Refugee Community Organisations working in partnership:

The quest for recognition

by

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Abstract

This thesis was based on five multi-agency, urban Partnerships at the heart of the *Accommodate* Project: An initiative that set out to stimulate grassroots resolution to the problem of refugee housing, settlement and integration, at a time when large numbers of people were arriving seeking asylum in the UK. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) were engaged by the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact) to work alongside housing providers, local authority partners and others, for three years in five cities where refugees were struggling to find permanent housing. My original contribution to knowledge concerned study of the Partnerships from the perspective of organisations working with the most socially excluded, the RCOs. The Partnerships created a structure where power could be brokered. Research was conducted in a critical realist tradition in order to discover the relationship between emerging themes. Connections made between structural barriers and local interaction meant this approach presented a bigger picture view that other methodologies might have overlooked. A longitudinal methodology tracked progression from the marginalised position that was the starting point for many RCOs, struggling to survive and fill the gaps in service provision for community members. By the end of the Project, RCO partners had changed attitudes, improved access to housing services and transformed institutional relations between social housing providers and refugees. Hact's support for RCO capacity building was fundamental to their being able to influence the agenda, define the solutions and participate in policy decision-making. The *Accommodate* Project created a learning space that countered marginalisation by actively involving community groups in cross-sector partnerships. This study demonstrates that community empowerment is an accumulative yet uneven process. A participatory approach allows less engaged groups to learn quickly from those that are better established. If the intention of community empowerment is to lead to fundamental change, the role of active management strategies by a catalyst such as hact is paramount. The thesis deploys and develops theories of community empowerment and network management to conceptualise the social inclusion of marginalised groups.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Brian Anson, architect, artist, writer and community activist. He inspired generations of students and never gave up the struggle for "*the world as it could be*" (Shaw, 2008:34).

Acknowledgements

Glossary of Acronyms

BME   Black and Minority Ethic

CBL   Choice Based Lettings

CEN   Community Empowerment Network

CIC   Commission on Integration and Cohesion

CIH   Chartered Institute of Housing

CLG   (Department of) Communities and Local Government

CURS   Centre for Urban and Regional Studies

ESRC   Economic Social & Research Council

Hact   Housing Associations' Charitable Trust

HMO   Home in Multiple Occupancy

HMRA   Housing Market Renewal Area

IOM   International Organisation for Migration

NAM   New Asylum Model

NASS   National Asylum Support Service

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

PCT   Primary Care Trust

RCO   Refugee Community Organisation

RHIP   Refugee Housing Integration Programme

TPO   Tenant Participation Officer

TSO   Third Sector Organisation

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Chapter 1: Hact's Accommodate Project: Partnerships in action

Introduction

This thesis is a study of power dynamics evident in cross-sector Partnerships that formed the Refugee Housing Partnership Project 2004-2007 (*Accommodate*). The research focuses on the empowerment process affecting the most marginalised partners, Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs). RCOs provide housing advice and support to refugees but their expertise and local knowledge has rarely been harnessed in Partnership with housing providers. Research showed that dispersal strategy, evolving from the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 after an asylum seeker had been accepted as a refugee, required more planning and coordination (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). Estimates for numbers and needs of those likely to remain in any region were required to adequately plan for settlement and integration. The Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact[1]), a charitable organisation with a track-record for innovating social change set up *Accommodate* as part of their Refugee Housing and Integration Programme (RHIP). The purpose of the *Accommodate* Partnerships was to address the lack of refugee access to housing services.

The settlement of refugees has been a highly politicised issue since the Second World War (Bloch, 2002; Ratcliffe, 2002; Finney and Simpson, 2009) suggesting that the migration debate cannot be conducted in isolation from resettlement and integration strategies. There have been various resettlement programmes in the UK, most recently delivered by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), a

Home Office agency established through the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. NASS was the Government's response to the pressure on high demand housing in London and the South East. It provided a central system of support and accommodation for refugee people seeking asylum in selected areas of lower demand housing, mainly in the Midlands, the North, Scotland and Wales. Although pressure groups, including hact, lobbied for a culturally sensitive approach to this strategy, the reality meant that host communities and those seeking asylum were less well prepared. Areas of low demand housing in which they were located were often associated with socio-economic problems (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003; Peach 2005).

Dispersal under NASS was accompanied by lack of wider provision to promote integration; little communication and very few formal or informal community support networks (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). Since the 1980s hact worked with refugees and RCOs to develop a grassroots understanding of RCOs' potential contribution to improve housing provision. RCOs are able to use their insider knowledge and firsthand experience of refugee housing needs and aspirations to help in the *"development of culturally-sensitive services"* (Perry, 2005:90). The timing to engage with housing associations was ripe for a number of reasons; dispersal policy was *"embedded"*; dispersal management was *"regionalised"*; accommodation contracts for dispersed asylum seekers were *"up for renewal"* and housing associations had a *"track record of expertise in working with vulnerable client groups"* (Zetter and Pearl, 2005:9). Hact realised that much could be learned from a structured partnership programme encompassing RCOs, housing providers,

local authority partners and others. *Accommodate* was set up in 2004 with the help of Big Lottery funding. By October 2005, following a process of phased selection; *Accommodate* comprised five urban interactive Partnerships (Appendix A). The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) Team was commissioned to evaluate these Partnerships from their initiation through seed funding in 2004. *Accommodate* set out to learn from local innovation to housing resolution for refugees. Immediate housing needs were automatically linked with longer-term resettlement issues such as community cohesion reflecting, as some commentators argue, that secure and adequate housing is central to other life choices and opportunities (Somerville and Steele, 2002; Robinson, 2002; CLG, 2008a) and Berkeley *et al.,* (2006) suggested that community cohesion strategy should be accelerated to respond to the needs of new migrants.

This Chapter introduces the background to *Accommodate* within which the CASE[2] studentship was located. It describes the evaluation activity of the CURS Team and the role of hact. Several clear challenges within the research field for the PhD emerged at the outset. This Chapter revisits the original research design to meet these challenges and identify an appropriate methodology. One of the challenges evolved from my experience as a community development practitioner that shaped the values I consequently held about the nature of community empowerment. The question of subjectivity is discussed here and developed in Chapter 5 to help clarify some working assumptions and research practices. In refining the aim and objectives of the study, Chapter 1 explains the learning and reflective approach

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adopted in response to the opportunities of this research field. It concludes with a summarised overview of the thesis structure.

CASE studentship in context

Accommodate lasted from February 2004 to March 2007 and set out to address an area of important social change and public policy in the UK; that of refugee housing, settlement and integration at a time when large numbers of people were arriving seeking asylum. Economic Social and Research Council (ESRC) support was secured by CURS in collaboration with hact for a three-year PhD to study alongside monitoring and evaluation activity within *Accommodate.* The aim was to create a progressive research opportunity that could explore the Project process in more depth. This doctorate is the product of the CASE studentship, which was awarded in October 2005. A key area of interest was the way in which *Accommodate* had created five linked, locally-based Partnership arenas where RCOs, housing providers and others could interact. An innovative theme for my study was the way in which *Accommodate* connected migration issues with organisational perspectives on managing inter-organisational networks in a manner that had not happened before. These connections offered a distinctive opportunity in an under-explored research field. While there is a growing body of literature about inter-organisational Partnerships; and pioneering work being done into the housing plight of refugees, there had not been a previous research opportunity on this scale into both areas of study within the same project. The following preliminary research interests guided my approach to *Accommodate*:

- Issues of power and influence over problem assessment and resolution in cross-sector partnerships

- How barriers associated with interaction between different organisational cultures are overcome

- The evolution of roles and the exercise of agency in collaborative working

- Active dynamics including the impact of changing policy contexts

- The process of RCO empowerment and how it develops over time

- The achievement of joint goals to benefited all partners' interests

- The role of RCOs in supporting their members with resettlement issues

The overall purpose of *Accommodate* was to stimulate innovative Partnership working to tackle the housing difficulties that refugees often encounter when granted leave to remain and create replicable models to influence policy change. Recent research had identified a gap in service provision as refugees left the relative security of Home Office housing provision and attempted to access social or private sector housing (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). RCOs emerged to mirror patterns of settlement by filling some of the gaps in access to service provision for their members (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). It was not intended that *Accommodate* would consider housing policy in isolation but would operate with an awareness of the contentions and political controversy surrounding new migrants, incorporating wider aspirations to settle, reunite with family and friends and integrate into local neighbourhoods. This facet became increasingly important as the Government's community cohesion policy was promoted during this period. The fixed-term

advisory body, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) was set up in 2006 and culminated in a compendium of case studies demonstrating good practice at local level (Singh, 2007). One aspect of my research was to investigate the development of RCOs as active partners in promoting integration and facilitating cohesion. The role that hact played in facilitating their development emerged as paramount.

Both immigration and housing policy have altered radically since 2004. Focusing the research on the process of RCO empowerment ensured a longer-term contribution to theoretical perspective concerning housing sector partnership working with marginalised communities with relevance beyond the life of *Accommodate* itself. One of the most exciting aspects of this study was the exploratory and inductive approach taken to theory, method and analysis, necessary to keep abreast of a rapidly changing research environment. My experience as a community development practitioner working with refugee community groups meant I had useful background knowledge. Consequently I was aware of some of the contexts and barriers to integration beyond the more obvious ones such as language. These hidden barriers included cultural sensitivities; traumatic stress, and tensions that sometimes exist between established host communities and refugee people seeking asylum.

Furthermore multi-sector partnership working within social housing is a device with which I am familiar, having employed a collaborative approach many times, to respond to community-wide issues. Previous experience of supporting and empowering community groups and volunteers within a partnership context created

a practical sounding board when researching questions of capacity building and enablement within *Accommodate*. I welcomed the opportunity to explore partnership working in greater depth from a group dynamic as well as an operational perspective and to observe the process of RCOs becoming stronger and more vocal elements within these Partnerships. Taking this opportunity to enable RCO participants to have a voice was a priority. One of the most satisfying aspects of this research opportunity has been engagement with hact, bringing national perspectives and understanding together with learning from the Partnerships to great effect.

Hact's role

Hact is a small national charity totally reliant on donations that has pioneered housing solutions for vulnerable people on the margins of society for over 45 years. Although hact is modestly staffed it fulfils much more than the standard role of funder and has brokered relations between refugee communities and housing providers for over twenty years. RHIP, one of three major programmes being developed by hact, was set up in 2005;

> *"to help integrate neighbourhoods and increase the amount of quality housing for refugees by building Partnerships between refugee community organisations, policy makers, providers and long-term residents."*
> (hact, 2005:15).

