

“NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”:  
TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE  
VISION OF CO-PRODUCTION IN THE  
HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

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“NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”:  
TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION  
OF CO-PRODUCTION IN THE  
HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

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## Abstract

In 2017, there were almost 160,000 households experiencing acute forms of homelessness in the United Kingdom (UK) (Bramley, 2017). This figure had risen by 33% since 2011 and is projected to have doubled by the year 2042 if trends continue along this same trajectory. This sharp rise in homelessness over recent years has been driven by a mixture of austere spending policies and welfare reforms imposed by national government since 2010.

In the run-up to the UK general election in 2015, a series of protests took place across the country calling for an end to austerity and the punitive welfare reforms imposed by the Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition government. Locally in Manchester, protesters cited homelessness as a key policy issue during a five-month public space occupation. The protest site was regularly moved due to legal action taken by both Manchester City Council (MCC) and latterly Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Under increasing pressure to respond to the concerns of the protesters, MCC formed the Manchester Homelessness Partnership (MHP) and Charter. Through this partnership, an opportunity for change emerged as future homelessness related services would be created in ‘co-production’ with people who had faced homelessness themselves.

Co-production in the Public Sector has the potential to reduce economic inequality by redesigning public services around the interests of marginalised groups. However, in practice, co-production remains an elusive concept. There is still much to be learned about how public organisations create equitable relationships with the community groups.

As the author of this thesis – and a former public sector worker – I came to this project with the desire to bring public services and communities closer together. Using a community psychology framework, I draw on a range of participatory and ethnographic approaches undertaken during 18 months of fieldwork to examine how organisational representatives and people with experience of homelessness worked together in the MHP. This research reveals the foundational stages of a long-term journey towards community governance through the MHP and explores the extent to which co-production in this setting is an emergent form of democratic organisation.

Three different sites of MHP co-production practice are shared as ethnographic cases in this thesis. By presenting these cases in the authentic, sequential order of investigation, this research casts light on the hidden politics of co-production and power in the MHP. The first case is an arts project between an art institution and small MHP arts group. Under the collective name The Listening Projectors, they articulated a utopian vision of co-production as a route to social cohesion. However, even their own working practices fell short of the democratic ideals that they promulgated. In the second case, the Unsupported Temporary Accommodation (UTA) Action Group is presented as

an example of organic co-production between multi-agency representatives, private landlords and temporary shelter residents. This introduces the challenges of using co-production in the homelessness sector, where policy and practice are dictated by national government. Third, the Resettlement Group is presented as an alternative approach to commissioning in the homelessness sector. This ethnographic case critically examines the extent to which radical change, based on the ideas of unhoused co-producers can be implemented within the broader political economy.

The MHP aspired to redesign the homelessness sector around the expertise of unhoused co-producers. However, this research considers that intermediary progress has been achieved in embedding informal examples of small-scale change through co-production in the MHP. A mixture of institutional resistance and tight time scales have stymied community engagement and promoted restrictions on spaces of participation.

The insights of unhoused co-producers in this study directly challenge the institutional culture of the city government that conceptualises homelessness in individualised terms. In addition to offering a critical examination of MHP practice, this research theorises a transformative vision of co-production for the future. The utopian vision of co-production - based on the marginalised voices within the MHP - reconceptualises homelessness as housing exclusion. Policies intended to address homelessness in Manchester should focus directly on prioritising social housing as the central tenet of the social welfare contract in the UK. A vision of social equality in Manchester may only be achieved through

a long-form deliberative process led by people with lived experience of marginalisation, oppression and structural violence in traditionally exclusive spaces of power in the city.

## Acknowledgments

To the many people who have contributed to this research by giving their time and sharing their expertise. Without Jez Green, Viv Slack, Beth Knowles, Amanda Croome, Jo Wilson, John Organ and so many more activists, progress so far would not have been possible. It has been a privilege to work alongside you during the last three years and I look forward to doing so again in the future.

To my supervisory team Doctor Leanne Rimmer, Professor Rebecca Lawthom and Professor Kate Pahl, who, with an equally high commitment to social justice research have enabled me to produce a piece of work that I am proud of. I have learned so much and know that I will reflect on our conversations for a long time to come.

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## Abbreviations used in the thesis

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLES	Centre for Local Economic Strategies
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
ETHOS	European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
EBI	Evidence Based Intervention
GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
MCC	Manchester City Council
MHP	Manchester Homelessness Partnership
MHC	Manchester Homelessness Charter
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
MIF	Manchester International Festival
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
MP	Member of Parliament
MUFC	Manchester United Football Club
NAO	National Audit Office



NEF	New Economics Foundation
NHS	National Health Service
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRS	Private Rented Sector
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SAR	Shared Accommodation Rate
UK	United Kingdom
UTA	Unsupported Temporary Accommodation
USA	United States of America
WASPI	Women Against State Pension Inequality

## Chapter One – Introduction

### 1.1 Setting the scene

This research project about co-production in the homelessness sector arose from the optimism that surrounded the launch of the MHP and Charter in 2016. Formed with the intention of providing new democratic spaces of participation for marginalised groups and community members, this initiative imagined the city as being a site of social justice. Davoudi and Bell (2016) argue that for a city to become a site of social justice, it would need to activate the agency of the people of the city to make and remake the city in the interests of themselves. In the two years that followed the launch of the MHP, people with lived experience of homelessness came together with organisational representatives from a range of city institutions to reconfigure local homelessness related services around the interests and needs of people who had faced homelessness themselves. This research will examine three cases of co-production in the MHP to learn about the process of democratising the city through the “*utopian method*” of co-production (Bell and Pahl, 2018:105). This chapter is structured around seven topics. In the first topic I set the scene by sharing information about the 2015 protests in Manchester. In the second and third topics, I introduce the MHP and co-production as the foci of this research.

In the fourth and fifth topics, I introduce myself as the researcher and community psychology as a research approach. In the sixth and seventh topics, I introduce the fieldwork undertaken during this research and the overall structure of this thesis. Before doing any of those things, this chapter begins by providing a description of the political influences surrounding the rise in homelessness in the UK from 2010 that led to a series of protests in Manchester during 2015.

The Comprehensive Spending Review undertaken by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 led to sustained cuts to public welfare and services that have characterised UK public policies since this time. Government presented austerity in positive terms - as fiscal consolidation, that could bear down on increasing levels of public debt (Streeck, 2016). However, in truth, the geographical impact of these national policies was unevenly distributed. Gray and Barford's (2018) socio-economic analysis of these policies showed that already deprived areas such as Manchester had been disproportionately affected. These policies of "*territorial injustice*" consolidated the nation's financial resources away from the poorest regions of the country (ibid:541). Yet the Local Authorities in these poorer regions were treated by national government as if they had been irresponsibly overspending on welfare.

In the years since 2010, public services were slashed by record levels. Whilst Local Authorities retained a legal mandate to provide homelessness

support, the quality and scale of statutory homelessness services reduced significantly under these financial pressures. Rights to homelessness support were withdrawn for single adults by the Welfare Reform Bill 2010. Alongside this, a wave of further punitive measures, including the 'bedroom tax' pushed many vulnerable families further into poverty.

Between 2010 and 2016, the number of households being supported by Local Authorities in England rose by 29% from 89,000 to 115,000 (Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox and Watts, 2017). Yet, average local government budgets were cut by up to 8.9% (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015). Changes in government policy and recording practices during this time masked the true scale of the crisis as many more single person households were informally referred on to privately owned temporary hostels or lettings and were not counted in the official homelessness figures. It is estimated that there were 156,000 cases of such practice in 2015 alone (Fitzpatrick et al., 2017).

As poverty increased in the UK, so too did the political discourses that stigmatised those in poverty. When the Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron criticised the supposed '*something for nothing*' welfare state culture in 2012, he laid the blame for poverty at the hands of the impoverished (Pemberton, Fahmy, Sutton, and Bell, 2016; Reeve, 2017). His alternative approach to poverty alleviation reflected an ideological drive to shrink the capacity of the local state and get people to '*look after themselves*'.

The 2010 Coalition Government hailed employment as being the route out of poverty. However, this common misconception failed to account for the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Whilst single solutions might help in one way, they add to the problems in other ways. At a time when the UK experienced the highest rates of employment in recent history, it concurrently experienced the greatest number of working families living in poverty – 55% (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2016; Tinson, Ayrton, Barker, Born, Aldridge and Kenway, 2016). Presenting employment as a single solution to poverty put families with existing vulnerabilities under increasing pressure. An example of which is presented by the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign. WASPI highlights how the government implemented policies that, by 2015 pushed 3.8 million women of retirement age in the UK into work by holding back their state pension entitlements for five years (WASPI, 2019).

By 2015, in areas of the country where territorial injustice was most extreme, faith in politics was at an all-time low. Alongside these successive welfare reforms, the nation had become preoccupied with debates and divisions about international politics in the form *Brexit*. By 2016, this noun was described in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as, “*the (proposed) withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, and the political process associated with it*” (OED, 2016). As a divided nation, where 52% of the voting public elected to leave the European Union in a referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Brexit symbolised the response from communities affected by territorial injustice. So

too, Brexit symbolises the prospect of change, that is feared and anticipated in (almost) equal measure. This research is not about Brexit, but about the hope for change. In Manchester, this hope for change focused on homelessness during the events that unfolded during 2015.

## 1.2 Local response to austerity in Manchester

It was within this context, and in the run-up to the UK General Election that a series of anti-austerity protests took place across the country in the spring of 2015. In Manchester, on 16<sup>th</sup> April that year, a large protest group marched together across the city centre from Piccadilly Gardens to the Town Hall. They were campaigning against a range of government policies including fracking, the environment, human rights, housing and homelessness. On that day in Manchester, a small number of protesters “*stormed the Town Hall*” and were forcibly removed by security officials (Williams, 2015a). In the days that followed, approximately thirty protesters occupied the public space outside of the Town Hall, camping in tents (Pidd, 2015a). From there, they continued their demand for political and social reform. Meanwhile, in the UK general election on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the Conservative Party, led by David Cameron went on to win an outright majority.

In the face of continued national austerity, the protesters in Manchester were appealing to local authority to adopt policies that based on social justice, welfare provision and housing inclusion. Based on the devolved powers

afforded to the region through the Localism Act 2011, the local government were a legitimate target for policy change. In the same month that the protests began, the former Member of Parliament (MP), Tony Lloyd became the interim Mayor of Greater Manchester. In this role, he would have increased powers over health, transport and housing. Over the following three years, this put Greater Manchester on track to receive £70 million pounds of the national governments Housing Investment Fund for growing areas (Harvey, 2018; Silver, 2018). However, rather than investing in social housing, Manchester was intent on using the funds to attract further international investment. The majority of the government funds would be used to build a record number of city centre apartments (Folkman, Froud, Johal, Tomaney and Williams. 2016). By 2016, there were 2,500 city centre apartments under construction – with a further 2,500 apartments waiting to start construction and over 40,000 in the pipeline (Howe, 2016).

In the summer of 2015, the protesters stayed in the grounds of the Town Hall until the Local Authority took legal action to remove them in early June 2015. The protesters moved to a fresh location in the popular civic space of St. Ann's Square and stayed for five weeks until they were moved again. This was a location of historical significance. It was once the centre of Manchester's international cotton trade during the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now, in 2019, there is a statue in St. Ann's Square that quietly references the homelessness protests of 2015. In 2017 by the Archbishop of Greater Manchester, Rev. David Walker unveiled this statue of Jesus Christ sleeping on

a park bench. It is colloquially referred to as '*the homeless Jesus*'. This research takes place in a city with a long history of power, exclusion, co-operation and suffrage.

The protests continued until October 2015. By this time, the protest camp had moved to a space under the A57(M) motorway flyover on Oxford Road in the heart of the city's university scene. At this point, MMU became involved as the lease holder of this land. An article in the Times Higher Education (2015) reported that in the weeks before the start of September term, university security guards undertook a failed attempt to remove all of the protesters from the site. MMU issued a statement describing that these actions were taken in the interests of the safety and wellbeing of students and staff (MMU, 2015). Students responded by establishing a group called 'students acting in solidarity with the homeless'. Staff at MMU also expressed concern for MMU's actions, signing a petition asking the institution to halt any future evictions. In a surprising turn of events, the former captain of Manchester United Football Club (MUFC), now a property developer, Gary Neville stepped in to the debate. After activist squatters had entered a disused property that he owned in the city centre, he publicly announced that they would not be evicted, and could stay for the winter. A timeline of the key protest events during 2015 in Manchester is provided (table 1).



**TABLE 1: KEY HOMELESSNESS RELATED PROTEST EVENTS IN MANCHESTER IN 2015**

Date	Event
April	Protesters march from Piccadilly Gardens to Manchester Town Hall. Protesting continued in the days after the March.
May	<p>Around 30 protesters erect tents outside Manchester Town Hall demanding an end to austerity. MCC obtained a Banning Order preventing tents from being erected outside of the Town Hall.</p> <p>Conflict at Manchester Central Library led to people presumed to be homeless being banned from using the facilities (Pidd, 2015a).</p> <p>Protesters met with MCC, who agreed to radically change the way that they respond to homelessness (Fitzgerald, 2015). Protesters move to the St. Ann's Square site and Castlefield site before the Banning Order was enacted.</p>
June - July	A second Banning Order was obtained to move protesters from the St. Ann's Square and Castlefield sites. When 20 protesters refused to leave these sites, a further city-wide Banning Order was obtained (Williams, 2015a).
August – September	<p>Protesters moved to MMU leased land on Oxford Road. MMU made an eviction attempt on 18<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>MMU and MCC presented evidence at a court hearing attempting to prosecute seven protesters for breaching the city-wide Banning Order after the 18<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
October	<p>Court case failed on the 1<sup>st</sup> October due to fundamental deficits in the prosecution's evidence (Hibbert, 2015). The occupation continued with 50 students and 69 staff voicing their support (Dawson, 2015).</p> <p>Activist squatters occupied the disused Stock Exchange Building – owned by former MUFC player Gary Neville. Neville announced that he would not seek to evict the “30 homeless and 20 activists” who could stay for three months until renovation work began (Pidd, 2015b).</p>

### 1.3 The origins of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership

In the months that followed these protests, MCC worked with local homelessness charities and faith-based organisations to respond appropriately to the protests and to the rising levels of homelessness. Various initiatives arose out of a series of meetings that were held in the winter of 2015. One of which was the decision to use the unoccupied Hulme Library site on the outskirts of the city as a temporary shelter in midwinter. Jez Green<sup>1</sup>, a Partnership Officer from a faith-based charity Mustard Tree undertook a series of listening events in the homelessness sector, gathering insights about the type of change that service users felt was needed to respond to the rising levels of homelessness. The overwhelming response was that people wanted a more democratic city where the power to make and remake the city was not concentrated in the hands of the few. In speaking with Jez in 2017, he summarised this sentiment with the phrase *“nothing about us without us”* (Jez, interview, July 2017). He explained that no policy about homelessness should be decided without the full participation of the groups affected by that policy. Jez would later be instrumental in creating the MHP. With the support of the Archbishop of Greater Manchester, Rev. David Walker and MCC, this powerful refrain underpinned what would become a Charter of rights, commonly known as the Manchester Homelessness Charter (MHC) (see figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> In some cases, such as my discussions with Jez, real names have been used in this thesis. This has been with the agreement of those involved. These issues are discussed in depth in Chapter 5 of this thesis.



# MANCHESTER HOMELESSNESS CHARTER

## VISION

**To put an end to homelessness in Manchester**

The Manchester Homelessness Partnership calls on the citizens of Manchester, the city council, healthcare and other public sector services, charities, faith groups, businesses, institutions and other organisations to adopt the values of this charter; and to implement it through improved working practices, specific pledges and by working together in new ways.

## VALUES

While homelessness remains, this charter provides guiding principles concerning the rights of people who are homeless at risk of homelessness.

We believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to:

- A safe, secure home**
- Safety**
- Respect**
- Equality of access** to information and services
- Equality of opportunity** to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities.

We believe that those who work with people who are homeless have a collective responsibility to ensure that:

- Good communication, coordination and a consistent approach** is delivered across all services
- People with experience of homelessness have a voice and involvement** in designing the services aimed at helping them.

## TAKING ACTION

Everyone has a role to play in improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

If you wish to adopt the vision and values of the Manchester Homelessness Charter, you should demonstrate your commitment by doing the following:

- Make a pledge to take action towards ending homelessness. Lists of relevant pledges and help with creating your own are available on the Street Support website
- Work in partnership by participating in one of the action groups set up around priority issues. These are designed to change how homelessness is tackled in the city
- Display the Manchester Homelessness Charter once the relevant pledges have been made.

If you want to find out more, make a pledge, or sign up to the charter go to:  
**[charter.streetsupport.net](http://charter.streetsupport.net)**

**FIGURE 1: THE MANCHESTER HOMELESSNESS CHARTER (REPRINTED WITH KIND PERMISSION)**

The MHC was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and declared that, in addition to fair treatment and the right to housing, people with experience of homelessness should have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness and in wider society. The MHC called for organisations, institutions and lay community members to work together in a new partnership, called the MHP. This partnership was initially made up of MCC, the Church of England, Diocese of Manchester and several voluntary and community organisations from across the local homelessness sector. In practice, this MHP became an emergent network that sought to change practices in the local homelessness sector based on the contributions of people with lived experience of homelessness.

Following its launch in May 2016, the MHP created a structure of participation. I have visually represented this structure in the following rich picture (figure 2). It demonstrates the complexities that arise when a new sector-wide approach is implemented alongside traditional nested practices and systems. In this figure, the MHP is shown in the centre, and the internal structure of the MHP is magnified in the bottom right of the figure. Specific MHP Action Groups are shown as boxes around the centre of the picture. These Action Groups bring together a mixture of organisational representatives and people with personal experience of homelessness to generate alternative ways of responding to certain homelessness related issues. Each group focusses on a homelessness related theme such as mental health, prevention and emergency shelter (a full list of the MHP Action Groups in 2016 is provided in

appendix B). The intention is that the various Action Groups will generate critical knowledge that can be implemented across the homelessness sector through the MHP Board. In the bottom left, the picture shows the macro political context – where austerity has decimated services since 2010 and furthered the individualised approach to service provision. This is also represented by how the homelessness sector is separated from the broader growth sectors in the city such as the housing market and private rented sector – top right.

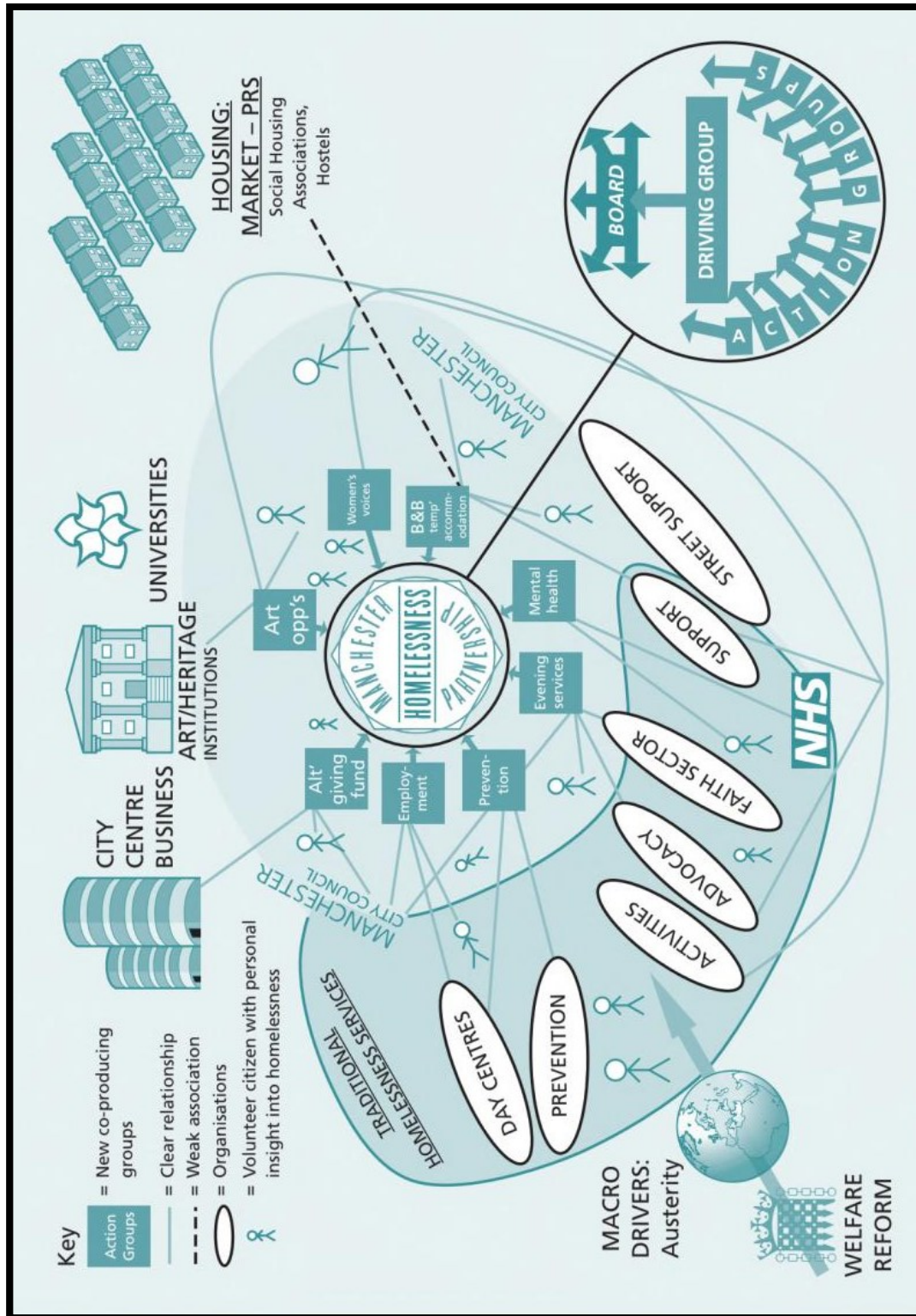


FIGURE 2: RICH PICTURE OF THE MHP IN ITS BROADER CONTEXT

#### 1.4 Introducing co-production

As a process of working together, co-production seeks to disrupt traditional hierarchies and offer new democratic spaces of participation for people most affected by austere governmental welfare policies. During the time of the UK's New Labour government, co-production was positioned as a radical community alternative to the growing trend of outsourcing, privatising and externalising public services. The left leaning think tank, New Economics Foundation proposed that through co-production, 'community' would be recognised as *"the core economy"* and *"the very immune system of society"* (Boyle, Stephens and Ryan-Collins, 2008:8). In doing so, it offered the hope for realising visions of social justice and community cohesion. Additionally, in the book *'No More Throwaway People'*, the American legal professor Edgar Cahn (2000) asserted that co-production rejects economic investment as a measure of prosperity – advocating instead for investing in people as a non-market-based measure of prosperity.

The origins of co-production date back to the 1970's. From this time, the American political economist Elinor Ostrom (1990) is widely credited as building a theoretical framework for co-production as a non-capitalist alternative for civic governance. Ostrom's fieldwork and theoretical analysis described examples of how communities around the world could sustainably pool their resources. This challenged people to think beyond the apparent dichotomy between the market and the state as the dominant modes of governance. In 2009, Ostrom became the first woman to receive the prestigious Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic

Sciences. Central to Ostrom's work was the move to transforming institutions to widen participation, favour cooperation over competition and promote diversity. In a summary of her career and impact, the author Derek Wall (2018), described that Ostrom's contribution to society has never been more relevant. By developing community driven approaches to the distribution of resources, issues of global climate change and problems arising from traditional models of centralised power can be overcome (ibid).

### 1.6 Story of the research

At the launch of the MHP, organisations from across the city were encouraged to join. MMU became involved based on the recognition of the need to atone for the eviction of protesters in September 2015. It was within this context, that the current research project emerged. The idea for this project evolved from a series of discussions between Professor of Community Psychology at MMU, Rebecca Lawthom<sup>2</sup> and a strategic group in the MHP known as the Driving Group. This research was funded by MMU as part of an internal funding scheme known as the Vice Chancellor's scholarship. It is a core pledge from MMU to the MHP.

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<sup>2</sup> Real name, used with permission



### 1.6.1 Introducing myself and the research

In 2016, I had completed a master's degree in psychology at MMU and was in the process of publishing my dissertation in the field of critical masculinity studies (Allmark, Grogan and Jeffries, 2018). I was aware of the protests in Manchester, but not involved. I lived on the outskirts of the city and was working full-time in a Greater Manchester Local Authority. My job at the time was in a Children and Young People's Service, delivering a family intervention that aimed to help parents keep children with behavioural challenges in school, out of trouble and safely at home. These experiences, as well as a range of personal experiences relate to why I was interested in undertaking this study. The qualitative health researchers Linda Findlay and Brendan Gough (2003) have written extensively about the need for personal reflexivity in research. They argue that,

Most versions of reflexivity involve an examination of researcher preconceptions and motivations pertaining to the research question(s). One can quite easily acknowledge 'academic' reasons for pursuing a particular line of enquiry (gaps in the literature etc.) but taking time to scrutinise subjective investment in the research topic, including how the research question is initially formulated, can yield valuable, sometimes surprising, fruit. For example, a decision to study gender stereotyping in television advertisements for children's toys might well be (partially prompted by the researcher's recollection and emotions pertaining to childhood experiences (ibid:37)

When undertaking a research project related to the issue of homelessness, the project is actually about prejudice in society. My personal experiences of prejudice have been with homophobia. It has been something that has been with me throughout my life. Writing this now as a 40-year-old

man, I live happily with my male partner of ten years. However, it has not always been so easy. I have a clear memory of being 16 years old, in 1996 and being told by my Religious Education teacher that homosexuality was “*unnatural*”. At that time, Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) prevented the promotion of homosexuality in schools; it was not repealed in England until 2003. Growing up with this prejudice has affected my confidence, and it is not an exaggeration to say that I have been debilitated by it in the past. It has caused me to feel that I am always on my guard, and I have come to realise that sometimes I incorrectly detect homophobia.

When I started this PhD, I met with some MHP volunteers who had direct experience of homelessness themselves. In this early meeting, one of the volunteers was annoyed at me coming to speak to them, asking me “*who do you think you are?*”. She said they didn’t need help from a student who didn’t know anything about homelessness. I had not intended to upset her, nor can I remember anything I said that might have upset her, but I could see that as a white man who has not faced homelessness himself, her experience may have seen my effort to help as being exploitative. I needed to think about what her view of life was, and what her experiences of prejudice might have been. My effort to help might have prompted negative experiences for her and I felt troubled about inadvertently hurt her too.

For me, my early experiences of prejudice coexisted alongside opportunities afforded through gender, race and economic stability. Growing up in a in the 1980’s with my parents and two siblings, I was confused about a lot of

things. I struggled to understand how a society did not look after every individual with the same level of care that I experienced at home. Like many children, perceptions of the broader world were influenced by television – more increasingly from the United States of America (USA). Popular media repressed the existence of inequality in our society – the popular television series *The Cosby Show* presented an aspirational world without racism (Jhally, 2019). Well intentioned campaigns such as Band Aid 1984, externalised poverty as something happening across the other side of the world (Grant, 2015).

As an adult, it is easy for me to reflect on how I was interested in social justice. My generation have come to be known as Generation X – taken from the book of the same name (Coupland, 1991). We grew up influenced by computers and media produced mainly in the USA. The author Douglas Coupland (1995) would later describe the stereotype of this generation as disengaging from society and rejected social climbing in favour of ‘slacking’. When I left University aged 21 with a Psychology degree, I felt like I was from Generation X because I intentionally steered clear from any type of job that I thought would be rife with homophobia. I trained to become a Probation Officer, which was my second choice after a Social Worker (Social Work bursaries had recently been removed).

My approach to this research, is undoubtedly shaped by my experiences as a Probation Officer from 2002-2012. When I joined the Probation Service, organisational change was already the norm. However, the incremental

changes were all heading towards a more punitive penology. This new penology was imposed by national government under the National Offender Management Service, created in 2004. At a national level, populist approaches to crime reduction were being planned. Locally, working in North Wales, probation work tried to retain its integrity and many staff remained committed to the traditional probation values of 'advise, assist and befriend'. As I became more involved in the National (trade union) Association for Probation Officers, it was also clear to see that outsourcing and privatisation would be a feature of this new penology. In my role, I tried to support people experiencing homelessness, crises, dangerous behaviour and a great deal of suffering as best I could. One of the many rewarding projects that I am proud to have been part of was in helping to start a weekly domestic violence perpetrator group, that – I am told – continues to this day. The Probation Service can only be effective when staff are supported to forge meaningful working relationships with people who have found themselves on the wrong side of the Criminal Justice System. The organisational changes that I experienced, forced staff to work in ways that conceptualised offending behaviour in strictly individualistic terms. This was reinforced by 'othering' terminology such as the perverse insistence on changing job titles from 'Probation Officer' to 'Offender Manager'. The most dramatic changes took place after 2010 which represented further incremental losses of power in the profession; over the next seven years, service budgets were cut by 40% (Emmerson and Pope, 2018). Furthermore, 70% of the National Probation Service was privatised (ibid).

I left the Probation Service during these years, taking roles in social care and becoming more interested in research. For some time, I worked as a Multisystemic Therapist with families where young people exhibited behavioural difficulties. They were referred to our service because they faced school exclusion or were at risk of custody due to their offending behaviour. Working on the systems around a young person – such as family and school - could bring about dramatic and positive changes in young people without the need for individualised interventions that pathologised young people. However, implementing a systemic intervention in a community setting required a high degree of institutional backing which was not always forthcoming. There was a degree of hype around Multisystemic Therapy as an ‘evidence-based intervention’. However, the outcome of a multi-site randomised controlled trial demonstrated that far from being a ‘silver bullet’, this intervention was no more effective than traditional services (Fonagy, Butler, Cottrell, Scott, Pilling, Eisler, Fuggle, Kraam, Byford, Wason and Ellison, 2018). I felt that this might have been due to the short-term nature of the intervention that we delivered. We regularly experienced that after the intervention finished, the broader systems surrounding a young person reverted to the practices that we had helped to change.

For many years, as a Public Sector worker in these roles, I had been concerned about how services were not being designed around the interests of the people who needed them. Labelling terms such as *‘troubled families’* and *‘offenders’* reflected the political drivers behind how services were designed.

For me, this became a clear example of how services needed to change. When I heard about the scholarship to undertake this thesis, I got in touch with the MHP and attended a public event organised to celebrate their six-month anniversary in November 2016. I was inspired by the collective energy and passion expressed by those who talked about change based on their direct experiences of homelessness and using services. In an extract from my field notes during this time, I expressed that,

*this would be a valuable project to get involved in for the next three years. I can feel that the collective energy and enthusiasm from people today has the potential to change things. I can see that getting involved in this project would be a valuable way of helping to bring about some of the changes I want to see in services. (fieldnote 1)*

Looking back at my fieldnotes - as I write this three years later in November 2019 - I can see how I was already using an ethnographic approach that would become central to the methods employed in this study.

### 1.6.2 Community psychology

This research project draws on a community psychology tradition to understand and attend to the complex social and political issues involved in this research (Rappaport, 1987). In the discipline of psychology, community psychology conceptualises issues such as health and wellness as collective issues, where individual wellbeing is inextricably linked to the state of belonging. The field of community psychology has therefore been described as “*really*

*social psychology*” (Kagan, Duckett, Lawthorn and Siddiquee, 2011:34) where research’s relationship to the broader world seeks to ensure that “*global is local and local is global*” (ibid:34).

Drawing on the work of community psychologists such as Isaac Prilleltensky (2008), Brian Christens and Douglas Perkins (2008) I have chosen to use a multi-dimensional analysis of power to examine co-production in this thesis. As I go on to find out during my time in the field, this research about co-production in the homelessness sector unfolds to become a story of power. A multi-dimensional analysis of power also facilitates an examination of power in the research process itself. In this approach, power relationships can be analysed across multiple levels (micro, meso and macro) to cognise the extent to which empowerment is translated into meaningful community change (physical, economic, sociocultural and political). This approach is underpinned by the values of participatory empowerment as articulated by Prilleltensky (2008). Within this approach, the opportunities for praxis are created. My understanding of praxis has been shaped by critical community psychologists at MMU (Kagan and Burton, 2001; Kagan et al., 2011). Kagan and Burton (2001) consider that praxis,

emphasises the relationship between action research [and practice] and the creation of alternatives to the existing social order. This combined process of social reform and reflection enables learning about both the freedom of movement to create progressive social forms and about the constraints the present order imposes. It also creates disseminated ‘images of possibility’ for a different way of ordering social life. (ibid:73)

For me, the MHP offers hope of social justice. The MHP itself is conceptualised as an example of “*community centred praxis*” (Singer, 1994) – where the complex term ‘community’ is firmly rooted in equality and solidarity.

### 1.6.3 Introducing the fieldwork

In total, I spend 18 months in the field, as an active volunteer with the MHP. The first seven months are spent with the MHP Driving Group, who are a small collection of key stakeholders from around the MHP (see table 3). Their role is to strategically and practically build MHP capacity; they facilitate training and write funding bids, all with the intention of embedding co-production in the homelessness sector. I first observed, and then experienced for myself the pressure that this group work under. One of the group members summarised this pressure to me by saying,

*we have come so far, and achieved so much – but were scared that as soon as we stop, everything will unravel.* (fieldnote 10)

Their concern is clearly one of systemic homeostasis – where the macro-system is self-preserving and those trying to change it are repelled through attrition. As the political theorist Wendy Brown (2015) observes in her seminal work ‘*Undoing the Demo’s: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*’, much of the Western world subscribe to the idea that capitalism as a macro-system is too big to fail. Yet, when capitalism is considered as too big to fail, marginalised groups are considered as being too small to matter (ibid). In my time with the MHP Driving Group, we co-created a specific research aim and a set of three



objectives for this thesis. The overall research aim of this thesis is to explore co-production in the MHP. The three research objectives provide the specific lines of enquiry to achieve this aim,

1. Critically examine practices of co-production in the MHP – integrating the unique contextual factors that exist when stakeholders including traditional service providers and recipients work together to co-produce services.
2. Develop a working definition of co-production within the MHP based on engaging experts by experience in the MHP.
3. Explore how these efforts intend to shape services for the future around the insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves.

In this thesis, I consider these issues directly by way of three ethnographic cases of different co-production groups within the MHP. Across these three ethnographic cases, I draw upon participatory approaches where possible. In this research, the MHP is conceptualised as a site of participation. However, this research offers a critique of how co-production in the MHP effectively sanitises the critical knowledge that is generated in these spaces. To attend to these concerns, the iterative action research approach pioneered by Kurt Lewin (1946) has been employed in this thesis.

Using an ethnographic lens, this research navigates across three specific sites of MHP co-production. Collectively, the critical knowledge generated in

these sites reflects the plural voices of those who have been ‘othered’ (Scott, 1988; Tyler, 2013). By unpacking the activities that take place between organisational representatives and people who have lived experience of homelessness, I respond to Michelle Fine’s (1994:78) call for researchers to reveal the “*rupturing narratives.... [of those] who speak against structures, representatives, and practices of domination*”. In doing so, this research unravels the transformations in social relations that have transpired over last three years in the MHP.

The research contained in this thesis is complicated by the mixture of different interpretations about co-production in the MHP, as well as in co-produced research itself. The findings of this thesis therefore offer unique contributions to both the field of public sector co-production and in the co-production of research. I consider the values of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as being instrumental in guiding the ethnography that unfolds in this thesis, creating insights that a mixture of collective, critical, anthropological and reflexive (Hemment, 2007).

## 1.7 Structure of this thesis

Chapter Two, *Defining, Researching and Contextualising Homelessness in the UK*. Here I draw on existing inter-disciplinary research and theory to contextualise and situate homelessness in the UK as an extreme example of exclusion in modern day society. I consider how the subjective experiences of many people who face homelessness remain unrepresented in official

discourses and data collection practices in the UK. I examine how debates about definitions are caught up in assumptions about causality, where an assumed dichotomy exists between individual and structural causes for homelessness. In this sense, efforts to define homelessness, rather than provide clarity on the issue have shown that it is a political issue, often separated out from broader discussions about poverty in the UK. In response to this, I present homelessness as a wicked social problem. Rather than meaning morally objectionable, the term 'wicked' reflects how homelessness remains resilient to efforts to define or effectively attend to it. I then question the role of research in attending to homelessness as a form of social injustice and how government funded research reinforces hegemonic understandings of homelessness. Following this, I move on to presenting an analysis of how homelessness is a manufactured social construct. Homelessness has risen UK since austere governmental practices of 2010. By locating homelessness within broader discussions about the impact of welfare reforms and poverty, it is possible to understand that homelessness exists because the broader political economy creates poverty. In this context, the MHP and Charter emerged in 2015.

Chapter Three, *Co-production in the Public Sector*, critically examines how co-production has been presented as a radical alternative the current forms of civic governance that exist in the Western world. While it has generally been considered that there is a dichotomy in civic governance where either the state or the market dominate; co-production positions the community as both the

‘untapped resource’ and main beneficiary of collective forms of governance (Cahn, 2000). This chapter considers this alternative form of collective governance and the extent to which it has been – or can be – integrated into a modern-day neoliberal context. Much conceptual confusion remains about co-production in the public sector. Whilst it is lauded for its capacity to deliver transformation, it is regularly referred to in literature as a ‘slippery concept’, hidden within a ‘black box’ and subject to ‘conceptual stretching’ (Needham and Carr, 2009; Durose, Needham, Mangan, and Rees, 2017). In this chapter, I unpick these issues by introducing the mixture of what I refer to as ‘*the who?*’ and ‘*the what?*’ of co-production.

Chapter Four, *Understanding and Theorising the Methodological Space and the Context of this Research*, develops my theoretical and methodological approach to exploring co-production in the MHP. Drawing on a community psychology tradition, I argue that community groups frame research in terms of what is most useful for them. In this chapter, I lay out the work undertaken with the MHP Driving Group to negotiate a specific research aim, objectives and overall methodological approaches for this thesis. In these extracts, I present the ontological underpinnings of this research. I then present the epistemological stance of this project. By including a plurality of voices in this process, this research moves towards the co-production of an extended epistemology in research. This chapter also examines the difficulties incorporating multiple perspectives about ‘research’ and some organisational representatives’ desires for ‘*real research*’. I situate these discussions in a

broader discussion of critical theory and how PAR and ethnography have informed this work. Essentially, these debates become a question of '*whose voice counts?*' in the research process.

Chapter Five, *Research Design and Methods*, considers the practical aspects of carrying out and analysing the research. I provide an overview of the MHP followed by the selection process for the three sites of enquiry presented in this thesis. The various co-producers from across the MHP are introduced, alongside information about the data collected during my time in the field. I then present a discussion about the ethical issues considered in this research, specifically in relation to participation, anonymity and ownership.

The next three chapters, Five, Six and Seven, are ethnographic cases of three sites of enquiry in the MHP. Each chapter is a construction of research findings that provides an insight into the experience of unhoused co-producers - and my experience - of co-production. The narrative style in each chapter brings an ethnographic perspective that is sometimes collaborative, sometimes critical but always situated from below (Lyon-Callos and Hyatt, 2003). These different – yet complimentary - methodologies reflect the mess involved in community-based action research. Tina Cook (2009) argues that this type of mess should be embraced because in messy places of research,

long-held views shaped by professional knowledge, practical judgement, experience and intuition are seen through other lenses. It is here that reframing takes place and new knowing (ibid:277)

These different approaches used in the field help to expose the many facets of co-production in the MHP. As my time in the field progressed, I began to recognise the hidden politics of co-production, or as other local co-production researchers have described it, “*the elephants in the room*” (Woodward, 2017). In each ethnographic case, these were the struggles for mutuality, lack of institutional capacity to share power and inability to change the exploitative system that drives poverty and homelessness. Over the course of this fieldwork I developed a growing understanding that these spaces of co-production were contested spaces of power. Throughout, I draw on the discussions with MHP co-producers and my observations as a participant-observer.

Chapter Six, *The Listening Projectors*, is about a collaboration between an MHP Arts Action Group and the Greater Manchester Arts and Literature Festival (G-MALF) in the summer of 2017. I joined this group as a participatory collaborator during the co-production of an artistic installation about homelessness. In this project, the group shared their insights about co-production to project a strong political message of community cohesion. Their message about homelessness challenged prejudice by showing that, irrespective of anyone’s structural circumstances, there is more that unites us than divides us. This chapter also uses ethnographic approaches to critically explore how this group worked together to produce this installation. This became the first example of how *doing* co-production would be more difficult than *talking about it*.

Chapter Seven, *The Unsupported Temporary Accommodation Action Group*, is an ethnographic case of a specific MHP Action Group. Following my time with The Listening Projectors, the opportunity arises to explore co-production away from an artistic setting – in a more concrete, homelessness sector setting. Working with this group offers the opportunity to examine whether the vision of co-production projected by The Listening Projectors could be realised in a homelessness sector environment. In this group, a collection of organisational representatives from across the sector and Unsupported Temporary Accommodation (UTA) tenants come together to improve conditions in privately run UTA's. Along the way, they invite private UTA landlords to join the group. The findings of this chapter relate to how spaces of co-production are no more immune to discrimination and social exclusion as any other space in society. In this group, the voice of people who face homelessness remain marginal, despite the best efforts of group members, and this reflects the culture and national policies of financialising the temporary accommodation sector.

Chapter Eight, *The Resettlement Group*, is the final ethnographic case in this research. Here, I join a group of Local Authority commissioners and MHP co-producers who develop a new resettlement service in the local homelessness sector. Having spent over twelve months in the field at the time of joining this group, I am able to draw upon my own experiential knowledge of the MHP to trace the origins of this group back to an MHP public event that gathered more than forty people together to co-plan future services for the homelessness sector. Many people who attended this event felt that their views

were not listened to by the Local Authority and were unaware of the new group that emerged. This chapter engages with debates about how commissioning more readily represents a market driven approach to public services rather than a community driven approach. The limitations of this are shown through examples presented from how the commissioning team then worked with group members from the MHP the provider of the new resettlement service. Here we see a case of the public sector pushing out transformation to the voluntary and community sector.

Chapter Nine, *Conclusion: A Multi-dimensional Analysis of Co-production*, reviews the themes that have emerged in these three preceding chapters. In doing so, I connect again with the three research objectives. By adopting a multi-dimensional analysis of power, I consider co-production at an individual, group and community level.

In the final stages of this chapter, I articulate the vision of co-production that I have collected from various fragments in the field. I draw on Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) arguments raised in *The Spirit Level*, as well as Ostrom's (1990) original vision for *Governing the Commons* to demonstrate that locating the focus of co-production beyond the homelessness sector is required to effectively address homelessness. As this thesis will demonstrate, there is a utopian vision of co-production from the people in the MHP who have faced homelessness themselves. This thesis will end by presenting this vision, alongside an assessment of how this research, me (as a researcher) and the MHP can move towards that utopian vision.



## Chapter Two – Defining, Researching and Contextualising Homelessness in the UK

what constitutes 'homelessness' and how many people are homeless is a debate which has been running for thirty years or more.  
(Greve and Currie, 1990:28)

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider homelessness as a modern-day social concern in a UK setting. The perspective offered in the following pages is drawn from a corpus of writing that began when I first met with people from the MHP in 2017. I continued to write and restructure this chapter during the course of this research as a way of helping to understand what was going on around me. The literature that I have assembled and reviewed in the following pages reflects a bricolage approach, in that social and cultural influences in the MHP have guided this process as much as my own academic styles of gathering literature. As such, information has been sourced from a variety of academic and non-academic places. 'Grey literature' takes the form of official government data and policy documents. Also, third sector and activist led publications that challenge these 'official' representations of homelessness are included. By promoting experiential knowledge alongside academically situated discourses, I intend to

take the debate beyond any particular discipline or 'subject' based lens – each with their own inherent limitations. That is not to say that academic literature has been neglected. Academic literature has been of particular value in considering the different philosophical approaches to conceptualising homelessness in research and practice. I have also used traditional academic literature search practices to gather a range of research articles in producing this chapter. Specifically, I have used the Web of Science database to search for the key term 'homelessness' including each of the following key terms; 'participatory', 'constructivist', 'positivist' and 'intervention' and 'defin+' (to include variations of 'definition'). However, this was by no means an attempt to rigorously review homelessness related literature. Instead, my searches served as a further tool to help me understand what was going on around me in the MHP.

I must also consider that I am drawing on my own unique experience to inform this discussion about homelessness, which itself is situated within a community psychology framework and leans on a personal background of working as probation officer and public sector worker from the years of 2002 to 2016. I recognise that my previous experiences of working in the public sector during the time of both a Labour and then Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition government has influenced my approach in this chapter. I attend to how politics shapes the conceptualisations of service users, service refusers and those for whom services are not provided at all. This is particularly true in relation to the homelessness sector. It is in this discussion about politics and

ideology that that prompted Greve and Currie (1990) to pose the dilemma raised in the opening quotation of this chapter. Their report - produced for the Joseph Rowntree poverty alleviation foundation - considered that the debates about what constitutes homelessness had been running for thirty years. It is now nearly 30 years since Greve and Currie's (1990) report, and those debates continue without resolution.

I start this chapter by considering the ways in which homelessness has been defined in the UK from 2010 to 2016. As a way of recognising the dominant definitions, I examine the discourses located in UK government homelessness policies. I also explore the counter hegemonic understandings of homelessness that have been articulated during this time. Locating these discourses has been largely informed by my activities in the MHP and by following the work of activist academics from critically orientated perspectives (see Bramley, 2017; Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox, Watts, 2017; Maciver, Snelling, Fleming, and Davies, 2016; Hardy and Gillespie 2018). It shouldn't be underestimated how differently homelessness can be defined through different ideological lenses. These conceptual discrepancies contribute to how homelessness has been referred to as one of the wicked social problems of our time (Rittel and Webber, 1973). This chapter will explain why consensus cannot be reached in defining wicked social problems; it will also discuss the subsequent difficulties relating to how wicked social problems are understood, researched and addressed.

