increased, with more people using the centre with more extreme needs (SSI16.4.14). However, in 2014 CareGM was financially solvent (PO13.11.14) and was doing so well that it was able to increase staff salaries by five per cent.

The SLA PAR workshop (PAR22.7.14) revealed specific issues that the organisation faced in response to austerity. The organisation felt that it was in a reasonable financial position after its funding difficulty a few years previously, and there was money in the organisation's bank account. However, some participants of the pilot workshop expressed concerns regarding funding and its continuation. This might have been because of a communication issue between board leadership and employees, or it might have been a representation of the precariousness of funding during austerity.

### **7.7.1 Donations**

Donations of physical items such as food and money were very much valued, as were the donations of time and skills by volunteers. Pro-bono services of the board members who have skills such as accountancy, legal knowledge and auditing were recognised as a financial asset to the organisation. A further asset was the local public who donated money and were very supportive of CareGM.

Concerns were shared at the participatory workshop (PAR 22.7.14) regarding ongoing funding and the vulnerability of VCS organisations during austerity. Worries were shared regarding reductions in food donations. There was a concern that personal financial pressure might prevent or reduce local generosity and a concern regarding increasing competition from other charities and services over funding. Personal pressures of reduced finances on employees, volunteers and trustees were shared and consideration given to the impact that this has had on their roles within the organisation. It was felt that establishing and maintaining financial independence was an important priority for the organisation, and that CareGM should be creative in its search for new sources of money. A discussion was held as to whether a smaller organisation was better and if operating on a smaller budget but providing good quality care was better than expanding and being unable to deliver the same services.

### **7.7.2 Business Planning**

Business planning was not a priority for CareGM. CareGM already had its own business plan and was included within the business plan created by LEM for the building. The business plan had been created in 2013 shortly before my research period. In a management committee meeting in July 2014 there was still discussion about it and a comment that the director of LEM and the chair of the trustees at CareGM needed to sit down to discuss their shared business plan. The timescale was unclear regarding this meeting and there appeared to be limited priority given to the plan (PO29.7.14).

### **7.7.3 Funding Applications**

Funding, although fairly stable during the period of my research, was a continuous concern for staff and trustees. Funding applications were discussed at the trustee meeting (PO29.10.14). Mental health funding via NHS sources was discussed, as the tendering process was very long and complex. Within the mental health fund there was not a clear category for homelessness. CareGM had applied for funding but the application took three trustees – a nun, a retired psychotherapist and a retired nursery nurse – days to complete. The trustees shared that a local community organisation that had existed for twenty-five years had had to close recently as it was not able to apply for funding successfully. The trustees discussed at their meeting the complexity and time-consuming nature of completing local authority and NHS funding bids (PO29.10.14). Some funding, even though awarded to CareGM in March 2014, had only just arrived in their bank account in October 2014. This delay had affected their ability to finance their plan.

Funding applications were made by the local Council for Voluntary Service as a consortia of VCS organisations had put in a bid for some money in July 2014 (PO29.7.14). The aim was to use this money to prioritise and formalise support work within the centre. On one of my visits (PO14.5.14), funders were being shown around the centre. They were a small group of three

smartly dressed individuals. This visit affected the atmosphere of the centre, and staff and volunteers seemed eager to please. The funders did not sit and engage with clients, but simply toured the centre as outsiders looking in.

CareGM received some money annually from small-scale fundraisers. It had a diverse range of funding sources, from the creation of a regular giving scheme (set up in the hope of financial independence from funders), and bucket appeals to placing reserves with Virgin Money to gain interest. They utilised their good relationships with local business to generate donations, which ranged from opened (so unsellable) packets of underwear via the community developments coordinator at Tesco's to bread from a local bakery. A chance online search had resulted in grant funding from Pret A Manger and that funded CareGM's cook's salary. A Catholic charity fund gave CareGM £20,000 a year.

The director of LEM stated that in fact the recession had resulted in an increase in giving by churchgoers (SSI16.4.14). Annually some of the funds raised at a cathedral carol service were donated and trustees completed supermarket bag packing (PO29.10.14). CareGM had also set up its own fundraising project based on a 'one hundred club' format. The idea was to get enough people giving monthly to support the project long term. Gail, a trustee, had calculated that if CareGM was to get 7,500 people giving £10 a month they could run the project full time without any need for external funders (PO13.11.14). This project was in its infancy but developing.

#### **7.7.4 Banking and Accountancy**

CareGM was struggling with its bank. This bank had a branch very close to CareGM and the nun trustee had always had a good relationship with the bank manager. Unfortunately this manager left and setting up an online banking system had taken Gail and the office administrator Sarah four months to arrange. In direct contrast to the value and support for

volunteers operationalised by CareGM within the centre, the trustees had not extended the same support to their volunteer accountant. The CareGM accountant had threatened to leave, citing not being valued as a volunteer. Gail, a trustee, had spoken to her and persuaded her to stay. The accountant had simply felt that her contribution of doing the accounts without charge had not been valued, but she agreed to volunteer for a further twelve months.