Accommodate, the Refugee Housing Partnership Project was part of RHIP and set out to fund, support, and evaluate collaborative Partnerships in order to develop replicable models of good practice. One of the reasons that this Project was feasible was that hact had encouraged long-term relationships with RCOs through

earlier projects. The Refugee Housing, Training and Development Project (*Accommodate*) was established in 1998 to equip RCO housing advisors with up-to-date advice to give to their clients and to signpost them and engage them in other networks. Over time, the trust that hact had nurtured with RCOs meant they were prepared to take a *"leap of faith"* (Jones and Hussain, 2010:06) in partnership working in *Accommodate*. Aware that many of the groups in areas of dispersal were embryonic and often running services from their own homes, hact ensured that people were contacted by phone and word-of-mouth.

Accommodate was set up in two Phases. Twenty six organisations bid for Phase 1 funding and 10 of these were successful, receiving seed funding grants of £5000 to develop action plans with the support of hact. Some of the 16 organisations that failed to secure Phase 1 funding took their proposals to improve local housing and support services for refugees forward in other ways including three bids for Phase 2 of *Accommodate*. Hact selected five Partnerships for Phase 2 on the basis of their action plans, partnership arrangements and feasibility of local proposals. These five Partnerships were each awarded £50,000 over two years to take forward local initiatives. Sustainability was an additional expectation and it was anticipated that the impact of the Project would extend beyond its duration. Hact supported the five Partnerships throughout, including via a central support services fund of £30,000. One of the first lessons of the Project was that the timescale in setting up the Partnerships made it difficult *"especially* (for) *RCOs, to be fully involved in the process"* (Mullins and Goodson, 2005:1). In total there were 163 RCOs that took part over the lifetime of *Accommodate*. Some have been

incorporated into later hact projects that applied the lessons learnt and furthered the aims of *Accommodate*.

Evaluation

Hact created a monitoring framework for the duration of Phase 2 intended to identify the challenges and opportunities to target where support was needed and maximise the learning from the Project. The CURS Team was commissioned to evaluate *Accommodate* from 2004-2007 to cover both Phases as well as the wider impacts. To reflect this, two aims were agreed with hact: Firstly, 'achieving success together' focused on the successful Phase 1 and Phase 2 Partnerships. A jointly agreed framework of five common purposes was formulated to fulfil this aim (Mullins and Goodson, 2005):

- Improving housing and support services for refugees
- Empowering RCOs
- Changing policy and practice
- Building successful Partnerships
- Meeting local needs

Secondly, 'promoting wider change' was an aim concerned with the impact of the Partnerships on policy and practice at national, regional and local levels. This involved the CURS Team in a process of gathering evidence of *"what works"* and building a *"database of learning"* that could be disseminated to promote wider change (op.cit:4). The recruitment of Project Workers in the early months of Phase

2 enabled more rapid progress within and between Partnerships (Mullins and Goodson, 2005; 2006).

I was able to join the CURS Team, attending the second national workshop and continuing to participate in visits and meetings to build relationships; making preliminary findings before a further stage of my fieldwork at the end of 2006. During 2005-2006 evaluation concentrated on the first aim of 'achieving success together'. Relationships were forged and a community research programme instigated. Training of 27 community researchers commenced together with Project-wide national workshops to exchange ideas and lessons learned (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). The CURS Team implemented the evaluation framework in conjunction with hact's monitoring interventions enabling the provision of capacity building and targeted resource mobilisation. After a time partners realised the CURS Team was different to the usual evaluation approach and began to see them as a 'critical friend' who could also help and advise. Towards the end of 2006 the CURS Team shifted its focus to consider how the Project could generate wider change (Mullins and Goodson, 2006). As housing shortage became more acute the Partnerships adopted three approaches to the challenge: demonstration projects; advice and signposting; and research on community needs and aspirations (Mullins and Goodson, 2006). During 2007 a series of national events were held to disseminate the learning and bring strategic lessons to the attention of national policy makers and service providers (Mullins and Goodson, 2007).

Refining the PhD topic

Study of any of the five common purposes identified by the CURS Team could have constituted a rich stream of research and learning for a PhD. In fact possible research themes suggested themselves throughout (see Fig. 5.4). However, empowerment of RCOs in the Partnership process seemed to be the one common denominator and the one that fitted most closely to my own interests. Despite considerable emphasis being placed on this objective by hact and the CURS Team in 2006, many obstacles remained evident:

> *"…power inequalities, differences in expectations, difficulties in connecting empowerment aims with policy influencing aims, insufficient resources and support and difficulties in maintaining continuity of attendance at forums and Partnership events"* (Mullins and Goodson, 2006:21).

The role of RCOs in collaboration is vastly under-researched yet fitted with the Government's emerging inclusion agenda (CLG, 2007c). *Accommodate* established an opportunity to explore empowerment of the least powerful partners thereby tackling marginalisation and potential injustice. Coupled with a research interest in community participation and practitioner experience of the power dynamics at play in collaborative working I considered study of RCO empowerment as being one which would have the broadest impact and add lasting value. Several clear challenges in the research field made it necessary to adjust methodology and revisit the original research design.

Challenges

The five *Accommodate* Partnerships were selected deliberately by hact on account of their varied approaches to promote learning. As the first CURS Evaluation Report noted these variations meant *"limited scope for direct comparisons"* (Mullins and Goodson 2005:14). The Partnerships started from different baselines particularly the number, initial power and standing of RCO partners. The CURS Team's early evaluation indicated that the issue of RCO empowerment was *"a highly dynamic feature of most Partnerships"* (Mullins and Goodson, 2005:17). There were few researcher approaches to adopt as a blueprint. Promoting responses to refugee housing need and aspirations in collaboration is relatively uncharted research territory. RCOs had a formal opportunity to sit round the table with housing providers, local authorities and other partners for the purpose of investigating good practice and influencing policy. An inductive and reflective approach was implicit: Positivist methods were unworkable and as Lincoln and Guba (2003:254) observe, inquiry methodology cannot be treated as *"a set of universally applicable rules."* The entire network of *Accommodate* comprised a small changeable sample where rules of engagement varied. For example, one Partnership had an open door policy to membership while another operated a loose network having what Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:44) termed low *"domain consensus"* i.e. they rarely met formally together to discuss the project.

Accommodate encompassed two Phases, feasibility followed by enactment over a three-year period. Although pro-active exit/continuation strategies were being fostered the Project concluded February 2007, affecting the timing and access for

conducting fieldwork. Hact's role set out to escalate Project development as 'catalyst for change' (hact, 2004). It not only funded but took a hands-on approach to capacity building and support. In addition to hact's continued involvement and monitoring activity, the CURS Team was commissioned to conduct a comprehensive evaluation comprising visits, self-assessment reports and dissemination events. Consultants in leadership skills and communication strategies were engaged to work across and within each Partnership. The challenge was to avoid duplicating contact as some partners expressed external visit 'overload'!

Another challenge was created by the research environment itself, which was in a continual state of transformation. *Accommodate* took place in a fluctuating policy context characterised by changes in migration and housing strategies. Destitution grew considerably in 2006 when removal rates failed to keep up with the level of refused applications for asylum (Temple *et al.,* 2005). The hidden homelessness of refused people seeking asylum collided with changes in housing policy such as clearance strategies and Investment Partnering[3], which impacted directly on Partnership development and outcomes. For instance, changes in housing supply impacted in one Partnership area where the Choice-Based Lettings[4] (CBL) scheme suffered a 40% reduction in the number of properties advertised. Moreover, incidents like the series of coordinated suicide bomb attacks on London's transport system in July 2005 had an impact on the success of the Partnerships' ability to strengthen community cohesion (Mullins and Goodson, 2005:16).

Consolidating researcher perspective and taking account of subjectivity was also a challenge. The question of the relationship between reflection and interpretation in social science and researcher practice is a contested and unresolved one (Delanty and Strydom, 2003). I aimed for transparency and continued interrogation of my own perspectives within the research process but acknowledged that my community participation experience is integral to my outlook. Operating from the assumption that the RCOs were the least powerful partners, it is my contention that they could not be researched in the same way as other partners. 'Thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of their experiences and biographies were needed to secure 'thick interpretations' (Denzin, 1989:32-34; Bowen, 2008). What is more, experience told me that new migrants were less likely than most communities to have knowledge of the UK housing system and their rights, or the resources and political power to effect change without support. This led me to seek an appropriate theoretical approach and methodology. I eventually developed my own approach drawing on ideas of structure, agency and critical realism. A critical realist perspective enabled a bigger picture view of *Accommodate* and located it in structural and institutional contexts. Network management theory offered an appropriate framework in which to explore hact exercising agency in the role of 'catalyst for change'. Community empowerment emerged as the exercise of agency to transform structures and attitudes, thereby linking process with outcome. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of these ideas on my research design.

Positioning theoretical frameworks

My search took me to the work of Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989) whose pioneering study of minority ethnic housing changes in Bedford adopted the theory of structuration and the core concepts of structure and agency (Giddens 1976; 1979). As Giddens explained, the link between institutional structures and individual action is the 'system', comprising rules and resources that govern society. This thinking is highly appropriate to questions of power dynamics in the context of *Accommodate*, seeking to effect policy change to benefit those who largely exist on the margins. Aspects of Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration such as context, social identity and the concept of power through human action and interaction are components in an inevitable struggle over control of resources and ideology. The role of the social researcher within this does not operate objectively in the process of translation and interpretation. Using these ideas Sarre *et al.* were able to interpret data concerning strategies and interactions at individual level and connect them with more *"general structures and processes"* (1989:52).