In the second section of this chapter, I turn directly to examining how homelessness is researched; I discuss the differences between positivist and constructivist research approaches. As part of my own research journey, I reconsider my assumptions that positivist research approaches always promulgate hegemonic understandings of homelessness and that qualitative research is uniquely positioned to challenge hegemony. In truth, it is more nuanced than that. Whilst positivist research might typically align with hegemonic understandings of homelessness, there is an established body of quantitative research activism that uses the power of numbers to challenge populist understandings about homelessness. I introduce an approach referred to as 'statactivism' – the appropriation of statistics to dismantle dominant understandings (Bruno, Didier and Vitale 2014; Walker, 2017). I relate this approach directly to the enumeration of homelessness in England and the work undertaken to contest official government figures – which underestimate the scale of homelessness. These issues are so contested that even the devolved UK governments are unable to reach consensus in data recording practices (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2017). The discussion about statactivism and the enumeration of homelessness considers that any form of counting practice has been criticised in some spaces of activism. For some, enumeration itself contributes to positioning homelessness as a 'problem' (Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield, 2001). Yet, enumeration is paradoxically important in allowing us to trace the power of numbers in discourses relating to homelessness. This, in turn, establishes a warrant for change.

In the second section of this chapter, I also consider qualitative approaches to homelessness research. With reference to participatory methods, I discuss their value in terms of creativity, accessibility, ownership and the relocation of power in the research process. I also consider the contributions of community art research and research informed by the anthropological tradition. What unites these approaches is their attempt to move the debates around homelessness beyond the familiar frame.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I present homelessness related policy from 2010 to 2016. During this time, significant and punitive changes to welfare were implemented by a Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition government. These changes reflected an ideological drive to recast the fundamental relationship between citizen and state. Based on the principles of neoliberalism, the role of the state as a welfare provider was drastically withdrawn. Employment was positioned by government as being the route out of poverty. Individual citizens were considered to be autonomous agents who can meet their own needs through work. This concerted effort to physically and culturally dismantle the provision of welfare is exposed as a key driver to the rise in homelessness in the UK during this same time period.

This chapter ends with a consideration of how these debates have influenced the creation of the MHP in 2016 and what it might mean for the work that unfolds in this thesis and the MHP at large. However, before raising these issues, I will return to the ongoing problem of trying to define homelessness.

## 2.2 Defining homelessness

In the introduction of this chapter, I explained that efforts to define homelessness have made relatively little progress over a considerable period of time (Greve and Currie, 1990). Moreover, it has not been possible to harmonise definitions of homelessness across the UK devolved governments. In a recent report by the UK Government Statistical Service (GSS), they concluded that this was not possible due to the differences in data systems and legally bound definitions of homelessness (GSS, 2019). The challenges of defining homelessness are therefore politically driven. In the UK, the political left favours welfare provision and investment in public services as a social safety net. The political right favours competition, market economics and the subsequent hierarchies produced therein.

Back in 1973, Rittel and Webber published an article in the *Policy Sciences Journal*, titled 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning'. In this paper, they considered that the search for scientific ways of confronting complex social issues such as homelessness were destined to fail. They coined the term "*wicked problems*" (Rittel and Webber, 1973:12) to describe social problems where the influence of contradictory forces such as the economy, the housing market and politics, render those problems difficult to solve. Where one locality might try and solve homelessness through a 'problem-solution' social policy framework, they find that this can produce problems in other areas. A city-wide policy to offer a bed for everyone experiencing homelessness can quickly reach saturation point if a neighbouring city starts to send people across the border.

In this sense, the term 'wicked' reflects the unabated spread of social hardships in modern day society (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Brown, Keast, Waterhouse, and Murphy (2009) suggest that 'wicked solutions' might be the only way to address problems such as this; by this, they mean that the current social order may require wholesale change. They suggest that multiple social systems should be reorganised to focus on early poverty prevention rather than having services that traditionally respond to social problems once they have already been created.

Having shown that current conceptualisations of homelessness might be flawed to adequately define homelessness, I want to expand upon what these are. Using a social science perspective, Jacobs, Kemeny and Manzi (1999) described that different groups in society struggle to impose a particular definition of homelessness on the policy agenda. There is a traditional dichotomy between minimalist and maximalist definitions of homelessness (ibid). Minimalist definitions are more likely to fall into the trap of downplaying or refusing to incorporate multiple social forces in an understanding of homelessness. Maximalist definitions of homelessness are suggested to downplay individual factors that render some people more susceptible to experiencing homelessness than others. Within any definition, lies implicit and explicit assumptions of causality and different statistics are used to support these assumptions. According to the constructivist researchers Hutson and Liddiard (1994), this often tells us more about the organisation than about

defining homelessness itself. I shall examine minimalist and maximalist definitions in turn.

Starting with minimalist, I will examine the legal definition for homelessness in England – I choose England rather than the UK because of the different definitions and recording practices across the devolved regions of the UK. In 2018, the legal definition of homelessness in England derived from the Housing Act 1996, updated by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These cover Local Authority duties towards someone who is legally defined as “*homeless*” (ibid:c13). The 1996 Act states that,

A person is homeless if he [and presumably she] has no accommodation available for his occupation, in the UK or elsewhere.....or if he has accommodation but-

(a) he cannot secure entry to it, or

(b) it consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it.

A person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for him to continue to occupy.” (Housing Act, 1996:c52)

The following 2017 amendment provided further examples of this definition. The amendment also replaced the masculine pronoun with gender neutral terminology. According to Bretherton (2017) the previous use of the masculine pronoun reflected the patriarchal assumption that women and children might be ‘protected’ from homelessness by family support. According to the 2017 amendment,



no accommodation available in the UK or abroad no legal right to occupy the accommodation split households and availability of accommodation for whole household unreasonable to continue to occupy accommodation violence from any person (Homelessness Reduction Act, 2017:c13)

Whilst these legal definitions might not initially appear minimalist, it is through their application, that a minimalist approach is demonstrated. This definition serves as a guide to Local Authorities undertaking their welfare duties. Since 2010, funding pressures across the public sector have led to minimalist – or narrow – interpretations of what circumstances constitute the opaque legal term of “*reasonable*”. As part of an academic longitudinal study of homelessness in the UK, Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox and Watts (2018) have recorded that in the previous eight years, funding pressures have led to have led to a reduction in the quality and availability of homelessness related services – essentially, less households are being accepted by Local Authorities as meeting the criteria for support. Even where households are eligible for support, the temporary shelter that is offered, almost always stretches the term ‘*reasonable accommodation*’ to unreasonable limits (Hardy and Gillespie, 2016). In one case where a Local Authority was taken to court, they had offered accommodation that was inaccessible to the claimant with mobility difficulties (*Kannan v Newham LBC*, 2019). In a second case, the Local Authority offered accommodation to a household that was 80 miles away from a child’s school (*Anon v Lewisham LBC*, 2018). In both examples, the Local Authority had told the claimants that if they refused the accommodation, Local

Authority support would be withdrawn. The conditionality of homelessness services, where households are easily reclassified as 'intentionally homeless', has become a way of managing escalating waiting lists (Watts, Fitzpatrick and Johnsen, 2018).

These policies and practices clearly point to a narrow, minimalist definition of homelessness. This can also be seen in the political discourses surrounding the issue. Such discourses are virtually synonymous with the growing number of destitute people on the streets of every major city in the country (Fitzpatrick et al., 2018). Policies to address homelessness are designed around these acute forms of homelessness (such as rough sleeping) whilst ignoring the multiple forms of homelessness and housing insecurity that come under maximalist definitions (Cloke, May and Johnsen, 2011).

An acceleration of individualised interventions to address homelessness took place under the New Labour government in the late 1990's. These have focussed on changing the individual across a range of domains; substance misuse, peer association, motivation and employability. The Homelessness Outcome Star (MacKeith, Burns and Graham, 2008) has been used to measure change across these domains and has dominated the homelessness sector in recent years. Services are monitored in relation to the outcomes that they produce on this star and contracts to deliver services are awarded accordingly.

These discourses promulgate a causality of homelessness that is located within the individual. Even where structural causes to homelessness are

recognised, the approach to intervention is targeted at an individual level. An example of this is how a lack of local employment opportunities is addressed by encouraging individuals to travel long distances to find work. The reasons why successive governments appear to have adopted narrow definitions of homelessness are twofold. First, individual interpretations of homelessness are coherent with overarching neoliberal frameworks and conceptualisations of society.<sup>3</sup> Second, it is simply cheaper for governments in the short-term to provide welfare services around a tight definition of homelessness because their estimates about the scale of homelessness are lower than by adopting a maximalist definition (Widdowfield, 1999).

Moving on to maximalist definitions of homelessness, these are often referred to as broad definitions. National homelessness and poverty alleviation charities such as Shelter, Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have been at the forefront of challenging narrow definitions of homelessness that are perpetuated in the media and political discourses. Charities are uniquely positioned to challenge narrow definitions of homelessness because they work on the frontline of poverty. As such, they are well placed to legitimise the experience of many people who are unreported in official data and thus represent hidden forms of homelessness in the UK. The national homelessness

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<sup>3</sup> I define neoliberalism as a political philosophy and policy agenda that recasts the fundamental relationship between citizen and state. Here, the role of the state (as a welfare provider) is drastically withdrawn and individual citizens are considered to be autonomous agents in meeting their own needs. This is supported by a marketized welfare economy that encourages competition between private providers to deliver public services at a profit. The discourses within such services reflect a responsibilised model homelessness, ignoring structural causes of poverty.

charity Shelter was established in 1966 – the same year that Ken Loach directed the influential film *Cathy Come Home* (1966). This film depicted the story of a young family separated as their lives descended into poverty and homelessness. As an exceptional piece of film making, it had a national impact. The formation of Shelter in 1966 was followed by Crisis in 1967, created “*as an urgent response to the growing homelessness crisis*” (Crisis, 2019).

Over the next decade, campaigning by Shelter and Crisis contributed to a shift in government policy from individual conceptualisations of homelessness to framing homelessness in terms of structural inequality. The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977) provided families (although not single person households) with a legal entitlement to settled housing. This policy also drove a national increase in the provision of social housing (Drake, O'Brien and Biebuyck, 1982).

A broad - or better - definition of homelessness recognises that homelessness takes many forms and is not characterised by the visible depictions of rough sleeping in city centres. According to housing policy academic Glen Bramley (2017), writing for the charity Crisis, rough sleeping only represents up to 2% of the many forms of homelessness in England. Other types of homelessness include the use of temporary shelter (be it emergency provision or staying with friends or relatives), which, under a narrow definition would be considered as a solution to homelessness (ibid).

If narrow definitions are to emphasise the individual causal features of homelessness, then broader definitions might emphasise the structural causal

relationships (Somerville, 1992; 2013). Using the examples of gentrification, Somerville (2013) describes a process of increasing rental prices in sought after areas leading to the displacement of many families who can no longer afford to live there. The Canadian social work academic Carolyn Gibson (2017) describes this as “*renoviction*”. Somerville (2013) considers that a multidimensional understanding of homelessness might be a helpful way of incorporating both individual and structural features. This essentially means that where structural pressures affect households, it is the most vulnerable in society that are most acutely affected.

Following this introduction of broad definitions of homelessness and inclusion of structural causes, I now present an approach to defining homelessness that relates to housing stability. This is the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS). It was developed by housing researchers Edgar and Meert (2005) and has become an accepted definition of homelessness by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. By defining homelessness in terms of housing stability, this effectively reconceptualises a deficit based individualised problem as an issue of social inclusion. The ETHOS model adopts a rights-based approach to housing that recognises its inextricable link to homelessness. It provides a framework for assessing individual circumstances against three different measures of current living conditions. These three measures are ‘whether a person has legal rights’ (security of occupation), ‘whether they have appropriate physical conditions’ (adequate space) and

‘appropriate social conditions’ (ability to maintain social relations and privacy) (Edgar, 2009). Scoring across these measures can categorise an individual’s circumstances as either “*homeless*” (no legal rights or appropriate physical and social conditions) housing excluded (no legal rights or social conditions) or adequately housed (the presence of all three factors) (ibid:15).

In a UK context, defining homelessness is often less associated with housing stability than it is proposed in the ETHOS model. Moreover, unique features of the UK private housing market make it difficult to adopt the ETHOS model wholesale (Downie, 2018). That is because there is not the legal backing to implement policies based on the ETHOS model for everybody in the UK, for example people with no recourse to public funds due to their immigration status.

In the MHP, a broad definition of homelessness is welcomed. However, the homelessness sector in Manchester is quite separate from the housing sector. In a context of these broader, macro, political issues, the research that unfolds in this thesis intends to confront how change, in these circumstances will be enacted.

### 2.3 Researching homelessness

The wicked nature of homelessness extends into issues of research - and it is worth noting the scope of perspectives and voices in this area.

According to Cronley (2010:328) *“the politicization of homelessness means that much of the scholarship has been hard-pressed to maintain an objective stance*

*on the debate. After all, grants fund the majority of social science research.”*

Cronley (ibid) helps us to see that the way in which homelessness is framed (ontology), relates to the way in which it is researched (epistemology). I will consider three issues in this section of the chapter. First, government funded research. Second, activist led statistical challenges to the enumeration of homelessness. Third, qualitative approaches to research from a variety of perspectives.

### 2.3.1 Government funded research

Writing for the *Housing Research Journal*, May (2000:612) considered that the political preoccupation of ‘problem - solution’ approaches to homelessness had led to a “*new orthodoxy*” in dominant forms of homelessness research. Christian (2003) cites that these approaches have been heavily influenced by government funded research in the USA, where a growing number of specialised social interventions have emerged under a rhetoric of evidence-based interventions (EBI’s). As part of this approach, the Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) is deployed as the ‘gold standard’ of government funded social research. Here, large data sets of intervention outcomes measures are compared against ‘treatment as usual’ conditions to assess the cost effectiveness of emerging interventions. The UK government currently supports a variety of social programmes in this way with national funding streams and pathways through various governmental departments. The UK Housing First

pilot programme is one such RCT funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (Goering, Streiner, Adair, Aubry, Barker, Distasio, Hwang, Komaroff, Latimer and Somers, 2011; Bretherton and Pleace, 2015). This is a Canadian intervention that focusses on addressing the needs of a tightly defined group of people experiencing chronic homelessness by providing accommodation followed by intensive, personalised services (Tsemberis, 2011). When evaluating the effectiveness of Housing First, focus is given to behavioural outcome measures that lead to reduced spending for public services. These are measured across a variety of domains including criminal recidivism, health and housing stability. In the case of Housing First, studies reported that there was a potential saving to public funds of £15,000 per person per annum (Bretherton and Pleace, 2015).

In the homelessness sector, practice has become heavily influenced by this type of research. This has become ever more evident since the financial downturn of 2008. At a time of rising levels of homelessness, projects such as Housing First are presented by politicians as a solution to homelessness. In turn, any new funding streams for the sector align with these economic and accounting based approaches to service delivery, such as Payment by Results and Social Impact Bonds (Cooper, Graham and Himick, 2016). Payment by Results is a type of government commissioning where service providers will only be paid if the outcomes are achieved. Social Impact Bonds provide the finance for contracts to be commissioned – essentially, private investors and



philanthropists receive a return on their investment if outcomes are successfully achieved (ibid).

Government funded homelessness research has not overcome the wicked nature of homelessness as outlined by Rittel and Webber (1973). Despite their perceived scientific superiority, these approaches to research in the social realm, often struggle to achieve the results expected by funders. Pawson and Tilley (1997) have explained why many of these programmes remain limited in their effectiveness. As sociologists, they have written extensively about implementing community programmes. They consider that under increasing pressure to find ‘what works?’, RCT’s are hurriedly designed and are implemented too soon in the theoretical development of interventions models (ibid). The use of RCT’s also tends to underestimate the complexity of social problems. Tsai and Rosenheck (2012) use the example of Housing First to critique how EBI’s are targeted towards very specific, tightly defined cohorts of service users, at the exclusion of wider examples of social hardship and deprivation. When extreme interventions are developed for acute social problems, it is often too little too late (ibid).

### 2.3.2 Challenging the enumeration of homelessness through research

Challenges to government funded research can take many forms. In this next section, I focus on the enumeration of homelessness. This is an important issue because the way that homelessness is perceived in modern society is

reflected in the way that it is enumerated. The Housing First project targets the most acute forms of homelessness - people with repeat histories of sleeping rough. As Bramley (2017) has stated, this stereotypical depiction of homelessness actually represents a very small proportion of all forms of homelessness. The DCLG officially records that 4134 individuals on a given night were sleeping rough in 2016 in England (DCLG, 2017). Yet, in order to generate an estimate of wider forms of homelessness, Bramley (ibid) needed to look beyond the official government figures. As I spent time in the MHP, I worked with many officials from the Local Authority who knew that the true scale of homelessness was greater than what was being reported or known about by the public. However, as local government employees, they would not readily share these figures in the public realm. Challenging these official government figures is not only a challenge to the numbers, but a challenge to the definition of homelessness. Bruno et al. (2014) use a term *statactivism* to explain how the power of statistics can be re-appropriated to challenge the oppressive use of data against marginalised groups in society. This approach is of particular interest in community psychology. As Walker (2017) explains,

social critique ... often relies on statistical arguments and much can be gained by creating spaces where a 'militant use of figures' can be used to defend the utility and quality of public services. Statactivism has been defined as collective action using numbers, measurements and indicators as means of denunciation and criticism. What hegemonic logics of quantification have installed, statactivists can dismantle or at least roughen up. (ibid:8)

Whilst the term statactivism, might be relatively new, the act of combining statistics and activism is not. The cartographer Danny Dorling (2012) is probably one of the most well know academics to use statistics to reveal inequality and social injustice in the UK and around the globe. In a career spanning forty years, he used data to create images that challenge a variety of inequalities ranging from poverty under 1980's Thatcherism to modern day globalism. His striking figures and maps provide a visual representation of the geographical inequality behind government policies. In a commentary about the ongoing effort to challenge government statistics and definitions about homelessness, the geographers, May, Cloke and Johnsen (2007) described this growing body of activism as alternative cartographies of homelessness. I shall share some of the these now.

Bramley (2017) used data from freedom of information requests, official figures, and various forms of front-line data to estimate the size of two types of homelessness, 'core' and 'wider' forms. He estimated that the combined level of core and wider forms of homelessness in England was 268,330 households. Core homelessness made up 53% (143,000) of this figure. Wider homelessness made up 47% (125,330) (ibid). This overall figure represents a rise of 33% since 2011 when he estimated that the figure stood at 103,000 (ibid).

Official data about levels of homelessness in England is gathered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Figures

from the MHCLG record homelessness in England as being much lower than Bramley's (ibid) estimates. In 2017, it was officially recorded that English Local Authorities completed 115,590 assessment of homelessness eligibility, accepting a lesser figure of 59,260 as eligible for priority support (MHCLG, 2018). Officially, the level of homelessness in England was recorded as being 59,260. This is the clearest example of how the UK government and Local Authorities in England adopt a narrow definition of homelessness. Based on Bramley's (2017) estimates, 40,000 households categorised as core homelessness and the entire 125,330 cohort of wider homelessness does not even receive official homelessness assessments from Local Authorities – let alone the offer of help.

The work of Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox, and Watts (2016; 2017; 2018) in collaboration with Crisis has helped to show some of the reasons behind the sharp rises in all forms of homelessness since 2010. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (2017), by 2017, the official figures for how many households assessed by Local Authorities had risen by 44% since 2010. There was an increase of 29% in relation to the number of households categorised as 'priority need' since 2010 (ibid). However, the official figures still mask the true scale. During this time, changes to Local Authority Housing Options services – adopting a more pro-active approach to prevention – account for some of the shortfall of official homelessness figures compared to gross estimates presented by Crisis (ibid). It became common practice for Local Authorities to discharge their duty of care (under the Localism Act 2011) through referring claimants to

private accommodation providers. In such cases, no formal homelessness assessment would be made and figures would not be counted in official homelessness statistics (Shelter, 2012). The subsequent figure of households reclassified as 'homelessness prevention' was a staggering 199,630 during 2016-2017 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2018). This represents a 42% rise in prevention activity since 2010 (165,200) (ibid). However, this does not represent an improvement of homelessness prevention. Instead, it represents an increasing use of unsupported temporary accommodation, which is classified by Bramley (2017) as a wider form of homelessness.

Discharging duties to the private sector through the Localism Act 2011 had the effect of pushing increasing numbers of people into hidden forms of homelessness. Fitzpatrick et al. (2017) considered that single person households were most likely to be referred to unsupported temporary accommodation because they were least likely to be even assessed for priority need by Local Authorities. Data from an England wide 2017 freedom of information request estimated that at least 51,500 single adults reside in unsupported temporary accommodation (Maciver, 2018). This estimate was based on the numbers of housing benefit claims coming from 'Bed & Breakfast' residences – the most likely form of unsupported temporary accommodation.

### 2.3.3 Further challenges to hegemony through research

In addition to challenging the numbers about homelessness, there are qualitative forms of research that focus directly on challenging how homelessness is conceptualised. These come from the sociological and anthropological traditions and favour a subjective interpretation of the social world. Qualitative approaches are more likely to employ creative and accessible methods. In doing so, they seek to disrupt the normative frames that social problems are viewed through. Farrugia and Gerrard (2016:278) call these approaches “*a more unruly approach to homelessness research*”.

Participatory research is a framework that is not located within any particular academic discipline - it is located in the community. It prioritises the involvement of people who experience social issues in the research process and positions those same people as the main beneficiaries of research (Roy, 2012). Participatory projects often use creative approaches to research design, data generation and dissemination. Community arts projects are a growing form of research exploration in this area. At its best, community art offers a context for reframing old arguments and demystifying complex social issues based on insider knowledge. It has the potential to uncover knowledge that may not be accessible through other modes of research. It also has the potential to lead to transformational social change through praxis (Clennon, Kagan, Lawthom, and Swindells, 2016; Ledger and Edwards, 2011).

In the comprehensive review of participatory arts, the British art historian Claire Bishop (2012) raised a concern about the relationships between ‘professional’ artists and community groups. Whilst collaborations might seek to privilege the experience of marginalised groups, in practice, the commodification of art threatens this process. In participatory art, the “*artist is concerned less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations*” (ibid:2). Art historian Grant Kester (2004) describes the role of artists working in this way as being one of “*context providers rather than content providers*” (ibid:1). It would seem that many participatory arts projects can fall short against this measure. In one recent example of participatory art in Manchester, Lawthom, Sixsmith and Kagan (2007) observed that,

power was explicitly used by artists in order to ensure artistic products were finished and up to standard for an exhibition. In one community centre arts project, artists locked the young participants out of the room in order to finish an exhibit which was then displayed as the work of the young people. (ibid:272-273)

Even creative and inclusive approaches to research run the risk of replicating hierarchical power relationships, which, in turn contaminates the insights of people with lived experience of social issues.

To provide further examples of participatory research, I turn to Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects. PAR can take many forms, it may involve art as a creative approach but equally it may use quantitative measures as a form of stactivism. As an example of a PAR project, *Becoming a Londoner*, was created, written and disseminated entirely by a group of peer

researchers (Refugee Youth, 2009). They were commissioned by the office of the Mayor of London to investigate the experiences of young people who have migrated to the city. They disseminated their findings as theatre performances, targeted at audiences of young people with experience of migration.

Anthropological approaches to understanding homelessness are a further qualitative approach that offer a unique perspective to the field. Of note is Tim Cresswell's (2001) historical work, *The tramp in America*. Drawing on 150 years of history, he scrutinises the changing concept of the 'tramp' in American cultural history. Charting economic developments such as the gold rush and the changing roles of men and women in modern day America, Cresswell (2001) considers that the discourses about homelessness reflect more about society at that time than about homelessness itself. At its core, Cresswell's work shows that knowledge about homelessness is socially constructed.

The themes of power, identity and time have been considered by anthropologists studying poverty and homelessness. Rutz (1992) describes that a capitalist construction of time schedules (consolidated during the industrial revolution) sets and translates the length of a working day and week into economically valued activities. Lovell (1992) continued this discussion by showing that by limiting ourselves to this particular construction of time, other ways of using time – such as leisure time – are perceived as being unproductive, useless or trivial. Lovell (ibid) argues that society faces an existential challenge when confronted by people who structure their lives around



different timeframes. This helps to explain the collective rejection of particular groups of people. Imogen Tyler (2013) describes this as ‘social abjection’ in her book *Revolting Subjects*. This is the process through which specific populations are figured as ‘revolting’ as well as the practices through which these populations ‘revolt’ against their subjectification. She considers examples from contemporary Britain, including the disabled, asylum seekers, ‘chavs’ and Gypsies. Tyler’s (2013) assessment is ultimately an optimistic call for resistance.

In summary, I return to Cronley’s (2010) assessment of research about homelessness. The ways in which research is funded has a direct impact on how homelessness is framed and understood through research. If the MHP (and the research contained in this thesis) are to contribute to transformational change, there must be a collective resistance to hierarchically imposed understandings of both homelessness and of research itself. In the next section of this chapter, I turn to examining a specific feature of why this is important. I consider what the government has implemented in terms of service and welfare reforms related to homelessness over recent years.

## 2.4 Welfare and service reforms

A succession of welfare reforms have been implemented since the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government came into power in 2010 – many as part of the Localism Act 2011. The rhetoric of the Localism Act 2011

extolled the virtues of devolution and local choice that would benefit communities. However, in practice, this Act represented an ideological drive for neoliberalist policies at a local level (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2013). The most significant homelessness related implication of this Act was the accelerated use of the private rented sector in place of social housing. Local Authorities were granted greater flexibility to use the private rented sector in the placement of households and individuals who faced homelessness. In effect, this enabled Local Authorities to discharge their statutory homelessness duties by referring people on to the private sector. This seismic policy shift undermined the social housing settlement in the UK, which had been the most protective welfare measure of the entire welfare state – secure housing (Tunstall, Bevan, Bradshaw, Croucher, Duffy, Hunter, Jones, Rugg, Wallace and Wilcox, 2013; Fitzpatrick et al., 2015). Official homelessness figures show that homelessness from the private rented sector rose dramatically following the introduction of this policy. In 2009, eviction from the private rented sector leading to homelessness represented 11% (4580) of Local Authority acceptances. By 2017, it represented 28% (12,320) (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2018).

Essentially, this policy meant that many households were no longer able to find affordable accommodation. Rental prices in the private rented sector were greater than social housing rental prices. This was compounded by a succession of welfare benefit changes during this time period. Table 2 provides a timeline of some of the key benefit changes that have driven poverty and homelessness in England since 2010.

**TABLE 2: TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT CHANGES FROM 2010 (ADAPTED FROM DALY, 2016)**

Date	Benefit change	Act
2011	<b>Local Housing Allowance (LHA) changes</b> Rates reduced from 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile to 30 <sup>th</sup> percentile of local rental average for new claimants from 2011.	Localism Act 2011
2012	<b>LHA changes</b> Lower LHA rates and caps applied to existing claimants (pre 2011) as their claims were renewed over the year.  Extension of Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) to single claimants aged 25- 34, as well as to those under 25.	Localism Act 2011
2013	<b>‘Bedroom tax’ – Under occupation limits</b> Under-occupation limits for social housing tenants. Lower LHA rates applied to households in temporary accommodation. Maximum benefit cap for out-of-work claimants.	Welfare Reform Act 2012
2013	<b>Universal Credit</b> Rolled out between 2013 and 2018, this reduced benefits in line with austerity measures.	Welfare Reform Act 2012
2014	Increasing conditionality and tougher sanctions were created within income-related Jobseeker’s Allowance and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance and re-assessments of individual claimants.	Welfare Reform Act 2012
2014	<b>Disability Living Allowance was replaced by Personal Independence Payments</b> The disability charity Scope estimates that 607,000 will no longer be eligible to claim benefit under the new system by 2018.	Welfare Reform Act 2012

One of the first changes to welfare payments was through the LHA that was reduced from the local market median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile), to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market level (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015). By 2015, renting property in urbanised areas would become unaffordable for households claiming welfare. A two-bedroom home in the cheapest third (30<sup>th</sup> percentile) of Manchester's 2015 rental market cost £542 a month. Yet the maximum level of LHA a household could claim was capped at £514 (Shelter, 2015). The National Audit Office (NAO) reviewed that this particular policy change was linked to rising levels in homelessness (NAO, 2017).

A further policy change was introduced under the Localism Act 2011. This was the extension of the SAR - formerly the 'single room rate' – to 25-34-year olds. The SAR originally affected only under 25-year olds and meant that claimants were only entitled to the rate for a room in a dwelling of multiple occupancy. This far-reaching policy therefore prevented any adult under the age of 34 from claiming full housing benefit for a single person dwelling.

Further reforms spanning this timeline took place as a result of the Welfare Reform Act (2012). The introduction of the 'Under Occupancy Penalty' in 2013 - anecdotally known as the 'Bedroom Tax'. This financially penalised social tenants of working age in receipt of housing benefit who were deemed to have too much living space in their rented accommodation and effectively 'under-occupying' their homes. Even though support could be provided through Local Authority Discretionary Housing Payments and exemptions were

effectively made on the grounds of disability, the implementation of this penalty was inconsistent and uncoordinated. Individual applicants would be required to submit separate claims for exemptions (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015). These reforms also had a disproportionate impact on women, lone-parents and disabled people (Hudson-Sharp, Munro-Lott, Rolfe and Runge, 2018).

Employment was a further feature of the Welfare Reform Act (2012). Increasing conditionality and tougher sanctions were created within income-related Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Incapacity Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance. An overall benefits cap was introduced in 2013, limiting weekly family rates to £500 and single person rates to £350. A further reduction of approximately 15% was applied in 2016. Further pressure came in 2013/14 through changes to the council tax benefit scheme in England that paved the way for a 10% reduction in Central Government funding for local Council Tax Benefit, which, in nearly all Local Authorities saw a rise in council tax charges (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015).

The much-criticised introduction of Universal Credit was also introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012. During the period of 2012 to 2017, Fitzpatrick et al. (2018) – in a national review of homelessness sector organisations perspectives – found that there was widespread concern across the homelessness sector about the implications of the new system. The security provided by direct housing benefit payments being made to landlords would now be replaced by a system where payments went directly to the

claimant. This appeared to represent an ideological drive to ‘responsibilise’ housing benefit claimants into budgeting their income. However, this policy failed to consider for the pressures faced by the growing numbers of debt burdened households in austerity Britain (Walker, 2012). Disabled groups would also be disproportionately affected by this reform. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (Hudson-Sharp et al., 2018) argued that 450,000 disabled people and their families would be worse off under Universal Credit. Single disabled people in employment were found to be £300 per month worse off when moved on to Universal Credit. The process for implementing reforms to disability benefits was often so stressful that it adversely affected the health and wellbeing of claimants (ibid).

There has been widespread criticism of these policies, and not only from activist groups. The head of the National Audit Office, Amyas Morse suggested that the government had adopted a cavalier approach to welfare reform,

Homelessness in all its forms has significantly increased in recent years, driven by several factors. Despite this, government has not evaluated the impact of its [welfare] reforms on this issue, and there remain gaps in its approach. It is difficult to understand why [DCLG] persisted with its light touch approach in the face of such a visibly growing problem. Its recent performance in reducing homelessness therefore cannot be considered value for money (NAO, 2017:2)

In addition to this raft of reforms to the benefit system, welfare services have also been significantly eroded since 2010. English Local Authorities faced average real-term cuts of almost 26% between 2010 and 2015 (Smith, Phillips, Simpson, Eiser and Trickey, 2016). Under the Localism Act 2011, previous

'ring-fenced' funding channels for homelessness services – such as the Supporting People initiative – were removed (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015). For the first time since 2003, there was no longer a dedicated national funding stream to secure the expansion of homelessness and resettlement services. The impact of this policy was immediate; 58% of homelessness projects received funding reductions in 2011/2012, with the average cut being 15% (Homeless Link, 2011).

Even still, it was considered that homelessness services faced smaller than average cuts in comparison to other areas of the public sector (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015). However, there can be little doubt that Local Authority homelessness services were under extreme pressure (Homeless Link, 2014). The media website, *Inside Housing* reported that local authority homelessness budgets for single person households had been cut by 26% in the three years to 2013/14 (Spurr, 2014). Worse still, housing welfare services in total had been cut by 46% in real terms between 2010 and 2014 (Perry, 2014).

These national cuts were not evenly distributed at a geographical level (Smith et al., 2016). Based on a new funding formula, cuts to net service spending tended to be larger in those areas that were initially more reliant on central government grants. According to Davoudi and Madanipour (2015),

whilst the 2010 comprehensive spending review cut local governments budgets by an average of 4.4%, some of the most deprived Local Authorities received cuts of 8.9% compared to cuts of only 1% or less in the most affluent ones. (ibid: 94)

MCC, like many other northern areas was disproportionately affected (Fitzgerald, 2015). As an example, in 2015, Manchester's spending power had reduced by £28 million in comparison to Surrey County Council's spending power, which was raised by £27 million. For Manchester, this represented a real term reduction of 5.1% from 2014 levels and made Manchester one of the worst hit areas in the country (Otterwell and Fitzgerald, 2014). The impact of these cuts was reported in *The Guardian Newspaper*, where it was described that 150 hostel bed spaces would have to be immediately withdrawn (Pidd, 2015b). Newcastle City Council was similarly affected – and, in a comparison with Surrey County Council, Harris (2014) calculated that between 2010 to 2013 cuts were about £162 per resident in Newcastle compared to £16 per resident in Surrey.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has considered some of the debates and shared the context around homelessness during the time when the MHP came into being in 2016. I have navigated the key considerations that relate to the modern-day efforts to understand and attend to homelessness. By framing homelessness as a wicked social problem, it is possible to articulate the circular challenges faced in defining, enumerating, researching and attending to homelessness. This chapter also shows that any given perspective of homelessness says as much about the perspective holder than it does about homelessness itself.



I have drawn on counter hegemonic perspectives and research approaches to understand and theorise the methodological space and context for this research. As someone who has experience of working in public services and delivering a range of government funded social care and offending behaviour interventions, this exploration has challenged my own understandings of the types of research that should be used to create the conditions for social justice. I had previously subscribed to the idea that the RCT was a necessary measure of success. However, I also recognised that government funded research both produced, and was the product of hegemonic understandings of social issues. Whilst still believing that projects such as Housing First have merit, they are the product of a populist approach to policy creation. By 2016, every major political party proposed policies to address homelessness. Yet, these policies focussed on visible forms of homelessness such as rough sleeping as opposed to wider forms of homelessness.

This chapter about homelessness in the UK has demonstrated the urgent need for radical change in terms of policy and practice in the wider homelessness sector. It explains that the key drivers to rising levels of homelessness since 2010 have been intentionally austere political policies. Certain areas of the country, such as Manchester received disproportionate shortages to their welfare services, leading to greater demands for shrinking services in those locales. This, in turn helps to contextualise the public protests that took place in Manchester in 2015 and the justification for this research.

In summary, I consider that defining homelessness is not a complex matter. There are many different definitions of homelessness to choose from. These various definitions exist along a continuum ranging from maximalist to minimalist conceptualisations of homelessness (Jacobs et al., 1999). The difficulty arises in trying to get multiple organisations and governing bodies to agree to adopting a unified definition (Downie, 2018). This problem reflects broader ideological clashes in society between neoliberal and socialist politics.

As I have explained in *Chapter One* of this thesis, in 2016 the MHP created a Charter that provided a set of rights for people experiencing homelessness in Manchester. According to that Charter, *“People with experience of homelessness have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness, and in wider society”* (Street Support Network, 2016). Through a practice known as co-production, this created the opportunity to challenge hegemonic understandings and practices of homelessness sector from within the sector. Having already outlined how activism created the conditions for co-production in Manchester’s homelessness sector, and also the need for challenging hegemonic understandings of homelessness per se, the next chapter of this thesis will focus on co-production as a means to transforming the public sector.

## Chapter Three – Co-production in the Public Sector

### 3.1 Introduction

When the MHP was launched on the steps of Manchester Town Hall in May 2016, those present were optimistic about how people with direct experience of homelessness would play a leading role in shaping the future of homelessness services in the city. At this same time, voters across the UK were debating a different democratic issue; one of international significance. It was only five weeks after the launch of the MHP that the country would go to the polling stations and decide in a national referendum whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union or leave. Professor of politics at the University of Sheffield, Matthew Flinders (2017), considered at the time that this crude choice offered little room for nuanced, multifaceted answers built on compromise. In the months that followed the UK's decision to leave the European Union, public opinion was polarised, so too was politics. In a year when public faith in politics was put to the test, the term "*post-truth*" was declared by lexicographers at the Oxford Dictionaries as its international word of the year (Oxford Languages, 2016). The use of this term had surged by 2,000% since 2015. Another political scientist from the University of Sheffield, Claudia Chwalisz (2017), published *The People's Verdict: Adding Informed Citizen Voices to Public Decision-Making*. In this book, Chwalisz (ibid) considered the potential for creating meaningful and long-term opportunities for citizens to

participate in public decision making in the UK. Fundamental to this idea was the need move away from populist short-term policies created to win elections, instead focussing on embedding policies in the long-term needs of communities.

Like much of the literature about inclusivity and participation of civic governance, Chwalisz (2017) considers a range of mechanisms for change, all of which derive from the field of political sciences. They include 'participatory governance', 'collaborative governance' 'deliberative mini-publics', 'democratic innovations' and 'citizens juries' (Fung and Wright, 2003; Asnell and Gash, 2008; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006; Smith, 2009; Smith and Wales, 2000). Each of these mechanisms broadly has the same intention; shifting decision-making power away from small groups of elected officials, towards greater numbers of community groups at a local level.

In looking beyond the field of political sciences, the MHP have adopted terminology and practice that is more closely associated with the sociological tradition – namely co-production. Whilst the literature about co-production in the public sector is drawn from the academic fields of sociology, and social policy, the concept was originally developed by political scientists in the USA. The term co-production itself is considered to be an umbrella term. It incorporates a range of mechanisms that directly engage members of the public in any - or all - aspects of governance, design, production, delivery and service evaluation. The overlap between these different terms, mechanisms, applications and academic

disciplines is considerable. This chapter examines co-production as a theoretical and practical process that can be used in the public sector.

This chapter begins by tracing the origins of co-production as a concept. In the 1970's, a group of political scientists in Indiana State University, USA had been undertaking global fieldwork examining the various collective approaches to managing resources and providing public services. The Nobel Laureate economist Elinor Ostrom (1990) consolidated these ideas in the development of a theoretical framework that would challenge the two dominant modes of governance around the world – namely leviathan governance and marketisation. Ostrom (ibid) presented a “*third way*” of governing the commons; positioning communities as active and core stakeholders in the creation of public resources. Ostrom (ibid) used longitudinal case studies to show that communities had been effectively managing their own resources (such as fuel, agriculture and water) for generations without exploitation and corruption of larger, macro-institutional or profit-making forces. I discuss Ostrom's (ibid) theoretical model of a ‘common pool resource’, and how it might be translated into modern forms of public administration. This discussion draws on the work of academics from the Indiana State University during the 1980's who considered these theoretical issues in a range of public services including metropolitan policing and education.

Co-production in the public sector evolved out of this work in the USA. At its core, it represents a renegotiated relationship between regular producers

(such as the state) and non-regular producers (such as citizens, community members or service users) (Parks, Baker, Kiser, Oakerson, Ostrom, Ostrom, Percy, Vandivort, Whitaker and Wilson, 1981; Brudney and England, 1983). The latter group take a more active role than before. However, the precise nature of this role is not prescribed; it is dependent on localised conditions. Durose and Richardson (2015), as well as Needham (2008) provide valuable modern-day UK interpretations of co-production that are of benefit to this present research project. Drawing on these sources, this chapter examines issues from a social policy perspective. My intention is to examine how a concept that has been described as a “*black box*”, a “*slippery concept*” and even a “*magic concept*”, might become a mainstay in the social policy landscape of the UK (Durose, Needham, Mangan and Rees, 2017; Needham and Carr, 2009; Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers, 2015; Pollitt and Hupe, 2009).

In an effort to demystify co-production in the public sector, I identify two critical features that must be considered; I refer to these as the ‘who?’ and the ‘what?’ of co-production. Starting, with the ‘who?’ of co-production, I introduce the various types of ‘non-regular’ producer who might be invited to co-produce services. The terms ‘citizen’, ‘public’, ‘community’ and ‘service user’ is interchangeably used across a great deal of the literature (Voorberg et al., 2015). I demonstrate how ill-conceived conceptualisations have a damaging impact on the credibility of co-production projects and are unlikely to lead to any meaningful forms of change. Using examples from the work of John Alford (2009) at the Melbourne Institute of Government Studies, I demonstrate that

loose conceptualisations of the public and their role in the production of public services can lead many to believe that co-production in the public sector is nothing more than a case of *“old wine, in new bottles”* (Pestoff, 2012:5). By way of structuring my discussion around the needs of the MHP and this research project, I specifically consider the academic literature about co-production between organisations and direct service users (rather than between organisations and other community groups). This approach reflects how the MHP prioritises the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness above other community groups who might have competing interests. The inherent problems of this MHP approach are considered. These relate to how Local Authorities in the UK have to manage their multiple responsibilities for a range of public groups, each with their own interests (Stanley, 2016).

I then introduce the second critical feature – the ‘what?’ of co-production. At this stage, I present four different ways in which organisations and service users might co-produce together in the public sector. These examples have been chosen to reflect the diversity of projects that can exist under co-production – as an umbrella term. The first case example describes the governance of a residential care home (Bassani, Cattaneo and Galizzi, 2016), where resident’s next of kin were invited to contribute strategically to services. The second example is the original example of participatory budgeting from the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre (Baiocchi, 2003). Here, residents from deprived areas of the city were invited to decide how a proportion of the local government budget was spent in their area. The third and fourth examples of co-production

relate to the delivery of services. I discuss the personalisation of social care services (characterised by personalised budgets that grew out of the independent living movement from the 1970's in the UK). I compare this approach to membership-based services where service users are invited to become partners of a co-operative organisation and as such, have a greater say in the strategic direction of their services.

Whilst the term co-production implies that power is being shared, rarely do the powerful give up control easily. As such, each participatory example discussed in this chapter should be examined for evidence of obscuring power inequalities under the guise of co-production. Drawing on the work of John Gaventa (2006), this can be accomplished by asking 'how were these spaces created', 'what are the terms of engagement' and 'whose interests they serve?'

These different examples of co-production with service users demonstrate the range of possibilities that can be realised through blurring the boundaries between organisations and service user groups. Needham and Carr (2009) have introduced a typology of co-production. This distinguishes between some of the more ameliorative forms of participation and projects that more closely reflect Ostrom's (1990) vision of transforming community governance. This typology offers a framework from which co-production projects can be evaluated. It is this framework that I refer to in the final chapter of this thesis when I produce a multi-dimensional analysis of co-production in the MHP. Before exploring any of these issues I shall return to introducing the structure of



this present chapter about co-production. It mirrors the structure of this introduction, as such, I will now turn to introducing the origins of co-production.

### 3.2 Origins

The roots of co-production can be found in the civil rights movements of the 1960's, particularly in the USA. As African Americans fought for equal rights under the law, there was small but growing body of academic work proposing that participatory decision making in civic governance would bring about greater equality in communities. Sherry Arnstein was a special assistant working in the United States Department of Housing, Education, and Welfare when she published the highly influential journal article *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* in 1969. This paper is significant because it was released in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act 1968 that prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion or nationality. Arnstein (1969) described that citizens were often placated and manipulated by governing authorities. However, if citizens were provided greater responsibility and control over public authorities, this could potentially lead to a fairer distribution of power in society,

It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future..... In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. (ibid:216)

It was Elinor Ostrom's research from the 1970's onwards that developed these ideas to show how communities can effectively manage their resources without the involvement of governments or private companies. In her early research, Ostrom and colleagues examined the problems of public service delivery in metropolitan areas – particularly policing (Ostrom, Parks and Whitaker, 1978; Ostrom and Smith, 1976; Ostrom and Ostrom, 1977). They considered the complex interrelationships between localised police forces and state police departments. Police response times were found to be quicker in smaller police forces than in larger ones. So too, smaller police forces were able to solve crime more effectively. This was suggested to be due to the deeper relationships that the smaller forces cultivated with communities. Essentially, in these cases, community members were taking an active role in helping the police to do their job. Ostrom and Ostrom (1977) even demonstrated that smaller police forces were more cost effective than larger ones.

Over the next ten years, Ostrom (1990) developed these ideas, culminating in a comprehensive theoretical contribution to the field, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Whilst politics in the global West had been preoccupied by the apparent choice between capitalism and communism, Ostrom's (ibid) research brought forward the 'community' as a key figure in the governance of communities. Here, a wide range of industrial examples were used to demonstrate that modern day communities could manage common resources, such as agriculture, water

resources, fishing and forestry effectively away from state control or market dominance. Examples such as the Raymond ground water basin in California, USA showed how supply and sustainability problems caused by competition between water authorities were resolved through mutual arrangements between municipal authorities to pool resources. Moreover, examples where community stakeholders had acted out of self-interest to deplete resources (known as 'the tragedy of the commons') were used to develop a set of implementation principles to strengthen how community resources could be fairly distributed. This emerged as a system referred to as *common pool resources*. Local producers were known as "*appropriators*" (ibid:34), each with equal rights to the commons. Eight design principles underpinned sustainable common pool resources. The first principle focussed on defining the nature of the project. The community stake holders must make that decision collectively. The second, third and fourth principles helped to ensure that rules for managing common pool resources were fair and enforced fairly by the collective, as opposed to an outside or biased authority. Principles five and six outlined processes for implementing graduated sanctions for transgressions by appropriators and conflict resolution mechanisms that ensured that the community could self-regulate. Principles seven and eight recognised the need for appropriators to have legal rights for protection and to self-organise within a supportive macro structure.