### **7.7.5 Social Enterprise**

CareGM had embraced social enterprise, having several trustees on the board that came from a private sector background. Social enterprise within the wider voluntary sector is a developing field (Nicholls 2010) and is often linked both nationally and within Greater Manchester to service delivery contracts and developing partnerships with the private sector (Huckfield 2014, Dayson et al. 2013, Fisher et al. 2012). However, many of the social enterprise projects at CareGM were on a micro scale. Trustees were knitting jam pot covers and Christmas decorations for sale as fundraisers (PO29.10.14). There was a clothes shop on site, where second-hand clothes were sold for fifty pence each item. The sales were intended to raise some money to fund other projects such as the showers, shower gel and clean underwear. Also charging for the clothes was intended to encourage financial responsibility and care for the clothes that were purchased.

A further small-scale social enterprise that CareGM initiated was a food bank scheme. Due to the high number of food parcel requests and the need to subsidise the funding of food parcels, CareGM came up with a 'pay us back when you've got it' system. Food parcels were given to clients for free at the point of access but then £5 was requested once the client received their benefits. This was administered on an honesty basis and if the client did not pay the £5 upon receipt of benefits the debt was not chased (PO19.3.14).

### **7.7.6 Staff Perceptions of Finances**

Interestingly staff and volunteers did not have a sense that CareGM was financially sound. Many staff discussed CareGM as struggling, as existing on a knife edge: “It feels ok ... nothing feels like we are here forever” (SSI16.4.14). Most volunteers and staff I interviewed expressed the concern that CareGM existed on very little funding: “They find funding but you cannot rest on your laurels” (SSI17.9.14). One volunteer cited the fact that CareGM offered small meal portions and often ran out of food as a reason for believing that funding was tight within the organisation (SSI13.7.14). However, another volunteer felt that CareGM was very good at fundraising (SSI14.5.15).

In conclusion, although CareGM finances were in a positive condition and the diversity of funders allowed a degree of operational freedom, perceptions among staff were that the organisation was in a precarious financial position. The organisational financial situation was not clearly communicated to staff and volunteers.

## 7.8 Summary

This Appendix section describes CareGM and introduces SLA. The chapter then considers each sustainable livelihood capital – social, human, public, physical and financial – with reference to CareGM’s experience. CareGM had good social and human capital. Relationships were strong with organisations that it had informal ties with. In terms of human capital staff and volunteers valued each other highly. Trustees very much valued staff and volunteers. There were some communication challenges between operational and strategic management levels, with trustees not always fully understanding the realities of how CareGM operated. CareGM had very strong public capital with strong links to NHS and VCS partners. Links and working relationships with the police were still being negotiated during my research period. In terms of physical capital the building in which CareGM operated was barely fit for purpose, with significant challenges in terms of how space could be used and maintenance issues. However, CareGM was continuously working to find new ways to solve some of these practical challenges. A deep sense of gratitude existed between CareGM and LEM for the use of the building and this softened some of the difficulties with physical infrastructure. Financial capital was strong despite many staff and volunteers fearing that funding was scarce. The 2013-14 Annual Review revealed a strong financial situation, so fears about security existed perhaps due to a memory of the organisation’s 2007 funding crisis when it faced closure (AR 2014).

There were, however, vulnerabilities, as social and public capital vulnerability was a real concern for CareGM. The organisations that CareGM listed as partners were facing cuts as a result of central and local government funding reductions, and there was a fear among staff, volunteers and trustees that this would impact on the social and public capital links that they could develop with CareGM. A lack of knowledge of public interest was shared as a concern. Participants were worried that a loss of sponsors would significantly affect the service that the

day centre could provide. Financial austerity was hitting all areas of the public and private sectors and there was a concern that financial pressures might reduce sponsor generosity. An overdependence on networks and signposting to services was also shared as a vulnerability.

This chapter maps out the five SLA capitals with reference to the organisational experience of CareGM. Much of SLA is about how the capitals interact. At CareGM social, human and public capitals overlapped to create personal and organisational bonds. Key to the CareGM SLA was the partnership with LEM. The physical capital challenges were negotiated within the messy reality of the partnership. The SLA reveals that at micro level CareGM generally did not experience the isomorphic and privatising pressures that the wider national and regional VCS was experiencing. However, in mapping these capitals I feel they miss something of the organisational ethos, the constant weaving of humanity through organisational bureaucracy that staff and volunteers engaged in daily. This is where my sixth capital and original contribution to knowledge developed.