Another significant body of work that assisted in defining approach and methodology related to the complexity of networks in organisational and public administration studies in the 1990s. Governments can chose between different governing structures; and networks structures have been added to traditional market and hierarchical structures (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997) becoming relevant to studies in the housing field (Mullins and Rhodes, 2007). Network management and governance grew to be a key research interest of a group of academics at Erasmus University but there was a gap in their work about *"how to*

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open networks to citizens," and *"a need to adopt a political perspective on policy networks: to explore ways of democratising functional domains"* (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997:xiii). This led to the growth of a normative body of literature (de Bruijn and Ringeling, 1997; Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Buitelaar and de Kam; 2009; Hertting, 2009; van Bortel and Mullins, 2009) that has helped to shape my research approach to analysing games, rules, trust, negotiation, roles and strategies that are common to partnership dynamics and connect with issues of 'system' in theory relating to agency, structure and process (Giddens, 1979, 1984). This framework encompassing power dynamics at several levels can be positioned within a critical realist perspective (Figure 1.1). Fleetwood (2005:216) contends that the agency-structure framework forms a central part of critical realist social theory because they are *"internally related"*. A network management perspective is based on the agency-structure relationship and so provides a substantive theoretical framework that links to the broader perspective of critical realism and social justice (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Positioning theoretical frameworks
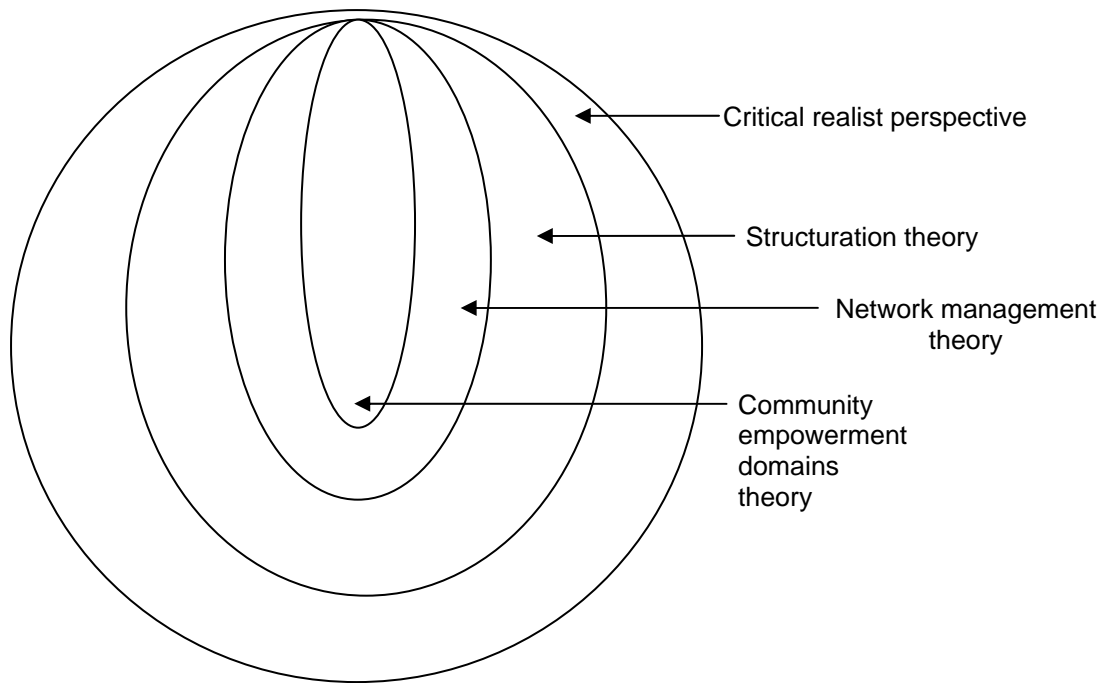
Source: Author based on literature review

Earlier I had engaged with Sayer's critical realism methodology (Sayer, 1992; 2000) to address the gap between individual and structural approaches to research. Critical realist theory is concerned with the way that social systems are constructed by ideas, discourses, gender, race, class and other social institutions. This affects the way that knowledge is recognised in research and supports the view that there is *"no unmediated access to the world",* in other words our experience always mediates knowledge (Fleetwood, 2005:199). Critical realism is concerned with the way that issues of power and justice affect knowledge (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003; Fleetwood, 2005). Kincheloe and McLaren (2003:439) point to a *"consensus"* emerging amongst critical realists that power can be used both oppressively and productively. An important aspect of the

productive use of power is 'empowerment', developing a critical democracy to engage marginalised people and communities (Freire, 2006).

The work of two practitioner/theorists is applicable to the study of RCO empowerment within *Accommodate*. Glen Laverack, Director of Health Promotion at the University of Auckland has worked as a practitioner for many years. His principal research interest is in the mechanisms of community empowerment. Nina Wallerstein is based at the University of Mexico. Following many years as a practitioner teaching ESOL she focuses her research on participatory empowerment using a critical pedagogy approach. Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) built on the dynamic continuum model and put forward nine domains in which the process may take place (Figure 8.1). It was along these lines that they set out to address the shortfall of linear models that tend to omit more dynamic processes. They considered that issues of organisational capacity building, developing negotiating skills and vocalising critical awareness were missing. In developing a more dynamic model they were able to provide a link between individual elements of empowerment such as personal control, trust and cohesiveness; and contextual elements like the political, the cultural and the socio-economic. A critical realist outlook on the empowerment process is essentially one that is participant-led and participant-focused. A grounded approach to the initial stage of fieldwork enabled RCOs to identify issues of empowerment from their own position.

Clarification of researcher perspective therefore helped in the selection of research methodology. The critical realist tradition is generally based on two separate concepts of knowledge that allow for social phenomena and theory development. One concept identifies the stable phenomenon in research while the other categorises elements of change (Sayer, 1992). This approach enabled exploration of change while focusing on the phenomenon of force migration. This study is an attempt to research the phenomenon of the refugee experience in the round: To look at it from the perspective of power dynamics, where marginalised communities face structural barriers when seeking 'place' and belonging in UK society; while also looking at the experience from a 'moral economy' (Sayer, 2005) viewpoint to find out what refugees can bring to the 'shared values' of the community cohesion policy agenda.

Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989:52) concluded that outcomes of interactions should give a reasonable indication of whether group actions have *"led to institutional and structural change"*. For me, this connects to further academic research that has influenced my later choice to adopt a particular definition of community empowerment; one of transformative change that would achieve lasting impact (Ledwith, 1997; Batliwala, 2007, Shaw, 2008). This resulted in an interpretation of community empowerment as both process and outcome. Evidence emerged of increased positive perceptions about refugees, improved equitable access to housing and resettlement and revised institutional structures to include rather than marginalise refugees from mainstream services. Most importantly I anticipated opportunities within and beyond *Accommodate* to extend the 'voice' of

RCOs. Further exploration of theoretical positioning in terms of the challenges of the Project helped to clarify my approach and implement appropriate methodology in an under-researched field.

Theory and methodology to meet challenges

The desire to extend the 'voice' of RCOs raised the question of audience: The 'policy community' is not the only audience for qualitative social research, there is also a 'practitioner audience' to consider (Bloor, 2004:307-308). Since the 1990s, models of Partnership working and consensus have redefined the role of community development practitioner towards capacity building and enablement. Yet community organisations and practitioners often find themselves without influence in collaborative agendas and can *"ironically feel disempowered through such arrangements"* (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008:57). There were parallels between hact's role and community development practice; learning from their activities seemed as important as the learning from Partnership innovation.

Banton (2005:622), states that social research is influenced by the research worker's *"personal characteristics"* but what is important is the *"recognition of an intellectual problem"*. Treating experience as standpoint is common to interpretive, post-modern and criticalist practices (Lincoln and Guba, 2003, Olesen, 2003) but the main understanding I had gained from practitioner experience of working with communities in collaboration was an awareness of power differentials between statutory and voluntary sector partners. Adopting a critical realist stance prioritised the significance of power dynamics in this study from the outset. This theoretical

perspective was selected above other interpretative philosophies because it reflected a community focused interpretation of the well-documented issue of power evident within *Accommodate* and helped to overcome the research challenges described above.

A grounded approach

Taking a grounded approach (Glaser, 1993; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2003) in the initial stage of fieldwork in order to encourage RCOs own views raised inter-related concerns that enabled a bigger picture view of the Partnership contexts and political landscape to take shape. Many concepts emerged: The role of the media in defining attitudes towards refugees raised questions of prevalent attitude and control of the dominant ideology. The process of policy making through collaboration rather than through vertical hierarchies inspired thinking about ways in which national policy directive was translated at local level. Many refugees described perceptions of marginalisation in terms of access to services, knowledge of organisational and institutional systems, understanding of rights and entitlements. Some raised issues about the role of women in refugee community organisations and the link between gender, ethnicity and social networks. Strong themes began to emerge from sifting the data to support meaningful connections between the role of hact, procedures within the Partnerships, local and national contexts and RCOs confidence to engage. This intensive first stage helped to direct two further stages of fieldwork and stimulate reflection between theory and multi-layers of analysis (Sarre *et al.,* 1989). The link between rich descriptive data

and structuration theory included the theoretical frameworks outlined above, associated with organisational power, empowerment and power brokerage.

Research methodology outcome

My research interest was to explore the process of empowerment of marginalised RCOs by studying interactions and contexts within collaborative cross-sector Partnership working. A clear framework was necessary to address several distinct challenges in the research field to implement the most effective methodology. Sayer (1992, 2000) suggests that there is an essential relationship between methods, research objectives (he terms 'purpose') and the subject of the research (he terms 'object'). Chapter 5 maps this framework in more depth (see table 5.1).

My research objectives were:

- To learn from *Accommodate*, a unique set of Partnerships that had little methodological precedent
- To maintain a constructive narrative while promoting the learning
- To work productively alongside hact, the CURS Team and other external agencies

There was an overlap between research objectives and the subject of the research in that hact's role later emerged as a focus in the research process.

The subject of my research was two-fold:

- the RCOs partners from the aspect of their position in the Partnerships and within their own cultural context

- The organisational context of dynamic process in which the RCOs were engaged (study of hact's role became a prominent part of this)

The framework linking objectives and subject together led to a methodological approach that is outlined below (Table 1.1):

Table 1.1: Characteristics of methodological approach

Emic[5], reflective and ethnographic
Able to locate the Partnerships in their contexts
Discrete yet robust in creating insights into lessons learned and good practice
Conducive to team working with other agencies active in *Accommodate* including hact and the CURS Team while retaining an independent research focus
Able to involve RCO participants in directing the focus of the research
Appropriate to studying power dynamics from an organisational perspective
Able to capture change through interaction
Prepared to take a longitudinal approach to fieldwork to map change
Sensitive and aware of cultural distinctions
Able to challenge subjective assumptions particularly in observation or interpretation

Source: Author based on literature review

Due to this methodological approach, research questions emerged initially from the findings and analysis of the initial grounded stage of fieldwork and from subsequent further enquiry of theoretical paradigms throughout the process. The key research question was:

How did RCOs become empowered within the Accommodate Project?