### 3.3 Co-production in the public sector

Ostrom's sizable contribution to research about civic involvement in the production of community resources is often overlooked in modern day iterations of co-production in the public sector. In the 1980's and early 1990's, a group of ideas known as 'New Public Management' dominated the public sector in the UK and USA. During this time, policy and practice took a turn towards 'efficiency' rather than 'equity' (Hood, 1991). Indeed, Hodge (2019) described that this period marked the beginning of a global wave of privatisation and welfare professionalism.

By the late 1990's in the UK, alternatives to New Public Management began to surface in the broader policy landscape. It is from this period that I consider co-production in the Public Sector. There remains some theoretical ambiguity in relating Ostrom's (1990) common pool resource model to the public sector; there is a difference between 'producing goods' and 'producing services'. Most 'common pool resources' focus on the production of tangible products. However, services such as schools or social care, require the active engagement of both the provider and recipient to create the outcome. Moreover, the quota of these services remain a political – rather than practical - decision (Whitaker, 1980; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Whitaker (1980) articulated this difference in a paper about co-production that emerged from a Theory and Policy Analysis Workshop in Indiana State University USA in 1980,

Most economic activity - including that of many public agencies - is directed toward the production of goods. Raw materials are

transformed into products which can then be delivered to consumers. Services are not like that. Education or health care or crisis intervention have as their primary objective the transformation of the consumer. (ibid:240)

Whitaker (ibid) suggests that co-production the public sector relates to citizens actively engaging with service providers. Moreover, that co-production has *always* been a part of public services, long before the term 'co-production' was used. This can be seen in examples presented by John Alford (2009), an Australian researcher who has written extensively on co-production in the public sector. Alford (ibid) published a series of case studies showing the routine use of citizen input into all aspects of service delivery. Three particular studies showed how postal services in the USA, UK and Australia each used the active engagement of citizens – as co-producers – to improve postal delivery systems by getting all members of the public to actively use post (or zip) codes. Changing public behaviour in this way in the 1960's facilitated the introduction of electronic systems that would significantly improve the speed and reliability of how mail was processed and delivered from then on. A more detailed example of these types of complex public sector relationships was shown through an operational analysis of the Melbourne Fire Authority. In this example, Alford (ibid) demonstrated that there were multiple agencies involved in the process of fire prevention: a water authority, highways association and several insurance companies. Additionally, the necessary input of the public was required to alert authorities to the presence of a fire. Here, Alford (ibid) suggested that co-production can involve business-to-business collaborations alongside a minimal

level of citizen input. If co-production has already been a feature of public services, then the possibility of co-production transforming public services is unlikely. It is for these reasons that Pestoff (2012:5) describes some examples of co-production as being “*old wine in new bottles*”.

However, this is not the only interpretation of co-production. There are others who consider that co-production can potentially become the means to reducing inequality in the UK (Coote, 2011). This was the view of the left leaning think tank - the New Economics Foundation - in their response to Prime Minister David Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ policy. The short lived ‘Big Society’ programme intended to enhance community cohesion across the country. It was flawed, not in its intent, but in its execution (Ledwith, 2011; Fisher, Lawthom and Kagan, 2016). It overlooked the need for economic investment in deprived communities and a structured approach to democratic participation in civic life.

In the late 1990’s, co-production received a renewed level of attention in the UK as part of the New Labour government’s attempt to bring public sector organisations closer to service users (Batalden, Batalden, Margolis, Seid, Armstrong, Opiari-Arrigan and Hartung, 2015; Bracci and Chow, 2016; Christie and Hargreaves, 1998; Parker and Gallagher, 2007). The virtues of co-production were extolled during this resurgence. Edgar Cahn’s (2000) much cited book, *No More Throwaway People* positioned marginalised groups in society as being the untapped community resource waiting to embrace

stewardship. Towards the end of the Labour government, Boyle, Stephens and Ryan-Collins (2008) outlined a manifesto for co-production describing it as the means to systemic change that can bring about social justice and economic equality. Despite this renewed attention, and recognition of the need to challenge economic inequality, co-production in the public sector remains an ambiguous concept. It has been described as elusive “*black box*” (Durose et al., 2017:2) and a slippery concept (Needham and Carr, 2009). It has also been particularly resilient to scrutiny and research (Verschuere, Brandsen and Pestoff, 2012).

In trying to define co-production, there is general consensus that citizens must be at the heart of co-produced projects (Brudney and England, 1983). However, as Alford’s (2009) examples demonstrate, the duration and quality of their involvement is often poorly defined, if at all (Verschuere et al., 2012). This makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from specific projects and between different examples. Any given definition of co-production therefore needs to reflect the unique features of the local setting. A globalised definition of co-production will undoubtedly remain abstract and academic. This can be seen in Ostrom’s (1996) overarching definition of co-production – which, although helpful, requires further refinement to apply it to specific settings,

We developed the term “coproduction” to describe the potential relationships that could exist between the “regular” producer (street-level police officers, school teachers, or health workers) and “clients” who want to be transformed by the service into safer, better educated, or healthier persons. Coproduction is one way that synergy

between what a government does and what citizens do can occur.  
(ibid:1079)

In terms of what further refinement might be required, this relates to defining the working agreements between those ‘regular producers’ and ‘clients’. This will be different depending on *who* the regular producer is (their role within a hierarchical organisation) and *what part* of the service delivery process they intend to co-produce (governance, design or delivery) (Joshi and Moore, 2004). By considering these technical aspects of organisational co-production, it might be possible to imagine the role of clients as being more than a user of services. The integration of clients at strategic levels of an organisation could move co-production closer to a model where appropriators are able to govern the commons and design their own common pool resource. With these considerations in mind, I have structured the following two sections of this chapter around two key questions that examine the transformational possibilities of co-production in the public sector; I call these questions the ‘who?’ and the ‘what?’ of co-production. I shall examine these in turn.

### 3.3.1 The ‘who’ of co-production?

Hodgkinson, Hannibal, Keating, Chester and Bateman (2017) argue that ‘the public’ are largely considered to be a homogenised group in the field of co-production. This loose conceptualisation of the public is part of the problem when it comes to defining and researching co-production in the public sector.



Voorberg et al. (2015) systematically reviewed 122 articles and books about co-production, observing that the terms 'public', 'citizen' and 'service user' were interchangeably used to describe 'non-regular' producers. In practice, significant theoretical and practical differences separate these distinct groups, leading to very different types of projects. Whilst emergency services and some public services do not differentiate between 'service users' and the citizenry at large, this is not the case for most public services. In tightly defined service sectors such as homelessness, service user interests are likely to be different to the interests of wider citizenry. Moreover, the public sector has only limited scope to prioritise the concerns of service user groups over their broader responsibilities to the wider public (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2013). Takahashi (1996) and Stanley (2016) both highlight this tension when considering the process of obtaining planning permission to build a homelessness hostel in an urban setting. Whilst prospective residents of the hostel might require accommodation close to local town amenities (in part, because the cost of traveling is high) local homeowners and businesses cite crime and anti-social behaviour as the reasons for wanting homelessness shelters away from town centres. These multifaceted dilemmas relate directly to the wicked nature of homelessness that I have explained in the second chapter of this thesis (Rittel and Weber, 1973). Here, wicked social problems are difficult to solve because they encompass contradictory public opinion based on different stakes in the economy, the housing market and politics. These issues led Takahashi (1996) to conclude that politics will always fail to address homelessness because the

public will not call for it. In the populist media, even the legitimacy of people experiencing homelessness as active citizens is called into question (Tyler, 2013; Rainey, 2016). These types of difficulties in bringing together the divergent interests of different community groups led Osborne and Strokosch (2013) to conclude that co-production in the public sector faces far greater complexity than is generally assumed.

In the MHP, the 'who?' of co-production is complicated by the ambitious effort to include the entire city in the process of change. MCC were keen to encourage every private and public organisation and every individual citizen to contribute to the MHP. This view was described in an MCC report for the internal Health Scrutiny Committee in the following way,

*The vision is to end homelessness and the Manchester Homelessness Partnership calls on the citizens of Manchester, the city council, healthcare and other public services, charities, faith groups, businesses, institutions and other organisations to adopt the values of the Charter (MCC, 2018:5)*

Inviting everyone to the co-production table might be well intentioned, but it risks obfuscating the 'who?' of co-production in the MHP. The city council want different organisations and community groups to sign up to the values of a Charter that prioritises the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness in future decision making. However, what is to say that this wide range of organisations and community groups will not bring their own interests and expectations to the co-production table? As Takahashi (1996) and Stanley (2016) have demonstrated, these multiple stakeholders will undoubtedly have

diverging interests. The research presented in this thesis will scrutinise this issue directly.

### 3.3.2 The 'what' of co-production?

In addition to the need for define who the co-producers are, there is also a need to clarify the scope and nature of their collaboration. In exploring these potential differences - that I describe as the 'what?' of co-production - I present four key examples from practice in the public sector. The examples that I present are from the UK, Italy and Brazil. Offering an international perspective, particularly from the global south provides a valuable range of examples drawn from academics and activists expressly interested in developing more egalitarian ways of governing. The examples have been selected to demonstrate the different applications of co-production in practice. Each example focuses on a different aspect of organisational and operational activity. Verschuere et al. (2012) offers technical terms to describe these; co-governance, co-planning, co-design and co-delivery.

Whilst each of these spaces offer the possibility of meaningful citizen engagement in the production of services, these spaces are not truly equal. As Gaventa (2006) explains, it is the organisation who established them, including the terms of engagement. As such, consideration should be given to the nature of these 'spaces'; closed, invited or created. Closed spaces of participation don't pretend to broaden the boundaries of inclusion. Decisions are made behind

closed doors, for the people, not by the people. Invited spaces open the doors and seek input (of varying forms) from outsiders (within pre-defined terms and conditions). Finally, there are created spaces of participation. These, often organically formed groups are made up of like-minded people with shared concerns and common pursuits (Cornwall, 2002). They locate themselves outside of hegemonic power domains, instead building a new social movement. In this thesis, I will share examples of these three types of 'space' in the MHP. Before doing that, I shall return to introducing international examples of co-production.

I start by providing an example of co-governance between organisations and service user groups. The case of a residential care home in northern Italy demonstrates this well (Bassani et al., 2016). A series of complaints about care standards in the home led the Mayor of the municipality to implement a far-reaching process of change. As this Mayor already had an academic interest in service user involvement, they consulted with residents and family members, inviting them to participate in the governance of the care home. A permanent committee for resident's relatives was created, where representatives would sit on the board and report directly to the local government. Initially, this led to changes in services and more staff hired for residents. Over time, there was a greater focus on client satisfaction due to the involvement of the committee of relatives. It was widely accepted that the participation of relatives drove organisational change and increased the quality of care. Locating co-production at the top of the organisational hierarchy lead to fundamental changes in

services caused by the relocation of power and control at senior levels (Penny, Slay and Stephens, 2012). A critical factor for its success was the willingness of a local leader to share power with the relatives of residents. This is an uncommon characteristic in hierarchical organisations, often where there is *“political and professional reluctance to lose status and control”* (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2012:1131).

Moving on to present a technical form of co-production, I now share an example of co-planning. In the public sector, co-planning is a process by which the public are involved in strategically deciding what community services are most needed locally (Pollitt, Bouckaert and Löffler, 2006). Drawing on a specific case study from Brazil, this approach has been used in the favelas. Favelas are specific areas of poverty on the outskirts of cities. A favela typically comes into being when squatters occupy vacant land at the edge of a city and construct shanties of salvaged or stolen materials. In the municipal province of Porto Alegre, Brazil, the residents of the favela's are recognised as having distinct 'place based' needs that can be addressed through participatory budgeting (Baicocchi, 2001; Baicocchi, 2003; Novy and Leubolt, 2005). This has since become known as the Porto Alegre model. The model is essentially very simple; people who live in the favelas decide the priorities and projects that make up a specific public budget allocated to their region. This was implemented during the early 1990's and is characterised by a yearly cycle of assemblies populated by favela residents. By 2004, this had become a long-form deliberative process where the assembly learned and adapted to the

changing conditions of the favelas. The results showed that after eight years of implementing participatory budgeting, the percentage of households served by the sewage system rose from 49% to 85%. In the same time span, half of the regions unpaved streets were paved, and the number of students in elementary and secondary schools doubled (Wampler, 2010). Part of the unique feature about this model is that it adopts a 'place based' approach to co-production. Geographical areas of maximal deprivation are prioritised as a way of improving conditions and structurally addressing some of the problems that lead to homelessness.

In UK contexts, there have been limited pilots of participatory budgeting during the New Labour years. Notably, these were in Bradford and Newcastle, yet many projects closed towards the end of the Labour government by 2010 (Davidson and Elstub, 2014). However, Scotland began a process of implementing participatory budgeting since becoming a devolved power in 1997. The Scottish Government aims to make at least 1% of all Local Authority budgets decided by participatory budgeting by 2021 (Harkins and Escobar, 2015). During the implementation phases of this project, the focus has been on ensuring that participatory budgeting projects are targeted at the areas of Scotland with the most deprivation (Harkins, Moore and Escobar, 2016). In the Scottish context, it is yet to be seen whether these policies will be translated into better local services for marginalised communities (ibid).

Moving now to examples of co-delivery as forms of co-production. Co-delivery is typically targeted at the front line of services, where workers – or as Ostrom (1996:1079) described them, “*street level bureaucrats*” – interface with “*clients*”. I will present the personalisation of social care in the UK as one potential example of co-delivery before introducing a second example as a very different form of co-delivery. The personalisation of social care services in the UK grew out of the independent living movement from the 1970's. It marked a change from a system that *provided* services to one where people *decided* for themselves how their needs should be met (Hurst, 2003). Personal budgets were a large part of personalisation; they involved the service user designing their own package of support (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2008). Deciding how a personal budget is spent is based on a negotiation between a social worker and service user, then endorsed by a care panel. However, it is through this hierarchical involvement of a care panel that personalisation is different to co-production. Braci and Chow (2016) argue that personalisation may only be considered an example of co-production if the negotiated outcome between social worker and service user is fully accepted – without amendments – by the care panel.

The personalisation of social care services has been criticised on two counts. First, on how it pushes an agenda of individualism rather than radically reforming services (Boyle et al, 2008). As an individualised approach it also imparts a consumer model of care that undermines the value of mutual support networks (ibid). The second criticism of personalisation relates to how it

‘responsibilises’ service users whilst divesting the state of its responsibilities for welfare provision. In response to these criticisms, I present the fourth example of co-production. This proposes a personalised approach to services but also includes mutual support networks and the opportunity for transforming services.

The fourth example of co-production is known as the Keyring Project – a third sector, UK based organisation providing supported housing services to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities (Poll, 2007). The Keyring Project rejects individualised conceptions of service users and have developed a service model based on structured peer support networks. Supported by a formal volunteering programme, networks between service users were developed to create a platform where people could share their skills with each other and the wider community. In practice, the lines between ‘worker’ and ‘service user’ were appropriately blurred, creating a community of mutual support. Since the early 1990’s, this project has progressed to embedding mutual support networks across the country as well as within their organisation. A membership system was developed where people using services joined the organisation. As members, they became involved in the recruitment of staff. Also, representatives from the membership formally joined the Board of Trustees. Part of the success of this project has been the long-term commitment to its members – recognising that it takes time to nurture and develop the collective strength of its membership.



The Keyring Project challenges the ‘taken for granted’ hierarchical nature of service delivery in the public sector. However, even this transformational approach has failed to transform the macro level approaches to providing public services. In an age of commissioning and outsourcing contracts to private organisations, the role of the state as a provider of public services has been shrinking. In this context, transformational approaches to co-production tend to take place in third sector organisations, that are, in turn commissioned by Local Authorities.

### 3.3.3 A typology of co-production in the public sector

Collectively, the four case examples presented in the previous section of this chapter demonstrate the range of ways that co-production manifests in the public sector. In the same way that homelessness is a wicked social problem, co-production has been described as a “magic concept” (Pollitt and Hupe, 2009). It remains conceptually vague due to the multiplicity of ways that it can be applied to services. In this sense, it can be politically interpreted in different ways. Implementing co-production in a macro-capitalist context, under New Public Management approaches will lead to an emphasis on performance monitoring and efficiency. However, implementing co-production as an ideological alternative to macro-capitalist systems will lead to an emphasis on the participation of excluded or marginalised groups from society. In turn, this can lead to changing the way organisations are measured to more closely

reflect the interests of service users. Voorberg et al.'s (2015) systematic review of co-production criticises the latter approach for its lack of specificity in outcome measurement. However, this is to be expected based on the public management focus of the paper. In this article, co-production is couched in economic terms. They emphasise that co-production is generally unlikely to lead to short-term increases in effectiveness (by standard management measures). They cite examples of neighbourhood safety programmes and household recycling initiatives that actually led to short-term decreases in service productivity (Ben-Ari, 1990; Meijer, 2011).

For others though, co-production should not be measured in economic terms. The establishment of democratic spaces creates the opportunity to move beyond performance management metrics. In their review of public service co-production, Bracci, Fugini and Sicilia, (2016) considered that co-production cannot be measured using these traditional New Public Management metrics. They assert that co-production is,

not a zero-sum process though: it requires education, skills, proper tools, awareness and responsibility from both governments and citizens. Thus, the expected benefits are not guaranteed, but when properly managed, co-production might generate not only better services for service users but also values for the community as a whole, improving for example democratisation, transparency and responsiveness. (ibid:9)

Co-production therefore has the potential to directly challenge how the public sector has been structured over the last thirty years in the UK. To many people it offers hope of making communities more equal and alleviating poverty

(Boyle et al., 2008). It is ideologically closely aligned with Ostrom's (1990) common pool resource approach to governing the commons. It is ideologically different to any practice from the New Public Management canon. At the beginning of this chapter, I considered how Ostrom's (ibid) ideas about communities sharing resources were based on a different logic to public services that change individuals. The fundamental question about co-production in the public sector, is, *whether a structural approach to economic inequality might become a policy proposal based on the insights of people with lived experience of social problems such as homelessness?* If the public sector were to move towards Ostrom's (ibid) principles, then community resources would be pooled equally, rather than distributed disproportionately to smaller groups at the expense of others. The political question here, is whether the citizens of the UK at large would be prepared to make such a change?

The Scottish Government appear to recognise the long-term structural changes to society that might be an outcome of co-production. In a policy briefing, Power (2013) points to how co-production might challenge a neoliberal political framework. It states,

embedding co-production and community capacity building in organisations and services will require whole systems change which spans commissioning of public services through to organisational and individual performance improvement. (ibid:8)

However, this policy document does not go so far as to suggest that whole systems change would mean the end for commissioning of public

services or individualised outcome measurement. In summary, I am suggesting that change can either be truly transformative or it can take ameliorative forms.

Needham and Carr (2009) used the terms ‘descriptive, intermediate or transformative’ in their typology of co-production. Based on examples generated from a series of public sector and third sector projects, descriptive co-production is defined as services where no change in ‘regular producer’ to ‘non-regular producer’ has taken place. Intermediate co-production can be defined as the recognition of service user efforts without fundamentally changing the delivery systems. Transformative co-production involves service users in a way that fundamentally changes how an organisation is structured. Long-term projects such as the Keyring Project (Poll, 2007) are examples that started off intermediate and developed along the way to becoming transformative in their own organisation. Therefore, the role of smaller intermediary changes may be part of the journey to transformative change of organisations.

The strengths of these projects are at the micro and meso levels, whilst criticisms largely stem from how these inclusive practices are uncomfortably nested within a market driven macro context. Critiques about intermediate forms of co-production have centred upon the intentions of organisations creating space for only limited forms of service user involvement. Indeed, Needham (2008) describes that profit-making organisations are more likely to limit the inclusivity of service users than localised community organisations. Co-production in a neoliberal context is likely to exploit service users by making

them accountable for delivering services, without the necessary remuneration (Durose and Richardson, 2015).

Whilst different organisations might have different interests in co-production than service users do, creating spaces of participation is a good thing in and of itself. In Sherry Arnstein's (1969) article *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, she put it in the following way, "*The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you.*" (ibid:217).

When genuine working relationships have been established in co-production, the benefits might more readily be realised in the service users as much as in the organisations themselves (Durose and Richardson, 2015). Deeply investing in service users creates active agents, who are mobile, adaptable and active in their communities. Bovaird (2007:806) observes how "*the networks created [when community members work alongside professionals] may behave as complex adaptive systems with very different dynamics from provider centric services*". In this sense, it may be the beginning of more subtle, long-term processes that relocate power from the organisations to the people.

### 3.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has broadly introduced the origins, development, nature and scope of co-production in the public sector. Ostrom's work in the 1970's demonstrated how many public sector institutions - such as

policing - would be unable to perform their duties without the active involvement of the communities that they serve. Ostrom's broader work about governing the commons presents the transformational vision for community participation in civic governance. The concepts of equality and mutuality represent the appeal of co-production to many people in the UK who are drawn to it (Coote, 2011). However, a level of theoretical ambiguity around co-production in the public sector remains. Loose conceptualisations of 'the public' and 'community' frequently fail to grasp how complex co-production tends to be (Alford, 2009). I described this problem as the 'who?' of co-production. It is difficult for Local Authorities to meaningfully prioritise the voice of service user groups, when those Local Authorities are structured in their current form – they will be compelled to listen to a range of community interests. The scale of homelessness in the UK during the time of this research has, in some senses increased the urgency of institutions to respond to the crisis. However, this urgency has also created a situation where the MHP have invited everyone to the co-production table without considering the type of co-production they want to undertake. In this chapter, I consider that this is a fundamental barrier to co-production in the public sector – the more perspectives there are in co-production, the greater the risk of sanitising service user insights.

Within these complex arrangements, some of the defining features that make co-production a challenge to current ways of governing can easily get lost. Questions and debates are therefore ongoing about the many ways that co-production can be applied to public services. Within this second concern – the

‘what?’ of co-production – there is the risk that co-production becomes co-opted by neoliberal agendas designed to roll back the state and promote more citizen volunteering in the production of public services. I have offered examples of projects that strategically resist these forces by positioning service users in governing and board level positions. Participatory budgeting in particular is a mechanism for providing people control over the strategic directions of sector wide services. However, in other examples, the practice of co-production can be positioned in individualised terms, leaving the structures of an organisation, institution or system unchanged.

Since 2010, in the UK, nationally implemented public sector austerity measures have largely positioned transformation as a means of cost savings to national government rather than a genuine attempt to relocate power to communities, despite the intentions of the Localism Act (2011). When considering these issues against the newly formed MHP, the possibilities and limitations for changing services based on the involvement of people who have experienced homelessness can be seen. Whilst providing space for people to participate is important, the type of co-production is yet to be decided. In these early phases of the MHP, it will be important to consider the ‘who?’ and the ‘what?’ of co-production.

Voorberg et al. (2015:1334) described co-production as a magic concept of social innovation based on its presumed ability to dissolve complex, multifaceted social dilemmas. Yet, many remain puzzled as to how this change

might take place (Pollitt and Hupe, 2009). For many people in the MHP who have faced homelessness, the term 'co-production' has become synonymous with 'systems change'. The next chapters of this thesis attend to these considerations through an examination of three practices of co-production in the MHP. In turn, this will articulate the specific changes to 'the system' envisioned by co-producers in the MHP. Before doing that, I will first discuss the methodical approaches used in this thesis. This will examine co-production in the research process itself.



## Chapter Four – Understanding and Theorising the Methodological Space and the Context of this Research

A new epistemological frame and set of commitments is needed for those of us concerned with the knotty relation of social science and social justice. PAR offers a flickering light for such work. Always riddled with the dialectics of power, the potential for co-optation and the likelihood of subversion, PAR nevertheless situates research at the heart of social struggle.  
Fine and Torre (2004:27)

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline and discuss the theoretical groundings of this research. In Fine and Torre's (2004) opening comment, they describe Participatory Action Research (PAR) as an being more than a methodological tool; it is both an ethical and epistemological stance. This has been a valuable starting point for understanding and theorising the methodological space and context of this research. It has also informed specific decisions made in the fieldwork of this research to manage the dialectics of power that take place when *regular producers* and *non-regular producers* negotiate new working relationships through co-production. As a researcher in these settings, I also consider my positionality within these dialectics of power. Moreover, I assert the intention of maintaining a positionality from below and I draw on PAR principles to guard against the potential for co-optation. These experiences shaped my

understanding of the limits and possibilities of co-production between organisations and service users, and of the research process itself.

In relation to Fine and Torre's (2004) work in prisons, they described that collective analysis between prisoners and prison guards failed to offer insights that stepped beyond the familiar frame. Hegemonic understandings of prison life, presented by authority figures, sanitised the critical perspectives of people at the receiving end of the justice system (ibid). In the MHP, I needed to therefore step beyond this familiar frame where organisational representatives and people with experience of homelessness came together. This became clear in the first group that I worked with in this research – and subsequent methodological changes were made to guard against these forces in the subsequent two groups. Ethnographic approaches have enabled me to navigate spaces of MHP co-production and retain an epistemological stance that is expanded, engaged, critical and from below. In this chapter, I explore the journey of understanding and theorising the MHP as a site of research enquiry. Through this chapter, I share some of my experiences and positionality; demonstrating that this research offers learning for organisations, activists, and researchers alike.

First, I discuss the critical and emancipatory theory that underpins this study. I refer to the works of Antonio Gramsci (1971), Paulo Freire (1970), Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Noam Chomsky (2012). Each of these philosophers have contributed in a significant way to critical understandings of inequality and

social justice. Collectively, they establish a basis for activism and solidarity in a present-day context.

Second, I relate the work of these philosophers to the approach of critical community psychology - which I use in this thesis (Kagan et al., 2011). In this section, I discuss how this branch of psychology offers the theoretical groundings and physical conditions for attending to social injustice through research. MMU has a rich history of undertaking community psychology research and it is fitting to use these same, locally developed approaches in this project.

Third, I re-introduce the MHP as a site of enquiry, and the Driving Group as the gatekeepers to this research. Within the MHP, the Driving Group's role was to strategically and practically build capacity and support the work of co-production across the homelessness sector. My time with this group was a dialogic form of sensemaking in the research process. I have visually represented this in a rich picture of the MHP presented on (figure 2) of this thesis. This rich picture shows the relationships and networks in the MHP and the complexities that arise when a new sector wide approach is implemented alongside traditional inter-organisational relationships. My work with the Driving Group revealed the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research. This was borne out through our collective negotiation and agreement of the research aim and objectives. This supported the creation of a research project that was to be framed in ways that are important to the MHP as a

citywide network of people and organisations working with the goal of ending homelessness.

Fourth, I introduce the methodological framework that supports this critical approach to research. Using a Venn diagram, the relationships between PAR, ethnography and case study research are considered (figure 3). By discussing these in turn, I show how a case study approach provides a structure that is helpful to understanding the different co-production groups presented in this thesis. Paradoxically, it is this same structure that I resist in order to create space for marginalised insights in the MHP. It is within these critical spaces that I introduce and discuss PAR, then ethnography, and finally the combination of the two. In a discussion about PAR, I examine the limitations and opportunities for participation, as well as the action research cycles that unfolded in this study. In the discussion about ethnography, different approaches and standpoints on this method are introduced and examined. By exploring the different features of both PAR and ethnography, I consider how these approaches will complement each other in this research. Before doing that, I will return to the task of introducing the critical theorists that inform this process.

#### 4.2 Critical theory

Antonio Gramsci (1971), Paolo Freire (1970), Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Noam Chomsky (2012) are four critical theorists whose work has influenced the

theoretical development of this research project. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Italian Marxist philosopher Gramsci (1971:9) made the clear point in his prison diaries that “*all [people] are intellectuals, but not all [people] have in society the function of intellectuals*”. This reflected Gramsci’s (ibid) analysis of societal hegemony that generates sets of values and cultural norms that become common sense understandings of morality used by the ruling elite to maintain structural dominance over others. In this sense, dominant cultural understandings of homelessness are examples of operationalised power in society. These are the processes through which discourses about homelessness are produced. As I have discussed in chapter two of this thesis, the historical geographer, Tim Cresswell (2001) has applied this critical approach to 20<sup>th</sup> century representations of homelessness in the USA. In his study of *The tramp in America*, Cresswell (ibid) argues that cultural representations of homelessness were invented and had the role of facilitating a discourse about wider social concerns of the time such as economic migration or crime. Modes of thought about ‘homelessness’ utilised notions of place, space and mobility to give the world ideological value.

Paulo Freire’s (1970) Latin American liberation movement work has long been recognised as a methodological pedagogy that uses education as the means to challenge oppression in society. When people acquire literacy skills through community education and social critique, this becomes a vehicle to show that education *is* power. This concept introduced the understanding that education, research and action are inseparable. This is described as praxis

– the unification of theory and action. The renowned critical theorist Henry Giroux (2011) elaborates on both Freire and Gramsci's work by articulating the need for a critical praxis in modern day times. He writes,

In the age of zombie politics, there is too little public outrage or informed public anger over the pushing of millions of people out of their homes and jobs, the defunding of schools, and the rising tide of homeless families and destitute communities. Instead of organised, massive protests against casino capitalism, the American public is treated to an arrogant display of wealth greed and power. (ibid:5)

Here, Giroux (ibid) points to mainstream society's disaffection and perceived inability to challenge oppression (in the form of capitalism) through action. The zombie, to which Giroux (ibid) refers, is both the individual and collective contributions to the political system of oppression, which in turn, is both the product and producer of ongoing oppression.

Freire's (1970) critical approach to research calls for conscientisation; the active constructing of one's subjective experience of oppression together with the environment. It is upon this understanding that modern-day PAR rests. Through participation comes demystification and change becomes based on practical knowledge of the system (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). In PAR, people who have experienced oppression, actively challenge the societal misconceptions of them that contribute to their subjugation. In doing so, they reclaim their right as knowledge producers and active agents of change (Voronka, Wise-Harris, Grant, Komaroff, Boyle and Kennedy, 2014). These knowledge contributions are counter hegemonic and have the potential to challenge the dominance of powerful majority perspectives.

Gayatri Spivak's (1988) post-colonial and feminist critique of society's hierarchical structures provides a valuable foundation to Freire's (1970) approach. Spivak (1988) draws on the example of the British colonial abolition of the Hindu rite of "*sati*" (widow sacrifice) to conceptualise power in society. Spivak (ibid) showed how hegemonic discourses and practices systematically erase certain social groups and practices from, at first cultural existence, then physical existence in mainstream society. In a fascinating interview (cited in Tyler, 2013:34), Gayatri Spivak is asked about this process – which Tyler (ibid) describes as social abjection. Spivak refuses to discuss this issue - insisting, "*the argument about the abject and its usefulness is committed to one single historical narrative, the dominant historical narrative*" (Spivak, 1992:59). Spivak's refusal to discuss the abject is a refusal to speak about this issue using the language and perspective of colonialism. Spivak's work has never been more relevant, as Goode and Maskovsky (2001) explain,

[the] regime of disappearance as a mode of governance, economy and politics in which the poor are not so much vilified as they are marginalised or erased by the institutional and ideological aspects of work, social welfare and politics that are dominant under neoliberalism. (ibid:10)

In relating this to the research presented in this thesis, Spivak (1988) describes how opaque the process of disappearance in modern day society has become. In the second chapter of this thesis, I have demonstrated that many households in the UK face homelessness yet are not accounted for in the official UK government figures on homelessness. For Spivak (ibid), there is a

difference between the subaltern and the oppressed; the former is completely invisible in society, whilst the latter has to be noticed to be oppressed.

Households in the UK who live in temporary shelter have access to a revisionist history (a logical cultural story to recognise their role); organisations such as Crisis and Shelter might advocate on their behalf. However, Spivak (ibid) warns that even this advocacy represents a hierarchy where a person's existence is dependent on a higher representative.

What we see, with the MHP, is a space to create a revisionist history. However, this space has not been 'provided' by institutions, it has been fought for. In Noam Chomsky's (2012) analysis of the Occupy movement, he discusses the example of Occupy Wall Street, in 2011, New York, USA. This public space occupation aimed to challenge social and economic inequality and the political structures that allowed the banking industry to cause the financial crisis and not be held culpable for it. Their maxim "*we are the 99%*" referred to income inequality in the USA between the richest 1% and the rest of society at large. Chomsky (ibid) talks about the growing public opposition to the top down model of rule in law that exploits those at the bottom. Yet he – like Giroux (2011) - also warns of the power of capitalist aggression that manufactures consent through propaganda advertising that focusses on individual consumerism (Chomsky, 2012; Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Through populist media, attention can be effectively diverted away from important social matters. In relation to the MHP, recent public portrayals of this work in Manchester have overlooked the role of activist protesters in 2015. The MHP Toolkit (Homeless



Link, 2018), whilst well intentioned in offering guidance to other cities about creating a partnership and Charter, did not refer to the role of political activism that forced a Local Authority to listen and respond. These concerns are critically important in understanding the what has driven local change in the homelessness sector, and – more importantly – who controls the narrative in the future. Ultimately, Chomsky (2012) is optimistic about the future. In an age of social media, there is a growing opportunity to for collective action at a global level.

#### 4.3 Critical community psychology

I draw on a community psychology tradition to underpin the critical approach to research presented in this thesis. In my own personal and professional experiences, summarised in the first chapter of this thesis, I considered an approach to reflexivity that Findlay and Gough (2003:6) describe as “*reflexivity as social critique*”. Through my personal experiences of diversity and my working life as a probation officer, I have experienced how structural injustice and discrimination exists in our society and is steeped in our history. The most vulnerable in society - young women with children – are affected the most by social inequality. Without welfare services to provide the safety net for children and families to thrive, generations of people from neglected areas of the country have become the victims of structural violence. At the same time, the public institutions responsible for delivering effective services have been stripped of the capacity to provide good levels of service.

I have always studied psychology and know it to be an approach that can challenge injustice and discrimination. However, as a western science, psychology is the product of colonial hegemony and, as such, has also been complicit in the production of injustice (Macdonald, 2016). The study of behaviour and the mind tends to be an individual study, removed from context, or seen as just another 'variable'. In response to this, the community psychologists, Prilleltensky and Walsh-Bowers (1993) consider that psychologists with a social responsibility must explicitly focus on social justice,

Socially responsible psychologists are those who denounce by means of systematic critical inquiry the social structures and dynamics that oppress people and denounce those conditions that are emancipatory. (ibid: 93)

Community Psychology in particular, attends to these injustices by setting itself apart from traditional psychology. In this approach, research takes a step back from the individual and considers context; the material context of the world within which we live, and the psychosocial, cultural and political realities of our existence (Orford, 2008). These multi-layered ecological systems within which we live include family, school, work and community that are interrelated through Urie Brofenbrenner's (1979) nested ecological perspective.

During my time working in the public sector over the last fifteen years, I gravitated towards this type of psychological framework. In 2012, I undertook training with Multisystemic Therapy UK and worked as a Multisystemic Therapist in a Local Authority in Greater Manchester. This was an intensive family and community intervention for children and young people who were at

risk of either care or custody due to their offending. In chapter one of this thesis, I explained how this work targeted therapeutic change at a systemic level rather than at an individual level. Moreover, that change was achieved without the need for pathologising individuals, especially young people. My work as a multisystemic therapist, and before that as a probation officer was underpinned by a value of stewardship. This relates to a sense of duty to look after people, to contribute to society. Undoubtedly, this derived from my mother's values. She is a Roman Catholic and took me and my two siblings to church every week during our childhood. The stories that I remember were about service, brotherly love and peace. One story in particular was about St Damien of Molokai. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he was a missionary who ran a ministry on the Hawaiian island of Molokai for people suffering from leprosy. In the story that I was told, people with leprosy were sent to this island, rejected from society. Father Damien, supported them, making their meals, sharing food and dressing their wounds. He ultimately contracted leprosy himself and died of this illness. He was beatified as the Patron Saint of Outcasts by Pope John Paul II in 1995. These teachings from my childhood taught me that we are all the same and that overcoming the prejudice that divides people is the reason why we are here. I have reflected on how this value relates to the critical foundations for this thesis and my positionality within it. When I read Gayatri Spivak's (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak*, I could relate to her construction of societal power as being in the shape of hierarchical pyramid. As power is concentrated at the top of the pyramid, just like gravity, the force of power moves more easily when directed

down. The relative power that I have, as a researcher needs to be applied to research that challenges oppression and supports the redirection of power from bottom-up. Or, even better to redistribute power, in more horizontal ways.

My learning about positionality has since been influenced principally by the work of researchers at MMU, notably by Carol Kagan and colleagues (Kagan et al., 2011). Kagan et al. (ibid) adds to Orford's (2008) ecological analysis of society by prefacing 'community psychology' with 'critical'. Critical community psychology emphasises the use of community psychology as a politically radical challenge to power and oppression. As an approach, it stands in solidarity, and acts collectively with groups – oppressed through marginalisation, violence and cultural imperialism. Drawing on local research practice in Manchester (see Evans et al., 2017), this approach positions itself apart from the proliferation of community research in general that often fails to challenge the political, cultural and societal structures that drive inequality. This project intends to create a "*community centred praxis*" (Singer, 1994) – where the complex term 'community' is firmly rooted in equality and solidarity.

#### 4.4 Phase one - Introducing and working with the MHP Driving Group

In the first chapter of this thesis I introduced the MHP Driving Group. To recap, they are a small collection of twelve key stakeholders from around the MHP including third sector workers, Local Authority representatives and volunteers with personal experience of homelessness. Many had been instrumental in the creation of the MHC in 2016; all were keen to drive change

across the sector. For this reason, at the start of 2017 they changed their name from the Steering Group, to the Driving Group. An outline of the actors in this group is provided in chapter five (table 3). I spent an extended period of time with this group, joining them for seven monthly meetings and accompanying group members to various MHP activities. Table 4 provides details of these meeting that that I attended. Chapter five also contains details of the data used in this research that was drawn from a variety of sources during the phases of this project (tables 7 to 17).

In this section, I share some of my work with this group that casts light on the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research. I refer to this early stage as phase one of this project. Figure 5 presents each phase of this research against a timeline. These early interactions in the field were – as the community researchers Bell and Pahl (2018) suggest they should be – a dialogic form of learning between the university and the MHP. As I learned about MHP, we all learned about what types of research would be of value in this setting. Together, we developed the focus of the research in this thesis. All of our meetings and discussions took place in typical MHP settings – day centre's and café's. Displacing me from the university led to a research frame that was emplaced in the community. As a personal learning experience, I recognised that using academic jargon in community settings was not something that people appreciated. Having shared summaries of our research design that were originally written for an academic audience, the Driving Group told me, quite clearly, that they didn't understand what I was saying. On

reflection, I am still unsure why I used the term “*qualitative preliminaries*” instead of “*speaking to people first*” (fieldnote 26).

The discussions about deciding a research approach were not without their difficulties; different people framed ‘research’ in different ways. Over the course of seven months during my time with this group, I found that collective discussions generally led to consensus. However, I noted that my individual interviews with group members exposed very different opinions that were often not vocalised in group settings. I recognise that it is not uncommon for many people to express different views in different contexts. Indeed, the social psychologist Michael Billig (1996) examined this issue in depth in the book “*Arguing and Thinking*”.

The different perspectives about research were as follows. One group member talked to me about producing an experimental evaluation of co-production that compared Manchester to an equivalent ‘control group’ city. We spent time exploring this together, and both recognised how problematic this would be. The design would lack rigour, validity and reliability. Indeed, exploring this idea in as much depth as we did reflected our naivety about research itself. The meeting concluded with me being jokingly told “*well, you’re the researcher, you solve it*” (fieldnote 6). Other group members interpreted research as being more related to action and social justice. The co-founder of a local charity told me that they wanted a research project that helped to embed co-production and inclusivity in the sector. It seemed that even research *about* co-production was a contested issue in spaces *of* co-production. I reflected at

the time *“It feels as if one side of the Driving Group want to know if co-production works and the other side want to make it work”* (fieldnote 9).

In ongoing discussions during this time, we came to the understanding that research about co-production in the MHP should centre around supporting its implementation rather than evaluating its effectiveness. The sociological programme evaluators Pawson and Tilley (1997) have extensively considered these issues in their book *Realistic Evaluation*. Here, they consider the implications of undertaking a wide range of social programmes in complex community environments. Using their model of realistic evaluation, the MHP is in the early phases of conceptual development – its essence is still being negotiated. These realistic circumstances are the ontological foundations of this project. Research can therefore support this work by building theory about co-production from these real-life settings. As I noted in my fieldnote diary after an unrecorded interview with one Driving Group member,

*He described to me that they are not working from a template of co-production. It is intuitive. With every step that they take with the Council, they learn more and it becomes a little bit more co-produced.* (fieldnote 10)

These early debates reflected the interpretivist ontological nature of reality upon which this thesis rests. Here, in these debates, the nature and relations of reality were being constructed and negotiated between individuals from groups or organisations with various standpoints (Edwards, Ashmore and Potter, 1995). The work of this thesis is therefore a representation of what took place in *that* place, during *that* time. This approach to research is quite different

to the positivist understanding of research. One Driving Group member vocalised their concern about an interpretivist approach in a meeting during this time. They said, “*we are already doing that though, where’s the research?*” (fieldnote 27). This assertion connects to the broader debates about research elitism where pure science is hierarchically positioned as ‘real’ science, and the researcher as the expert (Flinders, Wood and Cunningham, 2016). Flinders et al. (ibid:262) describe how alternative approaches to research that locate the expertise within the community are judged as a form of social pollutant; where the “*blending of traditionally defined roles and identities is seen as morally ambiguous*”. Resisting these elitist interpretations of research was a necessary challenge during these early discussions. In summary, by maintaining a community driven approach to designing this project, I took a facilitation role. This reflected an epistemological decision about ‘*whose knowledge counts?*’. Based on a constructivist understanding of knowledge and truth, the pursuit of absolute truth is rejected. Instead, an ‘extended epistemology’ is adopted, where experiential and theoretical knowledge are equal. This, wide lens seeks to connect communities through a ‘participatory worldview’ (Heron, 1996).

#### 4.4.1 Research objectives

The exploratory nature of this research design was reflected clearly in the research objectives developed with the Driving Group. For some of the organisational representatives in the group, this meant placing a level of trust in



uncertainty. Others however felt reassured by the emancipatory frame of the research objectives. In my role as a researcher, I felt reassured by the design that facilitated authentic collaboration away from conventionally funded research approaches. As Campbell and Lassiter (2010) consider, creating these spaces, away from hierarchical restrictions, offers hope for generating the critical knowledge necessary for transformational change. In presenting these research objectives here, I respond to Bell and Pahl's (2018) call for research to be framed in ways that are important to people, not academics. The research objectives are as follows,

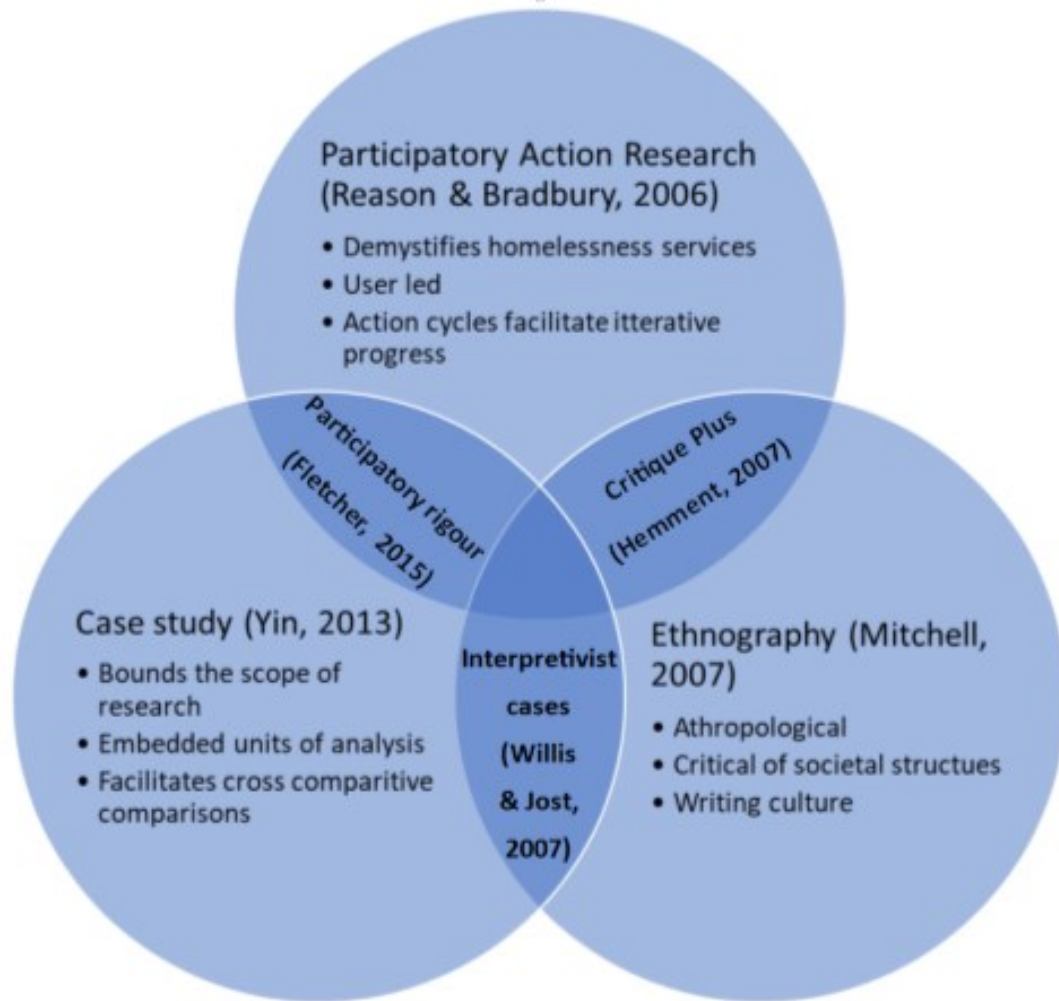
1. Critically examine practices of co-production in the MHP – integrating the unique contextual factors that exist when stakeholders including traditional service providers and recipients work together to co-produce services.
2. Develop a working definition of co-production within the MHP. This will be based on engaging experts by experience in the MHP.
3. Explore how these efforts intend to shape services for the future around the insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves.