Five subsidiary research questions emerged throughout:

- *What was the significance of organisational recognition in the process of RCO empowerment?*

- *What were the barriers to RCO engagement and involvement in the process?*

- *How were these barriers overcome?*

- *How did hact's role impact on RCO empowerment?*

- *At what point in the process can empowerment be considered an outcome?*

Thesis structure

The review chapters (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) of the thesis provide a contextual and theoretical backdrop to *Accommodate* in order to reveal the bigger institutional and socio-economic picture driving the dynamics and explore theoretical frameworks to help to understand the process. Chapter 2 positions *Accommodate* in a policy context to identify the social, economic and political dimensions of migration and UK housing policy. Tensions surrounding migratory status, classification and statistics are examined together with narratives that illustrate the compound loss of status, choice and control that characterises the experience of flight and asylum seeking. Restricted access to decent housing, housing shortage and the issue of clustered settlement are examined to understand resultant social exclusion and the need for a change in policy for marginalised community groups. Chapter 3 describes in greater detail the role that self-help Refugee Community Organisations play in ameliorating the gaps in communication and service provision. It further examines the barriers and challenges facing RCOs active

engagement in collaboration. Theories of community empowerment are explored to find an evaluative framework to assess the process of RCO empowerment within *Accommodate*. The need for an organisational perspective on agency structure and process is identified to enable exploration of interactions and dynamics within the Partnerships. Chapter 3 concludes that RCO exclusion from community participation strategy is more a consequence of lack of political will than lack of social capital. Chapter 4 takes forward an organisational perspective to understanding RCO empowerment to describe the synergy between agency and structure building on the contextual influences outlined in Chapter 2. Strategies and concepts are borrowed from network management theorists to lend the Partnership dynamics a language. Dimensions of power are revealed that help identify the boundaries and barriers impacting on the contributions that marginalised groups can make to the policy decision-making process. Partnership interests, goals and outcomes are investigated using these concepts to help interpret the interactions and perceptions that govern power dynamics between sectors and actors.

Issues of researcher perspective, methodological approach and practical methods are the subject of Chapter 5, which sets out the research methodology adopted for the thesis. This Chapter reflects on the interface between the interpersonal and political on the one hand and the theoretical and empirical on the other that is necessary to this research study.

The second part of the thesis analyses evidence collated over several years to offer insight into dimensions of the community empowerment process and the role

of hact within that. Chapter 6 is 'voice intensive' and sets out the RCO participants' perspective of their contribution to *Accommodate*. It uses a grounded approach to evidence the inequalities faced by RCOs and to discover research themes relevant to the study of power dynamics. Chapters 7 and 8 provide a longitudinal overview of findings using theoretical frameworks to explore the role of agency and structure in the process of community empowerment, network management and collaboration. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by returning to a theoretical framework in terms of agency, structure and process. It illustrates the agency exercised by hact to capitalise on the political opportunities within the Partnership structures. It points to the importance of political will where interaction to influence strategic decision-making between neighbourhood actors and local government provides *"a useful device for conceptualising community power"* (Smith and Beazley, 2000:859). This concluding Chapter synthesises findings and theory to conclude that the role of hact as outside agent is paramount in brokering the empowerment process. This process is shown to be an accumulative one, yet one that does not evolve in a linear fashion. Rather, the role of hact ensures that networked learning across the Partnerships means the process of community empowerment is one building on an asset rather than a deficit model of RCOs.

Chapter 2: Contexts and Dynamics

Introduction

Chapter 2 is the first of three literature review based chapters (2-4) that set the scene for empirical evidence presented in chapters 6-8 (following an account of methodology in Chapter 5). This Chapter explores migration and housing provision in order to identify the potential social, economic and political dynamics affecting RCOs as partners in *Accommodate*. RCOs evolved to meet the physical and psychological needs of communities sharing the same identity and experiences (Amas and Price, 2008) and their role is detailed further in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will review theory about power and networks that is relevant to the empowerment of RCOs in collaboration. First it is necessary in this Chapter to position *Accommodate* into two wider interrelated contexts; migration and housing. By examining the debates and discourse surrounding forced migration, patterns of settlement, housing shortage and social exclusion, this Chapter maps some of the complexities that affect our understanding of the dynamics surrounding RCOs in collaborative working.

The migration debate is characterised by resettlement and integration strategies. The Chapter begins the discussion by noting some of the difficulties encountered in gathering accurate statistical evidence including definitions of migratory status and classification of refugees. Although definitions overlap, commentators emphasise the suffering and trauma caused by forced migration (Burnett and Peel, 2001a; Wright VI *et al.*, 2005). Direct quotations from a biographical exhibition of refugees and refugee people seeking asylum[6] are employed to depict the loss of choice,

control and status that typifies this traumatic experience. Debate about minority ethnic settlement patterns, including discourse about 'parallel lives' (Cantle, 2001) shows that resettlement strategy is not simple www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk. It is compounded in the UK by housing shortage and additional choice constraints for most ethnic minority households including refugees. Racialised political discourse following urban disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001 created negative perceptions about clustered settlement, although studies have observed that clustering can be a positive step in resettlement (Phillips, 2006). Challenges to the 'parallel lives' analysis emerged and led some commentators to focus on housing policy rather than spatial segregation as a reason for the lack of community cohesion in some areas of the UK (Flint, 2008).

Therefore, housing policy is the next related context explored here encompassing dispersal, exclusion and housing options for refugees in a wider policy field where discrimination for minority ethnic households has long been evident. Research has shown that housing policy for refugee people seeking asylum, delivered under a new dispersal regime from 1999, increased social exclusion and destitution for refugees (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). Relations with host communities, already beleaguered by socio-economic problems were aggravated by a lack of communication and integration strategies (Sheikh *et al.*, 2004; Reeve, 2008). Following successful application for asylum, major problems were created by the gap in service provision and lack of information during the 28-days-notice period to quit Home Office funded property (Phillips, 2006b). The difficulties in dispersal areas were increased by the shortage of available housing coupled with policy

trends and initiatives to stimulate areas of low demand. Housing allocation became a critical social pressure point (Amas, 2008). Some commentators (Castles and Miller, 2003) endorse the benefit of RCOs' social networks in addressing the shortfall in local intelligence at neighbourhood level, to both providers and host communities.

This Chapter concludes by examining the likelihood of being able to influence the implementation process of housing policy in the UK (one of the five common purposes aimed for by *Accommodate*). Marsh (1998) outlined some of the barriers and enablers that link closely with the theories of power and networks that are discussed in Chapter 4. He describes two models of implementation, top-down and bottom-up and advocated the latter as a model to promote negotiation and compromise. Differences in ideological approach to this model are an important consideration if structure as well as agency is attempting to include the interests of groups *"outside of the usual networks"* (Marsh, 1998:14). These contexts and theoretical concepts lay the foundation for research focused on the dynamics surrounding the social network role of RCOs in collaborative working within the *Accommodate* Partnerships.

The Migration Debate

Statistical evidence

Migration to the UK is central to British history and development yet each wave of migration has renewed debate about national identity, sovereignty and race relations. Statistics ('numbers games') have been central to the 'race debate' about immigration, race relations and integration since debates began (Finney and Simpson, 2009). Two main patterns are revealed in current global data. Firstly, over 80% of the estimated total of 67 million forcibly displaced people remains within their regions of origin. Secondly, data show that numbers of urban refugees are continuing to grow (UNHCR, 2008:2). In the UK a lack of accurate data has characterised and aggravated the issue of asylum, especially in the inner cities. In 2002, principal applicants seeking asylum peaked at 23,385 (Home Office, 2002).

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/asylumq402.pdf

The National Audit Office (2004) reviewed Home Office statistics that suggested applications had been halved by the end of September 2003 compared with October 2002. The review found weaknesses in the compilation of statistics and noted that reasons for migration were extremely complex. Statistical evidence since 2004 suggests that asylum is less than a third of the higher level in 2002 and has remained broadly at the same point over the past four years. http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2009/august/immigration-asylum-stats-release

The countries from which people arrive correlate with unstable political conditions. In 2008, the top three nationalities were up by 10% from Afghanistan; up by 122%

from Iraq and had increased by 97% from Zimbabwe (Home Office, 2008). There is less clarity regarding statistics for those having been refused asylum. Following a Home Office official's admission that he did not have *"the faintest idea how many refugee people seeking asylum there are in the UK"* (Guardian, 29.05.06), informed estimates have been made, placing those who overstay or who remain when asylum has been refused at between 310,000 and 570,000 (Amas, 2008). Removal rates failed to keep pace with cases where asylum applications were unsuccessful, leading to a growth in destitution that has become a long-term problem for areas housing substantial numbers of asylum applicants. According to the Citizens Advice Bureau's (2006) submission article to the inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights into the treatment of refugee people seeking asylum in the UK, this is perhaps less an administrative challenge than a political one as the history of migration policy since the Second World War indicates.

Economic and forced migration

Prior to the Second World War there was no legislative distinction between economic and forced migration but legislation during and following the Second World War sought to divorce 'economic' migration from 'forced' migration[7]. Both the 1946 Displaced Persons Scheme and the 1949 European Voluntary Worker Scheme enabled controlled use of refugees from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Yugoslavia and the Ukraine and created the idea that the *"recruits were labour migrants rather than refugees and as such were not being accepted for settlement"* (Bloch 2002:30). In 2004 there have been record levels of migratory movement to the UK comprising migrant workers, increased as a result of EU

accession, refugee people seeking asylum, secondary migrants and families seeking reunion.

Migration is a generic term and there is often confusion between economic, forced and secondary migration (Finney and Peach, 2004; Breunig and Luedtke, 2008). Yet eligibility for support including housing is very different. While it could be argued that there is a fine line between flight for a better life following environmental disaster, war or persecution - and flight to evade poverty and unemployment; the experience of seeking asylum is crucially different for forced migrants: A refugee's functional, social and psychological adjustment from a forced migration is an experience that Wright VI, *et al.* (2005:5) observe, *"may last a lifetime"*. Secondary refugee migrants moreover, have generally achieved status in another EU country so their refugee identity is socially and statistically concealed. Researchers make a distinction between 'international transit migration', involving stopovers of varying length with the intention of reaching another country and 'international onward migration' i.e. migrating to another country with the intention of staying in the medium or long term. Cole and Robinson (2003) noted difficulties in estimating the size of the UK Somali communities as patterns of in-migration are complicated by secondary migration and self-classification when recording nationality. Added to the unreliability of what Harris (2004:33) calls "*wildly disparate figures"* for newcomers from this community, is the factor that Somalis are culturally a mobile population. It has been estimated there are 40,000 Somalis in the UK that are onward migrants (Rutter, 2008).