#### 4.5 Phase two - Methods in the field

In this study, I draw on three methodological approaches; PAR, ethnography and case study research. A PAR approach conceptualises the MHP as a research site that seeks to prioritise the views and interests of people

with lived experience of homelessness. Within this, I provide an ethnographic perspective that incorporates my contextually contingent positionality to view co-production through engaged and critical lenses. A case study approach separates apart the different practices of co-production that are presented in this thesis. Throughout this work, I use the term 'ethnographic case' to describe the three distinct practices of co-production in the MHP that are presented in chapters six, seven and eight. They draw on ethnographic strategies that are at times engaged and at other times critical. However, they are not traditional ethnographies because I – as the navigator in this journey - step in and out of different spaces and recognise my positionality and power within those spaces. These 'spaces' that I step between, are distinct 'cases' of co-production.

The following figure is a Venn diagram that shows the main elements of the approaches considered in this research. Here, PAR is considered alongside ethnography and case study approaches. Ultimately, the most important intersection of this Venn diagram is the intersection between PAR and ethnography. The anthropologist and activist, Julie Hemment (2007:309) describes this intersection as "*critique plus*". I shall elaborate on this intersection in the following pages, but before doing that, I will introduce each of the three approaches shown in the Venn diagram.

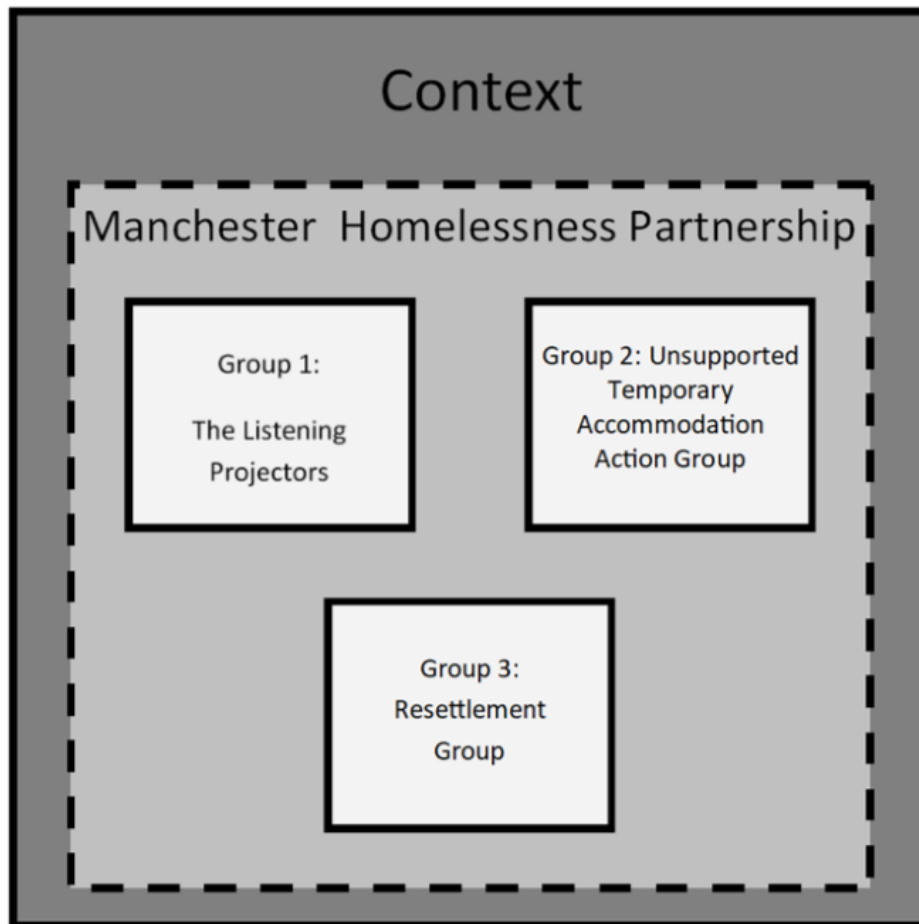


**FIGURE 3: VENN DIAGRAM OF MAIN METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THIS THESIS**

#### 4.5.1 Case study approaches

I introduce a case study approach with the intention of helping to descriptively present the MHP as a site of enquiry. The MHP is a single case, where three separate but nested practices of co-production are then explored. Within case study research, the term '*embedded units of analysis*' is more commonly used than '*nested practices of co-production*' (Yin, 2013). Whilst case study approaches offer a framework that helps to conceptualise the research in this thesis, the terminology of case study research – unhelpfully - draws on the positivist research paradigm. Indeed, when using a case-based approach with PAR projects, it is often cited that this brings methodological rigour to qualitative research (Fletcher, MacPhee and Dickson, 2015). I have not used this terminology in this research, recognising its association with top-down, elitist conceptions of research.

Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) and Stake (2005) describe this association between case study approaches and the positivist paradigm as misleading. Robert Yin (2013) goes some way to making case study research more accessible, and Yin's (ibid) analytical approach helped to present a research design for this project in the following way. Figure 4 presents the MHP as a single case, with three nested (or embedded) examples of co-production.



**FIGURE 4: CASE STUDY CONCEPTUALISATION OF THIS RESEARCH**

In further support of how case study approaches are qualitative tools, Willis and Jost (2007) consider the similarities between case studies and ethnographies. They describe a continuum between interpretivism and objectivism – the difference is all the interpretation (ibid). Bent Flyvbjerg (2006)

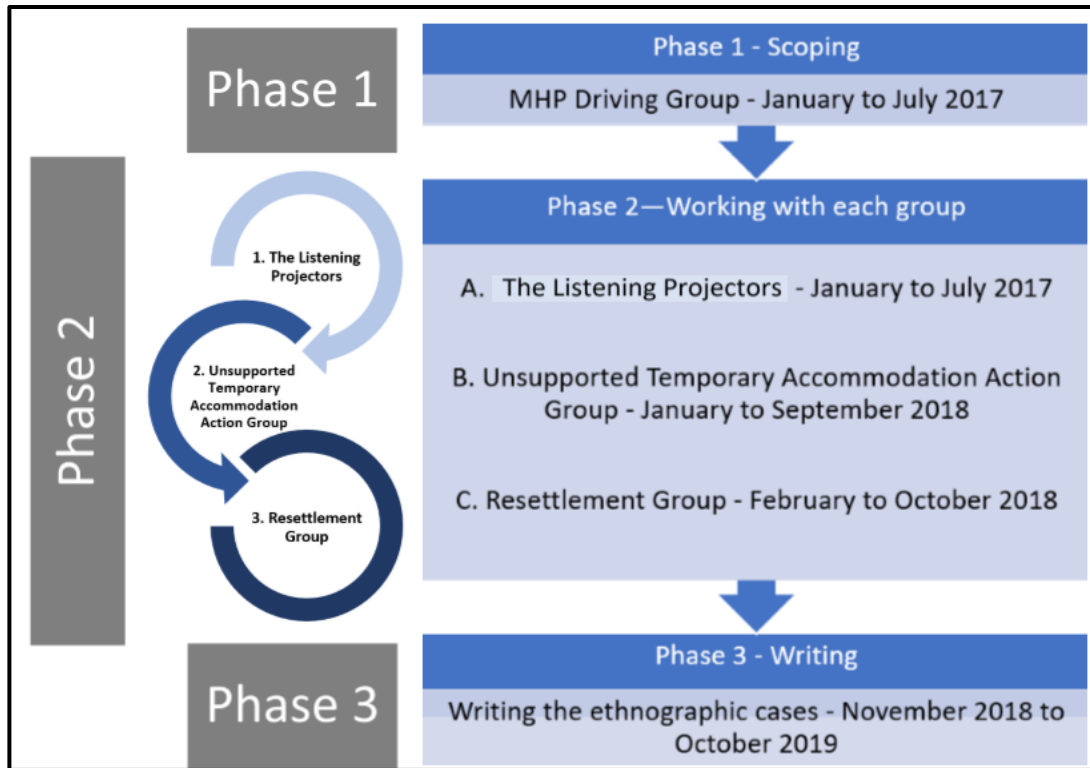
has also published a comprehensive and influential article dispelling the myth that case-based approaches are not part of qualitative research. Flyvbjerg (ibid) concludes that case studies legitimately support interpretivist research in the generation of theory. In summary, the MHP as a complex site of enquiry, warrants some degree of descriptive presentation. As I will demonstrate, PAR and ethnography provide the analysis, whilst case study research provides the descriptive framework.

#### 4.5.2 PAR

Whilst I have already introduced how PAR provides an epistemological framework for this research, I have not yet detailed the distinct contributions of 'participatory' approaches and 'action research'. I shall discuss these in turn, starting first with 'action research'. In phase one of this project, I spent time with the MHP Driving Group. In phase two of this project, I go on to work with three different MHP groups. The goal was to work sequentially with each group, contributing as an active group member whilst also building an action-based understanding of co-production in practice. This followed the action learning cycles proposed by Kurt Lewin (1946) that included the stages of plan, act and reflect. Over time, I directed these learning cycles away from spaces that included organisational professionals. This aimed to preserve the critical insights generated in each case. Part of each reflection process involved sharing insights with a wider audience. This was done in collaboration with people who had been involved in the process and had lived experience of

homelessness. During this fieldwork, presentations were given to university conferences, a local National Health Service (NHS) conference, various MHP groups and to a group of clinical psychologists in training. Blog posts have also been written for local homelessness sector publications and websites (appendix J). The depth of connection with the groups that I have worked with, and credibility of insights generated, were only possible through this immersive, long-form research process.

This process reflects a fundamental characteristic of PAR that establishes the long-term commitment to social change (McTaggart, 1991; Lewin, 1946; Friedman and Rothman, 2015). Figure 5 demonstrates the cyclical nature of knowledge production across three separate groups undertaken during this research.



**FIGURE 5: PROJECT PHASES IN RELATION TO PAR CYCLES**

I now turn to introducing the second aspect of the PAR process – ‘participatory’. My initial experiences with the Driving Group helped to conceptualise the MHP as a site of PAR. There were many aspects of their practice that were inclusive. When they met as a group, they followed inclusive facilitation procedures based on a cooperative enquiry process (Heron, 1996). This approach emphasised the active and equal participation of all group members and turn-taking before making collective decisions. The group were made up of a range of people, including people with lived experience of homelessness. They also valued multiple forms of knowledge; academic, practical and experiential. Through my eyes, as a newcomer, this was a



participatory space. It felt like a space where conscientisation could take place. This is a core feature of Paulo Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed – people were learning through action and empowerment. This group encouraged each other and the MHP at large to maximise the inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness and listen to their experiential knowledge.

However, as my time in the field progressed, I recognised the hierarchies between different forms of knowledge. People in the MHP came from unequal spaces of power, and some insights could more readily be turned into 'action' than others. As such, these new spaces that the MHP had created, became the focus of this research. Whilst the MHP sought to privilege a position from below, the very creation of a Partnership Board and Driving Group had inadvertently produced hierarchy within the MHP. As such, I recognise that my positionality as both a Driving Group member and researcher has had an effect on the ethnographic cases that I present in this research. Through my reflexivity, I intend to expose these tensions.

In my academic training – away from the MHP – I was fortunate enough to attend a five-day course about PAR organised by the National Centre for Research Methods. There, I met and discussed the project with researchers from the collective research team Refugee Youth. Some years earlier, they had undertaken a project called 'Becoming a Londoner' (Refugee Youth, 2009). This research was commissioned by the office of the Mayor of London to examine and understand the experiences of young people who had come to the

capital city as refugees. They helped me to recognise this power dynamic that already existed within the MHP and helped me to plan how I could create spaces of PAR away from institutional voices. In relating this to the project that was already unfolding in Manchester, I did two things.

Firstly, I drew on ethnographic approaches to critically interpret power in the groups that I was working with. Secondly, I worked towards intentionally creating safe spaces away from these groups for people who have experienced homelessness to talk. In Fine and Torre's (2004) research examples that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter, they considered that spaces that contain people from differential power bases tended to *"allow readers to grasp the familiar frame before the research ventures into more fractured analyses"* (ibid:24). Relating this to the MHP, in order to move away from this and create a fractured analysis from below, it was necessary to 'carve' out separate spaces for pedagogical collaboration with people and groups who have faced homelessness themselves.

One ethnographer and activist, Vincent Lyon-Callo (2008) has discussed his approach to carving out these spaces during his work in homelessness shelters. Lyon-Callo (ibid) found that oppressive institutional settings always made pedagogical collaborations impossible. Instead, time for shared analysis was created in the daily routines that surrounded normal activities. These normal settings were the spaces of activism where hegemony was resisted, through discussion and solidarity. In my own work, I initially tried to formalise this process, co-creating the title *'The Manchester Peoples Knowledge*

*Collective*'. However, I found that any attempt at formalising this process ended up being counterproductive to the goal of developing wider and more inclusive pedagogies. Indeed, the act of creating a group would exclude people who struggled to regularly attend due to the real-life pressures they were experiencing due to their housing insecurity. As such, in my research field work, these new spaces of collaboration were informal. They were sometimes on the way to meetings, or sometimes afterwards. They included fleeting conversations, as well as long discussions over food or coffee. As I stepped in and out of different spaces of MHP co-production, many discussions took place across the semi-permeable spaces of the MHP network and in different physical spaces in the city of Manchester. These discussions became active feedback loops that reinforced or challenged the emerging interpretations about co-production in the MHP. I was finding that my role in this research was to participate, document, reflect, share, listen, reflect and repeat. This was, as Fine and Weis (1996) describe, a reflexive research collaboration that emerged from below. In doing this, it was possible to get beyond the familiar frame and, as Fine and Torre (2004:30) put it, "*prick the "psychic amnesia" that assumes established representations are fact*".

#### 4.5.3 Ethnography

At its core, ethnography is a qualitative research method with anthropological origins (Hymes, 1982; Taylor, 1994). Essentially, it is concerned with documenting life as it is lived and felt (Hammersley, 2018). The

anthropologist and organisational ethnographer, John Van Maanen has written extensively on the process of ethnographic fieldwork and writing. In Van Maanen's (2011) seminal work, *Tales of the Field*, he considers that, whilst ethnography is the result of field work, as a written product, it is a representation of culture. Within this analysis, ethnography contains a degree of independence – it says as much about the author as it does the subject. In Van Maanen's words (ibid:1), it “*ties together fieldwork and culture – as well as the knot itself*”. Ethnography in the anthropological tradition came into prominence through the work of academics from the UK (and then the USA) in the early 20th century. Many of these early anthropologists focussed on ‘exotic’ global cultural settings. Well known examples include Malinowski's (1915) documentation of the Trobriand Islands and Mead's (1928) work on gender identity in Papua New Guinea. These studies from the anthropological tradition contributed to the notion of cultural relativism in research (a marked shift from universalist understandings of the human mind) (Stevenson, 2020).

In North America, the University of Chicago, contributed to a second strand of ethnography through the rich tradition of urban sociology (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland and Lofland, 2011). Here, with the city of Chicago as the object of study, symbolic interactionist approaches were developed. In this approach, insights about the nature of society derived from examining the everyday interactions between individuals. This work centred on the view that societies are both preserved and created through the repeated interactions of people in those geographical spaces.

#### 4.5.4 At-home ethnography

It is from the urban sociological tradition that the ‘at-home ethnography’ approach (used in this thesis) derives. Like the Chicago School, ‘at-home ethnography’ departs from the historical tradition of studying the ‘exotic’ and instead studies the local landscape. Alvesson (2009), describes this as the study of a cultural setting where the researcher has natural access and is on equal terms with others in the setting. This approach is quite different to ethnographic styles that emphasise *observation* over *participation*. According to Alvesson (2009:159), I – as the ‘at home ethnographer’ in the MHP – am an “observing participant”. During the course of my fieldwork, keeping a journal was my main source of data. I have included a list of this data set in the appendices (appendix J). Whilst other data sources are used - and discussed in detail in the following chapter - my journal, was *my* interpretation. Here, I documented and interpreted MHP events, providing a viewpoint to understand co-production and the MHP.

#### 4.5.5 The difference between PAR and ethnography

It was during the solitary process of writing this thesis in 2019 that I recognised how this thesis is a work of ethnography. Prior to this point, I had been active in the field, creating horizontal spaces of collaboration that more

readily reflected the PAR approach. As I reflect on these past events, my physical (as well as temporal) distance from these activities has led to an analysis that might more accurately be defined as my ethnographic interpretation of previous participatory events.

The key difference between PAR and ethnography in this thesis rests upon the linear progression of time. The fieldwork undertaken in 2017 – including all parts of the action research process – could legitimately be defined as PAR. That is because those activities (including analysis and dissemination) were collective endeavours. However, the individual reflections on those past events – whoever the reflector may be – belong to the reflector. In my case, these have formed the basis of this present thesis, which is an ethnography. To explain this process of change, I will provide an example. Whilst recently writing about the Listening Projectors (the first ethnographic case in this thesis), I noticed that my interpretations had diverged from the ‘group-speak’ of those previous meetings. Some of the things that we thought were great about our project then, didn’t stand the test of time. When we worked together, we reinforced this collective view that the project had merit. Whilst I still believe there was merit to this endeavour, I can now reflect – and speak - more freely about its limitations.

This temporal difference between PAR and ethnography is the reason that I do not claim that this research is fully participatory. Conversely, my ongoing relationships with MHP members has led to an ethnography that is not

ethnographic in the purest sense. At times, my analysis has been shared with grass roots MHP activists, leading to what Campbell and Lassiter (2010) interchangeably refer to this as collaborative or engaged ethnography. They describe this approach as making “*collaboration an explicit and deliberative part of both fieldwork and the broader processes of research, interpretation and writing*” (ibid:377).

A further ethnographic strategy used in this research was “*ethnography from below*” (Lyon-Callo and Hyatt, 2003:157). Based on their fieldwork in homelessness shelters, they wrote from the first-person perspective to critique traditional power structures and offers transformational alternatives to the current modes of governance. Whilst they might not use the same terms, both Campbell and Lassiter’s (2010) and Lyon-Callo and Hyatt’s (2003) approaches are both forms of critical ethnography (Hymes, 1982). However, they differ in the level of shared analysis with wider groups. I draw on both of their approaches at different stages of this study and as such, also draw on critical ethnography approaches.

#### 4.5.6 A bricolage of research methods

The plurality of methods described in the previous section, as well as further methodological innovations used in the field (see discussion about ‘go-along’ methodologies) draws on a concept of bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln,

1994; Kincheloe and Berry, 2004). This interdisciplinary approach rejects the supposed validity of data generated through 'triangulation' approaches in favour of a dialectic relationship between divergent methods and diverse theoretical understandings. Bricolage offers rigour through complexity. This, in turn, can offer new ontological insights about contested concepts such as homelessness and co-production.

As a bricoleur, context is everything. Beyond each MHP meeting between organisations and marginalised groups, there were separate spaces of hegemony and resistance. In this study, bricolage was necessary to expose the backstage of co-production in the MHP. Navigating these spaces became a process of witnessing, sensemaking and 'joining the dots'. In relation to this process Kincheloe and Berry (2004:3) state,

bricoleurs understand that their interaction with the objects of their inquiries is always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable and, of course, complex. Such conditions negate the practice of planning research strategies in advance. In lieu of such rationalisation of the process, bricoleurs enter into the research act as methodological negotiators. (ibid).

I offer the following reflection - as a bricoleur of action research and ethnography. Whilst these two approaches often sit uncomfortably together (due to the different voice prioritised in each), I consider mess between my interpretations and other forms of experiential knowledge in the MHP offers a



unique contribution to co-produced research. Activist and anthropologist Julie Hemment (2007) discusses these complementary approaches in relation to her work with Russian women's groups during the mid-1990's. Following years of state socialism, when women's groups were prohibited from organising independently, Hemment (ibid) tells the story of collaborating with one particular group, and sheds light on the method that emerged. Hemment (ibid:309) describes the liminal space between PAR and ethnography as "critique plus"; whilst PAR helps ethnographers to become more socially engaged, ethnography provides PAR with the critical tools to challenge hegemony. I have found that using these approaches together, provided additional protection against what Jordan (2003:190) describes as the "subtle processes of institutionalisation" that persistently invades research.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has established the methodological space and context for this research. Drawing on the work of several critical philosophers, this chapter has connected the activist roots of the MHP with a broader understanding of society, social justice and solidarity, upon which this thesis rests. The philosophical contributions of Gramsci (1971), Freire (1970), Spivak (1988) and Chomsky (2012) have sequentially been introduced to build this argument. Society is more commonly, an exclusive, rather than inclusive place (Gramsci, 1971). Education and action are processes for reclaiming power in society

(Freire, 1970). Dominant social structures and the discourses that support those structures are insufficient to articulate new ways of being (Spivak, 1988). Yet, it is through solidarity that new, more equal ways of being will be realised (Chomsky, 2012).

The methodological framework for this thesis draws on a critical community psychology tradition that has been cultivated at MMU (Kagan et al., 2011). As a distinct feature of praxis, the place and the timing of this research is important. Taking the academic out of the university has ensured that this research is framed in ways that are important to people in the MHP, rather than serving an academic interest. In doing so, this approach is part of a slow, but growing body of work that emphasises stewardship. This approach both attends to and works against MMU's – much criticised – policy in 2015 of evicting and taking legal action against the protesters whose actions drove the creation of the MHP and MHC. The final chapter of this thesis considers how MMU more broadly can act as a local resource at a time of growing inequality in the region.

The complex fieldwork setting of the MHP is both a site of participation and a focus of analysis. This complexity is reflected in the methodological approaches proposed. Contradictions emerge when using participatory approaches in certain spaces of the MHP. I refer to this as the 'familiar frame'; to get past this frame, I employ a variety of strategies. Ethnography is the main strategy, sometimes collaborative, sometimes critical. In making these decisions, context is key. The outcome of this endeavour will be an action-

based set of three ethnographic cases that cast light on co-production from the perspective of below. What I refer to as 'complexity', Thomas-Hughes (2018) has described as the 'mess' of co-produced research. Thomas-Hughes (ibid) encourages researchers to embrace this mess as being a place that we can learn from, in order to generate more diverse ways of working for the future. It is through sharing this mess that I am able to theorise and understand the MHP as a methodological space and context. The next chapter of this thesis shares the process of undertaking this fieldwork. This process is shared with the intention of further exposing the 'mess' of co-produced research and sharing my learning along the way.

## Chapter Five – Research design and methods

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the theoretical groundings outlined in the previous chapter by detailing the specific methodological tools used in this study. I start by introducing the importance of language when referring to the people who have participated in this study. It is not possible to characterise people in this study by any single identity. Moreover, much of the terminology surrounding homelessness already has a negative impact on people who have faced homelessness themselves. The contributions of a range of people from the MHP are rich, complex and based on diverse experiences that will be explained in the first section named *Introducing the co-producers*.

I then turn to introducing the data collection approaches used in this study. I have arranged this sequentially, detailing the various approaches used with each group that I worked with in the MHP. Starting with the Driving Group, then to the three groups that constitute the main body of this research; The Listening Projectors, UTA Action Group and the Resettlement Group. Taking this sequential approach helps to demonstrate the iterative decisions about data collection made during my time in the field.

I introduce each group using the following structure. First, information is provided about the group members. Second, details about the objectives of the group are provided, including contextual information about how they worked together. Third, I provide information about how long I worked with the group for. Fourth, I provide information about my positionality in each group. An example of which comes from the decision made prior to joining the UTA Action Group to emphasise the ethnographic analysis from the onset rather than the broad participatory approach used with The Listening Projectors. This was a key decision to ensure that the analysis of co-production in the MHP was grounded in the experience of co-producers with experience of homelessness (as opposed to organisational representatives). Fifth, I outline the various data collection sources, including the use of reflexive field notes, unrecorded and recorded interviews and other sources of data. A rationale is provided for the decisions made in the field about whether to record interviews or not. Sixth, information is provided about how data was analysed. This was a complex issue in the field and is discussed in relation to the specific circumstances of each group.

The final section of this chapter explores the ethical considerations of this research. I start by providing detailed information about ethical clearance during this project and the iterative and relational nature of ethics in fieldwork. By considering relational ethics, community ethics – and their intersection – I explain how this work is an ethical endeavour that extends the beyond procedural necessities of the university. An open discussion of this process

draws again on Thomas-Hughes' (2018) notion of 'mess' as well as Flinders et al.'s (2016) argument about 'social pollution' in research. The contentious ethical considerations examined in this research relate to two key issues. First, was the need to manage institutional expectations, whether real or perceived. Second, was the need to expose the hidden politics of co-production and exercise a high degree of care to those involved. Ultimately, this has led to certain incidences where pseudonyms have been used in order to protect those involved. This significant ethical tension arose from a polysemic duty of care that is discussed in the final pages of this chapter.

## 5.2 Introducing the co-producers

### 5.2.1 Language

In this section, I consider the choice of language used to describe and refer to the many people who I have worked alongside during the completion of this research. According to the researcher, Jewell (2016), who undertook ethnographic field work in a homelessness charity,

The words and terms we use are not simply neutral devices for communication.... we develop our language within the social and cultural spaces that we inhabit. Through social and cultural exposure throughout our daily lives we may come to use words and terms in a way that we believe to be unproblematic and simply the norm. (ibid:17)

Jewell (2016) raises the concern that much of the language surrounding homelessness already stigmatises and homogenises anybody on the receiving end of this specific label. Sociologist Richard Jenkins (2014), in the book *Social Identity*, argues that identities are used to define status. To refer to someone in terms of their current housing status, cements their identity in terms of their economic situation.

Referring to people in their own terms is something that has received recent attention in the MHP. A group of MHP volunteers - who have faced homelessness themselves - rejected the term 'lived experience', considering that its use had become tokenistic and had contributed to the objectification of people who bring their personal experience to the MHP. In discussions about this, others have objected to how the term is *used*, rather than the term *itself*. I have regularly heard people saying things like "*we need more 'lived experience' in the room*" (fieldnote 82) and recognise these concerns.

In the early stages of this project, it felt appropriate to refer to the people that I was working with as 'co-researchers'. This was based on the wealth of literature about positionality in PAR (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006; Kagan, 2012). However, as this project took a more ethnographic turn, it was not always the case that others were fully involved in the research process. Moreover, in the three ethnographic cases presented in this thesis - pseudonyms have been used to protect group members identities in contested spaces of power.

As a clear description of who took part in this study, the various people cannot therefore be defined collectively under one descriptive label. From reviewing the range of academic literature of research in this area, Mitchel Duneier (1999) offered an interesting neologism in an ethnography of Manhattan street life, *Sidewalk*. Duneier (ibid) used the term 'unhoused' instead of 'homeless' when referring to some of the storytellers in this book. In doing this, he sought to challenge the apparent – and often compelling – 'choice' that some of the people in this book made to sleep on hard surfaces by re-presenting this choice as one being made by society rather than just the individual. For me, this term represents a construction of a society that takes responsibility for housing its people. However, even this term constructs an identity in economic terms.

Based on these understandings, I avoid referring to people collectively wherever possible. At times, I refer to 'organisational representatives' in this study as a way of indicating the different experiences that people bring to the MHP. Yet even this term homogenises a diverse group of people who all have unique experiences and identities. I, myself am a co-producer, an activist, a housed organisational representative, and a student. Adopting a 'people first' approach is an appropriate way of avoiding the use of definitions that pathologise others or define their identity in economic terms. This approach has been criticised for its awkward, repetitive style. Maybe, our continued repetition of these awkward 'people first' phrases will lead to the development of more inclusive language.



### 5.2.2 Gaining access to each group

I was introduced to the MHP Driving Group by Professor Rebecca Lawthom from MMU. She had attended a series of Driving Group meetings and been instrumental in creating funding within the University for the PhD scholarship that has enabled me to undertake this research. Whilst it was easy to contact this group, gaining acceptance – as a researcher – in the broader MHP was not so easy. On first introducing myself to Jez Green (the MHP Facilitator) at the end of their November 2016 celebration day, he asked me *“Have you been here for the full day?”* (fieldnote 1). The inference being that they wanted to work with people who were committed to the cause. The CEO from a local charity also told me that they did not want any *“fly by night”* researchers, they wanted to work with people who were trustworthy and dependable (fieldnote 1).

It was in this context that I joined the Driving Group, staying for an extended period of time, taking minutes at meetings and volunteering to represent them at various public events when other group members were unable to attend. On one occasion, I represented the MHP at the 2017 May Day Citizens UK conference held at the Lowry Centre, Salford. I was given a front row seat to watch the incumbent Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham pledge to work with Citizens UK to make the region fairer and more inclusive during his tenure. On another occasion I travelled to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in York to participate in a working group about co-

production in the homelessness sector. I really enjoyed working in this way and was encouraged by my supervisors to get 'stuck in'. On reflection, this approach helped to gain access to three groups that form analytical chapters of this thesis. During 2017 I became known across the MHP and began to know most MHP co-producers by their first names.

Not all of my MHP activities were with the Driving Group. Attending a homelessness Day Centre Arts group every Monday for six months was a valuable way to build trust with some of the people who would become the co-producers in the first analytical chapter – The Listening Projectors. I had never attended an art group before and remember looking forward to Monday mornings at the Day Centre. Three hours would quickly pass by, chatting and painting with this friendly, funny and welcoming group of people.

I also drew on my former probation officer competencies to help some of the MHP groups. When the UTA Action Group (the focus of the second analytical chapter) put a request out for people help them co-visit temporary accommodation sites, I volunteered. In my previous role, I had visited UTA's regularly. On reflection, I think that this offer really helped to build trust with the group Chairperson.

By the time I started working with the final group in this research (the Resettlement Group), I had already established strong working relationships with many of the group members. Having delivered a conference presentation

to MHP members in 2018, they were actively interested in being part of the research process.

### 5.3 Phase one - Scoping exercise with the Driving Group

The first phase of this project began in January 2017 and lasted for seven months. In this phase, I joined the MHP Driving Group and negotiated the specific focus of this research. This represented a long-form deliberative process of dialogic learning between a central MHP group and me – a representative from the University. The outcome of which was that the subsequent research aim and set of objectives were shaped around the interests of the MHP rather than the interests of the academy.

The Driving Group consisted of twelve individuals (two senior managers from the City Council, a local Councillor, five organisational representatives from charities in the homelessness sector, one partnership director from a city centre business, and two people with personal experience of homelessness). An outline of group members is provided in table 3.

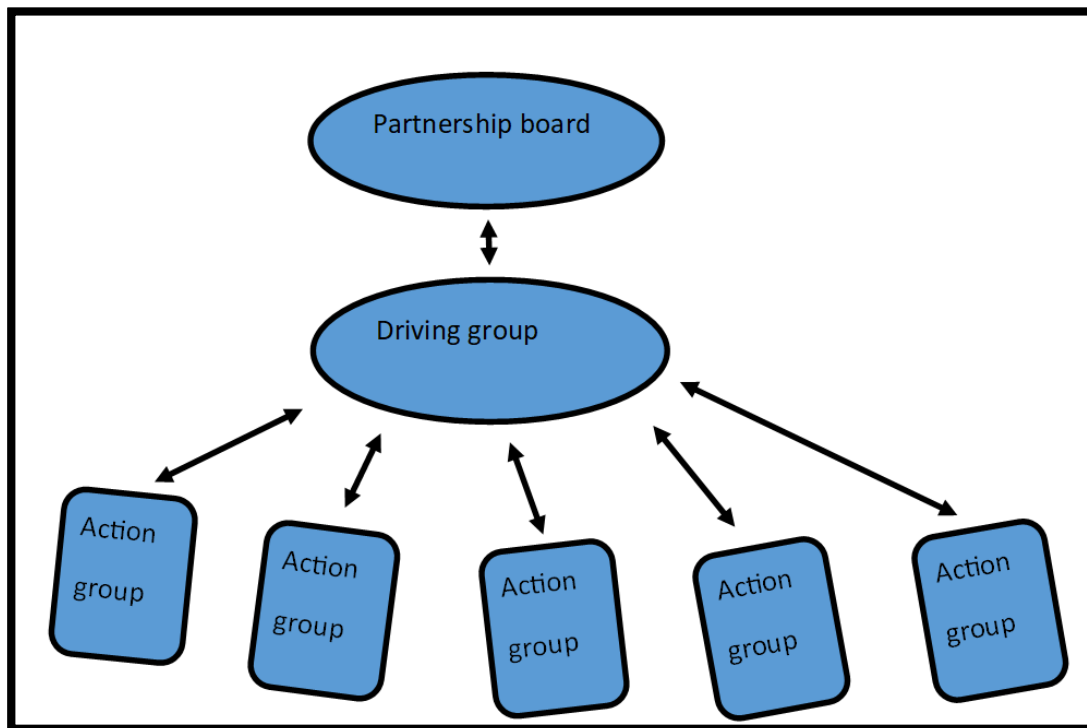
**TABLE 3: DRIVING GROUP MEMBERS**

Co-producer name <sup>4</sup>	Other role and affiliated organisation
Jez Green	Partnership Co-ordinator, Mustard Tree Charity.
Beth Knowles	Labour councillor with special interest in homelessness.
Amanda Croome	Chief Executive Officer, The Booth Centre.
Nicola Rae	Strategic Lead for Homelessness, Manchester City Council.
Jane Davies	Strategic Commissioning Manager, Manchester City Council.
Jo Wilson	Volunteer co-producer with personal experience of homelessness.
Barry Lundy	Chef at The Booth Centre and MHP co-producer with personal experience of homelessness.
Viv Slack	Co-founder Street of Support charity.
Gary Dunstan	Co-founder Street of Support charity.
Eleanor Watts	Area Manager for Housing Association.
Alex King	Partnership Director of CityCo.

This group had been working together since the MHP was launched in May 2016. During the early stages of the MHP, they provided support to the various Action Groups in the form of co-production training and mentoring. Figure 6 illustrates how I initially interpreted the relationship between the MHP Board, the

<sup>4</sup> These names are real names used with the permission of MHP Driving Group members

Driving Group and Action Groups. It was the hierarchical nature of this relationship that the Driving Group wanted to change.



**FIGURE 6: INITIAL INTERPRETATION OF MHP STRUCTURE IN JANUARY 2017**

In the field of institutional ethnography, the term ‘embedded researcher’ is often used to describe a researchers’ positionality in the field setting (McGinity and Salokangas, 2014). However, when joining the Driving Group, even though I was displaced from the university, I was never firmly placed within an

organisation or institution. Rather, the MHP was a sector wide initiative, with multiple organisations and many different people. MHP activities happened on the fringes of traditional practice in the local homelessness sector. In these spaces, I became an active contributor and observer (Gold, 1957).

Drawing on methodological contributions from the field of ethnography, I recognised the early honeymoon phase of starting this project (Oberg, 1960). Also, how this turned into an experience of broader culture shock when I knew how hard the members of the Driving Group were working. They were trying to change the system at the same time as providing services within the current system. One of the group members summarised this pressure to me by saying *“we have come so far, and achieved so much – but were scared that as soon as we stop, everything will unravel”* (fieldnote 10).

During this first phase of the research, data was drawn from a variety of sources. These included attending group meetings, undertaking individual interviews and attending a range of other meetings and events across the MHP. The group activities that I attended during phase one are recorded in table 4. I include these to show how this research derives from a wider corpus of activity during this period.

The Driving Group met together every four weeks during phase one of this project. In these meetings, time was allocated to discuss potential research aims and objectives. In addition to this, I undertook a series of unrecorded interviews (see table 5). The interviews took a narrative form and were guided

by the interests of the Driving Group member that I was speaking with.

According to Riessman (2011), narrative interviewing represents a major shift in perspective about what constitutes the research interview itself. Far from being a question and answer approach to interviewing, narration, in its broadest sense offers people the opportunity to co-construct the discussion that takes place. As such, it has more in common with ethnography than with traditional research interviewing practice.

**TABLE 4: DRIVING GROUP ACTIVITIES ATTENDED**

Activity	Date (month/year)	Estimated time
6 x full group meetings	January – July 2017	3 hours x 6
2 x Board meetings	February and September 2017	3 hours x 2
9 x art classes at local day centre	January to June 2017	2.5 hours x 9
1 x Sector wide co- planning day	February 2017	6 hours x 1
1 x Team building workshop	February 2017	3 hours x 1
1 x Co-production training	May 2017	3 hours x 1

**TABLE 5: UNRECORDED INTERVIEWS WITH DRIVING GROUP MEMBERS**

Interviewee	Location	Estimated time (minutes)
2 x Jez Green	Café and go-along interview	50 x 2
Amanda Croome	Office location	50
Nicola Rae	Office location	40
2 x Jo Wilson	2 x go-along interviews	40 x 2
Barry Lundy	Go-along interview	60
2 x Viv Slack	Office and go-along interview	40 x 2
Gary Dunstan	Office location	50

### 5.3.1 Go-along interviews

I decided not to record the interviews completed in phase one of this project. I felt that, as an outsider to the group, audio recording would be counterproductive to developing trust with group members. I was particularly conscious of power dynamics and did not want to give the impression that their views were merely data that could be extracted (see Fontana and Prokos, 2007). Van Maanen (2011) considers that recorded interviews are often unlikely to enhance the credibility of ethnographic research. Whilst verbatim quotes might produce valuable soundbites, it is the interpretations derived from fieldnotes and reflection that offers the real analysis (ibid).



Having read Barbour and Schostak's (2005) discussion paper about research methods in social sciences, I wanted to follow their advice and integrate research activities into typical MHP activities. My approach was also influenced by sociologist, Margarethe Kusenback (2003). Kusenback (ibid) considers the value of the 'go-along' interview and refers to it as 'street phenomenology'. This decision to use go-along interviews addressed two fieldwork problems; one, how to gather data that didn't jeopardise trust; two, how to move beyond the 'group-speak' that I observed in meetings. Goffman's (1963) theory of impression management describes the tendency for people to have a public presentation – and I wanted to go backstage to hear what people were saying away from the MHP audience.

In their book *Mobilising Methodologies*, Fincham, McGuninness and Murray (2009) discuss the go-along interview. They describe the value of,

movement and mobility, being *in-situ*, makes a profound difference to the sorts of things we might be able to say about the world. ... developing methodological frameworks for capitalising on an immediacy of context and the capture of *in-situ* experience, is important" (ibid:169)

As many of my go-along interviews took place whilst walking to or from meetings across the city, this approach was an invaluable qualitative research tool. Landmarks became reflexive tools that enhanced perception and

resonated with different experiences and biographies. This approach rooted the discussions in the every day lived experience of being part of the MHP. A selection of photographs are included from some go-along interviews in appendix H.

This approach also facilitated greater interrogation of co-production that would not be exposed through fixed, immobile research encounters such as interviews or focus groups. Nuanced differences began to emerge between the perspectives of different actors depending on their standpoints. One senior council worker told me *“I’ll be honest with you Nigel, I don’t know how to work with these people”* (fieldnote 28). An expert by experience also shared *“at the beginning of the MHP we set up co-production training, and not one member of the council who launched the Charter bothered to attend. You could write a whole PhD on that”* (fieldnote 23).

#### 5.4 Phase two - Working with each group

In this study, the MHP Driving Group helped to identify opportunities to work with additional MHP groups in the production of this research. They facilitated introductions to the following groups that have become the focus of this research study. Each group expressed an interest in helping to answer the core research aim of this project. I will introduce these groups in turn. First, The Listening Projectors offered the unique opportunity to examine power in a space of co-production. In this arts-based project, one of the group members is

Dave Smith (a principal member of the British poetry collective InHouse). In a collaboration with an MHP Arts Action Group, they co-produce an installation about homelessness in the city. Following on from this, the second group that I join is the UTA Action Group. In relation to the iterative action research cycles, this second group provides a more realistic opportunity to examine power and co-production in the homelessness sector. I spend between seven and nine months with each of these groups. The third group that I join is called the Resettlement Group. In this group, the Local Authority co-design and commission a new service in the homelessness sector with members of the MHP. This final ethnographic case offers the opportunity to examine co-production in a market-based macro context. These three ethnographic cases will be presented in the authentic sequence of investigation during my time in the field. In doing so, this research, iteratively moves closer to establishing a vision for co-production; whilst at the same time, scrutinising the extent to which this vision is achievable in the broader political economy.

#### 5.4.1 The Listening Projectors

I was first introduced to the MHP Arts Action Group by a Driving Group member in February 2017. They wanted to share an example of an exciting arts-based project that was being planned with the Greater Manchester Arts and Literature Festival (G-MALF) and artist Dave Smith. G-MALF is an annual arts festival focusing on diverse work, staged across the North West of England. As

a collective, the MHP Art Action Group, G-MALF and Dave Smith created The Listening Projectors, which was an artistic installation about homelessness as part of the G-MALF2017 festival. The installation was open for ten consecutive days during the festival. It was based in a vibrant city centre location and attracted 3,500 visitors – generated in part by national publicity about Dave's involvement. Information about the ten group members is provided in table 6.

I joined the group in the run up to the festival and contributed alongside group members for a period of eight months, covering the festival and a period of reflection after the event. The data collection and analysis with this group followed a participatory process that is now summarised.

**TABLE 6: THE LISTENING PROJECTORS GROUP MEMBERS**

Co-producer name <sup>5</sup>	Other role and affiliated organisation
Paul Radley	Outreach Worker, local charity and member of Art Action Group.
Lynne Butler	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Adam Williams	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Samuel Horrocks	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Dave Smith	Member of the British poetry collective InHouse.
Darren Davies	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Jane Thurgoland	Art festival representative and project co-ordinator.
Pat Jackson	MHP volunteer and local charity worker.
Charles Clarke	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness. Also, a volunteer outreach support worker for Housing Association.
Chris Hickmott	Sound engineer and arts practitioner at local charity.

<sup>5</sup> Pseudonyms used with the agreement of the group

In this project, data was drawn from a variety of sources. I used my fieldwork journal to reflect upon each meeting attended and activity undertaken. I amassed approximately fifty separate entries over the eight months that I spent with the group. A summary of the group activities is provided in table 7. In addition to these group activities, a process was developed to undertake interviews and collectively analyse the themes that emerged about co-production in this group. This process started by informally undertaking five interviews with group members during the latter stages of working with this group – after the installation was finished. In a similar approach to the interviews with Driving Group members, these were unrecorded collaborative discussions that took place on the way to meetings and sometimes in cafés. After each discussion, I completed a written summary and sent it to the group member immediately for them to add in any further interpretation. This helped to articulate a shared interpretation of the discussion. Sometimes the interpretation changed as part of this process. Charles for example, wanted more emphasis placed on how the work ethic of group members helped to demonstrate their values. An outline of the unrecorded interviews is provided on table 8.

After completing five unrecorded interviews, I generated four themes that were shared back with the group for collective discussion. The themes that arose from the interviews were ‘personal impact’, ‘shared vision’, ‘something new’ and ‘clear roles’. In a forty-five-minute group discussion, the team re-interpreted these themes, proposing the deeper themes of ‘action-not-talk’,

‘social cohesion’ and ‘shared ownership’. This led to four further interviews where group members spoke in-depth about these themes. These interviews were recorded for the purposes of using quotations during future dissemination outputs. Table 9 outlines the recorded and transcribed interviews undertaken with The Listening Projectors group. In the process of undertaking these interviews, two separate themes emerged, ‘negotiating disagreements’ and ‘timing/creating space’. Again, the themes were verified at a subsequent group meeting.

**TABLE 7: THE LISTENING PROJECTORS GROUP ACTIVITIES ATTENDED**

Activity	Date (month/year)	Estimated time
6 x full group meetings	February to October 2017	2.5 hours x 6
3 x Volunteering at art installation	July 2017	2 hours x 3
3 x Small group meetings and group presentation at conference	January – February 2018	1.5 hours x 3

**TABLE 8: THE LISTENING PROJECTORS UNRECORDED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Estimated time (minutes)
Lynne Butler	Office location	40
2 x Samuel Horrocks	Park & library	40 x 2
Darren Davies	Office location	30
Pat Jackson	Office location	40
Charles Clarke	Office location	40
Chris Hickmott	Office location	30

**TABLE 9: THE LISTENING PROJECTORS RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Time (minutes)
Paul Radley	Home	60
Dave Smith	Library room	30
Jane Thurgoland	Office location	40
Adam Williams	Park	50



#### 5.4.2 Unsupported Temporary Accommodation (UTA) Action Group

After working with The Listening Projectors, I went on to work with the UTA Action Group. I had first met the chairperson of this group at a large-scale MHP meeting in February 2017. I was then encouraged by a Driving Group member to explore their work as an example of co-production in the temporary accommodation sector. It was known across the MHP that this group were making inroads with private landlords to improve accommodation standards.

A summary of the UTA Action Group members is provided on table 10. They included two chairpersons from a local charity alongside four regular attendees who were UTA residents. The Local Authority were represented by members of the Housing Standards and Housing Benefits departments. Additionally, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Probation Service sent organisational representatives to the group. A small number of property owners from the local area had been invited to attend, some of them took up this invitation on an irregular basis. The key objective of the group was, in the chairperson's words to *"lift the lid on this hidden form of homelessness and make peoples stay in unsupported temporary accommodation as short and safe as possible"* (Laura<sup>6</sup>, August 2017).

The group had been working together since the start of the MHP in May 2016. Initially, they mapped all the UTA bed-spaces across Manchester. Then,

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<sup>6</sup> Pseudonyms are used in this group to protect the identity of particular group members

they sought to improve communication and co-ordination between agencies who supported UTA residents. At the time when I joined the group, they were working towards including UTA property owners and landlords in the group. At my initial meeting with the Action Group chairperson in September 2017, Laura was interested in contributing to an exploration about co-production in the MHP. She hoped that a critical assessment of group practice could help them to work more inclusively in the future. I met the group in November 2017, and they agreed to contribute to the process. They favoured a data collection process that integrated with the normal activities of the group – many of the organisational representatives told me that they were unable to provide time for individual interviews. As such, a more observational – rather than participatory – focus was agreed from the outset. However, collaborative work was undertaken with people from the group who had lived in UTA's.

**TABLE 10: UTA ACTION GROUP MEMBERS**

Co-producer name <sup>7</sup>	Other role and affiliated organisation
Laura O'Leary	Research officer at local charity.
Steve Quinn	Landlord and property owner of a local guest house providing UTA.
Gemma Spiller	Community Outreach worker, Local charity.
Siobhan Keavney	MHP volunteer with personal experience of UTA.
Paul Rodger	MHP volunteer with personal experience of UTA.
Michael Burnside	MHP volunteer with personal experience of UTA.
Rick Southwall	Housing Officer, MCC Housing Standards Team.
Amita Akin	Partnership Manager, National Probation Service, Greater Manchester.
Robert Lawson	Fire Safety Enforcement Officer, local Fire and Rescue Service.
Iain Jones	Housing Benefit Team Manager, MCC.
Owen Lean	Housing Association representative.

<sup>7</sup> Pseudonyms are used in this group to protect the identity of particular group members

During my time with the group, I attended a series of Action Group meetings from January to September 2018, five in total, with the addition of two sub-meetings and an open forum event in the summer of 2017 (as outlined in table 11. Data was generated from attending group meetings and completing comprehensive fieldnotes following meetings. A list of field notes referred to in this thesis is provided in appendix K. Five unrecorded interviews were undertaken (outlined in table 12) as well as two recorded interviews (outlined in table 13.

**TABLE 11: UTA GROUP ACTIVITIES ATTENDED**

Activity	Date (month/year)	Estimated time
5 x Group meetings	January to September 2018	2.5 hours x 5
2 x Sub-group meetings	February and May 2018	2 hours x 2
1 x Open forum event	August 2017	2 hours x 1

**TABLE 12: UTA ACTION GROUP UNRECORDED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Estimated time (minutes)
Laura O'Leary	Office	50
2 x Siobhan Keavney	Park	60 x 2
Gemma Spiller	Go-along interview – local neighbourhood	60
Amita Akin	Telephone	30

**TABLE 13: UTA ACTION GROUP RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Time (minutes)
Laura O'Leary	Library room	40
Gemma Spiller	Office location	50

In addition to generating data with UTA Action Group members, I met with several people from across the MHP who had personal experience of homelessness. In these spaces, we discussed our experiences of co-production and this helped to develop my analysis of what was taking place in the UTA Action Group. The informal conversations that took place here

grounded my ethnographic interpretations in a critical frame from below. During this time, I wanted to make my practice transparent with the group. As a result, I shared drafts with the group chairperson. This also responded to her desire to use research to inform practice and help to embed co-production in the MHP. The insights were well received, and I used an example from the group at a subsequent conference – attended by MHP members – to raise a discussion about inclusive practice.

#### 5.4.3 Resettlement Group

The final group that I introduce is the Resettlement Group. In late 2017, I was told by a Driving Group member that the Resettlement Group had been co-designing a new service in the homelessness sector and this could be a valuable focus of research. As a third example of co-production, I was keen to explore how this had been achieved. In particular, how MHP members had been included in the commissioning process. The group was made up of two members of the commissioning team, and a variety of MHP co-producers; organisational representatives from local charities and two MHP co-producers with personal experience of homelessness. A summary of group members is provided in table 14.

**TABLE 14: RESETTLEMENT GROUP MEMBERS**

Co-producer name <sup>8</sup>	Other role and affiliated organisation
Jill Symonds	Strategic Commissioning Manager, MCC.
Ian Ruskin	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Patrick Davies	MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness.
Kathy Edmonds	Chief Executive Officer, local charity.
Angela Roberts	Commissioning Manager, MCC.
James Levy	Project Leader, Manchester commissioned resettlement service.

I met with the group chairperson, Jill Symonds who is also the Strategic Lead for Commissioning at the Local Authority in January 2018. She talked to me about how they were coming to the end of the procurement stage of the commissioning process and had recently appointed a service provider. She invited me to the subsequent meeting of the Resettlement Group where they would be receiving an update from the new provider about progress in the first few weeks of running the new resettlement service. I joined the Resettlement Group from February to October 2018. This ethnographic case draws on experiences in this group, interviews with group members and my experiences

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<sup>8</sup> Pseudonyms are used in this group to protect the identity of particular group members

as a Driving Group member in 2017 to examine the co-planning stage of future services in the MHP. Also, by attending a series of progress review meetings in 2018, this case examines the impact of co-design on the new service that was created.

Specific details about the group activities I attended are contained in table 15. Data collection also included a series of unrecorded interviews, including go-along interviews and a site visit to the new resettlement service (table 16). Five recorded interviews were also completed (table 17). During this process, there was some limited concern by organisational representatives that the analysis may critique the practice of organisations. Equally though, this was balanced against other MHP members expectations that the analysis would provide critical insights to help organisations embed co-production in the MHP. The final draft of this chapter has been shared with the Resettlement Group and MHP Driving Group – no changes were requested.

**TABLE 15: RESETTLEMENT GROUP ACTIVITIES ATTENDED**

Activity	Date (month/year)	Estimated time
3 x Group meetings	Feb – July 2018	2.5 hours x 3
2 x Site visits to new service	March and July 2018	2 hours x 2



**TABLE 16: RESETTLEMENT UNRECORDED INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Estimated time (minutes)
Kathy Edmonds	Office location	40
Angela Roberts	Office location	30
Patrick Davies	Go-along site visit	120

**TABLE 17: RESETTLEMENT GROUP RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Location	Length (minutes)
Ian Ruskin	Café	40
Angela Roberts	Café	50
Jill Symonds	Café	30
James Levy	Office location	70

### 5.5 Ethical considerations

In this section, I account for the ethical considerations made in this community research project. I reflect on both the relational ethics and the ethical importance of promoting social justice through research (Prilleltensky, 1990; Prilleltensky and Walsh-Bowers, 1993; Prilleltensky, 2001). Drawing on

the work of critical community psychologists in Manchester, bringing these two ethical considerations together requires researchers to think in terms of “*Global is local and local is global*” (Kagan et al., 2011:34). In the following pages, I share these relational (local) ethical narratives and social justice (global) ethical narratives. In doing so, I also respond to Thomas-Hughes (2018) call for researchers expose these conflicts and dilemmas and learn from the ethical mess that is inherent in community research,

‘messy places’ are the feelings, experiences, and processes within research projects that are fraught with chaos and confusion. I argue that it is in co-producing ‘messy places’ where our struggles with power, partnership and ethics can bring methodological learning to the fore. (ibid:234)

According to Rappaport (1977), community psychology is fraught with ethical mess because it lies at the juncture between the individual and society. When I started this research project, data collection procedures were guided by two institutional processes designed to ensure that the practice of research is of an ethically high standard. Firstly, I followed I followed the *Code of Human Research Ethics* that are published by the British Psychological Society (2014). Secondly, this research was approved by the MMU Ethics Committee. These processes encouraged me to consider and plan for a wide range of ethical issues that may arise. However, in practice, as I spent time in the field, I felt more accountable to the people in the MHP who had direct experience of homelessness than to the official processes. Indeed, according to Snow, Grady and Goyette-Ewing (2000) and Roos, Visser, Pistorius and Nefale (2007) the

community are better placed to process and comprehend complex ethical dilemmas than institutions.

When working with the MHP Driving Group at the beginning of this project, I spent time ensuring that the research aim and set of objectives were framed in ways that were important to MHP members. According to Fine and Torre (2004) this is a fundamental requirement of collaboratively producing ethical community research. Even though I had been encouraged in this process by my supervisors, this was not something that traditional University ethics processes consider. Instead, focus was given to minimising the risk of emotional harm that could be caused to those involved in the research. This was an important issue, and I only mention it here to highlight that institutions tend to think of ethics in terms of individualised issues. Macleod, Marx, Mnyaka and Treharne (2018) suggest that this results from institutional concerns of litigation. I addressed this concern in a variety of ways; familiarising myself with the organisational safeguarding policies of some key local charities in the homelessness sector and producing a risk management protocol. Fortunately, people who were involved in this study were not placed at any additional risk than might normally be expected during their typical MHP activities. On reflection, I feel that emotional safety and social justice were supported by taking the long-form approach to framing this research with community partners.

As a community researcher, I had to think carefully about the impact of hierarchical, institutional processes on this research, no matter how well

intentioned they might have been. The 'consent form' symbolises this quite clearly. Whilst there is every need to ensure that informed consent is given in the research process, the requirement of signing a form in the research process represents a specific power imbalance that requires further scrutiny (Naidu, 2018). In this research project, I took a sensitive approach to the developing consent forms and emphasised how consent is an ongoing process that is continually reviewed (Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson and Tod, 2009). This approach draws on Facer and Enright's (2016) key recommendation for conducting community research, "*Time is to collaborative research what a super computer is to big data*" (ibid:158). These approaches help to relocate power in the research process in the hands of community partners. Naidu (2018) considers that within this framework, the official consent form can become a symbol of power that community members might use to sanction or reject research that is or is not in their interests.

Before working with each group in phase two of this research, collective consent was agreed for me to join the group for the purposes of gathering interactive group-based data to answer the research objectives (which were shared with each group). This was followed by the production of further interview-based consent forms that were used prior to conducting individual interviews. Opportunities were created for group members to collectively analysis data. Group members who had experienced homelessness themselves more readily responded to this than organisational representatives. This may have been because of how this research was framed in terms of social

justice; people who had faced homelessness themselves may therefore have had a greater interest in this.

Involving co-producers in collective analysis tested the formal requirements of ethical approval and data protection. Thomas-Hughes (2018) considers that such formal processes of ethical approval “*can be the antithesis of attempts to democratise the research process*” (ibid:237). Individual interviews that had been transcribed were not shared with other co-producers in the MHP for collective analysis. Instead, I regularly presented initial themes to groups of co-producers for verification, alignment of ideas, discussion and critique. As fieldwork continued, I established a base of ‘critical friends’ with experience of homelessness across various settings. In these settings, our analyses were more discussion based and less ‘rigorous’ in terms of formal processes. These spaces rooted the analysis in social justice to produce counter hegemonic insights about co-production in the MHP.

There was one specific issue that arose in relation to ongoing consent. This related to the tension between relational ethics and social justice ethics. As the counter hegemonic narrative was emerging in my fieldnotes and analysis, I felt that it was important to update the MHP Driving Group of the insights that were unfolding. I wanted them to know that the research will make recommendations to organisations about how to work more inclusively with people with lived experience of homelessness – the implication being that there were criticisms of their current practice. In speaking to the MHP Driving Group

about this, one group member who represented an organisation involved in the MHP wanted reassurance that their organisation would not be heavily criticised. In responding to this, I agreed to share drafts of this research for comment before submission. Having completed this process – with no changes from the MHP Driving Group requested - I recognise that I must have taken a sensitive approach to creating these ethnographic cases. As a reflexive aside, this is likely to have come from my own work experiences which have helped me to empathise with organisational representatives who are trying their best, within the restrictions of their roles to serve the community. I found the process of managing different perspectives and positionality a challenging part of the research process. However, I also recognise that it is not academics or organisational representatives that bear the emotional labour of community research, it is the community partners themselves.

One way that I navigated these tensions was to change the details of specific group members. In relation to the Driving Group, names have not been changed – this is with the consent of the group. However, names have been changed in The Listening Projectors, the UTA Action Group and Resettlement Group. There were two specific conversations that I present to explain the decision to use pseudonyms in these cases. These were based on open decisions agreed with each group. As Naidu (2018) discusses in a review of these ethical issues “*I needed to respond in a contextually contingent manner*” (ibid:252). The first example was in making the decision not to name one organisation in the ethnographic cases. This decision was made because the

organisation wanted the focus of the study to be on the co-production, not the specific organisations who contributed.

In the second example, one group member shared their experiences but didn't want to share them in their own name. As an ongoing contributor to the MHP, they felt that it might affect their standing with others whom they had been working with. In this instance, it was agreed that a pseudonym would be used. However, in doing so, the names of others would also need to be changed to prevent their identification. This second issue represents the polysemic duty of care in addressing these issues.

The final ethical consideration relates to the ownership of data produced in this thesis. When working with The Listening Projectors, we agreed to produce a collective publication and wrote under a collective name when contributing to the chapter of a forthcoming book about community research. Whilst, some of the ethnographic analyses have been collectively generated in this thesis, this is not always the case. Even though some interpretations are based on elements of collaborative and engaged analysis, the process of writing this thesis has also provided a further layer of analysis that was completed in the university setting. The very process of writing a thesis acts as a problematic barrier to collective work. In response to this problem, this thesis does not lay claim to be the only version of what has taken place in the MHP. Indeed, other research outputs by MHP co-producers exist including the *MHP toolkit guide*

(Homeless Link, 2018) and the peer research project *Cause and Consequence: Mental Health and Homelessness in Manchester* (Shelter, 2018).

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the methodological issues considered in this research. In preparation for presenting the ethnographic cases in the following chapters, I have drawn out the critical underpinnings and procedural considerations of this research. The aim of writing this methodological chapter has been to share something of the journey of this research project so that it can be viewed as a credible and authentic research undertaking.

In this specific chapter, I have focused on my interactions with specific groups during my time in the field. Starting with the Driving Group, I have shared how working with this group led to the creation of a research aim and set of objectives that were framed in the interests of the MHP. The information provided in this section also provided further context and description about this group who sit at the heart of the MHP and were the gatekeepers to further work that was undertaken in the field.

I then introduced The Listening Projectors who are the first group that will be presented in the subsequent pages of this thesis. I demonstrated the participatory nature of this project by providing information about the group, data collection processes and ways in which collective analysis took place. However,



in writing about this group, I drew upon ethnographic approaches to interpret what happened during my time in the field.

I then moved on to introducing the UTA Action Group, who will constitute the second ethnographic case presented in this thesis. When working with this group, the approach to analysis was less formal. Collaborative spaces for analysis were created on the fringes of official meetings and away from formal group settings. This was also true for the third ethnographic case that I introduce in this chapter, the *Resettlement Group*.

The final section of this chapter is a consideration of the ethical implications in this research. The challenge of any research project that uses participatory approaches to explore co-production is in how to answer the question of whether the research is co-produced or not? I answer this by making clear “*whose voice counts?*” in this project and how that voice is included. Like other researchers in the field, I do this by laying out the messy, immersive participatory approaches used. As an early career researcher, this project marks the beginning of my journey contributing to the ongoing collaborations between the university and community groups. In the following pages of this thesis, I shall share the three ethnographic cases that examine co-production in the MHP.

## Chapter Six – The Listening Projectors

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the work of The Listening Projectors that took place between January and October 2017. This group was formed out of a collaboration between an MHP arts group and an annual arts festival known as the Greater Manchester Arts and Literature Festival (referred to as G-MALF in the following pages of this chapter). G-MALF agreed to work with the group using the ethos and values outlined in the MHC – namely, co-production. I joined this group while they planned, delivered and reflected upon the large-scale artistic installation that they co-produced together as one of the G-MALF events staged in August 2017. This chapter explores the different phases of that project, interrogating how decisions were made along the way to cast light upon co-production in practice.

I start by providing some background information about the MHP arts group, originally named *Express and Empower*. I then share some of the story of how they came to collaborate with G-MALF.

Having attended the first meeting where G-MALF and the MHP arts group met together, I share the content of this meeting based on my reflexive field notes taken at the time. This was a place where ideas were shared, opportunities for convergence found and concerns were aired. In this meeting, the group were negotiating the nature of their working relationship together. From the outset, it was recognised that there were participatory

limits to this contemporary artistic installation. A well-known artist had already been commissioned to create the installation in his own quintessential aesthetic. Within this chapter, the tensions that arose from this are explored.

Despite these tensions, the MHP arts group recognised that this collaboration created a unique set of opportunities. These are explored as I share experiences from the early stages of working together as a combined group. At this stage, they referred to themselves as The Listening Projectors and worked quickly to gather the necessary material for the installation. It would be a collection of stories about homelessness, transcribed and reproduced in large written form during the installation. Peer interviewer roles were agreed, and storytellers were found. Information about this stage of the process is presented before moving on to sharing what took place at the festival.

The installation is discussed in two sections titled 'Plan and act' and 'Act and reflect'. These share some of what the team created together during the two-week installation event. Co-producers share their experiences of the installation and the impact that it had on them as well as what was described to them by visitors. They hadn't expected that a disused laundrette with stories written on the cardboard covered interior walls would attract 3,500 visitors. Ultimately, this showed that something unexpected had been created. This space became a place for discussion about homelessness locally; one of the group members poetry is used to capture the emotion felt during this time.

This chapter then reflects on the process of working together. I refer to group discussions and interviews with co-producers to develop some collective themes. These centred around the value of group cohesion and how this helped them to communicate their message to a wider audience. I also relate this installation to the broader literature about participatory arts. This considers the participatory limitations of The Listening Projectors and trade-off's that made this project more palatable for those involved. As part of this argument, I introduce the concept of temporality – the subjective perception of time – as a way to cognicise power in spaces of co-production. Drawing on an example from the group, I show that power is operationalised through different temporal lenses. Moreover, that when different temporalities clash, this creates the opportunities to rebalance power in favour of unhoused co-producers over institutions.

I consider the art historian Claire Bishop's (2012) interpretations of Jacques Rancière's philosophical work – specifically *Contemporary art and the politics of aesthetics* (Rancière, 2009). These ideas lay out how engaged-art facilitates political expression and imagining social change away from the daily struggles of enacting that change. In providing this space, participatory art is shown as both a gift and a limitation.

This chapter is about co-production as opposed to participatory art. However, whilst working with this group, I have reflected deeply on the concept and practice of participatory art. The inclusive artist and academic, Alice Fox (2015) developed a critical manifesto for participatory art. Fox (ibid) describes that the socially transformative potential of this work derives

from the “two-way creative exchange that enables artists to learn (and unlearn) from each other” (ibid:2). This in turn challenges traditional roles of professional and amateur artist to support a wider group of artists to realise their potential. My reflection is that too many supposedly inclusive arts projects are scared to embrace failure. Instead, the professional artist takes a leading role. Such projects ultimately fail to look inwards at moments of inequality and exclusion. It is towards these moments that this chapter now turns.

## 6.2 Background

The Listening Projectors was formed when a small arts group from within the MHP collaborated with a local arts festival to produce an artistic installation in 2017. The MHP group were called *Express and Empower*, who, alongside two other small arts groups in the MHP were part of the broader MHP Art Action Group movement. They met at irregular intervals during 2016 and 2017 to co-ordinate activities and share ideas. When the broad MHP Art Action Group had a meeting in January 2017, they created a banner to represent the different types projects that group members wanted to work on. This banner (figure 7, below) is now displayed where that meeting took place – in the activities room of a local Homelessness Day Centre in Manchester. Express and Empower wanted to explore how art could be a tool for expression as well as political change.



**FIGURE 7: MHP ART ACTION GROUP BANNER CREATED JANUARY 2017**

In the same month, the chairperson of this group – Pat Jackson, a local Councillor - was approached by an events producer at G-MALF. G-MALF had not previously been involved in the MHP but were planning a homelessness related project with the poet and artist Dave Smith. G-MALF and Dave had envisioned turning a local shop into a pop-up exhibition space, that could be used to share people's stories of homelessness in the region. Members of the Express and Empower project started to consider whether this could be an opportunity to collaborate – they already had ideas about creating a digital archive of local people's experiences of homelessness. According to the notable art historian Claire Bishop (2012), since the early 1990's there has been a surge of artistic interest in collaborative and participatory art leading to an expanded field of post-studio practices. Of the many forms of socially engaged, community based or collaborative works,

Bishop (ibid) uses the broad term 'participatory art' to describe these types of practices. For Bishop (ibid), participatory art can be defined by,

the artist is concerned less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations. The work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and; while the audience, previously conceived of as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now responsible as a co-producer or participant. (ibid:2)

These are interesting distinctions between traditional art and participatory art. It would be easy to criticise the work of The Listening Projectors as an example of participatory art. However, even though the aesthetic of this project was modelled on the quintessential style of the artist Dave Smith, the project has evolved since my time with the group in 2017. By 2019 they were a long-term project where participants paint their own stories in their own unique style. In the following sections of this chapter, I shall share some of what took place during the planning, production and installation of – what I now know to be – the first iteration of The Listening Projectors in 2017.

### 6.3 Plan and act

A meeting was arranged for the G-MALF group and Express and Empower to come together in February 2017. Paul Radley (a member of Express and Empower, and colleague of a Driving Group member) invited me along. I had been involved with the MHP for just four weeks at this time and was keen to get involved. I recognised three or four other people from the MHP at the meeting. Darren had been someone that I had spent time

with already. I had met him at a local Day Centre arts group, where I had regularly been attending. He was a volunteer there and had previously used their services to find stable accommodation. Now of retirement age, Darren is an artist in the group – interested in changing the public perceptions of homelessness. One of the first things he said to me was “*look at the person, not the sleeping bag*” (fieldnote 6).

I also recognised the artist Dave Smith, having heard about his poetry before. However, I didn't know he would be attending the meeting or involved in the project. We all sat together on old leather sofa's in the meeting area of the local charity St. Peter's Street Family. Dave introduced himself and presented a vision of the project that he hoped to undertake with the group. He wanted to get the public to think differently about people who had experienced homelessness and to understand more about their stories, away from stereotypes and labels. He described art as being a method to disrupt convention in society. He described using cardboard as a material to mock the conventions of 'high-art' and exclusivity. For him, cardboard represented how art - and art materials - *should* be free and accessible. The group immediately picked up on the association between cardboard and rough sleeping - and accepted that this was a genuine attempt to challenge the exclusivity of art. It appeared that even at these early stages, there was an awareness and a rejection of the tensions that exist in the field of participatory art. The chosen aesthetic walked a fine line between reinforcing media representations of homelessness and reclaiming art by using freely available materials (Kester, 2004). For the group, faith rested in



their assessment of Dave's sincerity. He acknowledged that he knew little about homelessness but wanted to work with the group to collectively produce something of social value.

The meeting then turned to exploring what the Express and Empower group members thought about this and how the team might work together. Darren had experience of recording stories from people. He liked the idea of capturing the poetry and natural rhythm of people sharing their train of thought. Adam said the project needed to reflect reality and not glamorise experiences. For him, he wanted to share how violent the reality of street life could be. He didn't want any art project to avoid the truth of that. Adam had also been invited by Paul. He was an MHP volunteer who had experienced homelessness. Adam 'says it how it is'. The first time I met him was at the November 2016 MHP six-month celebration event. Adam spoke up in one of the debates, telling some people that they didn't know what they were talking about because they hadn't experienced homelessness themselves. Now, he co-chairs another MHP Action Group. Even though he admits that he doesn't know anything about art, Paul had asked him to come along because of his honesty.

A valuable critique was raised at this point. Paul had also invited Esme, a local artist who had regularly undertaken participatory arts projects in the local homelessness sector over recent years. She told Dave that collaborative art projects cannot be rushed – and it takes commitment and care to help people to tell their stories in their own way and find their own voice. This was acknowledged. Another local artist, Rajesh, suggested

using the venue to display art and music by people who had experienced homelessness – to show the skills and resources in the community. Again, this was acknowledged, but there was already a sense that there might not be much scope for changing the design of Dave's idea.

Dave described that he wanted to offer this project to the group so that they could, *“hijack the institution – and my celebrity, whatever it may be – for your own gains, for the Manchester Homelessness Partnership's gains”* (fieldnote 8c). The term 'hijack' would go on to symbolise the nature of the collaboration between the groups. One side had hierarchical power and the other side had credibility. Within his own limited scope of control, Dave was trying to share power.

However, this project would not be an example of participatory art – it would be Dave who painted up the stories in his quintessential style reminiscent of many of the InHouse publications that he had released since the 1990's. This was the critique that Esme had warned about and is a key example of how power leads to compromise in this space of co-production. Within such a framed project, the scope of what is up for negotiation was limited. The Listening Projectors team would also become a closed group as opposed to an ongoing open MHP art group. In a later discussion with Paul from Express and Empower, he described how both groups got what they wanted out of the project – and more,

*the festival wanted to create a digital archive of stories after the installation - which completely ticked that box for us. The Listening Projectors became the primary project of the Express & Empower sub-group - which was to build cohesion and change perceptions*

*around homelessness through contributing lived experience to the public discourse.*

(Paul, interview, September 2017)

Paul's perspective emphasises how both groups got what they wanted out of the collaboration, and together, they produced something that was important because of its politics rather than aesthetic.

Over the following weeks, I attended all of the planning meetings with The Listening Projectors group. We met six times as a group before the installation took place in August. The pace of action increased during this time and the focus was on getting the stories recorded. During one Monday at St. Peter's Street Family, I saw Darren, Jane, Chris and Lynne all working hard to interview as many people as possible in the charity's small interview room. Jane was the project coordinator from the arts festival. She has a great organiser and was working closely with everyone to keep things running to schedule. Lynne was a volunteer from St. Peter's Street Family and a volunteer in the MHP. Paul had invited her to The Listening Projectors meetings knowing her passion for activism and systems change. It was always good to see Lynne and we were all glad that she was involved. I hadn't met Chris before. Paul knew him from a charity called Cartridge where he delivered various therapeutic arts projects in the homelessness sector. He had been invited to ensure that sound recordings were of good quality.

The pace of action meant that people gravitated to roles that they felt comfortable with. Adam, Darren and Lynne felt confident as peer interviewers – and they would be able to collect authentic stories of

homelessness. Chris focused on sound and edited the stories down from about thirty minutes to five minutes. This, however, was the type of compromise that Esme alluded to at the beginning. Chris later told me that this is not the way he normally worked – it was the time pressures and the need to project some of the storytellers that led to this decision.

In a group meeting after the event, we would discuss what these different roles in the team had taught us about co-production. Chris said that having defined roles was a strength for group dynamics. The group agreed that they achieved so much more by having clearly defined roles and having Jane as the project coordinator. Chris summarised this clearly in a later interview that we had together,

*There's no model for co-production, each situation has a wide variety of people with an equally wide variety of skills. People also have their own barriers, particularly if people have been homeless - those barriers might be the same ones they meet 'day-in-day-out' and what might have brought them to services in the first place. So, co-production is the bit of work around getting those specific working relationships right, by knowing each other. The Listening Projectors were able to do that by defining clear roles early doors - so we all knew what we were doing. Also, by having a clear goal and end date - so it was easier to manage. You need a project manager, or co-ordination - and we had that in Jane. That costs money; it annoys me how co-production can be presented as a 'cost saving'! What they mean is exploitation.*

(Chris, interview, September, 2017)

As a collective project a great deal was achieved - but whilst I was involved in this project, I had an uncomfortable feeling that Esme's warning hadn't been listened to. Having roles in the group might have helped to get the project delivered on time, but these roles defined us as well as confined us. People from the MHP did not influence of the design of this project. As a

limited space of participation, this project did not favour the facilitation of creativity in others. I tentatively raised this individually with some group members and sensed a collective resistance to this type of criticism. One group member told me *“this was never a participatory arts project anyway”* (fieldnote 20). For me, it just felt like a missed opportunity to do something more collaborative – based on the wealth of contemporary research and literature about participatory art (Wilson, 2007; Titley, 2017). Art historian Grant Kester (2004) expresses concern about how collaborations such as this locate the artist in the role in the position of *“creative mastery”* (ibid:151).

The hierarchically imposed timescales of this project also had an adverse impact on creative participation. Group members were so busy gathering stories that they didn't have the capacity to do anything else. I had also tried to engage G-MALF in a discussion about including storytellers more in the process and contributing to group analysis in our research about co-production. However, I was told that there wasn't enough time or space for this because the installation needed to be the priority. Within these hierarchically defined timescales, our hierarchically defined roles were part of the structure that prevented deeper levels of collaboration. It was Jane, as the project co-ordinator who was put in the role of telling me that certain research ideas had been side-lined, and it must have been difficult for her.

Along this same timeline, the festival organisers were looking for a suitable location. They wanted to use a disused laundrette in a popular location so it would attract passers-by. The event would also be free and heavily advertised in the festival programme. Their production department

had contacts across the region, but they were struggling to secure a venue that would commit to a short-term lease. A solution came when they found a disused laundrette in a bustling town centre. The shop was called The Little Laundrette and had been open for over thirty years. Almost immediately, someone took the decision to rename it TELL! – created by rearranging some of the letters from the sign over the shop. In the days leading up to the launch, the production team installed the cardboard, lighting and sound equipment.

#### 6.4 Act and reflect

The event opened with a small-scale reception where Dave and Paul introduced the project. Then Dave started the process of painting the walls green and writing up stories. We had expected that the stories would be deeply moving and affecting to read. Lynne, one of the storytellers and peer interviewers told me about her experience of reading and seeing her own story,

*I told my experience of homelessness as well as being a peer interviewer. I could tell those stories were genuine, people were opening and had been treated badly by others and the system. With my own story, I was so comfortable talking that I said things I didn't even remember saying. I was shocked when I read back my own transcript – I'd talked about how my sister's boyfriend introduced me to crack long ago before I was homeless. He said, "here, here's a friend for you". It was shocking reading that back. When Dave wrote the story up, he put two handprints out below the quote from my sister's boyfriend saying "here, here's a friend for you". I decided that I wanted that piece of the art to take home and I'm going to put it on the wall as a reminder.*

(Lynne, interview, August 2017)

Lynne's description of talking about and exhibiting her story was powerful and deeply personal. This theme was addressed by Samuel – one of the co-producers – who decided not to share his personal experiences of homelessness. In a group discussion on day six of the installation, Samuel talked about what he hoped the impact of this project would be. He was the first to raise the social responsibility of this project. I noted that he said,

*I'm interested in whether the arts can provide an alternative duty of care. People have contributed stories here and I want to know what will happen next with this, for them? (fieldnote 39)*

Samuel's question connects to broader discussions in participatory art about whether these types of oral repetitions of hardship heal wounds more than they re-open them (Bishop, 2012). Questions remain about how this

project design might have been different based on an empowered decision by participants about how art could be used as a healing process, or indeed imagining social change.

The group at large were less focussed on Samuel's concerns about the therapeutic possibilities of art. Instead, the focus was on the metapolitical (as opposed to party political) aspirations for social change. The question of social change was raised by Paul, who was amongst the most dedicated co-producers that went to the installation every day. Alongside Adam, Darren, Charles and Lynne, he spoke with many of the 3,500 people who visited the event. The installation space became a hub for connecting people to the broader work of the MHP and their vision for systems change. As the days progressed, media attention increased, raising a hopeful optimism and sense of achievement about the levels of public support for this their vision.

After the event, in one of our group meetings, we reflected on the project. Paul said that the timing of the event, combined with the location and the people made the event powerful. Just ten weeks before the installation, the region had been shocked by a suicide attack at the Manchester Evening Arena after a music concert that killed 22 people, many of them children. Three weeks later, the high-rise residential building, Grenfell Tower, burned down in London, causing 72 deaths. The Conservative Party had also just won a general election. Emotions were high in the city and issues of social justice and homelessness were being discussed nationally. A series of bees were being painted around the region



– a symbol of Manchester’s industrial roots. Paul wrote a poem titled *Shared* following an emotive exchange with a Listening Projectors visitor. During the exchange, they stepped outside the venue and noticed that a mural of 22 bees that had been created to honour and remember the 22 victims of the recent city bombing.

*Shared, by Paul Radley (2017) (reprinted with kind permission)*

*Evidence of our  
shared humanity emerges,  
glistening, from our  
chance conversation.  
My earnest stream of words  
halted mid-breath  
by a sudden throat-lump,  
heralding a sadness I had no idea  
was concealed so close  
to the surface.*

*The art did it:  
the twenty-two bees.  
I should have let them  
speak for themselves,  
for when I expounded  
on their behalf,  
the upwelling came;  
tears on my cheeks that  
almost simultaneously  
evoked them in her own eyes.*

*Therein lies the proof.  
Me on home soil;  
she a two-day visitor  
from overseas,  
speaking of a handful  
of men, women, children  
we’d never met,  
never can meet now.*

Paul's poem locates the installation firmly in a socio-political context, and in doing this, it moves the meaning of the installation further away from the aesthetic, towards the political. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2009) observes how works such as this are paradoxical in their relationships between the place and the people. The installation is both autonomous from its local setting in order to generate free thinking about social change, whilst also deeply rooted in the struggles of the present system. The effect of this was to produce an unexpected outcome. In one of our group discussions, we reflected on how this pop-up installation led to *new* conversations with *new* people. Moreover, that the members of the MHP arts group – had reclaimed an art space, which then enabled a new authentic message to be put out there. It was in these conversations that The Listening Projectors team summarised their work together.

*There is more that unites us than divides us.*

(The Listening Projectors, collective analysis, September 2017)

We didn't realise it at the time, but this phrase connected to broader socio-political issues being discussed in the country. These had been the words of the late Jo Cox, Labour MP for Batley and Spen, in her maiden speech to the Houses of Parliament in 2015. In the run up the European Union referendum in June 2016, Jo Cox was fatally shot outside her constituency surgery by an attacker shouting "*Britain first*". In the aftermath of this tragedy, Jo Cox's words from her maiden speech were widely used in

tribute to her work and activism for human rights around the world. Twelve months later, at the time of The Listening Projectors, the sentiment of her words was just as powerful in this project about social division and the quest for equality. As a group, we agreed that this statement embodied what we defined co-production to be.

One group member, Charles had quite a moving memory of The Listening Projectors installation. Charles had been volunteering with Adam at a local charity. He became involved as a peer interviewer. I hadn't spoken to Charles much in the run up to the installation. He was less vocal than Adam, aged in his early 60's. His job at the charity was to – alongside Adam – try to track down people who were sleeping rough and encourage them into services. Charles told me after the event about how working with Dave during the installation made him feel,

*It came from the heart, I was there every day, all day and so was Dave... [At the end of one day].. he put his hand on his heart leaving a paint print, and looked over at me, I knew he was genuine, I could see it in his eyes. I've got the cardboard bit [a piece of wall from the installation] that says 'try'. Because Dave tried... he tried to understand, and we all need to try to understand others -that's what we're trying to change in Manchester. You had everyone from everywhere combine forces to create something together. That was the catalyst for me. (Charles, interview, September, 2017)*

So, despite the credible critiques about process and participation in arts practice, this project had political aspirations. There was a trade-off made when the groups came together. The MHP co-producers had 'hijacked' a world of celebrity for two weeks, and used it to put a political message to the public.

During the process of working with this group, I used my unique position to offer a new understanding of why this project worked well. It was through adopting a temporal understanding of co-production that things started to make more sense. Temporality can be described as a subjective perception of time (Rutz, 1992). Rutz (ibid) explains how historically, those in society with more power have more control over time – they set the scheduled and deadlines that others work to. The Listening Projectors enacted traditional temporal relationships of power in society. The festival schedule dictated how the group worked together. Yet, group members' continued engagement in this project was based on a different subjective experience of time. The compromises of the installation were a short-term sacrifice for what group members knew to be the longer-term benefits achieved through remaining involved in the project. These came from the impact of the installation which they knew would be greater than what they could have achieved alone. The installation received media attention and advertising, including a two-page article in the regional magazine *Focus North West*. Through Dave's contacts, the Sky Arts television station scheduled a live broadcast from the installation as part of their schedule.

It would be ill-advised to consider that power inequalities in spaces of co-production cannot be disrupted and are static. In the weeks following the installation, The Listening Projectors continued to meet regularly. Here we discussed how to continue the work. There was £7700 available to support future work such as the digital archive for The Listening Projectors stories. I had been completing a series of individual interviews with group members

during this time and had heard that Jane, the project co-ordinator was keen to consider how best to spend the funds to create the digital archive. I was aware that she had discussed this with some group members privately before we met as a group. When introducing the topic in the meeting, Paul referred to the need for specialist technical expertise to help create the archive. This immediately got a reaction from Adam. Adam later told me that he could “*sniff a rat a mile off*”. He reacted by saying that all of the money should be used to employ somebody who has been homelessness “*we don’t need consultants, we can do it ourselves*” (fieldnote 55). A heated exchange then took place between Paul and Adam. Paul emphasised the difficulties of paying people who might be claiming housing benefits and Adam defended that there wouldn’t be a problem, “*you can work 16 hours a week without it being affected*”. This was a stand-off where Adam was not prepared to back down. Indeed, his forceful stance led to the creation of a 16 hour a week paid role for one of the group members - Samuel - who was currently living in temporary accommodation.

Adam’s determination showed how the lines of power can be redefined in co-production groups and that power is more fluid than in traditional hierarchies. People deploy their power in different ways, based on their unique subjective experiences. Lovell’s (1992) anthropological analysis of street life helps to explain this. Homelessness, as a form of social exclusion requires that people who face the challenges associated with not having a secure home base use their skills to navigate the many dangers

they face in daily life. Not only is time drawn out, but opportunities close. In this temporal space,

the precise moment of beginning an activity must be selected based on when a maximum effect can be produced. Temporal location cannot be rendered expectable in a contingent order. (ibid:92)

Co-production might replicate traditional power structures in the short-term, but don't underestimate the capacity of co-producers to seize the moment. Adam ended this meeting by telling the group that he was proud of what The Listening Projectors continued to achieve together, he said "*I didn't need to shout to be listened to – that's co-production*". Following this meeting, The Listening Projectors would go on – over the next 12 months - to develop the digital archive and create further installations that were more participatory – people painting up their own stories. Credible commitment to co-production would indeed lead to improvements in how the group worked together.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The Listening Projectors is the first example of co-production that I present in this thesis. It shows how one MHP group collaborated with an arts institution in the production of an arts installation. Whilst the scope of this project had been predefined, co-producers from the MHP willingly entered a space of restricted participation. In recognising this as an opportunity, they entered this space, and used their power when the opportunities arose.

Some twelve months after my time with this group, I learned that they had continued to work together and made the installation more participatory. It was at the Liverpool Art Festival 2018 where people wrote up their own stories in a more collaborative Listening Projectors installation. Referring back to Bishop's (2012) definition of participatory art, The Listening Projectors should not be viewed as one discrete artistic production. Rather, it can be seen as a long-term project with an unclear beginning and fluid conceptualisation of the audience. From the first iteration of The Listening Projectors, we have learned that co-production starts off with very limited opportunities for people to change things. The involvement of an established festival and well-known poet was a very effective way of getting the ball rolling on this project. For anybody involved in co-production, there needs to be something 'in it for them' – as Chris described – *“the glam and glitter added that extra bit that helped get people on board and focused”* (Chris, interview, September 2017).

A temporal understanding of power helped to show how the MHP co-producers who entered this space of restricted participation were not co-opted by the G-MALF institution. They recognised the opportunity to use this space to serve the interests of the MHP and in doing this created a unique meeting place where members of the public engage in a different way with the issue of homelessness locally. Spending time together working as a team also gave the group the space to create a shared group value that they could project to the public. Projecting this as a normative public value was well-received by people who visited the installation and they have contributed

in a small part to changing the language and discourse around homelessness. Their message was simple, *“there is more that unites us than divides us”*.

This project does highlight the ongoing danger of organisations and institutions retaining control over co-produced projects. The analysis that I present here in The Listening Projectors case is limited by using a participatory lens that includes institutional voices in the analysis. According to Fine and Torre (2004), based on this participatory lens, what often emerges is a failure somewhat to fully grasp the fractured perspective from below that it intended to represent (ibid). Instead, what emerged was a broad frame of the issues that arose as they worked together. One concern of the inclusion of institutional voices in analysis is that hegemonic stereotypical assumptions of homelessness are reproduced rather than challenged. In this case, the main criticism related to why people could not paint up their own stories and contribute to the aesthetic. In order to move the research interpretations of the following two chapters away from this full compositional lens I will adopt a more specifically critical and engaged ethnographic lens from below.

The Listening Projectors used art as an approach to comment on the real world. Art offers a space where it is possible to experiment, it must retain autonomy away from real world pressures in order to imagine a model for social change (Bishop, 2012). Yet, contemporary participatory art paradoxically blurs art and life – it is already political. This double ontological status (it is both an event *in* the world and *at one remove*) is both a gift and a



limitation (Rancière, 2010). For, on one hand the utopian vision can be imagined, yet on the other, it remains disengaged with the civic processes of implementing change. Bell, Pool, Streets and Walton (2018) discuss this issue in their conversation piece about the merits and limitations of co-produced art. They question whether “*capturing enthusiasm for change*” (ibid:99) is of any material use to communities, whilst also remaining hopeful that “*archiving hopes for the future informs the future*”. It is for the sake of these tensions, that the following two chapters explore co-production in more realistic service provision contexts in the homelessness sector. By doing this, I consider how co-production in the MHP can bring about the changes necessary to produce a society where “*there is more that unites us than divides us*”.

## Chapter Seven – The Unsupported Temporary Accommodation Action Group

### 7.1 Introduction

In this second ethnographic case, I explore a very different practice of co-production to that seen with The Listening Projectors. I have explained how the MHP is a network of individuals and organisations trying to encourage systemic change, whilst also delivering more traditional services in the homelessness sector. As such, there are many different groups in the MHP who have organised themselves around specific issues. A list of these different groups is included in appendix B. The UTA Action Group is one such group who were established to confront a significant challenge to the homelessness sector – that is the use of poor quality private temporary accommodation to offer shelter for single person households facing homelessness.

Having met Laura O’Leary, the chairperson of this group at an MHP event in 2017, I was keen to meet with her again and talk about the group. This led to two meetings over the summer of 2017 and agreement that I would spend eight months (between January and September 2018) with the group. In this chapter, I start by contextualising UTA as a lesser-known form of homelessness in modern day UK. I share how the group came up with the term ‘unsupported temporary accommodation’ to broadly reflect the growing number of poor quality unsupported shelters available to people who face

homelessness. The focus of this specific MHP group is on single-adult UTA provision as opposed accommodation provision couples or families with children. Data derived from freedom of information requests indicates that despite the growing levels of rough sleeping on the streets of England, over ten times more single adults reside in UTA (Maciver, 2018).

In the introductory pages of this chapter, I also I present the UTA Action Group members – who started working together in 2016 as one of the initial MHP Action Groups. Laura O’Leary – a research officer from a local charity - brought a wide range of workers from across the sector together with UTA residents to bring about improvements in this area of practice.

Areas of focus are then presented from my time with this group. These were first shared with the group chairperson in the summer of 2018. Since my time with the group, the themes that emerged have developed into this ethnographic case that I now present. In the words of the organisational theorist and ethnographer, John Van Maanen’s (2011:4) *“it’s the solitary act of writing where analysis takes place”*. Taking time to write and refine this chapter in 2019 brought out the unique attributes of this group, in an overall thesis which shares the diversity of co-production in the MHP.

The first area of focus is called ‘Fragile group value’ and it centres on the struggles of bringing very different co-producers together. After the first twelve months of working together as an Action Group, they invited property owners (referred to from this point onwards as landlords) to get involved. It was surprising to many involved in the MHP that that UTA landlords began to attend group meetings. The group had expected that many of them would

be resistant to engaging in this space. Experiences from a large group meeting attended by both residents and landlords are presented to show the challenges and opportunities of bringing these groups together. I would later find out that it had taken a great deal of strategic planning by a small team within the Action Group to broker this meeting. I propose that this work reflects a skill referred to in co-production literature as ‘boundary spanning’ (Blume, 2015). Yet these skills might have more to do with leadership, than with participatory forms of horizontal inclusion envisioned in a utopian model of co-production (Butler Zander, Mockaitis and Sutton, 2012; Ernst and Yip, 2009). In subsequent group meetings, I examine the impact of this effort to create group value between these dissimilar and unequal groups. I find that, not only do problems remain, but some residents feel that the inclusion of landlords actually undermines the process of holding them accountable for malpractice in the sector.

The second area of focus is titled ‘Unheard voices’. In this section, I draw upon two examples. The first is of a field visit to a UTA site in North Manchester with Gemma Spiller from the Action Group. In this example, we found out for ourselves, that families were living in this old guest house, apparently referred by Social Services. As we discussed the UTA Action Group with one of the workers there, it became apparent that this specific MHP group had not been set up to focus on the needs of families. Of even more concern was that there was no group within the MHP focussing on this issue. As of 2018, the voices of households with children in temporary accommodation that remain unrepresented in the broader MHP. The MHP is

therefore framed as both a restrictive and exclusive space of participation, where representations of homelessness align with dominant stereotype of an adult male sleeping rough in the city centre.

The second example from this section is titled 'Unheard voices'. It centres specifically on the experience of Action Group members who live in UTA and how their voice is - at times - disregarded by others with 'professional' backgrounds during meetings. Paul's example about the dangers of deep fat fryers, exposed an 'elephant in the room' – that took the form of classism. As a whole, 'Unheard voices' shows that spaces of participation are closed down at both macro and interpersonal levels.

The third area of focus is posed as a question – 'Whose voice counts?'. This examines the nature of different working relationships in the group. This final area of focus shows how some working relationships are supportive and are part of a long-term effort to build meaningful participation in the MHP. Other working relationships however have more in common with New Public Management practices. This latter approach fails to take forward the opportunities that co-production presents.

The chapter is then summarised as a unique contribution to understanding co-production in a realistic practice-based context. It builds on the insights about group cohesion offered in The Listening Projectors chapter, demonstrating the challenges of using co-production in homelessness related services. By introducing the landlords, and exploring their role in the UTA Action Group, this ethnographic case demonstrates more of the struggles in realising the utopian vision of co-production,

promulgated in The Listening Projectors' maxim *"there is more that unites us than divides us"*.

## 7.2 Contextualising Unsupported Temporary Accommodation

The UTA Action Group in Manchester first started out as the Bed & Breakfast Action Group when they formed in May 2016. They began using the term 'UTA' during 2017 to reflect how they were uncovering a fragmented and hidden sector comprising of various types of small privately-owned lodgings. These, typically sub-standard accommodation options, came in the form of a single room in a large multi-occupancy dwelling, co-occupied by people who have faced homelessness but do not meet local authority thresholds for homelessness assistance. UTA's include private hostels, guesthouses, hotels or short-stay houses in multiple occupation and Bed and Breakfasts. There are three main concerns about UTA's; lack of security of tenure; state of living conditions; and lack of support for residents with multiple and complex needs.