The rapid growth in global processes has affected all areas of life so that it is *"increasingly difficult to act locally without thinking globally"* (Castles, 2001:13). Climate change is one of the most obvious examples of this thinking. Attention has been increasingly drawn in the last few years to a further category of refugee people; *'climate change'* refugees (Sachs, 2007:43). Reports anticipate that global warming will result in environmental upheaval due primarily to the shortage or abundance of water, causing the relocations of millions of people over relatively few decades. Sachs (2007) notes the present link between food and water insecurity and violence in regions like Darfur and Somalia. Koser (2008) points out that most people who are displaced because of climate change do not qualify for refugee status. Cohen (2009) amongst others, calls for universal recognition of climate change displaced persons and highlights the need for the international community to institute new arrangements to protect the human rights of these refugees.

UK classification

Presently there are two classifications of refugees to the UK – 'quota' refugees who are brought under organised Projects e.g. the Gateway Protection Project[8], the Mandate Refugee Project[9] and 'spontaneous' forced migrants who arrive independently seeking asylum via the Home Office determination process. Refugee people seeking asylum independently are no less legitimate than quota refugees but as Wright VI *et al.* (2005) point out; they are just not so far along the process. While quota refugees are allocated a dedicated worker to support their individual needs, spontaneous refugees seeking asylum usually arrive alone

without structured integrative support. Data compiled by the UNHCR and IOM about quota refugees are imprecise because maximum quotas relate to forecasts rather than actual figures. Wright IV *et al.*'s (2005:49) study of UK resettlement projects concluded that in 2003, the proposed resettlement project was unlikely to meet levels of need. There was a sizeable difference between the approximate 810 quota refugee places compared to the 3,865 granted asylum coupled with 7,210 granted other forms of protection and leave. Bloch (2002) finds correlation between the length of this process and levels of exclusion that prevents those people awaiting decisions from being able to get on with their lives. Robinson and Segrott (2002:64) describe refugees seeking asylum as ordinary people driven by the basic desire to live in peace and in democratic freedom and they support the call for a *"more benign and better-informed debate"* about this type of migration, to parallel existing discussion about labour migration.

The refugee experience

The powerless experience of seeking refuge is patently relevant to this study. Berkley *et al.* (2006) observe that media hype is sometimes so inflammatory about refugee people seeking asylum; the reality is almost overlooked that this experience is brought about by external factors. Perry (2003:4) cites the campaign that was waged by the *Sun* newspaper in 2003 against asylum seekers that encouraged thousands of *Sun* readers to sign up in protest. For those of us fortunate enough not to have experienced exclusion from our home countries and the trauma that flight entails; it is impossible to imagine the levels of social, personal, economic, physical and mental deprivation suffered by those in this

position. From the outset of the research I felt that, as far as possible, it was important to try to understand this experience. Participant refugees were generous in sharing their stories particularly as time went on and relationships matured. However, this is a sensitive and personal topic to document. To create immediate insight into the refugee experience I have referenced secondary data from 'Leave to Remain', a photographic portrait and testimony exhibition of the politically displaced, voiced as part of Refugee Week 2005[10]. This poignant data, from those who finally reached the UK, speaks for itself and serves to illustrate that flight is characterised by loss of choice, loss of control and loss of status. Loss is illustrated on a number of different levels by the following quoted extracts and can be supported by wider literature (Bloch, 2002; Carter and El-Hassan 2003; Phillimore *et al.*, 2007; Lewis *et al.*, 2008):

Loss of Choice

Loss or lack of choice extends during the asylum seeking process and well beyond determination. Flight is often provoked because people are unable to exercise choices at the most fundamental level in their home country, manifest in the lack of power to exercise basic human rights. For instance an Iranian woman described how her husband and the regime colluded to accuse her of adultery, in a legal system that presumed guilt:

> *"The judge said, 'You were sitting alone with a man who is not your husband. You were not wearing hijab'. The Koran says, in a case of adultery, you must by law have four witnesses to prove guilt. But in Iran, if you are a woman you must prove your innocence"* (DM27: S).

Tragedy is often a consequence of not being able to make basic democratic choices as this Turkish respondent depicted:

> *"My village was burned in Turkey when I was a child and when I was an adult I was imprisoned and tortured for being part of an illegal political party. My case was documented by Amnesty International. … my brothers and other members of my family are still in prison and I worry for them very much"* (DM5:Anon).

The lack of choice to exercise trade unions rights, to demonstrate and strike for better pay and working conditions was the reason that this respondent, a medical doctor in Harare, had to flee:

> *"The hospitals there had deteriorated and there was a shortage of drugs, gloves, bandages… The money we were getting as doctors and hospital staff was not enough to sustain us. At times we were working thirty-six hours without a break. … We decided to call a legitimate strike for our rights and the rights of our patients. I was at the forefront of the strike and was taken into custody by the Zimbabwean Central Intelligence Organisation, questioned and told I would be tortured if I did not end the strike"* (DM8:C).

Other respondents fled because they had chosen a marriage partner from a different religion. For example, after the war had ended in Kosovo, the Liberation Army was allegedly killing anyone who had married into different religions. One woman spoke of the freedom she had gained for her son by fleeing to the UK.

"Here, my son can be Catholic or he can be Muslim. He will marry who he wants and no one will threaten him or kill him. It will be his own choice" (DM24: N).

Many respondents, like this Zimbabwean refugee, testified to being terrorised by lawless regimes prompting them to flee to the UK:

"….One night twenty-five or thirty masked and armed men stormed our house. They had no warrant and they didn't allow us to open the door, they just broke in. Most of us were asleep in our rooms but my fifteen-year-old daughter was still awake studying for her exams. They came into the room from two different doors, surrounding her, screaming and pointing their weapons at her. They were throwing things all over the place with the excuse of trying to find my son" (DM:10 F)*.*

Loss of Control

Most people expect to be able to make basic decisions about where and how they live. So much of this control vanishes once these freedoms are taken away by the experience of political displacement. One woman's description of flight characterised the lack of control that flight entails:

"When we came to the airport, the agent told me not to say anything. Then we get on a train and we go to a place I don't know. And I don't know what is a train. And then we go somewhere in the night, and the language the people are speaking I understand. In the morning he takes me on a bus to somewhere else I don't know. He told me to wait and he would come back for me. I wait maybe two or three hours, standing outside, and then I see my cousin and I am crying" (DM:2 AB).

Another respondent, a Columbian refugee, depicted the exhaustion and emotional bankruptcy that accompanies flight:

"Columbians come here broken. We have difficulties trying to learn a new language, a new culture, get used to the food, the people and even the weather. And because of what we have experienced back home, most of us are emotionally defeated before we even arrive" (DM16: J).

Loss of status

Demotion from occupation, community standing and often a comfortable standard of living is one of the least visible consequences of political displacement. Many refugee people seeking asylum arrive in safe havens with little more than the clothes they stand up in. There is often no way of knowing what lifestyle and profession have been abandoned in flight without testimonial. A long-term refugee seeking asylum, who had worked in a government bank in his native India and set up a business in the UK as a building contractor, portrayed the degradation he felt having to report regularly to the police.

"I pay my taxes and have paid for my house and I have done nothing wrong here. But I am still not free. For ten years every week, I am required by the Home Office to go to my local police station, let them know where I am and sign my name like a common criminal" (DM6: A).

Popular perception often assumes that refugee people seeking asylum arrive with little talent and skills. One woman's testimony from Azerbaijan symbolised the status and lifestyle that is often lost in flight:

"We had a nice life in Azerbaijan. My husband is a laboratory scientist and I work in aviation. We have friends and family and a nice house and car. But my son looks very Russian and one day I said to my husband 'We are going to lose our son if we stay in this country'… There was a war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the Russian army invaded Azerbaijan to aid the Armenians. They killed many, many innocent civilians…. I don't look Russian and both my husband and daughter are dark; they look very Azerbaijani, but my son has blond hair and blue eyes… and he became the target of many, many horrible things" (DM11: G).

As another refugee, recently arrived in the UK affirmed:

"You don't come here; leave your house and your children's schooling, and your cars, and your life, to live like this with so many people in one small room, unless you have to. No one would do this unless they have to"
(DM:9 F).

From these insightful accounts, reflected by other researchers (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004; Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Ager and Strang, 2008) it is not difficult to understand the importance of secure and adequate housing as a pre-requisite for refugees to begin building a new life in the UK.

Patterns of settlement
Traditionally, UK resettlement policy for refugees has had a tendency to focus more on reception rather than on long-term settlement and integration issues. "*Move-on"* local authority, housing association or private-rented sector housing has been the main consideration for resettlement staff in the belief that protracted stays

in reception centres fosters dependency (Wright, IV, *et al.* 2005:26). Lessons were learned from the Bosnian and Kosovan assistance programmes where dispersal policy developed to link refugee reception centres with ethnic groups in nearby settlement clusters (Robinson and Coleman, 2000). There have been several studies of long-term settlement patterns as a whole. Most recently the Race Equality in Public Services Report noted spatial settlement patterns of minority ethnic groups differed, with a tendency of particularly South Asian households for clustering. It concluded that although this may reflect people's need for access to community resources, the allocation of social sector housing may also have contributed to spatial concentration (Connolly *et al.* 2007). Here Connolly touches upon the 'choice-constraints' debate that contributors have engaged with for several decades. Ratcliffe (2002) and others have suggested that reasons behind settlement patterns are much more complex.

Ratcliffe (2002:27) points first of all to the *'fatal contradiction'* reflected in the census categories, in themselves a rudimentary form of labelling, on which analysis is based. The purpose of ethnic monitoring is to assess the impact of discriminatory practice contravening good race relations, in other words – how people are seen by others, yet it asks for people to define their own ethnicity as the basis for this causality. Furthermore, Ratcliffe draws attention to the fact that settlement is not a static issue; structural discrimination impacts on minority groups' decision-making and leads to changing structural forms. For example the discriminatory behaviour of estate agents towards minority ethnic households, results in minority ethnic entrepreneurs filling a niche market. Sarre, Phillips and

Skellington (1989:39) suggest that the challenge is to understand how elements of choice and constraint combine when *"cultural choice and economic determination are in practice mutually reinforcing"*. The formation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) housing associations could be seen as another example of this dialectic. BME housing associations created a new ethos in social housing, via increased empowerment and control of assets: An ethos, which Harrison (2002) observed, emphasised community roots and crossed boundaries between housing needs and socio-medical services. During the 1980s and 1990s the recognition of the rights of minority ethnic groups promoted the tradition of multiculturalism and celebration of diversity. This quest for the recognition of a *"community of communities"* (Finney and Simpson, 2009:77) came to an abrupt end following the 'war on terror' backlash to attacks on New York and other US cities in 2001.   In the same year in the UK, allegedly 'riots' were reported in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley that had the effect of pathologising young British Pakistani Muslims who were portrayed as *"poor, backward… and socially isolated"* (Phillips 2006:28) and depicting their communities as being *"in a state of crisis"* (Bagguley and Hussain, 2005:210).