UTA's differ from privately rented tenancies in that residents may lawfully be evicted without any notice or reason (Maciver et al., 2016). Whilst the term 'temporary' reflects the lack of rights afforded to residents, it does not accurately reflect a resident's transition to permanent, or secure accommodation. Many people are 'stuck' in UTA's for extended periods, unable to find affordable move-on accommodation or maintain private rented accommodation (due to a mixture of affordability and individual support needs). In a recent study, a local charitable research team found that, of the

people they interviewed, the longest time someone had lived in a UTA was 35 years (Maciver et al., 2016). Part of the reason for being stuck in UTA relates to the incremental lowering of housing benefit payments since 2011. In contrast, rental costs have consistently risen in the years since 2011, leaving many people with no other choice than to accept sub-standard unsecure temporary accommodation.

In relation to living conditions, a recent survey of 35 UTA residents in Manchester found that 27 residents reported that both their mental, and physical health was negatively affected by their accommodation (Rose and Davies, 2014). Not only did many describe their living conditions as depressing, but issues of damp, infestations, poor heating and cooking facilities were regular problems. In a subsequent survey of 45 UTA residents in Manchester, Maciver et al. (2016) found that 28 residents had witnessed or experienced violence where they lived and bullying from their landlord.

UTA residents are likely to have support needs that remain unmet. Often, people might enter a UTA following a period of sleeping rough or extended periods of time unhoused (Rose, Maciver and Davies, 2016). Residents may therefore experience a range of multiple and complex needs including mental health and addiction.

Alongside the rising levels of homelessness in all its forms, the number of people living in UTA has also risen since 2010 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2018). This Action Group focusses on UTA's for single adults in an effort to provide support to a group of people who are hidden in the official homelessness recording practices of government. Single adults are typically

assessed as not meeting the Local Authority threshold for priority need – based on their lack of dependencies. Referring them to a private UTA is officially classified as an act of homelessness prevention – dealt with on an advisory basis. As such, data about this group is not systematically recorded, nor are they counted in official calculations of the scale of homelessness in England. It is only through a large-scale Freedom of Information request, that Maciver (2018) has been able to estimate that 51,500 single adults reside in UTA's in England – 7786 in the North West of England. This figure was based on Local Authority figures for individuals claiming housing benefit from a registered guesthouse.

### 7.3 Introducing the UTA Action Group

This Action Group was formed as part of a pledge to the MHP and MHC, by a small Manchester based charity supporting UTA residents in the local area. They brought together a range of people who might be interested in co-producing change in the UTA sector. A table of group members is included (see tables). Here, I will introduce some of the co-producers described in this table who will be referred to again in the following pages of this chapter. I have already mentioned that Laura was the chairperson of this group. During the time that I worked with the group, she left the group to pursue another role within her organisation. Her colleague Gemma Spiller took her place as the group chairperson. Gemma was equally as helpful and open to discussing the many questions that I put to her when we worked together. There are three people with personal experience of UTA that I refer



to in this chapter, two of whom are Siobhan Keavney and Paul Rodger. Siobhan had lived in a UTA for nine months before obtaining a secure private tenancy some two years ago now. She had been helped by a local accommodation support charity and since securing a degree of housing stability she volunteered with organisations in the MHP and regularly contributed to the UTA Action Group. In my time getting to know Siobhan, she told me about a series of health complaints that she felt – in part – were made worse by the stress and physical conditions of living in UTA. Siobhan is a particularly caring person who was in the process of completing a counselling course while we worked together. She lived near the University and – during my time writing drafts of this of this ethnographic case – we met on four occasions to discuss the interpretations as they emerged.

During my time with the group, Paul was living in a UTA in Manchester. He had a very good relationship with Laura and Gemma, who had supported him to start attending UTA Action Group meetings. In meetings, when Paul spoke, it was clear that he knew the neighbourhoods, landlords and different UTA's that we discussed in meetings. He could give directions and point out different places in a way that connected group discussions to the reality of what was going on in UTA's. He was friends with Michael Burnside, another group member who had lived in UTA and occasionally attended the group. At one meeting, Michael told us about how he went into a UTA on the same day as leaving prison. As soon as he left prison, he went to the Town Hall to ask for help. He was given was a list of private landlords who offered temporary accommodation at the rate of

housing benefit. He since became involved in a prison-leavers charity to help others who were coming out of prison with no accommodation.

There are other group members that I refer to in this chapter, mainly organisational representatives. Amita Akin was the Partnership Manager for the Probation Service. For her, forming strategic links with community groups and charities was an important way of helping the Probation Service do their job effectively. Robert Lawson was the Fire Safety Officer, representing the Fire and Rescue Service and attended all meetings. He has been working in this role for several years and provided safety checks and advice to UTA landlords. Owen Lean also attended some of the meetings as a representative from a local housing association. There were also members of the Local Authority Housing Standards team in attendance, generally the team members took turns to attend, one such member I mention in this chapter is Rick Southwall. Steve Quinn is also introduced as a UTA landlord. Steve attends only one of the meetings – where a presentation is given about the introduction of Universal Credit. He owns a large UTA occupied by up to 20 residents. In the meeting he spoke about struggling to make a profit and was unsure about how long he could stay in business. It is in this meeting that Steve attended that I now turn to as the first area of focus in this chapter.

#### 7.4 Fragile group value

The first Action Group meeting I attended was at a surprisingly grand location – the Virgin Money Media Lounge in central Manchester (see appendix H). Looking back now at my time in the field, it was not actually uncommon for MHP meetings to take place in incongruous settings – city centre businesses would offer premises for group meetings in response to MHP requests. However, the irony of meaningfully discussing homelessness in these spaces was never lost on me, or many of the MHP co-producers who had experienced homelessness themselves. In that UTA Action Group meeting, the room was packed with over 25 people including tenants and organisational representatives from across the sector. I recognised two people, Siobhan and Laura and headed straight to say hello. At least six landlords were also present; Steve introduced himself as the owner of guest house in North Manchester.

They were all there to hear from a guest speaker from the Local Authority who had been invited to talk about the roll out of Universal Credit. This would replace housing benefit and have implications for both residents and landlords. The representative explained some of changes – direct payments to landlords would cease. Instead, housing benefit claimants would be responsible for budgeting their gross benefit (Universal Credit) and ensuring their rent was paid. There was a shared concern amongst group members that Universal Credit would cause problems in getting rent paid and would lead to a rise in eviction rates. Landlords described how they routinely completed resident's paperwork on their behalf to ensure that their benefit

applications were submitted. Steve said, *“We are the safety net for these people, because the government has taken the whole welfare system out from under their feet”* (fieldnote 60).

It felt quite progressive to see both residents and landlords agreeing together in the same meeting, and I wanted to find out more about this. Laura later told me that she was happy and relieved that the meeting went well. It had taken a long time to get to the point where landlords and residents could sit together in the Action Group. She described this process as a personal journey with co-production – saying that it had taught her to think in terms of collaboration even when it might seem impossible. The Action Group had moved from a position of seeing the landlords as the enemy to finding that they needed them on side. She told me that *“it is better to have an engaged landlord than a non-engaged one”*. This meeting was therefore part of a longer-term strategy designed to increase the involvement and participation of landlords. This type of strategic facilitation built on negotiation between groups, managing perspectives and building alliances has been described in academic literature about co-production as ‘boundary spanning’ (Blume, 2015). Boundary spanning involves knowing the needs of different groups and creating opportunities for synergy in complex social systems. The critical social researcher Michelle Fine (1994:70) calls this process *“working the hyphens”* between a given individual’s dual roles in these community spaces. Laura for example, is any, and all, of the following; an advocate-negotiator-facilitator-activist-researcher. Each of these roles

creates opportunities; and between each of these roles is a hyphen that can be leveraged to create the conditions for social change (ibid).

In the UTA Action Group setting, this approach clearly helped to facilitate greater levels of agreement between disparate groups. However, it did not resolve some key concerns raised by co-producers who had lived in UTA's themselves. After the meeting at the Virgin Media Lounge, Siobhan told me that she did not feel comfortable talking in the group with landlords present. She found them intimidating. Ever since her time living in UTA she avoided contact with landlords – describing them as nosey and judgmental, always looking for reasons to evict. She recalled one experience where her landlord wanted to check her room, saying it was for a fire risk assessment. He told her to tidy up and said that she couldn't store her bicycle in her room anymore. These experiences were present for Siobhan in meetings. She told me that she didn't even try to contribute in 'business style' environments around tables, sitting across from paid employees and landlords. I also later heard how Steve - the landlord from the previous meeting - might not actually have been the "*safety net*" that he claimed to be. Reports has circulated from residents that he had recently evicted tenants who had complained about him.

Bringing the disparate groups together did not turn out to be a sustained way of working for the UTA Action Group. In a subsequent Action Group meeting, no landlord was were present. In this meeting, we met in a community arts café. The Virgin Money Media Lounge had withdrawn their offer of the room, saying that we could only book the room if we had a

company bank account. The community arts café was more comfortable. They displayed artwork from a local MHP arts group on the walls. Undoubtedly, because of the setting and because no landlords were present, residents were able to speak more freely. In this meeting, there were current six residents, and a former resident, Michael, alongside representatives from MCC Housing Standards, as well as the Fire Service. Midway through the meeting, the conversation turned to holding landlords to account for malpractice in the sector. The group had been talking about how best to encourage landlords to change when Michael snapped and said, *“this isn’t going to work”*. He said that the landlords wouldn’t change voluntarily, because they do not care about their residents. He presented a vivid description of inhumane living conditions that he had to stay in for thirteen weeks before a charity helped him to find somewhere else. He felt that it was time to use sanctions against them – *“it’s the only way they will change”* he said. Rick from Housing Standards responded by outlining the incremental steps the Local Authority take towards imposing sanctions. He said,

*It’s difficult balance. We simply don’t have the capacity to prosecute first off, there needs to be chances and ways to get compliance. We already offer support and advice to help landlords comply. (fieldnote 72)*

This approach derives from the field of socio-legal studies, which examines the role of legal systems in mediating the interdependent interests of economic, social and political forces. Within this field, the approach that Rick describes to working with landlords is known ‘responsive regulation’ (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992). Ayres and Braithwaite (ibid) crystallised this

term in a book published in the USA at a time of ongoing debate between those who advocate strong government regulation of business and those who favour deregulation. They promote a flexible regulatory policy that is context specific. Considered at the time to be biased towards a republican democracy (Nowotny, 1993), the book considers the involvement of public interest groups (unfortunately referred to as PIG's) in dealings between business firms and the state. It describes state intervention in the economy as being the "*benign big gun*" (ibid:19). They propose that punitive regulation should be reserved for extreme cases and that a more flexible approach to regulation can effectively be used in many other cases.

In the UTA Action Group, Rick was saying that this, more flexible approach, is being used. Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System of the Housing Act (2004:c9), landlords can self-assess their property and approach Rick's team for advice and support. When complaints are made by tenants to the Local Authority, Rick's team use this system to encourage landlords to willingly comply. Regulatory action is taken in cases of wilful non-compliance. Michael's frustration came from this approach and his experience of landlords who make changes to appease the Local Authority but don't maintain these standards after the checks are completed. His experience demonstrated that responsive regulation wasn't working in the UTA sector and a greater use of enforcement was required.

It is within this specific issue that the contribution of co-production can be examined. Despite Michael's contribution to the debate, the policy of responsive regulation remained. At best, the Housing Standards Team

encouraged tenants to keep reporting concerns to them so that they could build up evidence to take more punitive action in specific cases. This is the point where *co-production* in this setting became the 'benign big gun'. Whilst a Local Authority has obligations to tenants, they operate in a macro system that encourages the entrepreneurial activities of local landlords. This is what the Marxist economic geographer David Harvey (1974) calls 'class-monopoly rent'; ideological and geographical community divisions are maintained by positioning different public group interests against each other. In this same UTA Action Group meeting, Michael expressed, with incredulity, his experience of living in UTA during the winter, without heating, whilst his landlord who lived next door was building a conservatory.

### 7.5 Unheard voices

The second focus of analysis considers the voices that are not heard in this Action Group. I present examples drawn from accompanying Gemma – the new group chairperson from March 2018 – on a go-along interview (Kusenback, 2003) and from an Action Group meeting. Starting with my field visit with Gemma, she had heard that there might be further UTA's in the city that the group were not aware of and wanted to investigate. I was the only member of the Action Group who responded to Gemma's group email request to accompany her. Apparently, some agencies considered certain areas of the city 'no-go-zones' and that this approach was beyond the remit of their organisation. On our visit, we planned to introduce ourselves at the UTA and provide general information about the Action Group, saying that it



was an opportunity for people residing in temporary accommodation to access support and participate in change. If a landlord answered, we had the same strategy, they could also access support through the group and contribute to improving standards in the sector. Gemma drove us to a small town on the outskirts of north Manchester. It was a run-down area, with several boarded-up buildings. We found the potential UTA from our directions given and upon knocking at the door, a staff member answered and openly spoke to us. She told us that their residents were all families who had been referred by the Local Authority's Social Services department. She was interested in the UTA Action Group and said that the families could really benefit from our support. She said that there were many problems in the guest house; childhood behavioural needs, mental health concerns and addiction. The families were not local, typically moved here from areas where there was no affordable accommodation.

After this visit, Gemma explained that the voices of temporarily housed families were missing from this Action Group - and more concerningly - from the MHP at large. Based on the rise in single person homelessness since 2010, and how they are omitted from official homelessness figures, the UTA Action Group focussed specifically on this group of people living in UTA. This finding was a sober example of how, despite the concerted efforts of small groups like the UTA Action Group, the MHP was not providing space for everyone. Even the MHP had become an exclusive space of participation. This is a criticism of two issues. First, that the MHP does not represent all forms of broader homelessness. Second,

that using Action Groups whose scope is restricted to a specific issue, prevents open participation of all. Beyond the MHP, there were other groups in Manchester where activists were focussing on the needs of families who faced homelessness. However, these voices had not been included in the MHP. According to the government's own data, a total of 79,880 households with children in England were in temporary accommodation in the first quarter of 2018; in these households, there were 126,020 children (MHCLG, 2018). This is the highest figure since 2007. Families facing homelessness in highly populated city centre areas are particularly vulnerable to gentrification, and dispersal to other regions by Local Authorities who struggle to accommodate them is rife (Hardy and Gillespie, 2016).

Following on from this visit with Gemma, I wanted to explore a second feature of this issue that I call 'unheard voices'. Specifically, I was interested in understanding more about how the Action Group worked together and responded to the contributions of UTA residents such as Michael. I now turn to an example taken from a meeting in February 2018. The group had been working hard together for two hours prioritising the various ideas and suggestions generated about what they should focus on as a group for the next twelve months. Towards the end of the meeting, Gemma asked the group if there were any other issues that people wanted to raise. Paul – a co-producer currently living in a UTA – called her attention saying "*Gemma, what about the chips? Do you remember?*" (fieldnote 83). While the group looked confused, Paul explained how he had heard that the Fire Service were promising free fire-safe deep fat fryers to UTA residents. Gemma

directed the issue to Robert – the Fire Officer present – who said that he hadn't heard of any current chip-pan amnesties being organised locally but could check. He explained that these could reduce the risk of unintentional kitchen fires caused by cooking oil on open gas hobs. Surprisingly, what unfolded in the group was a discussion about the health implications health implications of fried food, rather than concern for fire risks in UTA's. Owen, a housing association representative joked *“well, they'll have to eat oven chips instead, we shouldn't be encouraging that”*. As other group members laughed, the issue that Paul raised dissolved into small-talk and group members called an end to the meeting. Moreover, in the subsequent four months that I remained in the Action Group, this issue was not raised again on the agenda, or Paul's suggestion followed up.

Paul's concern is a serious one. Over a period of five years in London, 78% of all fire related deaths were from unintentional dwelling fires. Cooking appliances were the second highest cause of these fires, smoking was the highest. Ten fatalities during that period were specifically related to chip-pan fires. Fire related fatalities were more likely to occur in houses of multiple occupancy, areas of social deprivation, and involving alcohol or drugs. No fatalities occurred in single family detached accommodation (Holborn, Nolan and Golt, 2003). This study therefore demonstrated a correlation between the features of private UTA's and an increased risk of kitchen fire fatalities.

The group response raises uncomfortable questions about the extent to which class identity shapes capital and claims for legitimacy (Skeggs, 2010; 2013). In recent years, the issue of class has been overlooked and

underplayed as an analytical tool in social relations. In their book *The Death of Class*, Pakulski and Water's (1996) drew on arguments about social mobility and technology to suggest that we were living in a post-class society. New Labour, bolstered by the ideas of the sociologist Anthony Giddens, defined the 'self' in neoliberal terms; consumerist and workplace (Gillies, 2005:837). Any talk of poverty became easily attributed to individual fecklessness (Tyler, 2013). Spaces of co-production are not immune to discrimination. Tyler (ibid) eloquently explains how social abjection is a discursive strategy that creates false images or scapegoats of discriminatory practice. Whilst Paul raised the issue of fire risk in UTA's, the UTA resident who used the deep-fat fryer became the social abject. Phelan (1997) considers that this type of interaction is symptomatic of wider power relations that exist in society. In this example, judgment is political. Social hierarchy is reinforced through collective consensus. It is for this same reason that Siobhan didn't feel comfortable talking in meetings with landlords' present.

Laura and Gemma were concerned about these issues. They had been working hard to get the group to work more equally together. One idea was to take the group away from the 'business' style context of having meetings around tables. However, they felt that the group would generally be resistant to doing activities together such as going for walk in the countryside or gardening. Paid employees cited a lack of time to engage in such alternative group building activities. Group members who lived in UTA gave knowing looks to each other every time they heard a paid representative say, "*I don't get any workload relief for coming here, you*

*know, I'm giving my time for free, on top of a full-time workload"* (fieldnote 102). The issue that Laura and Gemma allude to is that activities outside of the office environment, or working routine are better placed to establish trust and support amongst groups where 'the office' is not their natural space. Having meetings in offices, privileges those who work in offices. Having meetings whilst walking, respects the expertise of those who walk for a living. As many unhoused co-producers will testify, when you walk everywhere, as a necessity and to fill time, walking stimulates creative thinking and mood (Oppezzo and Schwartz, 2014; Mueser and Cook, 2015).

#### 7.6 Whose voice counts?

Throughout my time with the group, meetings continued to be held in offices, however, there was a concerted effort to make group-work activities a feature of every session. These included active small group exercises and lots of flipchart discussions away from tables. Within these settings, the former UTA resident, Siobhan described that the charity workers who chaired the UTA Action Group were particularly supportive and inclusive. Anecdotally, she told me how the gesture of providing her with a lanyard for meetings made her feel included in these spaces and integrated alongside the organisational representatives (fieldnote 139).

As a general feature of most of the MHP groups, all agencies were encouraged to bring service users to meetings. This required organisations to support their staff to take the time to engage more with service users, both in finding service users that might want to contribute and then supporting

them to do so. There was only one organisation in the UTA Action Group who supported service users in this way, they were the small third sector charity who created the Action Group. I spoke to Amita, the Probation Service representative about this. She told me that her organisation could definitely do more to involve service users. However, under the pressure of funding cuts, their workforce is so stretched by the demands of their statutory responsibilities that they struggle to work creatively. Instead, she described that it was easier for them to use whatever pockets of funding available on partnerships with relatively small third sector organisations who might be able to work more flexibly with people staying in UTA's. This type of partnership-based relationship is different to how the public sector might commission the third sector to deliver statutory services. In her role, as Partnerships Manager, this role reflects a strategic approach of maximising social impact through collaboration with smaller, external organisations. Whilst this approach might be favourable to commissioning services (Osborne and McLaughlin, 2004), it still works against a public organisations capacity to create greater levels of social impact directly with service users and communities (Fugini, Bracci and Sicilia, 2016). Indeed, any benefits from this approach would be indirectly experienced by service users and communities. This managerial approach to social impact is referred to in public management literature as 'Inter-Organisational Collaboration', or IOC for short. Fugini et al. (ibid) define IOC as an approach where,

*individual actors work together across organisational boundaries in a sustained way to achieve something which they could not have achieved alone. (ibid:16)*

Pestoff (2012) describes this type of working relationship as typically being located at senior management levels, where strategic objectives between organisations are aligned. Literature from the school of New Public Management considers the benefits of IOC, citing how it can to reduce duplication between agencies and produce “*collaborative advantage*” through more integrated services (Huxham and Vangen, 2005:79; Brandsen and Hout, 2006). In criticism of IOC, Sancino and Jacklin-Jarvis (2016) argue that it undermines direct relationships between citizens and the state because it fails to position individuals with personal experience of services at the heart of the relationship. It also limits the capacity for innovation because the actors involved in IOC are bounded - as paid representatives - by organisational priorities (ibid). This approach dominates the operational landscape surrounding services for people in UTA’s.

Here, the effort to implement co-production through the MHP comes up against different priorities within multiple organisations. Whilst this makes the broader effort to implement co-production across services difficult, within the UTA Action Group it makes it very difficult to even nurture the participation of people with experience of UTA. In these spaces, unless all organisations are committed to working in this way within their own organisations, traditional business practices will continue to dominate. More concerningly, the social abjection of people who are unhoused or temporarily housed will likely resurface.

## 7.7 Conclusion

The UTA Action Group is an organic example of co-production in the MHP. Originally coming together as a group in 2016, this space brought together a cross section of organisational representatives, UTA tenants and landlords. Here they undertook a process of change to raise standards across the UTA sector. This chapter offers insights into the practice of co-production in a live homelessness sector context. As an ethnographic case it focuses more on the working relationships between co-producers in the group than in the previous chapter about The Listening Projectors. It also unpacks the conflicting interests of different groups who enter the space of co-production. This chapter has shown that co-production is not a panacea for resolving competing interests in the UTA sector, especially when the private sector is involved alongside the public sector and service users. Indeed, this chapter challenges the maxim promulgated by The Listening Projectors that, *“there is more that unites us than divides us”*. As the work of the UTA Action Group demonstrates, in a financialised UTA sector, this is not the case. The introduction of financial capital to the UTA sector replaces this collective hope with a system where people are ideologically and physically divided by capital gain.

Not only does this chapter demonstrate the systemic problems in the UTA sector, it also demonstrates some of the interpersonal challenges that people with personal experience of homelessness face in contributing in MHP co-production settings. These challenges are threefold. The first challenge arose from the strategic efforts to bring landlords into the group by



providing a presentation about Universal Credit. It is possible to generate consensus between landlords, tenants and agencies that the introduction of Universal Credit is not a good thing. However, in bringing these disparate groups together, there needs to be greater recognition and understanding by all group members of the structural inequality that exists in this setting. Should landlords recognise this and commit to a long-form process of working alongside tenants, there is hope that change can be made. However, this culture is unlikely to change while the broader political economy in which they are located remains unchanged.

The second challenge relates to how the creation of specific issue-based Action Groups in the MHP inadvertently restricts the focus of those groups. There is no voice for families with children in the MHP as of 2018. The UTA Action Group had been designed to focus on the needs of single adults and did not feel equipped to address the needs of families. This led me to question the extent to which the MHP could respond to the needs of a wide range of people facing homelessness in the city. It arose concerns that the MHP might instead represent a local political response to the rising levels of visible forms of homelessness in the city centre – as opposed to the democratic engagement of wider groups of people experiencing extreme poverty in the city.

The third challenge for this group centred around how the contributions of people who live in temporary accommodation are not acted upon by the Action Group. This was the case in Michael's suggestion about sanctioning rogue landlords, and Paul's suggestion about fire safe kitchen

equipment. Traditionally 'professionalised' ways of thinking and acting reinforce structural oppression at an interpersonal level. Spaces of co-production need to be intentional spaces of equality. Classism manifests itself in spaces of co-production through the subtle undermining and minimisation of 'non-professional' voices.

This chapter raises the concern that the pressures of delivering services in the UTA sector and macro governing structure works against the transformative possibilities of co-production with people who have personal experience of homelessness. As an organic example of co-production in the homelessness sector, it soon became clear that greater forces and pressures would dictate the work of organisations and their representatives. It is of most concern that these spaces might then reinforce the oppression and exclusion that these spaces are intended to work against. Whilst this chapter considers that smaller, third-sector organisations potentially have more freedom to transform their organisations based in the involvement of service users, we should be wary of how public organisations claim that they cannot change. In the next and final ethnographic case, I move on to explore the extent to which public institutions can change through co-production in the MHP. Drawing on experiences from across the 18 months of fieldwork, and through the privileged position of working in the Driving Group, I work alongside members from the Local Authority commissioning team and the MHP as they co-design a new service in the local homelessness sector.

## Chapter Eight – Resettlement Group

institutions or decision-making processes that exclude some people or leave some people powerless to influence decisions, fail to recognise those people as the political or moral equals of the included and powerful  
(Bell and Davoudi, 2016b:168)

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter is the final ethnographic case presented in this research. It follows on from the examination of the UTA Action Group as a site for organic co-production. In that group, co-producers were drawn from across the homelessness and temporary accommodation sectors. Their aim was to co-produce incremental improvements in the private temporary accommodation sector. As a site of co-production, the interactions in this group exposed the broader ideological clashes between groups of people created by broader governmental structures. Policies introduced under the Localism Act 2011 have driven the use of the private sector as the main providers of temporary accommodation for single adult households. The work and struggles of the UTA Action Group demonstrated that if co-production is a process of consensus making between disparate groups, then the financialisation of temporary accommodation is the key barrier to this process.

In this chapter, I join the MHP Resettlement Group to explore co-production in an even more technically complex, and politically relevant part of the public sector - commissioning. Instigated by commissioners in the

Local Authority, a small group of MHP co-producers were invited to contribute to the co-design, procurement and co-governance of a new service in the local homelessness sector. I had been told about this group by a Driving Group member who considered that it might become an example of transformation in the public sector. This claim is considered by employing ethnographic approaches during fieldwork with this group for a duration of seven months in 2018.

This chapter is divided into three sections; first, the events that preceded the Resettlement Group are examined; second, I explore the co-design stage of the new service; third, I discuss the procurement stage of the commissioning process.

In the first section I present my experience of being involved in a large-scale co-planning day organised by the MHP in February 2017. Here, more than forty people from across the local homelessness sector debated and proposed ideas for planning future services in the local sector. The event was attended by all members of the Driving Group and many members of the various Action Groups from around the MHP. In this section, I introduce the MHP Driving Group chairperson Jez Green and a Local Authority Director of Homelessness and Adult Wellbeing Services, Sarah Powers – who co-chaired the event. They had both been involved in the MHP from the beginning and, in preparing for this event, negotiated how best to structure and facilitate proceedings. The level of inclusion and participation is analysed against legitimate forms of co-planning from public sector co-production literature (Barbera, Sicilia and Steccolini, 2016). In this

discussion, the Brazilian Porto Alegre model of participatory budgeting is used as an exemplar of co-planning (Santos, 1998).

In the second section, I introduce the Resettlement Group. Led by the Local Authority commissioning team, this group was made up of a small group of representatives from across the MHP. The Local Authority Strategic Commissioning Manager, Jill Symonds began the process of designing the new service before inviting others from across the MHP to contribute to the remaining part of the design stage. These included Kathy Edmonds, the CEO of a local homelessness charity. Also, two volunteers in the MHP with experience of homelessness – Ian Ruskin and Patrick Davies. Using data derived from interviews with group members and first hand experiences with the group, I present examples of negotiations during this time to show the opportunities for creativity during the co-design stage. These include designing a personal interest fund and providing paid opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness in the new service. However, these opportunities are levelled against the collective rejection of a more radical proposal presented by Ian Ruskin. Upon viewing the ideas for a new resettlement service, Ian proposed that they tear up the service specification and start again from scratch. This section also draws on data from recorded interviews with Angela Roberts, a Commissioning Manager for the Local Authority and James Levy, the Project Leader of the newly commissioned resettlement service.

In the final section of this chapter, I consider the process used to deliver this new service. It had already been decided that the Local Authority

would commission an external provider to deliver the new service. The involvement of Patrick Davies, as an MHP volunteer with personal experience of homelessness is considered during the procurement of this new service. Drawing on both Ian and Patrick's experience of participating in this group, I examine how their ideas were curtailed by the limits of the systemic processes of market-based delivery models in the homelessness sector.

## 8.2 Co-planning

The Resettlement Group emerged as a key outcome of an MHP sector-wide co-planning day in February 2017. The event took place at the Friends Meeting House in central Manchester – a large conference facility operated by the Quakers Religious Society of Friends. Over forty MHP members attended in response to an open call from the Local Authority for people to contribute to planning what future services were needed in the sector. Having recently joined the MHP Driving Group to undertake fieldwork for this thesis, I participated in this event as part of phase one of the project. From the proposals generated at this meeting, the decision to design a new resettlement service for people with repeat instances of homelessness was made. I consider the extent to which co-production played a part in making this decision. Drawing on academic literature about co-planning as a form of co-production, I consider the inclusivity of this event against a widely respected model of co-planning in the public sector – the Porto-Alegre model of participatory budgeting (Santos, 1998). This region of Brazil was the birth

of the citizen council movement. As part of a long-form deliberative process, the Porto-Alegre local government included marginalised community groups in the allocation of public budgets. This had the effect of locating public service budgets closer to the interests of marginalised community groups.

The MHP co-planning day was held in one of the conference rooms of the Friends Meeting House. When I arrived, four circular tables had been arranged with approximately ten chairs around each. A projector and laptop were positioned at the front of the room, alongside a plinth and microphone. I went straight to meet Jez, who was at the front of the room looking through his introductory notes. He thanked me for agreeing to help and talked me through my role whilst handing me some flipchart paper and pens. Alongside two other Driving Group members and an MHP volunteer, my role was to facilitate a series of small group discussions during the day.

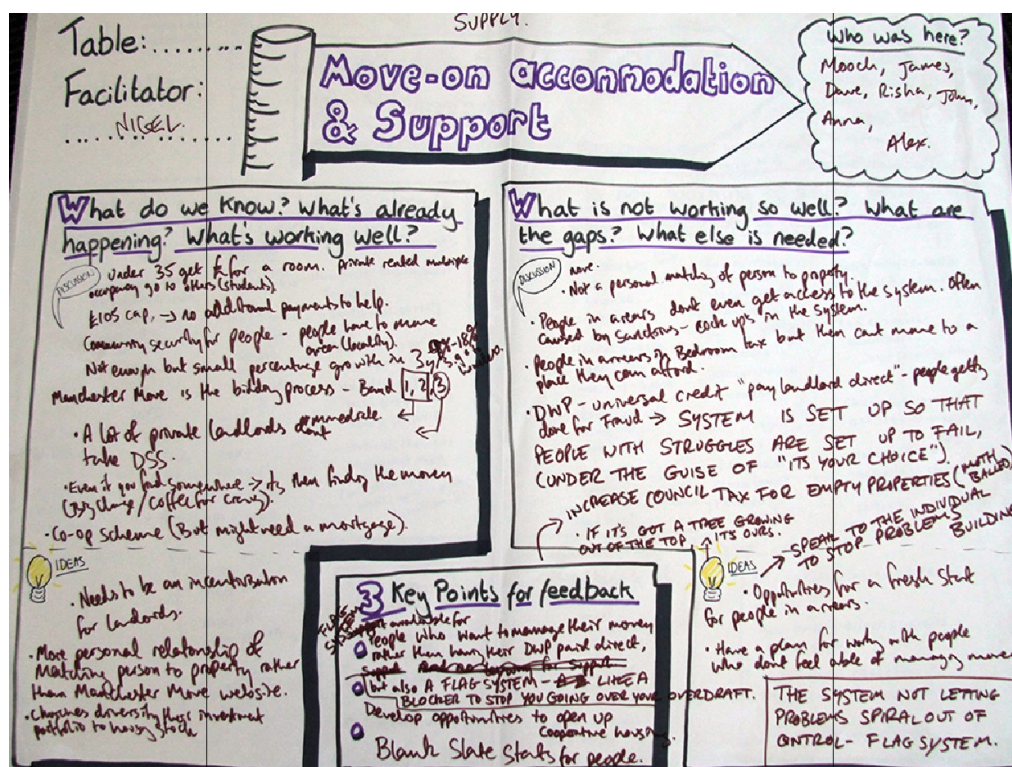
The agenda and format of proceedings had been decided in advance – through a negotiation between Jez and Sarah. Sarah proposed an agenda where four key homelessness service areas would be discussed in turn: prevention, rough sleeping, hostels and ‘move-on’ support. This concerned Jez, and he later told me that he had pushed for the for the event to be externally facilitated and for an agenda to be elicited directly from the attendees on the day. However, he said that Sarah did not feel that it was possible to fund such an idea and that they could facilitate it themselves. They were, however, able to fund a visual minute taker, who outlined the key themes that emerged during the day (see figure 8).



FIGURE 8: VISUAL MINUTES OF MHP CO-PLANNING DAY (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF JON DORSETT)

The day began with introductions from both Jez and Sarah. Then we split into smaller groups to discuss the themes in turn, spending an hour on each. On the issue of ‘prevention’, my group discussed systemic solutions to preventing people from accruing unmanageable levels of rent arrears. Our suggestion involved a more responsive approach by housing associations and petitioning for the legal imposition of rent caps in the private rented sector. We also discussed the need for more affordable housing in the city and proposed that the Local Authority could discourage the prevalence of unoccupied properties by raising council tax rates on empty homes (see figure 9). There were a wide range of ideas such as these that were suggested throughout the day, all compiled on flip charts pinned to the walls.





**FIGURE 9: NOTES FROM A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AT THE MHP CO-PLANNING DAY**

At the end of the day, Sarah addressed the room with closing comments about how this event marked the beginning of co-designing future services in the sector. I noted in my field diary that she said, “an extra one million pounds had been secured in addition to the standard homelessness budget of £10 million” (fieldnote 5). She envisaged a series of smaller groups to take the ideas raised in today’s meeting forward and that the work would start immediately. Sarah described that this was uncharted territory for the Local Authority and hesitantly referenced how co-production might be difficult to integrate into their existing commissioning processes. After everybody left, I stayed, along with three other Driving Group members and typed up the key ideas from each flipchart (appendix E). These were then

shared by email with the wider Driving Group who included colleagues from Sarah's team in the Local Authority. Some of the group were excited about how there would be the opportunity to be involved in deciding how a large budget would be spent. However, others were concerned that nothing had been decided at this meeting and they were unsure how any decision would be made from the mass of ideas generated. They also questioned how much of this new budget would be allocated to these new 'co-produced' services.

In the weeks that passed, I attended the Driving Group, where we tried to keep track of these two key issues. In one such meeting, we received an update that the additional funding had been allocated to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority – not to Manchester City Council. The total sum was five million pounds and local negotiations were taking place to decide the regional distribution of this sum. In a further update - at the May 2017 MHP Board - we were told that the,

*DCLG [Department for Communities & Local Government] [were] currently trying to negotiate the amount down £4 - 4.6M being offered - now saying they can't do anything until after the general election [June 2017] as there is no minister to sign everything off. (MHP Board minutes, May 2017)*

The proportion allocated to the city of Manchester, was not clarified beyond this date. In relation to deciding what new services would be co-produced, we found out that this would be a decision taken by the Local Authority. According to the minutes of the Driving Group meeting in February 2017, the Local Authority commissioning team were considering the following options,

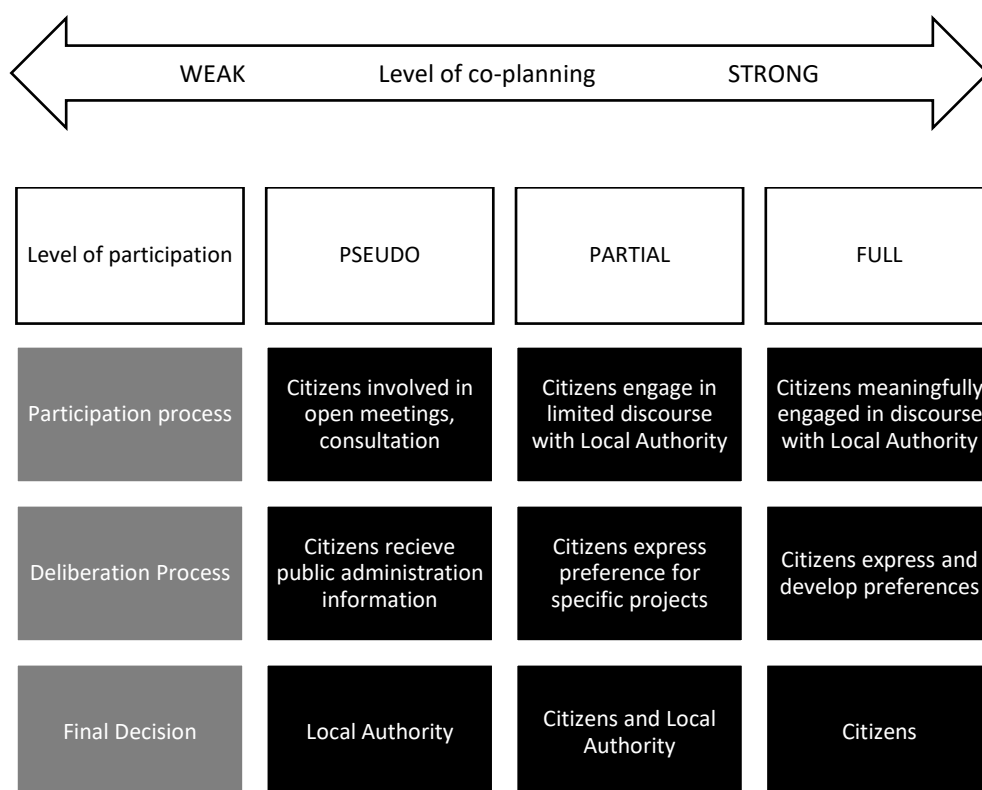
*e.g. resettlement.... entrenched [homelessness service]?, [homelessness] hub?.....service specification to be drawn up with mixed co-pro groups to follow.*

(Driving Group minutes, February 2017)

It was not until nine months later – in November 2017 – that I heard from a Driving Group member that the Local Authority had created a Resettlement Group in response to the ideas generated at the co-planning day. Moreover, that they had already been working together during a co-design process. I got in touch with the Strategic Commissioning Manager at the Local Authority, Jill Symonds. She agreed to meet over a coffee in Manchester Central Library to discuss whether it might be possible to consider this group as a focus of research. I had known Jill for some time by this point, we had attended co-production training together and she knew that I had been working with the Driving Group. She confirmed that her team had decided to prioritise ‘resettlement’ and began to explain more about the process. She recalled that it was difficult to extrapolate any single policy recommendation from the February co-planning day. However, her team were left with a strong feeling that resettlement support represented a significant gap in existing provision. I will now consider this closed decision to prioritise a new resettlement service against other models of public participation in service planning.

Barbera et al. (2016) define co-planning as the collaborations between the public sector and citizens aimed at identifying what services will answer citizen needs. The terms co-planning and participatory budgeting are used interchangeably in co-production literature. Participatory budgeting has been

defined as the broad process of involving citizens in the budgetary, planning of public services (Santos, 1998). By examining a series of examples of these processes, Barbera et al. (2016) have produced a model of citizen participation in co-planning (see figure 10, below).



**FIGURE 10: A MODEL OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (ADAPTED FROM BARBERA ET AL., 2016)**

The figure demonstrates that the depth of citizen participation in civic budgeting decisions depends on the distribution of responsibility between the Local Authority and citizen contributors. Pseudo participation occurs when citizens attend open meetings to be informed of Local Authority plans. Partial participation involves a level of consultation on public decisions, where citizens might express preferences that might affect the final decision.

Full participation involves deep discursive processes between Local Authority and citizens, and where the latter are enabled to make the final decision about how public money is spent.

To examine the process by which a decision was made to create a new resettlement service in Manchester, I will consider the process outlined in this model; participation, deliberation and final decision. In the participation process, there was full participation. A wide range of people with lived experience of homelessness and other stakeholders (in the form of organisational representatives) attended and contributed. In terms of deliberation, there was partial involvement of those who attended the meeting. They generated preferences through group discussions. However, they were not given the opportunity to express a clear preference. In terms of the final decision, there was pseudo participation because the final decision was taken after the event, by the Local Authority alone. Overall, it can be assessed that there was a partial level of citizen participation in the MHP co-planning process.

In terms of considering how participation could have been deeper, the answer is clear – enable those who attending the co-planning day to make the final budgetary decision. There are a range of processes that could be employed to achieve this. In a theoretical article about public participation and collaborative governance, Nabatchi (2012) considers that the use of external facilitators should be the used from the outset. This had been originally suggested by Jez from the Driving Group. A collective decision about what service to prioritise could have then been achieved through a

voting system such as the D21 method (Janeček, 2016). D21 has become an increasingly popular modern voting system since being developed in response to corruption within the Czech political system. It is unique in that voters can cast multiple votes, enabling a wider scope of preferences that reflect the complexities of social choice. In recent years, it has grown in popularity as an inclusive way of making collective decisions through consensus building.

By including a voting system in to the MHP co-planning day, this would have created deep levels of citizen participation associated with transformational forms of co-production. It would have made participatory budgeting a feature of the MHP. I now refer back to an exemplar of participatory budgeting before moving on to consider what changes this could have produced in the MHP. In the third chapter of this thesis, I introduced the Porto Alegre model of participatory budgeting (Santos, 1998). In 1989, this Brazilian city created a citizen council and allocated a proportion of the city's budget for them to allocate through a democratic process. It led to an annual series of citywide assemblies, that by 1998 were identifying spending priorities, deliberating on them and voting on which projects to implement. Each year, thousands of citizens participated, deciding up to a fifth of the city budget (Baicocchi, 2003). The results showed that after eight years of implementing participatory budgeting, the percentage of households served by the government's sewage system rose from 49% to 85% (ibid). In the same time period, half of the city's unpaved streets were paved, and the

number of students in elementary and secondary schools doubled (Wampler, 2010).

From the many suggestions made at the MHP co-planning day, there is one particular idea that would have likely scoured favourably using a D21 system. This idea was to improve Women's Direct Access Hostels in the city. This came from a peer led research in the MHP that took place in the months before the co-planning event. This project is summarised in the online blog post by peer researcher and activist Collette Cronshaw (2016). She was part of the MHP Women's Voices group, who had been working to increase the voice of hostel residents in the evaluation of local hostel services. At the end of the project the peer researchers expressed frustration that their key recommendations were not followed up by the hostels. This led to the ultimate cessation of the peer research project in late 2016. It was still a 'live' issue in the MHP during the February 2017 co-planning day and was also discussed in the May 2017 MHP Board meeting. At that Board meeting, senior Local Authority staff agreed to meet the peer researchers and discuss their concerns.

Undoubtedly, the February co-planning day was a missed opportunity for the findings of the Women's Voices peer research project to have been prioritised. I talked about this with many MHP members who felt that the Local Authority were just not listening. One particular MHP volunteer who was close to these decisions helped me to understand why the Women's Voices peer research project might have been overlooked. They suggested to me that the Local Authority may have felt that it was easier to create a new

service than reform an old one. The Local Authority were aware of the problems with Women's Direct Access Hostels and had considered outsourcing it to an external provider in an effort to address the concerns. Ultimately, the preferred strategy was to use the new resettlement service as a model for redesigning existing services at a later stage. Bovaird (2007) considers that institutions traditionally favour institutional control over citizen control because it makes it easier to operationalise services. They also fear greater citizen involvement because they assume "*that gains in status among coproducing clients might come at their expense*" (ibid:857). Following this missed opportunity to direct services towards the interests of service user groups in the MHP, I now turn to the co-design stage of this new resettlement service.

### 8.3 Co-designing

At my meeting with Jill Symonds in November 2017 she spoke to me about how her team began to develop a service specification in the weeks after the February co-planning day. Based on data provided by local housing associations, they estimated how many people currently using services had experienced repeat instances of homelessness. From this, they identified a cohort of people whom a resettlement service could be designed for. The service would be targeted to single adults who had experienced homelessness several times; their aim was to help them sustain tenancies in the long-term. An intensive support intervention would be delivered by a team of four workers, each with a caseload of up to approximately 14 people.



In terms of co-designing the service, it was only until after these decisions had been made that the commissioning team invited MHP partners to form a Resettlement Group.

In a subsequent interview, Angela Roberts, a Commissioning Manager in the Resettlement Group, talked me through the process of creating the group. She described that it was the beginning of a tentative exploration for the Local Authority in using co-production in the commissioning process. She recognised that there were limitations to their chosen approach and emphasised their long-term commitment to including more community partners in future commissioning groups. Specifically, she described that,

*It started with trusted partners [in the MHP], the organisations we knew, and that wouldn't be bidding for the contract. And the initial group was Kathy from the Davidson's Trust Charity, Jill [MCC commissioning], [two other third sector representatives], and Ian and Patrick [MHP volunteers with experience of homelessness]. It was key to have a couple of people with personal insight right from the beginning. (Angela, interview, February 2018)*

In Angela's account, the organisations who wouldn't be bidding for the contract are described as trusted partners. In the field of co-production, trust has been interpreted in different ways. Cornwall (2004) and Miraftab (2004) describe that those groups who are invited to co-produce, whilst other voices are excluded, run the risk of being co-opted or being perceived as having 'sold out'. The suggestion being that they had been chosen because of their malleability. Cornwall (2004) uses the concept of 'space' as a metaphor for examining democratic inclusion within institutional decision making. Co-production is an 'invited' space of participation, where organisations decide

who is involved and what they can do. Cornwall (ibid) concludes that there is still a long way to go before invited spaces of participation are genuinely equitable and representative spaces of inclusion. Groups who are excluded from these spaces have to create their own spaces of participation. Miraftab (2004) refers to these as 'invented' spaces of participation. Invented spaces of participation offer a position from which independent critique is possible, and new plans can be created outside of the state structures. To give an example, Greater Manchester Housing Action (GMHA) are a campaigning group who have been excluded from spaces of co-production in the MHP. Like the MHP, GMHA formed in the time after the 2015 Manchester austerity, homelessness and housing crisis protests. Their aims are similar to those of the MHP; they want a safe city and housing for all, and a city run by its people. However, they are largely ignored by institutions in the city, most likely because of their progressive, radically left-wing proposals to addressing homelessness. It might be that GMHA would not be considered as a trusted partner in the Resettlement Group because their ideas would challenge any conceptualisation of housing resettlement in individualistic terms. Indeed, they call on the Local Authorities of Greater Manchester to invest heavily in diverse social housing ideas and welfare support to respond to the rising levels of homelessness.