The 'parallel lives' debate
Shortly after refugee dispersal strategy was being formulated and applied under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, reports attributed urban disturbances to racial tensions caused by social and spatial segregation. The ensuing Cantle Report (2001) blamed 'parallel lives' and has since shaped the Government's community cohesion agenda. Community cohesion, as outcome of the process of successful integration policy is described as:

> *"Communities where there is a common vision and sense of belonging, the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and there are strong and positive relations being developed between people from different ethnic backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods"*

(Connolly, *et al.,* 2007:219)

Some policy applications of this definition have tended to play down the existence of unequal access to housing options for minority ethnic groups and focus instead on segregation as the main issue. Yet poor housing conditions often signify diminished life opportunities. Adequate secure housing has been identified as the *"cornerstone of longer-term settlement and integration"* (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003:9). The response of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH, 2004:1) to the National Strategy for Refugee Integration was clear about the pivotal role of housing in integration matters and stated: *"a sustainable and secure home is in fact a prerequisite for integration"*. According to England-wide research by Cole and Robinson (2003) Somalis cluster into deprived areas where a majority appears to be living in social housing although homelessness and overcrowding are common problems. Nevertheless, community safety in the face of a high instance of racial harassment was what Somalis identified as the main advantage in living in concentrated households. Indeed, Ager and Strang's (2008:183) work on indicators of integration found that personal safety was *"paramount"* for many. Cole and Robinson's (2003) findings indicated that respondents did not report incidents

because of language barriers, lack of knowledge of available services and a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of complaints procedures.

The focus on spatial segregation, as root cause for the lack cohesion across communities has led to a political discourse with "*racially coded notions of ethnic segregation, community and integration*"; problematising minority ethnic clustering (Phillips *et al.* 2008:84). These interpretations have since been challenged but continue to persist in local perceptions (Phillips, 2006, Phillips *et al.,* 2008). Phillips' (2006) research with young Asians and Whites in Oldham and Rochdale, in accordance with similar studies found an alternative rationale for spatial segregation. Socio-economic factors, for example, increased poverty due to lack of employment opportunities while barriers to housing choice reinforced negative views of clustering. She concluded that clustering itself is not necessarily negative, as other aspects of clustering such as cultural support and development have positive effect on employment, housing and integration opportunity.

Castles and Miller (2003) reviewed clustering in terms of social capital (see Chapter 3 for more debate about social capital). They suggested that migrants compensate for loss of identity by developing:

> "*cultural capital (collective knowledge of their situation and strategies for dealing with it) and social capital (the social networks, which organise migration and community formation processes)*" (2003:24)

Ratcliffe (2002:35) challenges the basic premise of the 'parallel lives' debate when he questions whether spatial integration is a necessary prerequisite for social integration at all. He proposed that genuine social inclusivity is one based on "*respecting differences in which people have a right to express distinct identity*". These common conclusions evolving from the 'parallel lives' debate have led some commentators to focus on the impact (and perceptions) of access to and allocation of social housing on community cohesion (Flint, 2008).

Housing Policy

Dispersal and access to housing

NASS was established under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act as a new Home Office directorate. It set out to implement regional dispersal of refugee people seeking asylum on a no-choice basis, to relieve pressure on services in London and the South East, as the backlog of claims failed to keep pace. Eight Regional Consortia were established for people seeking asylum to develop and monitor regional housing strategies, co-ordinate local agencies, promote positive media relations and tackle gaps in service delivery (Audit Commission, 2000). Under the NASS dispersal system, the intention was to house people in language-based clusters within existing multi-ethnic communities, but the availability of accommodation was in reality the chief determinant. Mechanisms used to procure this accommodation under contract with private and non-profit providers precluded such fine-tuning (Audit Commission, 2000). To relieve the administrative burden, 60% of units went to commercial tender and 40% via regional consortia (Pearl and Zetter, 2002). It is indicative of the shortage of social housing in the UK that most refugee accommodation has been found in the private sector. Commentators noted with dismay that the critical issue of promoting settlement in the regions had been neglected in the rush for dispersal (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003; Perry, 2005): The transition housing needs of refugees at the point of decision (Table 2:1) were not strategically considered:

> *"After the uncertainty and wait for a decision on an asylum application,*
> *which often includes working through the appeals process, a refugee has, in*

theory, only 28 days to sort out work or benefits, furnish and decorate, and move in" (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003:32).

Table 2.1: The 28-day transition period

Housing Options	Barriers
A. Applying to the local authority under statutory homeless legislation for those who can prove they are 'vulnerable'[11] B. Applying to the general housing waiting list for local authority and, where lists are combined, HA properties C. Applying to HAs directly D. Finding accommodation in the private rental sector E. Relying on the hospitality of relatives or friends	• Language barriers • Lack of provision of interpreters and translators • Lack of awareness of housing options or eligibility • Lack of knowledge of protocols and procedures in signing on Centre and registering for Housing Benefit/Income Support • Lack of transitional referral between NASS-funded and mainstream agencies • Lack of training for staff in cultural awareness and sensitivity • Lack of understanding by staff of the mental distress caused during the transition period • Overcrowding family and friends

Source: The author based on Carter and El-Hassan, (2003:32-35)

By 2002, more than half of the refugee people seeking asylum (at the time over 50,000 including dependants) had been dispersed throughout the country, principally in areas with low demand housing that were also suffering socio-economic problems (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003; Peach, 2005). Critics suggested a failure of political will to integrate refugees existed at both national and local levels. Bloch's (2000:41), comparative study of immigration legislation under both Conservatives and Labour since 1962 concluded that the election of the new Labour administration in 1997 had little impact on asylum policy. The continuation of restrictive immigration control was in *"the same pattern (that) is to be found across Europe regardless of the political party in power"*. Carter and El-Hassan (2003:10) argued that the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act eroded the

housing rights and benefit entitlements of asylum seekers and created "*institutionalised exclusion";* a process of deterrence that some commentators argue is on-going (Griffiths *et al.,* 2006). At the local level there was limited understanding of the integration process and the support needed to include refugees and those seeking asylum within the broader regeneration and neighbourhood renewal agenda. The Refugee and Housing Network's submission to the House of Lords in 2003 argued that lack of information at local level had:

> "*fuelled social strife and racial tension in dispersal areas, which are over-represented amongst the 88 most deprived localities as defined by the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal strategy"* (hact/JRF, 2003:4).

These failures indicated the need for more coordinated local planning of the services to achieve integration.

Recommendations from the NASS Review included a less crisis-driven approach; more autonomy for regional partners in initiating local solutions; more flexible budgeting and better communications and co-ordination. Development of a positive agenda was proposed in an NGO working paper on improving the asylum system (Williams, 2004). From May 2005 onwards, a New Asylum Model (NAM) sought to radically redesign the determination process using a fast tracking method of classifying claims at the outset. Early case ownership was promoted through a dedicated caseworker responsible for everything including integration. This new process tackled accommodation requirements in conjunction with an analysis of

the nature of the claim. For example, the claim may indicate whether highly supervised accommodation blocks or flats close to reporting centres or remote accommodation are the most appropriate forms of dispersal. However, it is questionable whether an effective link between housing supply, environment and control has been forged: The Refugee Council Briefing (2007:10) on NAM points to the lack of any *"precise statistics that demonstrate impact or progress"*.

Lack of local intelligence
Despite the requirement for needs assessments by local authorities, Regional Housing Boards and other agencies and despite the intentions of the general housing policy statement in December 2000, *Quality and Choice, a Decent Home for All,* there remains a lack of hard data. There is little accurate information charting the complexities of changing patterns of migration and gender, faith and ethnicity issues within newcomer communities, including refugee people seeking asylum (Amas, 2008). Secondary migration, whereby refugees have secured status in another region of the UK or EU country and moved legitimately within the UK or Europe as EU citizens has made data gathering increasingly challenging. Homelessness in these communities is often concealed and is considerably greater compared with indigenous households. In order to access sensitive cultural information, community researchers have been used to good effect in several studies (Temple *et al.*, 2005). Harris's (2004) use of Somali community researchers noted that although variables like confidentiality and other differences such as clan, class and generation might impede, they have the advantage of overcoming intrusive barriers:

"As do many minority communities, Somalis value their privacy, for reasons both of culture and of caution. The Somali Muslim is not a confessional one: self-containment is valued and personal enquiry is seen as intrusive. On a practical level research can arouse suspicion – questioning is associated with Home Office or local authority investigation" (2004:15).

Informal sources of advice and support from community organisations such as RCOs are an important resource (Shelter, 2007). The number of regional RCOs has grown rapidly since strategic dispersal began (Griffiths, *et al.,* 2006).

Housing Supply

Most refugee accommodation has been found in the private-rented sector, not only because of housing shortage but also because of allocation policy that failed to recognise the vulnerability of single refugees. Refugee people seeking asylum are more likely to be single men, unaccompanied by family dependents (Perry, 2005). Single people are seen as low priority by Local Authorities so usually end up in private-rented accommodation. This accounts in part for the fact that the 11% of housing stock in England comprising the private-rented sector is predominantly occupied by single people (Amas, 2008). Most asylum applicants are male, which means they are in direct competition with 'low priority' men seeking accommodation in deprived neighbourhoods from established populations (Amas, 2008:20). The same sector is being increasingly used for temporary housing by Local Authorities as a result of the shortage of social housing. It is estimated that 39% of private-rented properties are Homes in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). The sector is unregulated and where local accommodation is cheap, is *"more likely than*

any other type of tenure" to be of poor standard and lacking in basic amenities (Amas, 2008:19). The limited evidence available (Perry, 2008) shows that refugee people seeking asylum, refugees and economic migrants rely predominantly on this sector for accommodation, followed by social housing and then the homes of friends and family (op. cit.). Bloch's (1994) earlier study of refugee settlement in Newham evidenced this pattern, where 54% were in the private-rented sector; 23% in Council housing and 13% housed by RSLs. Amas (2008) identifies poor housing conditions principally in the private sector characterised by overcrowding, disrepair and lack of health, safety or cleanliness; as one of the key reasons for the social exclusion of new migrants. A situation worsened by little understanding of their housing rights.