In the Resettlement Group, there were opportunities to challenge the design of the new service, although not in a radical way. The American Organisational Theorist, Russell Ackoff (1995) considers that change in organisations is more likely to be ameliorative than transformational. In a

scathing critique of public sector reorganisation in the USA, he considered that focussing on ameliorative change as opposed to systemic change in the public sector “*tend[s] to do the wrong things righter rather than the right things*” (ibid:43). In the co-design stage of the Resettlement Group, there are three examples of change that I consider. First, the creation of a personal interest fund for service users. Second, designing job opportunities for service users and people with lived experience of homelessness. Third, the proposal to tear up the service specification and start again from scratch.

### 8.3.1 Personal interest funds

The first example, the use of personal interest funds was raised by Patrick who suggested that it might offer greater freedom to service users to design their own resettlement intervention. He described how they could use the fund to purchase anything related to their interests, such as joining the gym or buying a guitar. The group immediately liked this idea and agreed to build it in to the service specification. This idea is similar to personalised services; which has been a favoured social care policy of successive governments in recent years (Department of Health, 2005; Lymbery and Postle, 2010). Personalised services involve direct payments to service users who can use the money to pay for a range of services from home support to respite care. Whilst personalised services offer more choice to service users (Leadbeater, 2004), their conceptualisation of resettlement is problematic. Based on a consumerist model, they undermine the complex structural drivers to community displacement in the first place. You can't buy

‘community’, especially when communities have been neglected through austere national spending policies.

In an interview some months later with the manager of the new Resettlement Service James Levy, he pointed to the underlying ideology behind the personal interest funds,

*let's be honest, it's about getting people to do it for themselves.*  
(James, interview, July 2018)

The use of personal interest funds might therefore be considered to be an ameliorative form of change from the co-design stage. It appeared to also add an extra layer of bureaucracy to the task of delivering services. In the three managerial meetings that I attended between the Resettlement Group and new provider, the use of the fund was discussed regularly. Group members were interested in what the money was being spent on and offered their view on whether it was an appropriate use of the resource or not. On one occasion, James was reminded that kitchen equipment was not what the funds were intended for. On another occasion, he was told that purchasing a mobile phone was “*not in the spirit of the fund*” (fieldnote 75). I later spoke with James about his experience of accounting for these issues. He told me,

*there was a very loose definition of what they should be for in the first place - a wellbeing fund. But who decides what contributes to wellbeing? That is subjective to the service user. They might want furniture, and I am thinking ‘is that right?’ is it in the spirit of the fund? So, more clarity at the beginning would have helped. This touches on a bigger debate around something I’m not sure about. Imposing our idea of wellbeing on the client, they might want ‘x’ but we’re thinking, is that ‘wellbeing-enough’? There’s a feeling about autonomy, and us imposing our views of wellbeing. Take for example [our worker] Sarah, she brings out mindfulness CD’s, which can be helpful, but not everyone is receptive to that.* (James, interview, July 2018)

The bigger debate – to which James refers – is a debate about citizenship, power and social control. Whilst ‘personal interest funds’ offer the hope of freewill, through their hierarchical implementation, they risk mimicking the very forms of governance they seek to resist. The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1991), contemplated these issues of power at length and depth. Foucault described how institutions - as ‘disciplinary regimes’ - make claims to knowledge that are in turn embedded with values for society. This idea draws on the broader Foucauldian concept of governmentality – succinctly defined as the “*conduct of conduct*” (Li 2007:275). For Rose and Miller (2009), governmentality demonstrates the act of governing. In the administration of social life, everything relates to power. It produces different ways of making us free and shows how ‘productive’ conduct is considered and measured in modern society.

Within the Manchester resettlement group, an appreciation of governmentality, provides a mandate to scrutinise interventions such as the ‘personal interest fund’ and the values upon which they rest. On the face of it, they appear well intentioned, yet through their implementation, values about productive citizenship become clear. For Cruikshank (1999), disciplinary regimes in this context might better be described as “*technologies of citizenship*”. The resettlement group overtly controlled what constituted ‘wellbeing’ for their clients, yet they never gave clear guidance on what they meant by ‘wellbeing’ - going to the gym? Getting a dog? Getting a job maybe?

This vague definition of wellbeing created a situation where power need not be exercised through coercion. Cruikshank (ibid) differentiates between 'subjects' and a 'citizens' in a model of empowerment that effectively channels power through people's voluntary participation in acts associated with active and self-sufficient democratic citizens. Technologies of citizenship are the ways through which subjects are moulded that constrain their agency and enable them at the same time. Adopting this analysis exposes that the resettlement group's decisions are part of a longer process of institutionalism that has harassed this MHP co-production project from the onset. I turn now to the second negotiated change to the new resettlement service design specification.

### 8.3.2 Employment opportunities

Returning to the changes made to the service specification during the co-design stage. A second change was proposed by Kathy, the CEO from a local charity. She wanted the new service to have an inclusive approach to employing people with direct experience of homelessness. Her suggestion was to make this a target in the service specification, aiming for 50% of staff to have lived experience of homelessness. Again, this was agreed by the rest of the group. Subsequent job descriptions and advertisements were designed to reflect this. People with direct experience of homelessness were encouraged to apply. However, there was never an agreement made about how homelessness might be defined, or what type of 'experience' was preferred. As the new service was formed, two of the four interventions

workers recruited described themselves as having direct experience of homelessness. Again, James shared with me his experience of responding to this requirement from the Resettlement Group. His summary demonstrates the value of inclusion and the risk of tokenism,

*The integration of staff with lived experience [of homelessness] has been a humbling experience. We've got two members of staff who are transparent about their personal experience. They would tell you directly about their experience, no secrets, and I don't want to take advantage of that - I want to protect them. Sometimes I look at Ryan working and think wow, you've come so far, I admire that. But I think you need a mix of skills in a team. And I don't want him to be remembered just for his lived experience of homelessness, he's more than that.*  
(James, interview, July 2018)

Baljeet Sandhu's (2017) extensive examination of the value of lived experience in the social sector, addressed this issue directly. Sandhu (ibid) found that providing meaningful paid opportunities for people with lived experience of a social issue was a good thing for services, service users and communities at large. The concern is that these jobs tended to be restricted to entry level grades. Also, in terms of a commissioning approach to service delivery, these opportunities become externalised to third sector providers rather than becoming a feature of Local Authority recruitment practice.

### 8.3.2 Reframing resettlement

In addition to these suggestions during the co-design stage, there was one further proposal. However, it was not adopted by the group. Ian Ruskin - one of the two people in the group with lived experience of homelessness -

encouraged the group to take a radical approach to resettlement. When he looked at the service specification, he thought that the money could be better used for something else. In his own words, he reflected on this time and told me that,

*I had something completely different in mind - the arts - saying that art should be used as a connector in resettlement. We've got normal homelessness resettlement services already. The point I was trying to make was that it didn't make sense to divorce resettlement from prevention. They go on about 'upstream, upstream, upstream' - and **I know** what upstream looks like, **there** [points to service specification]. Resettlement **is** upstream, its cyclical, it's the beginning of next time because we've done nothing to address any of the other drivers, like prevention, in fact we've made them worse. I put forward the idea that rather than do half a job badly, let's use the money to set up a research project to figure out how to do it differently.*  
(Ian, interview, January 2018)

Ian was intentionally trying to open the restricted space of participation created in the Resettlement Group and to reframe the issue of resettlement. The activist ethnographer Vincent Lyon-Callo (2008) considers that this is a necessary step towards transformative change in the homelessness sector. Based on his study of the organisational culture of homelessness shelters, he suggested that the current approaches to service design undermine the critical insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves. Services are based upon broader neoliberal rationality. Within this mode of governance, services are focussed at the individual level, leaving systemic and structural factors unchallenged. Lyon-Callo (ibid) goes on to consider that the current social order is almost considered by people to be the natural way of being, so much so that dissenting voices, such as Ian's, are dismissed as impractically ideological. Moreover, service users are forced to



‘play the game’ if they want to get any help. In the Resettlement Group, Ian’s suggestions were dismissed by the rest of the group, even if they were hesitant to say that overtly. Commissioning Manager Angela Roberts spoke generally about the tension between ideology and practicality during the co-design process,

*a big thing for me is managing expectations and explaining limitations..... bringing people back to parameters.... keeping them on track. I think in a perfect world you would be able to rip things up and start from scratch but what I’ve learned from the commissioning world is you have to work within the realms of what’s possible. .... It’s about helping people understand those parameters and then look at what we can shape within our control and limitations. And once we set the boundary, we could look at everything else that was up for grabs.*  
(Angela, interview, February 2018)

Angela recognises the boundaries and restrictions that exist in this invited space of participation. Yet, it is the enforcement of these boundaries and restrictions that prevent transformation. Davoudi and Healy’s (1994) study of urban regeneration in Newcastle showed that tight timescales were a typical problem for creative approaches to community engagement. They observed that government-imposed time pressures led to the prioritisation of *“back pocket projects mainly originating from officers who then, tended to go out and seek outside support”* (ibid:14).

Of further concern in this project was how Ian left the Resettlement Group at this co-design stage. Ian told me that he was asked to leave the group by someone from the commissioning team. Kathy thought that he left because of a conflict of interests whilst organisations bid for the new contract; Ian volunteered for one of the bidding organisations, he was also a

resident at a hostel who were intending to bid for the contract. Ian talked to me about this,

*it made me think I was paranoid about them trying to get rid of me, paranoid or useless, one of the two. You see there was a chunk of time when I was arranging to move from the hostel into my own accommodation. I've got it in an email somewhere saying that I was being offered resettlement support. It was recommended that this was a second type of conflict of interest. If I was part of the group monitoring the contract, they [the bidding organisation] said I'd be privy to confidential information - so it would be a confidentiality conflict.*  
(Ian, interview, January 2018)

This issue demonstrates that market-based approaches to providing public services are a direct barrier to deeper working relationships between citizens and the state. Financial and litigious concerns of both the state and service provider are prioritised over the credible and critical inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness in these exclusive spaces of power. The critically engaged ethnographers Vincent Lyon-Callo and Susan Hyatt (2003) warn that when social care services are privatised, service users are pathologised. The Resettlement Group shows us that market-based strategies also diminish the possibilities for collective mobilisation.

#### 8.4 Commissioning

After Ian left the group, Patrick Davies was the only person in the group who had faced homelessness himself. He was involved in the procurement stage of the commissioning process. Both Jill and Angela from the commissioning team recognised that they struggled to involve Patrick fully in the process. Whilst other group members such as Kathy assessed and officially scored each bid, Patrick's involvement was advisory. His views

did not officially contribute to the assessment of any of the bids from prospective providers. Jill from the commissioning team and Patrick met on several occasions to discuss the bids and get Patrick's views on each. Patrick told me that he appreciated not being burdened with the mounds of paperwork associated with assessing and scoring prospective bids, and he felt that Jill listened seriously to his views about his favoured choice. Ultimately, the commissioning team were uncomfortable putting Patrick in the role of formal scorer. Jill cited how they had been dissuaded from doing so by their legal team. Yet Angela hoped they would change this in the future. She cited an example from a Greater Manchester substance misuse intervention (called Contingency Management) where a service user group had scored prospective bids,

*The Contingency Management service contract actually had a co-production panel, facilitated independently and they formally scored two questions relating to the prospective bidders. Their responses were then included as part of the overall scoring. But that was a different approach to ours because we brought together co-pro' in early in the process and more informally, rather than having co-pro' as a bolt on. We didn't have a scoring panel because [the] procurement [advisors] were partly uncomfortable with that, so that would be our next push in the co-pro' journey – we will improve on that next time.*  
(Angela, interview, February 2018)

Angela's comments reflect a desire to enhance the participation of people with personal experience of homelessness in the decision-making processes. Even though outsourcing the new resettlement service had been presented as a fait accompli, at least there was some hope that community members could have a say in which provider would deliver the contract.

In this context, it would also be legitimate to question the use of commissioning as the vehicle for delivering this new service. With its origins

in the New Public Management reforms of the 1980's, commissioning has fast become the main delivery vehicle of public services in the UK. Within this framework, the role of Local Authorities has changed from 'providers' to 'commissioners' of public services (DCLG, 2006). Government literature emphasises how a 'full-cycle' approach to commissioning ensures that community needs are addressed through ongoing processes of evaluation, engagement and procurement. In truth, commissioning is far from being the comprehensive approach to producing public services that it claims to be (Ramia and Carney, 2001). Indeed, the drive to recast how public services should be delivered might more accurately be described as privatisation where the main emphasis is on reducing the cost of delivering services (ibid). As part of this approach there is an increased emphasis on cost-efficiency and the management of policy outcomes through contracts and performance monitoring (Rees, 2014). Given this top-down, managerial approach to producing services, it would be fair to consider that co-producers in the MHP might – given the option – favour a more horizontal, egalitarian approach to producing services in the homelessness sector. Indeed, Rees's (2014) analysis of commissioning in the public sector considers that the public sector is still – despite their reduced budgets - better placed than the third sector to deliver public services. They remain more economically viable than third sector organisations because they cannot go bankrupt (ibid). Moreover, they already have the infrastructure to deliver projects quickly (Mills, Meek and Gojkovic, 2011). In Bovaird's (2007) analysis of a series of co-production case studies in the UK, he was unable to find any example from commissioning that equalled his case studies of Local Authority projects with

a high level of community involvement in terms of efficiency and community resource activation effects. From this, he suggested that commissioning was not necessary to building mutual relationships between public services and communities; it might also be counterproductive (ibid).

## 8.5 Conclusion

In this third and final ethnographic case of MHP co-production, I have told the story of the Resettlement Group. The work of this group represents the beginning of a journey undertaken by the Local Authority to include people who have experienced services in the design of future services. This exploration of co-production during the co-planning and co-design stages of a new service therefore offers valuable critical insights about the need for deeper levels of collaboration with these groups in the production of services.

From my unique position, as a Driving Group member and researcher who had spent 18 months in the MHP, it was possible to trace the roots of the Resettlement Group back to an MHP co-planning in early 2017. Since writing this chapter, I have shared it with various people in the MHP, many people commented that they had forgotten about this important meeting at the Friends Meeting House, let alone what had been discussed that day. One Driving Group member told me that they were relieved that I had been taking notes and tracking the conversations about ‘who decides what service is prioritised?’ and ‘how much money will be allocated to it?’. They had been unable to keep track of these issues as their attention was drawn to a succession of challenges in the homelessness sector over the next few

months. When I joined the MHP at the beginning of 2017, they were in the middle of one of the coldest winters of the decade and had opened a disused library on the outskirts of the city so that extra shelter could be made available to people to sleep in during the winter months. To me, as a newcomer, the situation was at crisis point. Over the next year, I found that the situation would be worse the following winter. This is how the homelessness sector is forced to operate; managing crisis after crisis, constantly having to do more with less. In that context, taking the time to focus on co-planning and co-designing services is particularly difficult. This ethnographic case is intended to support deeper iterations of this work in the coming months and years. It may also be a signpost from which future success can be measured.

As the final ethnographic case about co-production in the MHP, this chapter also tells the deeper story of the challenges faced when trying to undertake value-based work in the sector. By value-based work, I mean the values of MHP co-production that were articulated by The Listening Projectors group in the first ethnographic case – *“there is more that unites us than divides us”*. In the Resettlement Group, this value does not sit comfortably within the broader macro-system surrounding the MHP. Market-based approach to public services are built on a different ideology to community driven approaches to public services. In an examination of controversial public engagement in health service production, Walker, Artaraz, Darking, Davies, Fleischer, Graber, Mwale, Speed, Terry and Zoli (2018) unpack these different ideologies. Whilst co-production locates the

expertise within the community, market-based approaches locate the expertise in the elite spaces of hierarchical commissioning processes. From these spaces, service user groups and the public are conceptualised in consumerist terms; the system does not change because it produces the *“technologies of governance which impose norms and shape social order”* (ibid;763).

These concerns are found in both the co-planning and co-design stages of the of the new resettlement service in Manchester. Barbera et al. (2016) have defined co-planning as the collaborations between the public sector and citizens aimed at identifying what services will answer citizen needs. The sector wide co-planning day presented at the beginning of this chapter describes the process by which the public sector tried to understand citizen needs. Over forty people from across the MHP attended and participated in considering how money from national government might best be spent locally on homelessness services. However, whilst this meeting brought out the best ideas of the group, insufficient consideration was made to how these solutions would be translated into practice. Unlike the Porto Alegre model of participatory budgeting, the Local Authority did not identify a budget or consider a process that would collectively decide what services should be prioritised. What transpired was an example of partial-participation that left many feeling that their participation was tokenistic.

In the next sections of this chapter, a service specification for a new service emerged and a closed group of primarily organisational representatives came together. The inclusion of people with personal

experience of homelessness in this group was considerably limited – to the point of exclusion when certain ideals could not be integrated with traditional commissioning processes. The examples presented in this chapter demonstrate how this new service framed the process of resettlement in individualised, consumerist terms. Within this context the scope for change was ameliorative; a transformational proposal to locate the focus of intervention at a community level was overlooked as being unrealistically ideological.

This chapter calls on the Local Authority and Resettlement Group to question certain practices of their organisation and group. Whilst commissioning might be considered by some as the vehicle for delivering transformation, it currently serves to externalise – rather than internalise – ideas about change in the sector. Furthermore, when the important decisions are made away from democratic spaces, this risks reinforcing hegemonic conceptualisations of homelessness and services per se.

In the next chapter of this thesis, these issues are considered against the previous two ethnographic cases presented in this thesis, The Listening Projectors and UTA Action Group. Bringing the collective insights together in the final chapter of this thesis refines the critical examination of practice whilst also theorising a transformative vision for the future, based on the insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves.



## Chapter Nine – Conclusion: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Co-production

### 9.1 Introduction

This research was undertaken during the time of a Conservative government between - 2017 to 2019 - when cuts to social welfare budgets and punitive welfare reforms dominated national policy. In this context, the MHP, offered hope that a community response to the rising levels of homelessness could alleviate these problems that were caused by national government. To achieve this goal, the MHP create new spaces of civic participation for people with lived experience of homelessness. From which, their critical insights could offer alternative ways of producing public services that might better meet the needs of people in the city. This critical knowledge was to be generated through a process called co-production. Co-production involves bringing service users and organisational representatives together in a new, equal working relationship. Co-production had been positioned as a radical alternative to market-based approaches of providing public services. However, this research has shown that local government is unlikely to truly serve the interests of the people, while the broader political economy in which it is located remains unchanged. This research has presented a perspective of co-production in the MHP, which in turn becomes an analysis of power in the homelessness sector. In this context, this research set out to explore *what* the co-production alternative might be, and

*how* it could be translated into practice. A broadly collaborative and ethnographic approach attends to these issues through an exploration of three sites of practice in the MHP.

This thesis's contribution to knowledge stems from the unique research setting, where homelessness (as a wicked social problem), intersects with co-production (as a magic concept) (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Pollitt and Hupe, 2009). By critically examining this intersection, this thesis has practical applications for those in the homelessness sector and civic governance whilst also theorising a transformative vision for the future based on the insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves. The following analysis presented in this concluding chapter will demonstrate that a long-form, transformational process of community development is required to attend to wicked social problems such as homelessness. By creating greater opportunities for the citizens of Manchester to participate in civic governance, public institutions may evolve and restructure in a way that no longer produces poverty based on prejudice. In terms of the work shared in this thesis, it is just a small part of greater political change to come.

The context of homelessness in the UK was introduced in *Chapter Two* and the rationale for the research was established. In *Chapter Three*, co-production in the public sector was introduced, providing a framework through which the key changes to practice in the MHP could be discussed. *Chapter Four* provided a discussion of the theoretical and methodological space and context of this research. *Chapter Five* described how the project design and methods evolved in relation to the research aim and objectives.

*Chapters Six, Seven and Eight* were the three ethnographic cases presented in this thesis, with each providing a distinct critical examination of co-production in an MHP group. In *Chapter Six*, The Listening Projectors used art and action as the inspiration to present a vision of the city where “*there is more that unites us than divides us*”. However, as a space of participation, roles in this group were tightly defined and participation was bounded to the extent that the arts group did not disrupt the existing power structures of the arts institution that they worked with. In *Chapter Seven*, the work of the UTA Action Group brought public organisations together with residents and property owners to improve temporary accommodation provision in Manchester. Here, the hope of a community driven approach to bringing about change in the UTA sector was undermined by how the sector had already been privatised by national government through the Localism Act 2011. This case demonstrates that a plurality of community interests had prevented the critical insights of unhoused co-producers from being prioritised in practice and policy across the sector. In *Chapter Eight*, these ideological clashes - between community and economic interests - were further explored when I joined the Resettlement Group. Here, a group of commissioners from the Local Authority sought to integrate community participation into the commissioning of a new service in the homelessness sector. The results of which produced an intermediate level of transformation in the third sector that failed to challenge practice in the public sector, or a neoliberal conception of homelessness per se.

This final chapter considers these three ethnographic cases of co-production against the research objectives for this study. This will be discussed in three sections; the first section is a critical examination of co-production in the MHP; the second section provides a definition of MHP co-production; and the third section considers the impact of MHP co-production on future practice in the homelessness sector. Before attending to these research objectives, I shall introduce the analytical framework employed to scrutinise practice in the MHP. This is a multi-dimensional analysis of power that is drawn from the community psychology tradition and has been articulated by Christens and Perkins (2008) and Prilleltensky (2008).

## 9.2 Analytical framework

Community psychology offers a unique perspective of power in society. Traditionally, within this field, the concept of community cohesion is emphasised over power, which has particularly individualistic connotations. However, Christens and Perkins (2008) outline a process of collective empowerment that demonstrates that power and control over community resources is the ultimate goal of community psychology. Nelson and Prilleltenski (2005) succinctly consider the importance of these two interrelated issues as,

without empowerment we risk maintaining the status quo, and,  
without community, we risk treating people as objects. (ibid:103)

Here, they bring together individual agency with a sense of collective belonging – they define this as ‘*communion*’. A multi-dimensional analysis of

power recognises that this form of communion can take place at the individual level, group, organisational, community and social levels. Within each of these levels are different processes and outcomes. Whilst an individual might gain skills from contributing to a collective such as the MHP, the outcome of their participation may also be similarly limited to the individual level. On the other hand, when a group of people are empowered to co-design a service, the outcome can be at an organisational level. This approach is important in order to cognise the extent to which empowerment is translated into meaningful community change. It also demonstrates some of the limitations when the MHP only enables one or two experts by experience to contribute to groups, such as with the Resettlement Group.

Christens and Perkins (2008) introduce a further dimension to power – the domain of environment or ‘capital’. Capital manifests across four main environmental domains; physical, economic, sociocultural and political. Physical capital refers to the type of investment that is made in people, providing them with the resources to work, such as transport and computer access. Economic capital refers to the financial remuneration that people gain from contributing to the collective. Sociocultural capital refers to economic and non-economic gains from being part of the collective. Political capital refers to the influence that the collective has on policy

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) is a key sociologist to have conceptualised power in these ways. Bourdieu is concerned with understanding the practical relations of power in everyday life. His work contains a densely nuanced conceptualisation of power that centre around capital (social,

cultural, economic), habitus, field and social class. Bourdieu's central concepts should be viewed in the context of dynamic, structural conditions. People as agents, operate in social fields where their habits, skills and dispositions (habitus) are prescribed by the specific rules of the given field. Where the rules of the field produce an uneven distribution of opportunity to create habitus, hierarchies are formed. Rather than being limited by rigid structuralist class boundaries, Bourdieu considers the world to be one with expanded creative and educational opportunities.

Taking the MHP as an example of one such opportunity, the integration of human agency is the focal point of his conceptualisation. Within this new space, traditional social hierarchies have been translated in to new practices and cultures. A key theme of Bourdieu is the analysis of how stratified social systems of hierarchy and domination persist without the conscious recognition of their members.

In Bourdieu's work, he also stresses the importance of reflexivity in the practice of social science. In writing about the work of Bourdieu, David Swartz (2012) emphasises the evaluation of researcher self interest in this process. For me – as a researcher – this liminal space of research and action (that I discuss in the methods section of this thesis) requires ongoing attention in the production of research.

As such, the focus of analysis in this chapter is on the extent to which the rules of the field have been changed to increase collective social capital. Christens and Perkins (2008) consider that there is a further dimension of collective power – temporality. That is the recognition of the fluidity of power

over time; where the state of oppression shifts through a process of empowerment and liberation to a state of wellness.

This analytical framework of power is closely related to Elinor Ostrom's (1990) development of co-production theory. Ostrom (ibid) also used a multi-dimensional analysis of power, although not of the same name. In her seminal work *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Ostrom (ibid) observed that,

When doing analysis at any one level, the analyst keeps the variables of a deeper level fixed for the purpose of analysis. Otherwise, the structure of the problem would unravel. But self-organizing and self-governing individuals trying to cope with problems in field settings go back and forth across levels as a key strategy for solving problems. Individuals who have no self-organizing and self-governing authority are stuck in a single-tier world. The structure of their problems is given to them. The best they can do is to adopt strategies within the bounds that are given. (ibid:54)

As Ostrom (ibid) argues, it is not possible to control all of the variables in real life. Problem solving in the real world requires strategic action across multiple levels. The ability to self-organise and self-govern relates directly to Christens and Perkins (2008) concept of collective liberation and wellness. It is towards these issues that I now turn.

### 9.3 Discussion of findings

The discussion of findings is presented in three sections; the first section is a critical examination of co-production in the MHP; the second section provides a definition of MHP co-production; and the third section

considers the impact of MHP co-production on future practice in the homelessness sector.

### 9.3.1 Research objective one

*Critically examine practices of co-production in the MHP – integrating the unique contextual factors that exist when stakeholders including traditional service providers and recipients work together to co-produce services.*

Investigating co-production across three separate groups in the MHP provided a level of rich detail that helped to expose the hidden politics of co-production. In relation to this specific research objective, there are three main research insights. The first was that MHP co-production groups were spaces of bounded participation, where restrictions were hierarchically imposed. The second was that cohesive relationships and emotional connection did not necessarily translate into egalitarian power distributions. The third was that a temporal understanding of power can generate opportunities to open up restricted spaces of participation. These will be discussed in turn before moving on to the second research objective.

The first research insight from these spaces was that MHP co-production groups were spaces of bounded participation, where restrictions were hierarchically imposed. This was the case for each of the three ethnographic cases presented in this thesis. The Listening Projectors allowed co-producers to focus only on the practical tasks associated with the production of the arts installation; co-producers in the UTA Action Group could only advise and encourage landlords to voluntarily change their



practices; the Resettlement Group only invited co-producers to the co-design team once the majority of the new resettlement service had already been designed.

When organisations voluntarily commit to using co-production, they retain the privilege of deciding *who* to invite and *what* aspects of the project will be shared with co-producers. I have introduced how Miraftab (2004) and Cornwall (2004) relate this issue to the concept of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation. Invited spaces of participation include sites of co-production such as the MHP. Invented spaces of participation are created by activists and dissenting voices who remain excluded from these invited spaces. Whilst the MHP organisations have invited individuals with personal experience of homelessness to contribute at a civic level, existing local activist efforts relating to homelessness were not invited. In the previous chapter of this thesis, I have described how Greater Manchester Housing Action (GMHA) are one such group that remains outside of the MHP. As a dissenting voice, GMHA offers a unique perspective on homelessness in the city. Their radically left-wing proposals directly challenge the market-based approach to public services and the financialised housing sector. Their proposals would transform homelessness services by positioning social housing as a right to everyone in the city. Groups such as GMHA remain on the fringes of the MHP, whilst those who have been invited to co-produce are often individual service users drawn from the existing local homelessness sector. Through their own experiences of homelessness, MHP co-producers are likely to be disconnected from other activist efforts in the city. As such,

the MHP is often dominated by institutional voices that run the risk of creating an MHP canon that aligns with institutionalised representations of homelessness.

The excuse of 'tight timescales' is often presented as being a reason why greater levels of community participation have not been possible in community projects. In both The Listening Projectors and Resettlement Group, hierarchically imposed deadlines restricted the level of community participation so that projects could be delivered efficiently. This restricted participation by taking away time as a valuable commodity to generate alternative ideas and plans for these projects. Whilst tight timescales ensure that projects are delivered on time, the quality with which those projects are delivered becomes a secondary feature. Co-production expressly seeks to focus on the process of delivering equitable outcomes, which would in turn require that time acts as a facilitator rather than a barrier in this process. In their review of city governance in Newcastle, Davoudi and Healey (1994) found that these problems were a common feature in community development projects with large organisations and governments. They summarised the problem as such,

tight timescales, imposed by central government tended to stymie community engagement and promote 'back pocket' projects mainly originating from officers who then tended to go out and seek outside support. (ibid:14)

In Davoudi and Healy's (ibid) evaluation, they found that decisions had already been made in advance of collective discussion, and in the run-up to finalising these decisions, community support was actively sought.

This type of cynical approach to public participation directly excludes activist groups and dissenting voices, while others are 'leaned-on' for their support. It is for this reason that Miraftab (2004) and Cornwall (2004) warn that those who are invited to co-produce are perceived by others as selling-out.

The second research insight was that cohesive relationships and emotional connection did not translate into egalitarian power distributions. In each site of enquiry, the establishment of trust was necessary to maintain collective working. Indeed, group cohesion sustained these groups working together. Where trust was deeply established in projects such as The Listening Projectors, group members talked about mutual understanding and respect. Yet, power within this group was restricted by the pre-defined space of participation and did little to alter the hierarchical distribution of power within the arts institution. In The Listening Projectors, a trade-off was made by co-producers between power and publicity. A high level of public recognition came from the involvement of a well-known poet and art institution that undoubtedly fuelled the emotional connection that people experienced in this project. It was Chris from that group who noted that the involvement of Dave in the project "*brought the necessary glitz and glamour that we all needed*" (Chris, interview, September 2017).

More generally, in the MHP, rebuilding trust and providing recognition to people with experience of homelessness was not achieved to the same extent as it was in The Listening Projectors. There was not a strong sense of reparative trust or account for structural oppression generally in the cases presented in this thesis. Reparative trust is a concept that would be useful in

these spaces. This concept received global recognition through the South African post-apartheid truth and reconciliation movement (Wilson, 2001). Within this framework, formal reparation can be made to oppressed groups without having to resort to the legal system. Through its analysis of power and injustice, reparative trust and reconciliation has been widely used in many areas of the public sector, from criminal justice (Johnstone, 2013) to mental health (Spandler and McKeown, 2017). It would seem that reparative trust and reparation remains a missing feature from the MHP – society has thus far evaded taking responsibility for the construction of homelessness.

Much literature about co-production is written with a tone that reflects the emotions felt in those spaces. In *The Listening Projectors*, it was Paul Radley's poetry that evoked the emotion and sentiment of the project (Radley, 2017). When I worked with the group during this process, one of the group members, Darren, asked me specifically what impact the project had on me. For me, I felt a deep level of guilt and anger at how our society displaces so many people. Yet I was also overwhelmed at how this project emplaced those same people. Darren had reclaimed a public space, and it was a small victory that I felt would be a catalyst for further change. Yet, those emotions are not a measure of what has changed, they are a measure of our desires. In the same way, the anger and mistrust that co-producers expressed in other MHP groups was directed at the systemic injustices caused by macro political forces. Using an example of the UTA Action Group, Michael's anger that he expressed in a meeting was based on legitimate concerns about private landlords exploited residents. Michael was

frustrated that the Action Group lacked the power to ensure that landlords changed their practices and that the wider system had created the problem in the first place. Our emotions are indicative of the change we want to see. Pahl, Brown, Rasool and Ward (in press) describe this as the affective qualities of co-production. Whilst cohesion might be a feature of interpersonal relationships in the MHP, or indeed in the production of this research, it is community partners in co-production who live with the experience of these injustices (ibid).

Without tangible changes, empowerment within these spaces has thus far been restricted to the individual and relational level, leaving broader organisational, structural and community empowerment unchanged. The power of emotions in spaces of co-production is concerning because they can be exploited. Laurent Berlant (2006) describes that it is our human nature to hope and to participate in action that might realise our desires. Where our existential survival rests upon the hope of social justice through systemic change, we may continue to engage with the very same cruel, neoliberal system that produces social injustice. To put it another way, the fantasy of upward mobility drives us to contribute to the same system that oppresses us. Berlant (ibid) describes this as a 'cruel optimism'.

Drawing on Berlant's (ibid) analysis, co-production – as a 'magic concept' – could end up being a way of making the unjust present more bearable. Margaret Ledwith (2011) writes powerfully about the need for exposing the cruel optimism found in disingenuous spaces of civic participation. For Ledwith (ibid), these spaces of participation make *"life just*

*a little bit better around the edges, but not stemming the flow of discriminatory experiences that create some lives as more privileged than others” (ibid:14).*

The third insight relating to this research objective is that a temporal understanding of power exposed how opportunities to disrupt and expand the restricted spaces of participation were possible in this research. Co-producers were able to use their opportunities to challenge practice and policy that was beyond the scope of their original involvement. First, Adam in The Listening Projectors and then, Kathy in the Resettlement Group effectively negotiated that future paid roles would be made for people who had lived experience of homelessness. Whilst in a further example, Ian, in the Resettlement Group left the group as his ideas were considered too radical for the nature of the project. It was clear in this research that seizing or relinquishing these opportunities reflected the hidden politics of co-production. In these spaces, power was operationalised through different temporal lenses. This is what Ostrom (1990:54) described as the strategies that people adopt *“within the bounds that are given”*.

I propose that power should be considered to be a temporal construct. Christens and Perkins (2008) describe temporality as a dynamic dimension of power, where the state of oppression shifts through a process of empowerment and liberation to a state of wellness. To explain more about temporality and power in the MHP, I draw on the anthropological work of Henery Rutz (1992) and Anne Lovell (1992). According to Rutz (1992), temporality is the subjective construction of time. Time is operationalised

through ritualistic processes such as setting deadlines, agreeing working hours and so forth. Therefore, whoever controls the agenda, is in control of time – and holds the power (ibid). Lovell (1992) asserts that taken for granted schedules of modern-day society face significant existential problems when confronted with people who live outside of those rhythms. This anthropological interpretation of the intersection between street life and hegemony is magnified in MHP spaces of co-production. This research has shown some of the tensions between housed and unhoused co-producers when they meet and begin working together. Even the settings of these meetings cast light on the uneven distribution of power that remains in the MHP. From the safety of traditional meeting spaces, organisational representatives have resisted the views of others based on a perspective of managerial elitism. Unhoused co-producers have been unable to increase the urgency of organisational representatives to respond to the crisis of homelessness in the way that they feel is most important.

In consideration of this, Rutz (1992:6) observes “*societies exist in time, but in what time they exist is contested ground*”. In the MHP, there were examples of hierarchically imposed operational timescales, yet within these restricted parameters, opportunities were taken to disrupt power by actors from the bottom. The MHP co-producers that disrupted hegemonic power, strategically used these spaces to enact their long-term vision of creating equity in society. In doing so, they recognise that progress would be incremental, and they demonstrate that ‘invited’ spaces of participation in the MHP were not spaces of co-optation. They also cast light on how the rules

of the field can change to increase collective social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Christens and Perkins, 2008).

### 9.3.2 Research objective two

Following on from the critical analysis of co-production within spaces of the MHP, I now turn to addressing the second research objective,

*Develop a working definition of co-production within the MHP based on engaging experts by experience in the MHP.*

One particular typology of co-production in the UK public sector has been developed by Needham and Carr (2009). They consider that co-production can be understood and implemented at three different levels; descriptive, intermediate and transformative. Descriptive co-production relates to the type of public services that already exist and do not involve any deliberate change through public involvement. An example of this is Alford's (2009) interpretation of local fire authority co-production with members of the public. Here, the role of the public in the production of services is restricted to alerting the emergency services to the presence of a fire. Whilst it is true that members of the public are actively involved in this process, this is not the type of co-production that the MHP had envisioned. It is also not the type of co-production that the MHP have undertaken in practice.

Intermediate co-production is defined by how an organisation includes co-producers within its structure, without necessarily changing the delivery systems of services. An example of this can be drawn from the MHP. The new service commissioned by the Resettlement Group ensured that paid



roles were available to people with lived experience of homelessness. Moreover, community stakeholders were involved to some extent in the commissioning processes of this new service. Within this example, people with lived experience of homelessness were integrated into the existing service delivery systems without changing the fundamental ways that the organisations operate.

Transformative co-production is different in that organisations change their structure based on the involvement of co-producers. Participatory budgeting can be considered as an example of transformative co-production. Here, members of the public are involved in deciding how a Local Authority spends a proportion of their budget. This is transformative co-production because the organisational processes for making strategic decisions have changed based on the involvement of members of the public. This will also lead to further organisational changes based on the priorities of members of the public involved at this level.

It is a key research insight from this thesis that the MHP have implemented an intermediate form of co-production between 2017-2019. Existing structures and practices of some of the most powerful organisations contributing to the MHP have remained unchanged following two years of co-production in the MHP network. This was evident in *Chapter Eight's* analysis of the sector wide co-planning day that took place before the creation of the Resettlement Group. The Local Authority favoured a process of consultation as it was less disruptive to their traditional business practices than a fully inclusive process of participatory budgeting. Within any Local Authority - like

any large organisation - the decisions made in one part of the organisation will have an impact on the other parts. This is where wholesale institutional backing is necessary for co-production to be credibly adopted. It is that broad level of institutional backing that was lacking from the Local Authority. Despite the good intentions of some local officials within the tightly defined homelessness sector, the MHP approach to co-production has largely been ignored by a city council that is consumed with furthering the economic aspirations of the city centre.

A second reason why the MHP has not moved further towards the transformational possibilities of co-production relates to the structure of the MHP itself. The MHP has been designed around homelessness as a specific social issue. As such, co-production is applied to a social issue, rather than targeting our local government and civic institutions as being the focus of co-production. By targeting co-production around a specific social issue, the institutions of the city – such as the Local Authority - have a diminished level of responsibility for implementing co-production within their organisations. Essentially, creating the MHP has enabled organisations to externalise rather than internalise their responsibility to co-produce with the people of Manchester. An art institution has been able to collaborate with the MHP whilst – at the same time – it has kept people with lived experience of homelessness at arm's length from power within the art institution. A Local Authority can commission services without questioning whether commissioning is an equitable process for providing community services. Private landlords can voice their opposition to Universal Credit through the

MHP but are not obliged to change their practices. Also, a University can offer a PhD scholarship to research homelessness whilst structural concerns of inclusion within the academy remain. Where the involvement of people with lived experience of social issues is targeted at a sector level, their critical insights about social issues are filtered through how the 'sector' traditionally conceptualises these issues.

In these contexts, traditional service orientated solutions dominate. This can be seen in the discursive practices of national and local governments. In an age of commissioning and reducing the role of the state as a provider of services, public institutions increase their '*social impact*' by drawing on the work of '*grass roots*' organisations (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], 2018). In a review of local government and third sector relationships, Osborne and McLaughlin (2004) described this as an increasingly corporatist approach to public management, driven by increased financial pressures. These relationships can be seen in the UTA Action Group, where the National Probation Service considered that it was only through partnership with smaller, more flexible charities that they could reach some of the most marginalised service users.

These processes, and the creation of an additional network such as the MHP, obfuscate how transformative changes might be made within organisations and institutions. The MHP becomes an additional layer, created where complex systems of enterprise already operate. It is only when organisational and systemic change is targeted directly within those existing systems that co-production presents a true challenge to neoliberal

modes of governance. Hunter and Ritchie (2007) provide an example of how these new networks can fail to deliver transformation in the public sector.

They warn against the proliferation of various advisory groups and partnership boards because they make the process of decision making circuitous rather than direct. They observed that in the latter years of the New Labour Government in the UK, a medium sized city such as Edinburgh typically had over one hundred different partnership boards across the social care sector. In their view,

at their best, such groups look beyond the distribution of service resources to locate their work within a broader social policy context, and service users participate as citizens and stakeholders with expert knowledge. At their worst, such groups simply pass the time while decisions on policy and resources are made elsewhere. (ibid:10)

Whilst the sites of enquiry presented in this thesis have offered opportunities for people with experience of homelessness to become more involved in the production of services, their involvement in the key decisions on policy and resource have yet to be realised. Indeed, it may be – as Hunter and Ritchie (2007) suggest – that the real decisions are made elsewhere.

During the time that this research in the MHP was undertaken, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), secured £7.6 million of Government funding to implement a Housing First programme ringfenced for the most acute forms of visible street homelessness in the region. When this was discussed at an MHP board meeting in 2018, it was clear that the power

over policy and decisions were being made elsewhere, away from the MHP or any space of co-production.

The next section of this thesis imagines the vision of co-production in the MHP. This is of particular importance to the strategic direction of the MHP. As Hunter and Ritchie (ibid) consider, transformation through co-production must *“look beyond the distribution of service resources to locate their work within a broader social policy context”* (ibid:10).

### 9.3.3 Research objective three

*Explore how these efforts intend to shape services for the future around the insights of people who have experienced homelessness themselves.*

Even though organisations have not changed under intermediate forms of co-production, the term ‘intermediate’ implies a journey towards transformation. It is this transformative vision of co-production, that this final research objective attends to. The first glimpse of this vision was generated by The Listening Projectors - *“there is more that unites us than divides us”*. Working with the UTA Action Group exposed the struggle to realise this vision in practice. However, co-producers in this group provided a clear message that reform at a macro level was needed to hold private landlords to account for improving conditions in UTAs. This need for wider systemic change was also exposed through Ian Ruskin’s attempt to get the Resettlement Group to ‘start from scratch’ and reconsider what they meant by the terms ‘resettlement’ and ‘homelessness’ from the onset.

Alongside these examples, I have assembled fragments from the field about what this vision of co-production looks like. This was generated through its own action research cycles; discussion, writing, sharing and repeating the process. This vision rests on a premise that homelessness is the product of a system that is structurally violent. Structurally violent systems are ones that produce and normalise, exploitation, marginalisation and exclusion (Dutta, Sonn and Lykes, 2016). Homelessness is normalised through prejudice. Wider forms of homelessness are also masked through language and culture. Realising this vision of structural equality is defined by Bell and Davoudi (2016a) as *'justice in the city'*. As they explain,

justice in the city is linked to the activation of agency in the many, democratisation of the city and its reconfiguration, so that the power to make and remake the city is not concentrated in the few. In other words, reducing the injustice requires the explicit and self-conscious politicisation and democratisation of the everyday life of the citizen. (ibid:276)

For Bell and Davoudi (ibid), transformative change is about the people in the city being able to change the city. It encourages us to think beyond the 'sectored' approach to public services, such as the 'homelessness sector'. Margaret Ledwith (2011), considers this to be an issue of community development; people don't think of their lives in terms of the 'sectors', they think about life around them. This idea challenges the legitimacy of a 'homelessness sector' in its current form. Indeed, the homelessness sector, itself, is a social construct; it has been designed and redesigned around a top-down, macro governmental system that conceptualises homelessness in individualised terms. A 'sectored' approach to public services obfuscates the

culminative impact of poverty by separating out different facets of the wider problem. One clear example is how health and social care services struggle to support people with co-existing problems of mental health and substance misuse (dual diagnosis). Mental health services are ill equipped to address issues of substance misuse, and vice versa (Crawford, Crome and Clancy, 2003). This might be the way that the system is designed, but it is not the way that people think, act and feel. Unhoused co-producers in the MHP conceptualised co-production in terms of what was important to them as opposed to the structural limitations imposed by the existing system and homelessness sector. They incorporate issues beyond the scope of the homelessness sector, such as housing and community as being part of the solution to homelessness. The demystified knowledge in critical sections of the MHP, clearly points to change at a community level and this requires the sectors to become more flexible and integrated.

A second feature of the transformative vision in the MHP is around economic equality in the city. This moves the focus of homelessness services away from the individualised level, and towards structural changes. This vision can be further articulated by drawing on the work of Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), who popularised the notion of economic equality being the benchmark for cohesive communities. Wilkinson and Pickett (ibid), through analysing the degrees of income inequality and the costs of income inequality in the richest 23 countries found that more equal countries benefited everyone by having fewer social costs across a range of social areas. People were more trusting, less likely to resort to crime or have a fear

of crime in their communities, as well as a series of other benefits described in their study. In terms of the MHP, the type of structural reform, that can bring about economic equality has been identified as housing justice. This has been raised so many times by unhoused co-producers and dismissed many times more by organisational representatives.

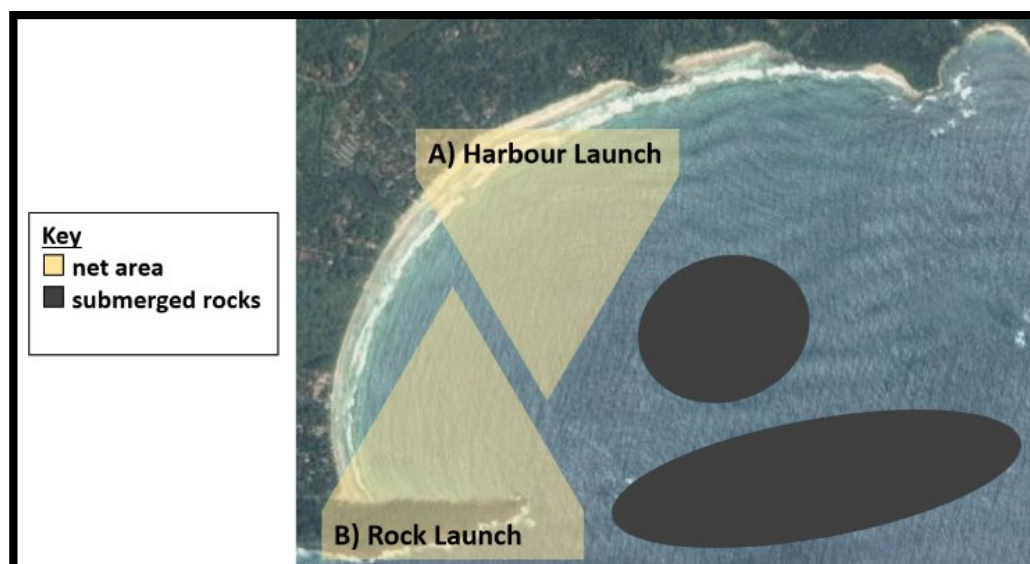
Housing justice, as a vision for co-production in the MHP can be articulated as a credible approach to addressing homelessness in Manchester. Indeed, the idea draws directly on Ostrom's (1990) alternative vision for governing the commons; where social housing is re-established as a common resource. This would provide the most protective welfare measure to protect people from homelessness in the UK. However, in many MHP discussions, this proposal was repeatedly dismissed as being wildly unrealistic by organisational representatives and senior managers in institutions. This, however, is a credible proposal.

During my time in the field, it was clear that the present day homelessness sector was not designed to support communities to flourish in the way that Ostrom's (ibid) common pool resource theory proposed. Collectively contributing to a sector designed around a model of structural violence cannot challenge structural violence unless the system itself is changed. In this case, homelessness needed to be reframed around a specific common resource such as social housing. I presented this idea, alongside one of Ostrom's (ibid) common pool resource case studies to a meeting of MHP Action Group chairpersons in 2018. Some 20 people attended this meeting and I had already been encouraged by two of the



Driving Group members to develop and share this idea more broadly in the MHP. In the meeting, people who had faced homelessness themselves responded by saying that this reflected their sentiments about co-production in the MHP.

Ostrom's (ibid) case study that I presented to them was of a Sri Lankan fishing community in the harbour of Mawella. In the year 1900, a common pool resource was created where all of the 20 local fishing families were given appropriator rights to catch fish in the harbour waters. In this case, anchovies were the main catch; they were caught with big nets cast out from the beaches (see figure 11). Boats were not used to catch anchovies because, in deeper waters around the harbour, the submerged rocks meant that fishing yields were non-existent.



**FIGURE 11: FISHING IN THE SRI LANKAN HARBOUR OF MAWELLA (MAP DATA**

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Ostrom (ibid) emphasised that a common pool resource is most effective when the lived expertise of the local people is used to design the rules of governing the common pool resource. As such, the 20 fishing families – as appropriators - collectively developed rules to ensure a fair distribution of fish were caught amongst them. Each appropriator was only allowed one net; there were 20 nets in total. Each net could catch one ton of fish in prime season (September and October). This would equate a third of their annual catch. A daily rotation system was developed, with two launch sites. Nets were numbered from one to 20 and launched so that there were only ever two nets in the water per day. On the first day, net number one was launched from site 'A', and net number two was launched from site 'B'. Then on the second day, net number 20 was launched at site 'A', and net number one was relaunched from site 'B'. This sequence was repeated so that all appropriators had an equal opportunity to launch their nets twice every 20 days. It was only through the local expertise that they were able to take advantage of specific fishing patterns; site 'A' always had the biggest catch but was never consistent; site 'B' had the most consistent catch when there was a general low flow of fish. These sites also avoided the submerged rocks, further out to sea where it was not possible to catch fish. The fishing families had learned to avoid this area because of the low yields and damaged nets caused by the rocks. Overall, the system of using sites 'A' and 'B' provided a sustainable amount of fish to meet community needs at affordable prices.

In trying to compare a common pool resource like this, to an example of co-production in Manchester, I questioned what the goal of the MHP would be if it was a fishing harbour in Mawella? The answer is that it would seek to increase the appropriator rights to marginalised families who wanted to catch fish. The protests in Manchester, calling for change would be equivalent to a situation where the Mawellan fishing system had become corrupt, leading to exploitation in the sector. Public protests would call on local government to change the appropriator rules and allow new fishing families to catch anchovies for fair distribution in the community. They would not be calling for better homelessness services whilst wholesale exploitation continued to dominate the broader system unchecked.

What this comparison shows is that the MHP was created by institutions in the city as a bounded space of participation for homelessness activists to work towards social justice. However, this space of participation restricted to the homelessness sector alone, which itself is a structurally violent social construct. Effectively, MHP co-producers have been working hard for systems change in the area of submerged rocks, whilst exploitation continues in the broader economic system. It is for that reason, that co-production in the homelessness sector, as a means to social equality is unable to offer the transformation envisioned by unhoused co-producers in the MHP.

When I presented this idea to the MHP Action Group chairpersons meeting in 2018, one group member replied enthusiastically, *“That’s right, it’s the fish, there’s no fish here, they need to start coughing up”* (fieldnote 79).

This meeting was also attended by a senior manager from the Local Authority. They responded less favourably by saying, *“interesting idea, but it’s not gonna’ happen. We live in a capitalist society, get used to it”* (fieldnote 79). This response characterised the cynicism that enables injustice to continue. Despite this cynicism, the systems in society are actually far from being fixed, they are soft, supple and are changing all of the time (Spivak, 1988). Following this MHP meeting in 2018, I discussed this idea on several occasions with MHP members. In those conversations, we described the homelessness sector as the *‘fishlessness sector’*, a quick reminder of the ‘cruel optimism’ created by a system that is designed to push ideas of social justice to the fringes whilst the most powerful are preoccupied with economic growth (Berlant, 2006).

The idea of targeting MHP efforts towards housing legislation and policies is not as ideologically unrealistic as some people during this fieldwork have suggested. The outgoing Special Rapporteur to the United Nations on the Right to Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik (2019) firmly asserts that housing legislation should be the key policy focus for addressing homelessness. Rolnik (ibid) has helped to relocate the conversation about homelessness to a conversation about housing justice. In her report to the United Nations, Rolnik (ibid) concluded that homelessness can only be effectively addressed by cutting the umbilical cord between financial capitalism and real estate at large and specifically for housing (ibid). If financial capitalism continues to dominate society, housing will primarily serve the needs of investors, rather than people. Rolnik (ibid) continued by

critiquing the UK government's welfare policies since 2010; not only has social housing been physically dismantled but so too has the hope for social housing. This represents the physical and cultural destruction of social welfare in the UK. It is on this issue, that the insights of unhoused co-producers in the MHP have become sanitised by the voices of organisational representatives. We should take hope that even though many organisational representatives in Manchester feel that change is ideologically unrealistic, there are many more, such as Rolnik who, not only listen, but also support the cause. Rolnik (ibid) considers the Conservative government's response to her recommendations in her most recent work *Urban Warfare: Housing Under the Empire of Finance*,

the Conservatives' resentment was not merely against a UN rapporteur who criticised them. It was against a 'Brazilian woman', hailing from an 'underdeveloped' country marred by the existence of favelas and other degrading housing forms. One who, moreover dared to state that the recent reforms in the British social housing system were a step backwards and a violation of the housing rights of the affected people. The campaign of disqualification that followed, spearheaded by the right-wing tabloids, only exposed the prejudices more clearly. (ibid:2)

In the same way that the criticism levelled against Rolnik was based on prejudice, so too are the criticisms levelled against the transformational vision for co-production in the MHP. This research dispels any idea that restricted spaces of service user co-production will be enough to realistically address the issue of homelessness in a modern-day UK setting. Whilst intermediate forms of co-production have become common place in UK health and social care settings, issues such as homelessness remain

unsolvable through classical 'problem-solution' social policy frameworks (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

This research has cast light on the organisational processes of resistance to the insights and ideas of excluded and oppressed groups of people. At its best, co-production still offers a mechanism for institutions to engage in a process of wholesale change, albeit long-term. However, this research considers that public institutions remain resistant to systemic change based on the critical insights of people who have experienced social deprivation first-hand.

#### 9.4 What next for me and the MHP

I had originally intended to create clear set of recommendations that would help the MHP to further embed co-production as a means to transformation. However, as I reviewed these recommendations in November 2019, I was reminded of Roz Ivanič's (1998) advice to writers in her book *Writing and Identity*; if you have a problem, share it with your readers. My problem about what we should do next, is a problem of liminality - the ambiguous space where action and change is defined by the actors involved. If we are to take a community development approach to co-production, then any recommendations for the MHP are of equal value to other city institutions (such as the university) and those who act in those spaces (like me). By bringing these themes together, I frame this research around the community psychology value of stewardship – where we all have a duty to cause no harm and work in the interests of the collective. Referring

back to Noam Chomsky's (2012) analysis of social change; it was the solidarity movements of the 1970's that created the opportunities and equalities realised thirty years later. As such, the following discussion considers what we should all be doing based on the findings of this research.

As a doctoral student, I have been able to work for three years outside of the bureaucratic processes of the academy. Whilst this has offered freedom from a system that I knew would have its own restrictions, it has meant that this project has had only a limited impact in opening the doors of the university to community groups and remunerating them for their time. Providing meaningful ways to make institutions more accessible and inclusive is an issue for the MHP, city council and the academy alike. When community members contribute to these types of projects, finding ways to value their expertise alongside paid counterparts is of paramount importance for the future. Whilst citizen volunteers are seldom 'in it for the money', remuneration reflects the value placed on their expertise (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991). In meaningful terms, pay should be part of a wider contract made between an institution and people with experience of a social issue when they undertake any project together. In learning from the MHP Resettlement Group, paid permanent roles provide a stable structure to embed participation in institutions (Sandhu, 2017). Meaningful employment with opportunities to progress within an institution offers hope of future systemic change within the organisation.

In my future work as an early career researcher, I intend to develop funding bids with community partners where meaningful remuneration is

planned from the onset. Drawing on Facer and Enright's (2016) principles for creating living knowledge through research, this will focus on funding community participation, reframing impact, creating multiple and embodied legacies as well as long-term strategies. Drawing directly on the example of partial co-planning in the Resettlement Group ethnographic case in this thesis, there is much that can be implemented to ensure that the direction of future work remains in the interests of marginalised community members – both in research and for the MHP. It is a priority for me after the completion of this thesis to use the findings of this research to support the MHP to ensure that future services are co-planned using a process of participatory budgeting. Lyon-Callo (2003) describes this as the ongoing effort to move services and research away from professionalised (mis)understandings of social issues such as homelessness. Drawing on his own research in a homelessness hostel, he reflected,

when staff are hired and trained to treat disorders of the self, they can hardly be expected to offer a collective or political response to homelessness. (ibid:135)

Whatever the institution, whether it be a University or a Local Authority, bringing about this type of organisational change requires that the interests of the institution *reflect* the interests of marginalised community members. In terms of how this will shape the direction of research, the principles of participatory budgeting offer *the* most democratic form of participation in strategic decision making and designing services or research. Setting the culture of citizen participation from the top will positively impact on how services are delivered and how research is conducted. The value of



this approach has been considered in a modern-day public sector context by Burrall and Hughes (2015), who consider that,

collaborative policy making can only flourish when it has the political space to do so and this can only be opened and kept open by senior politicians. Without senior permission to act differently. Those within the process are unable to develop the creativity and flexibility required to identify and reach a commonly defined goal. (ibid:17)

In terms of bringing this collective voice to the university, I have been able to co-disseminate material from this thesis with MHP colleagues. This has undoubtedly increased the accessibility of scholarship and was one of the most practical ways of demonstrating how the expertise of community research is held by community members. I hope to have a greater opportunity to strategically contribute to these issues in the future. It is for these reasons that I should be considered by those in the MHP as a community resource.

It is strategically important that research attention be directed towards the provision of social housing as a means to alleviating poverty in the UK. The increased use of the private rented sector in place of local authority housing is a seismic policy shift that undermined the social housing settlement in the UK. Secure housing is undoubtedly the most protective form of welfare that the entire welfare state has to offer.

This thesis has examined the MHP as a site for civic participation. It has questioned the extent to which the MHP offers a democratic space for people with lived experience of homelessness to meaningfully contribute to changing services in - and beyond - the homelessness sector. The insights

presented in this research project have challenged traditional understandings of homelessness. In doing so, this thesis presents a transformational vision of co-production as a challenge to social inequality in the city.

Drawing on a community psychology approach, this research has examined how power in spaces of co-production is a fluid concept. Whilst spaces of participation in the MHP were initially bounded, the actions taken by co-producers in those spaces created opportunities for greater inclusivity as time progressed.

This thesis was driven by a desire of many people to reshape public services around the interests of those they are designed to serve. A priority, now that I have completed this thesis is to share the research. I have already shared some of this work at a National Health Service Mental Health and Homelessness conference and at two academic conferences. I also have contributed to a book chapter about community research (forthcoming). However, the experience of undertaking this research will remain with me, as will the generous contributions of the people from the MHP who allowed me to walk with them in solidarity.

#### 9.5 Way making strategies in co-produced research

Drawing on Cook's (1998; 2009) concept of mess in action research, I view my journey as a PhD researcher one of stepping into mess and the mess that creates. In this section I share some of the methodological strategies that I have developed around co-production.

Creating mini-horizontal spaces. Over the course of this research, maintaining collaborative pedagogies with experts by experience provided a layer of protection from the subtle forces of institutionalisation. These collaborative pedagogies needed to be separate from traditional MHP spaces (where organisational representatives participate). The need to do this became very clear when working with the Listening Projectors - where the 'group-speak' reflected the language of institutions rather than the people. By collectively stepping outside of these spaces to unpack the activities that took place between organisational representatives and people who have lived experience of homelessness, I respond to Michelle Fine's (1994:78) call for researchers to reveal the *"rupturing narratives.... [of those] who speak against structures, representatives, and practices of domination"*.

Innovative use of methods. Establishing these mini-horizontal spaces of participation required a creative approach to research methods. In fact, methods needed to be deployed with the intention of moving beyond this 'group-speak'. Go-along interviews created the conditions to talk naturally, away from the MHP meetings and collaboratively (Kusenback, 2003). The value of these spaces was that they were 'one removed' from the MHP as the focus of investigation. This in turn helped to resist the same problems observed in the field from occurring in the research.

Project management. Having recognised these problems of 'group-speak' in the MHP, half way through my fieldwork, I approached the MHP Driving Group to clarify the epistemological stance of this research. In this discussion, I made it clear to organisational representatives from the City

Council that the critical insights produced in this thesis would represent a perspective from below, not an institutional perspective. In response, I was told that they welcomed critique, however, they asked me to submit drafts of the analysis prior to submission. This was agreed and no amendments were requested. This example highlights that in the field of co-produced research, not all the conversations are easy, nor is the journey smooth sailing. Indeed, following the submission of this thesis, I found out that one institution had not actually read the analysis. When I asked again for their feedback, they requested that the work be anonymised because they thought it projected an unfair representation of their organisation. In order to stand up to organisational power, it was essential to have the backing of several experts by experience. Many of whom had read the same analysis and offered their support and praise for the insights presented about organisational culture and power. For me, this was more important than the organisations response.

As part of a reflexive approach to this research, I consider that my positionality in the MHP makes this thesis unique. I would not have been able to produce this analysis if I were in the role of an MHP organisational representative. However, I must also accept that I was viewed as such by some experts by experience in the MHP. This relative level of power was a difficult but necessary burden to manage. Reflecting on these issues ensured that I used my position of privilege in the MHP to expose the back stage of co-production in the public sector and offer an authentic and

credible ethnography from below – on that institutions should welcome rather than resist.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A - Introductory blog to MHP stakeholders

### Promoting community participation in the co-production of the Manchester Homelessness Charter

**I'm Nigel Allmark and have recently started a PhD (Community Psychology) working with the Manchester Homelessness Charter.**

Specifically, we're interested in the value of co-production and how it is helping to bring about changes and embed new ways of working. I know that the work has been off to a good start with Jez Green (Manchester Homelessness Charter Facilitator) hosting a number of focus groups and interviews right back when the Charter was written. There are also emerging pockets of co-production in services related to homelessness and housing in other areas of the UK, particularly in Scotland and Wales. Here are a couple of links if you want to explore in more detail:

[Scottish Co-production - Housing and homelessness - where now for service user involvement?](#)

[Co-production Wales](#)

[Street Support - Manchester Charter](#)

[Street Support - Working together to End Homelessness](#)

I've previously worked in a variety of health and social services since 2002 and I'm particularly passionate about getting services out of the office and

into the community. Communities don't limit themselves to 'nine to five', Monday to Friday, nor should people have to travel out of town to access essential services. I feel privileged to have been involved in some meaningful and important interventions during the last few years such as the new developing Integrated Family Support Service in Wales, NSPCC's Caring Dads Programme and Multisystemic Therapy.

The three year Manchester Homelessness Charter research projects will value how individual experiences of homelessness provide unique insights into this issue that workers, researchers and policy makers don't always have access to. An example of this is how homelessness is commonly associated with rough sleeping at the expense of other situations. This is why shared working and listening to each other are vital if we are to build stronger communities.

One big idea that I'm working on is participatory action research. In terms of research, this is deeply rooted in the principle of solidarity and where groups of people have been marginalised and don't have power or a voice. Research is conducted collectively by this group to identify and put into practice ways of changing the situation. Examples have included the development of community



bank in an economically deprived area and better health services developed by women for women. The unique qualities of the Charter have brought together individuals from all areas of homelessness services and there are real opportunities to co-produce better services and outcomes.

So these are the values of the research we are doing over the next three years. The work of the Charter is already under way, however, research opportunities are still in the planning stages. So this is a call out to people with lived experience of homelessness, workers supporting those people, policy makers, commissioners and anyone who wants things to change to get in touch.

[nigel.allmark@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:nigel.allmark@stu.mmu.ac.uk)

[http://icmblog.shelter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/OBR-1198\\_ICM\\_At-A-Glance-Newsletter\\_v6\\_WEB-1.pdf](http://icmblog.shelter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/OBR-1198_ICM_At-A-Glance-Newsletter_v6_WEB-1.pdf)

## Appendix B - List of MHP Action Groups

<https://charter.streetsupport.net/join-action-group/>

What is an action group?

The 9 action groups will each tackle a key challenge that people experiencing homelessness regularly face, such as access to mental health support, emergency accommodation, and employment. Each group will include people who have experienced homelessness, as well as those who have relevant skills or professional expertise.

How will the action groups work?

Each group will decide how they want to work together, but we expect no more than one meeting a month. The groups will feedback progress to the charter driving group at least every 3 months, and we will publish regular updates on this website.

If you feel there is an action group that might benefit from your experience, please submit your details, and the group Chairperson will be in touch with more information.

### 1. Mental Health

Improving Mental Health provision for homeless people

The mental health group will be looking into issues with accessing mental health support, missing services, and also supporting therapies and activities that could be provided by the volunteers.

### 2. Employment Opportunities

Increasing employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness

The Employment Action Group aims to challenge perceptions and create new pathways into work, building on the fantastic work already going on in the city. The group hopes to encourage local businesses to step up and be a part of the solution by supporting people into work.

### 3. Substandard Temporary Accommodation

Improving sub-standard temporary accommodation (B&Bs)

This group is exploring what problems exist for people living in temporary accommodation, and asking 'what kind of things do we want to change?'. The group has a number of people with lived experience of this situation, and includes JustLife and representatives from the Fire & Rescue service.

### 4. Women's Direct Access

Re-designing the Women's Direct Access hostel

This group are redesigning the Women's Direct Access provision. It includes representatives from the Inspiring Change Women's Voices group, staff members of WDA, and women currently using the service.

### 5. Evening Services

Creating new indoor evening services for homeless people



This group are looking at how best to create, provide and operate an evening provision for homeless and vulnerable people in Manchester.

#### 6. Emergency Accommodation

Increasing winter emergency accommodation for rough sleepers

The Emergency Accommodation Action Group takes a holistic look at temporary provision of accommodation in the city, including winter night shelters, and move-on accommodation. The initial focus is on creating a set of minimum standards as a guide for new emergency accommodation.

#### 7. Preventing homelessness

Improving the experience for people presenting as homeless at Manchester town hall

This group is looking at improving the experience of people presenting as homeless at the town hall. It includes people with lived experience of attending the town hall, staff, management and support workers for the sector.

#### 8. Big Change Initiative

Alternative ways for the public to give money and reduce street begging

Giving money to people begging on the street isn't an effective way to help individuals move away from sleeping rough, or address the complicated range of reasons which made them homeless. This action group is looking at alternative ways of giving via the Big Change fund, and will also raise public awareness on how to help including volunteering.

#### 9. Arts and Heritage

'Increasing opportunities for people with experience of homelessness to engage in the arts, through the city's arts and cultural institutions, artists and industries

The Arts and Heritage group is a partnership of people involved in arts and/or homelessness work. Their sessions will include co-curating workshops at different venues across the city.

Appendix C - Project summary presented to the MHP Board, December 2017

**Manchester Homelessness Partnership: a study of co-production across three separate MHP Groups.**

**Background**

Co-production first emerged in research literature during the 1970's where it was most notably presented by Elinor Ostrom as an alternative model to the dominant market-based approaches of public administration. It was (and is still) argued that this approach has the potential to transform how public services are organised and delivered; recognising service users and the community as assets to be invested in. Ostrom defined co-production broadly as the:

“process through which inputs from individuals who are not “in” the same organization are transformed into goods and services”

Over recent decades, several examples have highlighted the factors related to successful projects. These include clarity over what will be co-produced, for how long and by whom; also, that these issues are clearly negotiated and agreed locally.

The Manchester Homelessness Partnership Driver Group has negotiated a working definition of co-production as:

“People with lived experience of homelessness are fully included (equally) in the design, delivery and evaluation of services”

However, the unique and organic development of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, driven by the Action Groups provides multiple opportunities for co-production to be acted out and negotiated in practice. Each Action Group with their different focus and different stakeholders will produce unique results and ways of working. Researchers sometimes describe co-production as a ‘black box’ where its contents remain elusive to even those directly involved. The following project proposal will explore these multiple examples of co-production in Manchester and provide learning insights to support the work of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership.

**Project**

The selection of groups will ensure that a variety of examples are included to increase the learning from this study. To support the practical

use of research findings, information will also be shared at the end of each study (at 4-5 months intervals).

So far, work has been undertaken with the Arts & Heritage, Express & Empower group over a five-month period. Twelve interviews have been completed and preliminary analysis of co-production within this group has been undertaken by the group. This case is in the process of being formally written and the findings will be shared within the Partnership and discussed at two academic conferences in March 2018 with the aim of facilitating further scrutiny.

Contact has been made with several other groups however a further study is yet to be confirmed (it is expected to be agreed in January 2018).

Broad goals of the project:

1. Explore and critically examine co-production within multiple settings of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership. The unique qualities of the Partnership with embedded Action Groups facilitates an in-depth exploration of co-production (understanding each group's contribution to systems change, how working relationships are negotiated and learning from each group).
2. To improve the quality, utility and relevance of homelessness research in Manchester by embedding participatory approaches to conducting research with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, enabling individuals with lived experience of homelessness to claim their right as knowledge producers and agents of change.
3. The findings of which will contribute how future homelessness services may be evaluated and what 'outcomes' should be measured.

## Appendix D - Information sheet and consent forms

### INFORMATION SHEET

#### **An exploration of co-production in group of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership (MHP)**

##### **What does this study involve?**

This study exploration is being completed by Nigel Allmark, a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University. It aims to understand how people work together in the action groups and incorporate perspectives to generate unique ways of addressing issues related to homelessness.

##### **Why have I been invited to participate?**

As a member of an MHP Group, you are involved in co-production and have insight and experience of working together in this way.

##### **What will happen if I take part?**

This natural research method means that work in the group will carry on as normal. The researcher will refer to meeting discussions, interactions and different perspectives to help explore co-production. He will observe and take notes on naturally occurring interactions and conversations among group members during meetings and he will also participate these activities as a student volunteer as an action group member.

You may also be invited to undertake individual interviews, and this could be recorded if you consent to this. It would last around 40 minutes and take place at a location of your choice.

##### **Do I have to take part?**

No, your participation in this study is voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw from the study without giving a reason. Your participation is voluntary. Your choice will be respected.

##### **What are the possible benefits of taking part and what will happen to the results?**

The final version of this project aims incorporate three case studies and an overall commentary of the MHP. It will read like a full book accounting for the transformational work of the MHP. Extracts of work will be shared with you as progress unfolds and by consenting to this ongoing process you are

supporting and enabling the document of a social phenomenon to exist on public record for the benefit of our community. This is also an opportunity to reflect and share important experiences, and/or assessing the challenges and needs of particular groups and institutions.

### **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Confidentiality is assured in that your participation and personal details will not be disclosed to anyone by the researcher; also that what you say in the sessions will not be discussed beyond the remits of the research project. Anonymity is ensured so that you will not be identifiable as an. Names will be changed as standard during this process; however, you may decide that you wish for your name to appear. Opportunities to be involved in the completion of this case study will be available and you will be kept informed about this as it progresses.

Your input is valued and providing consent is recognised as being a process rather than just a 'one off'. You will therefore be given further opportunities to view what this work turns in to and be involved at an active level or, if you wish, a passive level (endorsing or withdrawing consent for further use of material).

### **What are the possible risks of taking part?**

Some people may feel uncomfortable talking freely for concern that their social standing, peer relations or employment will be affected by what they say. This is something that is recognised as very important to guard against in the design of this study and an ongoing process of consent is adopted.

You will be shown drafts of work that is produced and can raise concerns at any point going forward and these will be accommodated as best possible, for example, if information has already been synthesized, changes will be made to ensure that it can be untraceable if necessary, for example, changing the name of the meeting venues and discussion topics etc.

The risk of harm associated with this project is no greater than that encountered in the ordinary work of the MHP.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This study is being reviewed and supervised by a team at Manchester Metropolitan University. The supervisors are Dr. Leanne Rimmer and Prof. Rebecca Lawthom.

### **Who is involved in this study?**

The members of three separate Action Groups are also part of this study. The findings of each will be compared at a later stage.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have any concerns about the research please contact Nigel.allmark@stu.mmu.ac.uk (Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, M15 6GX) in the first instance. Alternatively, please direct concerns to his supervisor Dr. Leanne Rimmer at [Leanne.rimmer@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:Leanne.rimmer@mmu.ac.uk) (Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, M15 6GX) or Faculty head of ethics: Professor Carol Haigh at [c.haigh@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.haigh@mmu.ac.uk) or by telephone on 0161 247 5914.

## **CONSENT FORM**

**Please initial EACH of the following in the box if you agree to them:**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I consent to Nigel Allmark joining the Group and undertaking the observation processes outlined in the information sheet. ☐
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study without giving any reason. This can be before, during or after any interview of group. You can tell the researcher that you wish to withdraw in person or by email simply saying, "I wish to withdraw", no additional reason is required. [nigel.allmark@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:nigel.allmark@stu.mmu.ac.uk) (Faculty of Health, Psychology & Social Care, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, M15 6GX) ☐
4. I agree to take part in the study. ☐
5. At this stage, I am happy for direct examples given in the group or following interview to be used in reports. The examples given will not be identifiable to a given person and I understand that I will have an opportunity to read a draft copy of the report before it is completed (and have the right to withdraw at any stage). ☐
6. A) I agree to be interviewed about the work of the action group ☐

B. and that this interview will be recorded ☐

7. I agree to being contacted again and invited to look drafts of the report produced and look at what the group has talked about the themes produced. Before this happens, I will decide if I want my name to be used or anonymized. ☐

Name                      Date      Signature

Name of Person      Date      Signature  
taking consent

## Appendix E - Typed feedback sheets from MHP 'co-planning' day, February 2017

### **Prevention homelessness – support in tenancies**

*What do we know? What's already happening? What's working well?*

- *Difference between support for private provision and local authority. Private there isn't anything apart from CAB. Housing associations have more scope for support (e.g. in managing arrears) but even housing associations struggle to support multiple needs.*
- *Housing Connect Service and Compliance Team working well and can support people.*
- *Shelter is good at getting info to people about their rights.*
- *Bond Scheme at Council good.*
- *Rough sleepers – Big Change can pay rent up front.*

*What is not working so well? What are the gaps? What else is needed?*

- *Automated eviction/arrears letters being sent to people with multiple needs – they struggle to manage/understand.*
- *Agencies not speaking to each other.*
- *Not enough or any support for private rented tenants. There's been an increase in private rented sector problems.*
- *Communications not working well for service user e.g. people having to ring an 0845 number and then not getting called back.*
- *No route to hold private landlords to account – e.g. agency fees, people losing loads of money to them unfairly.*

*Ideas?*

- *People/volunteers to explain or stop computer generated arrears letters to vulnerable individuals. More volunteers at town hall with lived experience or a paid grow trainee at the Council.*
- *Advice and support in the community – housing associations are the key.*
- *Legal advice to challenge dodgy landlords – can we shape a pledge from a solicitor firm to help with this? (provide legal services).*

*Three key points:*

- *How can we co-produce a solution between individuals and council to cut out the agency fees in private sector – e.g. social lettings agency?*
- *Legal advice to challenge dodgy landlords – can we shape a pledge from a solicitor firm to help with this – legal services. Or (more importantly) the legal people to train up lived experience to help*



*communicate the message to vulnerable people (more likely to listen than to a solicitor).*

- *Ways of preventing vulnerable person falling through the gaps with housing association – letters and support.*

### **Move on accommodation and support - supply**

*What do we know? What's already happening? What's working well?*

- *Under 35yo's get money for a room but private rented and multiple occupancy mainly go to students or workers.*
- *£105 cap on housing benefit – no additional payments to help.*
- *Community local provision – not much.*
- *Small percentage increase of Manchester Move accommodation going to homeless – 9 to 18% in last 3 years.*
- *A lot of private landlords don't take DSS tenants.*
- *Big Change can help with deposit*

*What is not working so well? What are the gaps? What else is needed?*

- *Not personal relationship of matching person to property through Manchester Move*
- *People in arrears don't get access to the system – often caused by sanctions or cock ups in the system.*
- *DWP universal credit – can pay landlord direct but what about the people who want to try to learn life skills of self-management; when they mess up, the problem can spiral out of control!*

*Ideas?*

- *Needs to be incentives for landlords.*
- *More personal relationship of matching person to property through Manchester Move*
- *Churches to diversify their investment portfolio to housing stock.*
- *Increase council tax for empty properties – “if it's got trees growing out of the roof, it's ours”.*
- *Opportunities for a fresh start with arrears and wipe the slate clean.*

*Three key points:*

- *Flag system so that issues don't spiral out of control, e.g. rent arrears because of DWP money going to individual but not getting passed on – if there was a flag system (like an overdraft limit), then a personal approach could be used to address it or move it to a direct payment system.*

- *Develop opportunities to open up co-op housing so people can live together multiple.*
- *Blank slate for people.*

### **Rough sleeping, begging and outreach – advice and support**

*What do we know? What's already happening? What's working well?*

- *One to one conversations with people (assessment) so that their options are understood, explained – quality is dependent on worker (not consistent).*
- *Used to have the Manchester Advice Alliance where they shared good practice, people learned a lot and trained up lived experience*

*What is not working so well? What are the gaps? What else is needed?*

- *Manchester Advice Alliance was only funded for 2 years*
- *People pass the buck when giving advice passed from pillar to post*
- *Lack of consistency between agencies/workers*
- *'M Think' intended to prevent people telling their story multiple times but lack of trust may have stopped its use.*
- *People disillusioned, we don't have solutions when giving advice*

*Ideas?*

- *Include language choice provision for newly arrived communities.*
- *Training days for people giving advice – front line network*
- *'No Wrong Door' policy to be funded as a team to try and really make it work.*
- *There needs to be a connect between advice and solutions*

*Three key points:*

- *Massive reinvestment in advice services.*
- *Consistent advice in advice services similar to Manchester Advice Alliance*
- *Local accessibility of advice services at the time and place that people need.*

### **Hostels, supported accommodation, B&B's – commissioning and choice**

*What do we know? What's already happening? What's working well?*

- *Commissioners listening and being responsive, like in the case of Riverside and Brydon. It's all about commissioners trusting agencies to do it and commissioning working as a partnership with provider.*
- *Experts with experience are involved in the planning and evaluation as well*
- *Personalisation of services*

*What is not working so well? What are the gaps? What else is needed?*

- *Are people getting stuck in the system? Not moved on when need to be due to limited options*
- *Having unrealistic expectations of what is achievable?*
- *Combined commissioning? To include health with housing so it's a one stop shop in the place where they live.*

*Ideas?*

- *We struggle to access mental health and alcohol services for people – maybe they could be commissioned together (personalisation)*

*Three key points:*

- *Finding solutions for people who are excluded from accommodation criteria (ensuring there are no gaps in the market) e.g. for someone with an arson record.*
- *Collaborative commissioning and evaluation with experts with lived experience*
- *Personalisation of services – service users feeding back if it is working for them and defining their own personalised service (not the provider defining this).*

## Appendix F- Extract from NVIVO

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface. On the left, a sidebar contains navigation options: Quick Access, Data, Codes, Cases, Notes, Search, Maps, and Output. The main window is titled 'Nodes' and features a search bar. Below the search bar is a table listing various nodes and their corresponding file and reference counts.

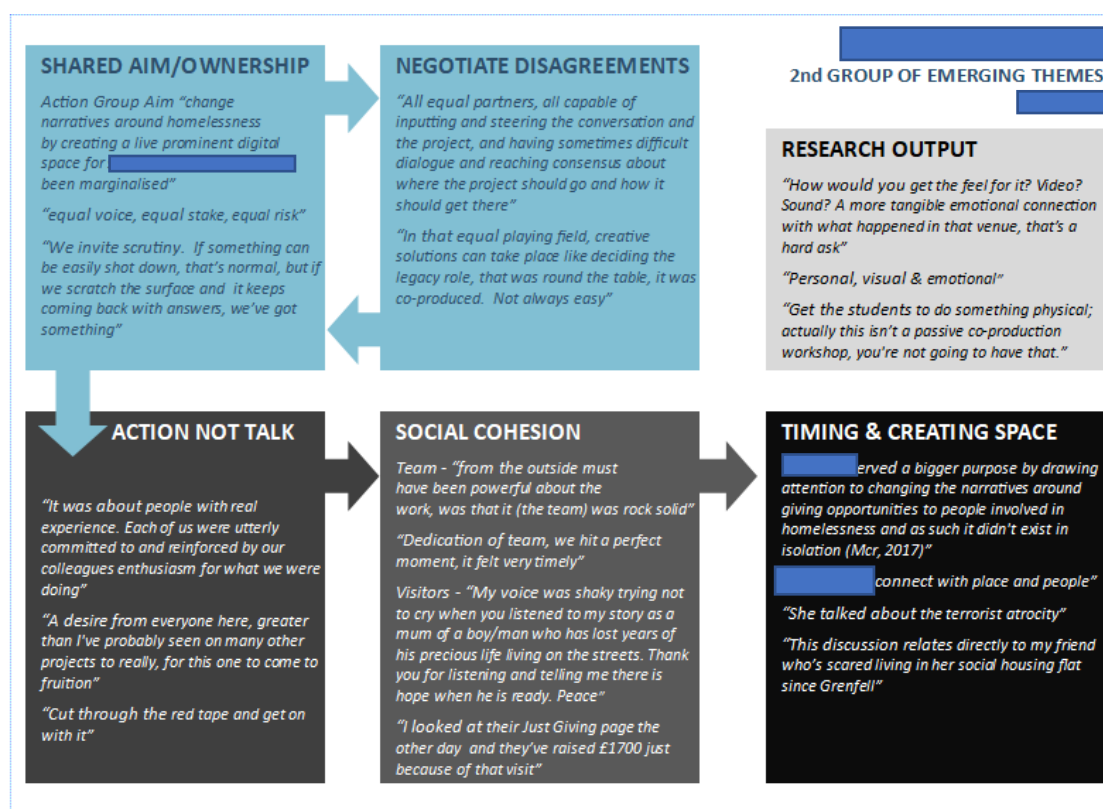
Name	Files	References
aim vision	6	12
clear roles	2	2
co-ordination management	2	3
coordinator role	1	2
copro definition	4	13
OPEN TO SCRUTINY	2	5
partnership vs coproduction	1	3
power sharing	1	1
stakeholder risk shared	1	2
employment	1	1
funding	1	1
lived experience	1	1
credibility catalyst for conversations	2	3
skill building	3	3
manchester is me and i am manchester	2	2
negotiate	1	1
deadline focusses the mind	1	3
legacy	2	5
push through disagreements	2	3
power door opener	1	2
role satisfaction	2	3
social cohesion	2	4
impact on others	5	7
research output	2	2
personal impact	5	10
drive determination	2	4
timely	3	3
something new	4	5
uncovering local expertise	1	2
unexpected outcomes	2	2
unique collaboration	3	4

Below the table, there is a section for 'copro definition' with a detailed analysis of references. The analysis includes several reference excerpts and their coverage percentages:

- Reference 4 - 0.16% Coverage: nothing about us without us is for us.
- Reference 5 - 0.45% Coverage: yes its involving that community that you are actually, that the projects about, yes it comes back to thap phrase.
- Reference 6 - 1.94% Coverage: AND THEN THE BIT ABOUT ROLES TAKES IT AWAY FROM THE ARTIST? yes. its funny who was on site he was like 'im the [redacted]'; and people were coming in and talking more to [redacted] more than [redacted] so again it was, thats what i mean about the ego and sometimes with the festival, actually, although i do think the presence of [redacted] and [redacted] gave it gravitas but that then in the grand scheme of things beame irrelevant because actually it then became about people.
- Reference 7 - 1.85% Coverage: so the roles and coproduction working practically [redacted] was the main project producer, but being [redacted] as an issue that [redacted] is very passionate about as am i but me being in mcr theres a real, more connects to the city and organisations or charities. so i quidy thought 'this needs to be someone whose based here' rather than london producing team but [redacted] had the overall vision and helping shape that vision but coordinator role, and trying to install.
- Reference 8 - 0.90% Coverage: Theyve never heard of me or the festival. I got to know [redacted] well and i like them very much. I think that's the thing, it became. Maybe that's the other factor in coproduction, you need to like everyone you work with.
- Reference 9 - 4.90% Coverage: And then in terms of working towards, I was regularly chatting with [redacted] about practicalities of the recording, i think that briefing to [redacted] about what we needed to get out of those sessions then getting tarnish vision on board and making sure that was integrated. i would change that (sequence) the imagery was a massive part of the project. We were origionally wanting a headshot again! [redacted] if we had tarnish with us from the start the whole process would have been streamlined. That's something to learn going forward. But coordinating with them as freelancers, so making sure they can fit in with the person sharing their story and us working round them. Looking after confidential storage, transcriptions, recruiting a transcriber, with tight time frame we had 30 recordings. Going forward, we will only have, not in those volumes. But then lasing with [redacted] in our team, the website, what we wanted to achieve, how the content we have gets showcased, [redacted] vision for the site. Reconnecting with the interviewees, making sure, sorting out expenses to the team on site. Making sure little things, tshirts, lanyards were a really big thing, makes people feel part of the project. Yeah, so that role was essential.

## Appendix G - Summary of collective themes from group discussion

### EMERGING THEMES FROM FOUR INTERVIEWS



## Appendix H - Selection of photographs taken during fieldwork



The Booth Centre (homelessness day centre). Setting for the majority of MHP Driving Group meetings.



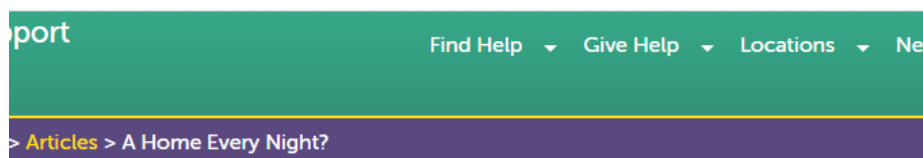
Virgin Media Lounge. Setting for a UTA Action Group meeting.



Building in central Manchester where office space was donated for the purposes of MHP activity

## Appendix I - Blog article written during the process of fieldwork

<https://news.streetsupport.net/2019/09/03/a-home-every-night/>



### A Home Every Night?

The [Manchester Homelessness Partnership \(MHP\)](#), launched in 2016, is a network of organisations, charities and individuals who work together towards the aims and values of the [Manchester Homelessness Charter](#).

**The goal is to end homelessness in all its forms in Manchester.**



This network of people across the homelessness sector are trying to change policy and practice responses to our rising levels of homelessness. The 'change' that we are talking about is *putting the voice of people who have experienced homelessness themselves at the heart of decision making across the sector*.

- An MHP Open Meeting took place on the 2nd September 2019 where 28 people from across 21 different organisations came together to discuss progress so far.
- It was clear that everybody was deeply concerned about progress being made to establish equal, open, unrestricted and democratic ways to advancing our community response to the rising levels of homelessness in the city.

The group were at pains to point out that the 'homelessness' they were talking about was more than the clear visible signs of poverty seen in our city centre.

**People who sleep rough represent the minority of people who face homelessness.** It's estimated that the visible forms of homelessness in our city represent about 2% of the overall picture. This is supported by the data – the governments recorded 4,134 people sleeping rough in England in 2017 is 2% of the national charity Crisis's estimates of broad levels of homelessness for that year being 268,330 people.



People at the meeting are passionate advocates for the Manchester Homelessness Partnership as a vehicle for driving change. But it is felt that local government policies and politics do not reflect this work and ideas. Despite the good intentions of some local officials within the tightly defined homelessness sector, this partnership is ignored by a city that favours housing developers and a drive for creating a city full of glass towers.



*Amidst the understandable frustration, one hopeful voice in the group pointed out that the partnership doesn't realise how much power it actually had. Following this chain of thought, we came to this question:*

## What do we want to see happen?

Many of the attending group have been involved in the previous winter's A Bed Every Night campaign (aiming to provide temporary shelter throughout the winter months). Manchester Homelessness Partnership want to see the cities response go much further...

## Homes for all

We want to see a city where everyone that wants a home is able to find one. And beyond that, we want to see more support available to enable people to live a full, healthy, independent and fulfilling life (including better support for mental health, dual diagnosis and other issues we know about).

A return to adequate supply of affordable and social housing for any housing developers out there wanting to support the Manchester Homelessness Partnership. The grassroots and third sector group who met today value the work of Greater Manchester Housing Action who have consistently petitioned local government to enforce Section 106 of the Housing Act to ensure that housing developers meet their affordable housing obligations. There are still many examples where this doesn't seem to be happening.

Alongside other cuts to services, benefits changes and other interrelated issues leading to poverty and homelessness, the results are clear for all to see. We support the efforts to respond to the current crisis with more emergency beds, and at the same time, as a city, we need to keep aiming for more homes and support services.

*With thanks to Nigel Almark for this content. Nigel is a community researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University in the final stages of finishing his doctoral thesis. His research has been with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership and for two years he has spent time understanding how this network of people across the homelessness sector are trying to change policy and respond to rising levels of homelessness.*

## Appendix J - List of ethnographic material

Fieldnote reference number	Date	Context
1	November 2016	Notes taken from attending the MHP 6-month celebration event at the Co-operative headquarters, central Manchester.
5	February 2017	Notes taken from attending the MHP service co-planning day at the Friends meeting house.
6	February 2017	Notes taken from spending a day at the Booth Centre, homelessness day centre. Discussion with one volunteer in relation to the power of art on public perceptions of homelessness. Also met with Driving Group member to discuss research objectives.
10	February 2017	Notes from an unrecorded interview with a Driving Group member at their place of work in central Manchester. They discussed the struggles of people working towards systems change.
8	February 2017	Copy of the minutes from a Driving Group meeting. Discussion related to the creation of a Resettlement Group.
8c	February 2017	Notes from the first meeting between MHP art group members and the Manchester Art Festival. Dave talked about wanting people to hijack the project.
9	March 2017	Reflection about different perspectives from the Driving Group about the types of research that are needed. Described the situation as feeling like one side of the Driving Group want to know if co-production works and the other side want to make it work.
20	May 2017	Discussion with The Listening Projectors group member about the participatory nature of the project. They described that it was never intended to be a participatory project.
23	May 2017	Notes taken from interview with a Driving Group member who described the process of co-production as being intuitive. They said that the MHP are not working from any model but are moving incrementally closer to greater inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness.
25	May 2017	MHP Board minutes. During this meeting, an update was given about how much money MCC was expecting to get from the DCLG as part of the additional homelessness funding to GMCA.
26	June 2017	Reflection about using a plain English approach to writing research. This was based on a discussion in the Driving Group about what I had meant by " <i>qualitative preliminaries</i> ".

27	June 2017	Fieldnote after a Driving Group meeting. One group member expressed a 'research elitist' perspective by questioning what added value a participatory approach would provide. I noted that they said, <i>"we are already doing that though, where's the research?"</i>
28	June 2017	Go-along interview with council worker.
39	August 2017	Field note taken during a discussion about the value of The Listening Projectors. One group member said they were interested in whether the arts can provide an alternative duty of care for people who have provided their stories.
46	August 2017	Unrecorded interview with Chris from The Listening Projectors <i>"the presence of Dave brought the necessary glitz and glamour that we all needed"</i>
55	September 2017	Field note taken from a Listening Projectors meeting. In this meeting, we debated how best to spend money from the project. Adam challenged the group to use the money to provide employment for someone with experience of homelessness.
60	September 2017	Fieldnote from a UTA Action Group meeting. This took place at the Virgin Media Lounge in central Manchester. It was attended by landlords and UTA tenants.
72	March 2018	Fieldnote from UTA Action Group meeting where sanctions against landlords was discussed.
75	March 2018	Fieldnote from Resettlement Group meeting where the use of personal interest funds were debated.
79	March 2018	Presentation to MHP Action Group chair-persons. I shared the metaphor of 'fishing in an empty lake' to share the effect of restricting co-production to the homelessness sector and expecting it to make an impact on the levels of homelessness in the city.
82	April 2018	Fieldnote from an MHP meeting where an organisational representative talked about needing more 'lived experience' in the room.
83	April 2018	Fieldnote from UTA Action Group meeting where a group member who lives in a UTA suggested that the fire service could provide fire-safe chip pan cookers to reduce the risk of kitchen fires in UTA's.
102	June 18	Fieldnote from UTA Action Group meeting where UTA residents gave knowing looks to each other in response to someone saying, <i>"I don't get any workload relief for coming here"</i> .
139	June 2018	Fieldnote follow a discussion with a former UTA resident - described that the charity workers from the group were particularly supportive and inclusive.