Forcibly dispersed refugee people seeking asylum have found themselves located in predominantly White neighbourhoods, where there was no history of migration in some of the poorest housing on the least popular estates (Robinson and Reeve, 2006). This meant that local attitudes were unlikely to be welcoming and receptive (Hewitt and Cwerner 2002; Mestheneos and Ioannidi, 2002). The impact of a small number of new arrivals on community cohesion in an area with no previous history of migration can be *"significant"* (Shelter, 2008:12). Ager and Strang (2008) identify social connection, including bridges, bonds, and links as an important domain in the integration process (see Chapter 3 for more discussion about social capital and capacity building). Critics of the Home Office strategy for refugee integration repeatedly called for communication between emerging and established communities (Sheikh, *et al.*, 2004). Ward's (2008:46) study of local experiences in

Coventry found *"a strong sense of powerlessness"* expressed by the host population and *"a feeling that they were expected to tolerate the perceived impact that newcomers were having on their local neighbourhoods"*. When refugees and other migrants are able to exercise more choice about location they are likely to opt for the benefits of clustering, at least in the medium-term, which includes support, identity reinforcement, security from hostility and provides more culturally sensitive services and community facilities (Simpson *et al.*, 2006; Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Phillips, 2006a; Amas, 2008).

Affordable, safe permanent accommodation may be a primary concern of refugee people seeking asylum but the Barker (2003) Review of Housing Supply confirmed that, at the time, house building in England was at its lowest since the Second World War. After a prolonged period of household increase and house price inflation, the Government estimated that 120,000 private sector houses per year would be required to bring the real price trend in line with the EU average (CLG, 2007). A further 1.4 million households wished to live in social housing and CBL have indicated a greater demand for social renting than had previously been assumed (CLG 2007b). Devan Kanthasamy (2006), hact's Refugee Housing Partnership's Coordinator, wrote a report to the national Refugee Integration Forum Housing and Community Safety Sub Group and to CLG about refugee communities and CBL. RCOs, the main conduit of information to refugees about CBL had little knowledge about the workings of this new system. Many confused CBL with an increase in supply rather than in housing options. Equality impact assessment of social housing allocations consider one of the positive impacts of

CBL is it would *"reduce the propensity to cluster ethnic groups"* (CLG, 2009:9). Four of the *Accommodate* Partnerships developed links with CBL providers. Additional barriers to refugee access within CBL were identified such as the 3-day notice for acceptance of an offer and the lack of safety and support mechanisms to help refugees to settle.

In 2004, the Government adopted a new approach to the procurement of social housing known as Investment Partnering. This reduced the number of social housing providers directly funded by government from over 400 to just over 70 nationally as part of an 'efficiency agenda' intended to focus resources on the 'best developers' (Zitron, 2004). While this decision was not on the surface related to issues of refugee housing, it was to have a significant impact on the *Accommodate* partnerships since it changed the resource map and distracted housing association partners from local partnerships (Mullins and Jones, 2009). Up to this point, it was the private-rented sector that mainly provided accommodation for dispersed refugee people seeking asylum (Zetter and Pearl, 2005). Initial contracts between Government and private sector housing agents were treated as *"commercially sensitive and subject to market forces"* (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003:23). This contributed to a lack of monitoring and accountability. In an attempt to manage shortage, some local authorities have used priority need and local connection criteria[12] to limit the numbers of refugees accepted as homeless. This left most single refugees to find their own accommodation and prevented refugees from returning to locations prior to dispersal, leaving them isolated from social networks (Mullins and Jones, 2009).

In 2007, the Prime Minister announced the Government's target of building 3 million new homes by 2020 to meet demand. While house building has increased the total stock in England by 1.5 million from 1997-2007 (CLG, 2007), shortage has more recently been exacerbated by the credit crisis. The Council for Mortgage Lenders predict 45,000 repossessions in 2009 - a 50% increase on last year's figures (Osborne, 2008), thereby increasing the pressure on both the private-rented and social housing sectors. Several commentators have suggested that housing shortage, as well as rivalry over other scant resources is cause for inter-community tension and disturbances have been more an expression of this tension than an issue about race or ethnicity (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004; Dwyer, 2005; Amas and Crosland, 2006; McGee, 2006; Rudiger, 2006; Amas, 2008; Ward, 2008; Phillips *et al.*, 2008). Amas and Crosland (2006) more specifically find that tension is related to competition for houses, jobs and benefits: A competition, McGee (2006) argues, that is whipped up by the far right to encourage racial prejudice.

Policy trends

There are wider economic pressures in some of the UK's inner cities that have left areas where previous industries have flourished, *"marginalised in the process of economic and social restructuring"* (Uguris, 2004:27). As Phillips (2006:26) observed, Bradford, Oldham and Burnley are former textile towns that have become *"marginal spaces in today's post-industrial economy"*. Discrepancies in the treatment of black and minority ethnic applicants for social housing have meant an over-representation of African-Caribbean and Asian tenants in inner-city

neighbourhoods where housing conditions are poorer (Phillips and Unsworth, 2002). Community safety issues often characterise such areas and *"territoriality"* (Kintrea and Suzuki, 2008:201) has been identified as a feature of deprived neighbourhoods where invisible boundaries define place attachment, familiarity and safety restricting the movement of adults as well as young people.

Restrictions on minority ethnic groups' full access to housing options, typified in the constraints/choice debate (Somerville and Steele, 2002) had been defined by Ratcliffe (2002) as three-fold; cultural, material and spatial. Cultural issues included house size; accommodation preferences for extended family living; and consideration of living areas that can also be used for worship. Material inequality is well-documented. Ratcliffe (2002) points to exclusionary housing policies after World War II affecting housing mobility. Restrictionary practice within social housing about residence requirements denied minority ethnic applicants access to better quality accommodation than could be found in the private sector. Spatial constraints on housing choice for ethnic minorities are described by Ratcliffe (2002:33) as *"processes of racial steering"* in which local authority housing staff discourage housing options into 'White areas' for fear of racial harassment. Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989:41) observed interaction between factors. For example, a single household move can be affected by cultural predisposition, economic resources, household structure, policy and practice, knowledge of the system and crucially the *"degree of intentional or unintentional racial discrimination".*

Other demands on housing have impacted on availability of accommodation to refugees such as the higher levels of international commuting since EU accession in 2004 where labour migrants have provided manpower in sectors with high vacancy rates, like social care. This transient workforce has created pressure for more short-term rented property. Little is likely to change for ethnic minority households in the long-term, as Phillips notes:

> *"Given ethnic inequalities in access to power and resources, the sustained patterns of settlement in deprived inner-city living are more likely to reflect the choices of white, non-Muslim people and institutions."* (2006:30)

Housing policy has been the subject of various initiatives throughout *Accommodate*. Some areas that had once been low demand were markedly changed by the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Project, part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan (HMRAs). This ambitious body of work covers nine areas of the country where housing markets are deemed to be 'failing'. From inception in April 2002 low-demand housing and housing abandonment were to be tackled via demolition and refurbishment. The HMRAs concentrated on the Midlands and the North of England, taking a holistic approach to the economy, the environment and housing, within a 10-15 year timeframe. Improved service delivery, quality design, community safety and effective communication with local communities are considered fundamental to the Project's success. The aspirations of BME households have been included in some consultations (Audit Commission, 2007). In the interim, the demolition of low

demand housing has impacted on the very areas selected under NASS to house newcomers. Local political sensitivities in some cases have been heightened by this diminishing resource. One of the *Accommodate* Partnerships had explicit aims to influence the local pathfinder.

Zetter and Pearl (1999) made a national assessment of how major policy changes between 1993 and 1996 affected housing provision for refugees and refugee people seeking asylum since 1993. They found that service delivery fragmentation amplified the need for partnership working between housing associations, local authorities and RCOs. Although housing is increasingly being provided by housing associations there is a lack of awareness of the need for culturally sensitive services for example concerning access and allocations policies. The CIH noted that prior to the NASS support regime, refugee people seeking asylum would enter social housing at application stage and simply continue their tenancy following confirmation of status. CIH were concerned that too few housing associations and local authorities were subsequently involved in the provision of refugee accommodation (CIH, 2004). Zetter and Pearl (1999) had also found that RCOs' skills and expertise were underused within the housing service. Their findings were very similar for London, Birmingham and Manchester suggesting that the London experience was not unique (Zetter and Pearl, 1999). In addition their research discovered that negative rhetoric and media coverage had a weakening effect on service delivery and refugees and refugee people seeking asylum were often portrayed as helpless. This meant they were excluded from efforts to engage them in mechanisms for integration such as tenant participation strategies.

Housing and social exclusion

This section reviews notions of social exclusion in terms of refugee housing needs. It examines how refugees face similar barriers to housing options and choice as other minority ethnic groups, because of discriminatory policy implementation resulting in minimal engagement in participation strategy (Zetter and Pearl, 1999). The lack of British citizenship excludes refugees from political, social and economic rights (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). Removal of one of the most important rights, the removal of the right to work for refugee people seeking asylum, has had disastrous effects on destitution and homelessness rates within refugee communities (Griffiths *et al.* 2006). Access, allocations and planning housing provision is crucial in the debate about social exclusion (Sarre *et al.* 1989; Ratcliffe, 2002; Phillips, 2006). Perceptions of favourable treatment to refugee housing needs in a climate of housing shortage can exacerbate racist and divisive opinions (McGee, 2006). Alternative allocations systems, offering greater transparency are a useful tool in countering misconceptions about newcomers receiving unfair advantages.

The term 'social exclusion', traditionally used by commentators on race and ethnicity to describe black and white issues has been generalised since 1997 in policy rhetoric to refer to all social divisions (Ratcliffe, 2002). Although social exclusion can affect people on different and often multiple grounds e.g. gender, class and race; exclusion from adequate housing is characteristically different from other social realms because it affects so many other life chances e.g. health, education, employment etc. (Lee and Murie, 1997; Somerville and Steele, 2002; Robinson, 2002). Groups marginalised on the basis of race and ethnicity face

additional barriers in accessing housing and refugees and those seeking asylum can be regarded as an *"extreme product"* of social exclusion (Somerville and Steele, 2002:19). Robinson (2002:96) described discrimination preventing newcomers from gaining equal access to adequate housing in three forms *"subjective racism"; "institutional racism"* and *"structural racism"*. Research has shown there is little doubt that access to good quality housing provision is affected by ethnicity: An analysis of housing availability under the Government's Public Service Agreement 10: 'to improve race equality and community cohesion' (Connolly *et al.*, 2007) found that minority ethnic households were proportionally more dissatisfied with their accommodation from 1996/7 to 2005/6 and of these, most were likely to live in social housing. Many studies link health, well-being, educational and professional attainment to quality of housing, neighbourhood stability and community security and safety. Perry (2003:8) noted that lack of choice about housing was identified as a *"key issue"* in reports on community cohesion and applied more sharply to refugees than other BME groups. Recent national consultation has confirmed that access, allocation and planning of housing provision are pivotal to community engagement (Tenant Services Authority, 2009:10). Coupled with exclusion from traditional methods of strategic participation, this implies a lack of representative voice for many minority ethnic households as well as refugees.

Griffiths, *et al.*, (2006) argued that for both economic and forced migrants the integral issues of British citizenship driving immigration policy since the 1960s have affected participation in employment, access to welfare services and settlement.

Citizenship embodying political, social and economic rights holds significance for contemporary refugees seeking and being granted asylum in the UK. Bloch (2002, 2002a) argued that racist violence has become one of the major concerns of asylum seeking refugees. Lack of political citizenship rights in order to vote and take part in the democratic process; lack of economic rights to work and access welfare benefits has meant persistent social exclusion from mainstream services and marginalisation from the rest of society. The withdrawal of the right to work from asylum seeking refugees since 2002 and its effect on the plight of refused asylum applicants has been cause for great concern[13].

Legislation was introduced by the Government in the summer of 2002 that prohibited refugee people seeking asylum from working or undertaking vocational training until they were given a positive decision on their application. By the end of that year, the British Refugee Council reported a growing number of people were living in *"absolute destitution"* (Temple *et al.*, 2005:3). Policy change in 2003 under the Nationality and Asylum Act of 2002, limited NASS support by prohibiting refugee people from seeking asylum if they could not prove they had applied as soon as reasonably practical. This added another layer of destitution into the immigration system (Refugee Council, 2004).

Destitution has left some refugees homeless but it is difficult to be sure of accurate numbers within homelessness data. 'Crisis', the national charity for single homeless people estimate the hidden homeless at 380,000: These are people living in temporary accommodation or squatting on friends' floors not included in

Government statistics on homelessness (http://www.crisis.org.uk). 'Thames Reach', the London-based charity estimates a similar 400,000 hidden homeless cases nationally (http://www.thamesreach.org.uk). Connolly *et al.*, (2007) found minority ethnic households were over-represented among households accepted as homeless (21% of all households in priority need) and overcrowding remained higher for minority ethnic than White households. The most current indication of levels of destitution comes from the Asylum Support Project Inter-Agency Partnership monitoring exercise. They have found over 40% of people using one-stop refugee services are destitute (Smart, and Fullegar, 2008).

Access, allocation and planning of housing provision are pivotal in several ways in this study. Because of the shortage and inadequacy of housing supply in the UK, the 'race debate' is never more crucial than in the field of housing allocation and creates social pressure that cannot be ignored (Amas, 2008). Much of the commentary about settlement, identity, belonging, integration and community engagement identifies the fulfilment of housing need as bottom line: Until sustainable housing is secured, access to other services, school employment, training and education cannot be achieved (CLG 2008a).

Pawson *et al.* (2000) found that needs-based allocation systems increased housing access for socially-excluded groups such as single-parents and minority ethnic groups. More recently, Connolly *et al.* (2007) found that CBL policy has resulted in an increased proportion of social lets to minority ethnic groups outside areas of traditional ethnic concentration. They discovered that this trend was quite strong in

Northern cities. This confounded early critics who said that CBL would reinforce segregation. The most consistent trends came from Black households and households classified as 'other ethnic'. Housing associations have increased lettings to minority ethnic by around 50% across England from 2001 and 2004/5 (Connolly *et al.* 2007:176). Factors contributing to this could be length of time on the waiting list; whether the household is assessed as being in housing need and the supply of properties with 3 or more bedrooms to accommodate extended family life. Allocation is one practical aspect of housing policy that has been reviewed in the last few years as a means for equitable access and sustainability.

Influencing housing policy

Accommodate set out to influence changes in housing policy through the use of replicable models at local level. Marsh (1998) observed that UK housing policy is open to negotiation although there are barriers and enablers in the housing policy implementation process: Sometimes housing policy initiatives are merely symbolic because they are starved of funds. Non-decision making or lack of implementation of decisions arises, according to Marsh, for three reasons. Firstly, non-decision making can be caused by the failure of powerful actors to acknowledge demands and opinions of the less powerful: Secondly, non-decision making occurs because the powerless do not raise the issue in anticipation of a negative reaction: Thirdly, Marsh cited the *"mobilisation of bias"* (1998:9) enabling the powerful to exert such control over the dominant ideology that the powerless do not even attempt to raise issues and demands. There is a distinction between Marsh's view of vertical policy implementation and later horizontal network models that have the potential to

broker power relations and influence policy. The barriers that Marsh describes are further explored in a discussion about social power and network management in Chapter 4.

Marsh's (1998) work makes a useful contribution to the thinking behind network management theory. He suggested there are two models of implementation; one top-down that separates the strategic from the operational levels of policy implementation. The other he describes as bottom-up providing a *"fundamentally different view of the policy process"* (Marsh 1998:10). The bottom-up model is based on policy being the product of negotiation and compromise between different interest groups with different values and priorities. However, Marsh proposed that political will to implement policy whether bottom-up or top-down is determined by ideological approach: Some view policy making as a competition between interest groups. However, these groups, Marsh observed, are "*insiders"* (1998:14) of what Rhodes (1988) conceptualised as the *"policy community"*. The notion of insider interest groups also infers that some groups find themselves "*outside of the usual networks":* Groups that Marsh concluded have to struggle harder to get their views acknowledged. Within *Accommodate*, RCOs are the groups usually outside policy implementation networks striving to get their voices heard. Marsh explored the view that emphasised the significance of structure as well as agency in the policy making process. This thinking laid a useful foundation for further discussion about the dynamics involved in RCOs' involvement in collaborative working within *Accommodate* and the significance of the Partnership

structure as a place where RCO perceptions of refugee housing needs could begin to inform policy change.

Conclusion

Consideration of the migration debate is hampered by confusion over classification and inaccurate statistics, some of these figures, such as those for hidden homelessness are not counted in Government calculations. Global trends reveal a pattern of continuing growth in the numbers of urban refugees. Coupled with the lack of accurate data, especially at neighbourhood level, this makes planning housing provision a considerable and pressing challenge. The trend for minority ethnic and newcomer groups to cluster around community and identity is well-documented and noted as a successful strategy in pre-emptive resettlement programmes. The positive aspects of ethnic or language-based clustering have been undermined by the emergence of racial, politicised discourse that has been influenced by a number of factors including the 'parallel lives' debate. The advantages of interim network support for employment opportunities, housing and other early settlement needs have been overlooked in the widely held belief that spatial segregation is inherently bad for community cohesion.

The NASS dispersal strategy impacted negatively on refugee people seeking asylum not able to access community networks, which has led to social isolation. Housing shortage and initiatives to rekindle areas of low demand have only served to exacerbate housing options for refugees. In addition, settlement of ethnic minority households takes place against a backcloth of institutionalised racism

within housing provision that is manifest culturally, materially and spatially. Historic discrimination in access, choice and allocations for migrants has meant disproportionate settlement in some of the poorer inner city areas where other life chances are also inhibited.   Social exclusion is endemic for many ethnic minority households and refugees and those seeking asylum are considered the 'extreme product' of this although there is some evidence that CBL has recently widened access.

Against this challenging contexts, some commentators have suggested that RCOs play a more prominent part in resolving housing needs for refugees (Carter and El-Hassan, 2003; Perry 2005). There has been a significant rise in the development of RCOs across the regions since enforced dispersal began in 2000. There have been calls for partnerships of housing associations, RCOs and local authorities to work together to consider solutions and *Accommodate* offered just such an opportunity. Collaborative working is not without its challenges especially for new community organisations, struggling for resources and recognition of their worth. The next Chapter looks at RCOs in more detail, together with theories about community empowerment that can bring greater understanding of their partnership role.

Chapter 3: RCOs' challenges in collaboration

Introduction

The previous Chapter outlined the contexts of migration and housing policy and discussed dynamics that impacted on the *Accommodate* Partnerships throughout the life of the Project. This Chapter has two distinct objectives; firstly to explore the capital that RCOs bring and the challenges they face in collaborative working and secondly to review theory about community empowerment in order to understand these challenges.

Concepts of social capital and capacity building are explored in the first section to identify an asset rather than deficit model of RCOs. A summary of the emergence of RCOs in areas of settlement and development of their role follows. The considerable, yet largely unrecognised work that they do prompts contemplation about RCOs as social capital networks. This study is focused on RCOs such as those within the partnership context of *Accommodate.* There is a noticeable absence of engagement with 'hard-to-reach' groups within partnership working and *"a failure of collaboration to attract diverse representation"* from communities marginalised on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age or disability (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002:179). Inter-collaborative strategies to meet the needs and long-term aspirations of newcomer and refugee communities in the UK are scanty (Amas and Price, 2008). Established RCOs, often with years of political and social influence in their home countries (Lukes, 2009) who generally work 'below the radar' embody local knowledge, counter negative media coverage, signpost and support, filling the

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gaps in general service provision working. Why is it that RCOs remain on the margins? Answers to the continued marginalisation of these particular community groups and their exclusion from the resettlement process appear to lie in the structural barriers to community cohesion described in Chapter 2 that are identified here again by commentators researching RCOs.

The second section examines perspectives of community empowerment with emphasis on organisational empowerment via collaborative working towards mutually defined goals. This section discusses empowerment in structural terms and focuses on the considerable barriers that thwart RCOs from becoming empowered in collaborative activity. A key research question emerged: At what point in the process can community empowerment be considered an outcome? Laverack and Wallerstein's (2001) domain theory of community empowerment potentially forms a comprehensive framework to address this question. Chapter 8 draws upon their work to explore the process of RCO empowerment within the *Accommodate* Partnerships in greater depth.

Social Capital

Social capital and capacity building

Although attitudes are influenced by a complex set of variables (Finney, 2005), the dominant ideology about refugee people seeking asylum is that they are in need of support and services rather than empowerment (Flint and Robinson, 2008). There is a requirement for public sector officials to develop *"third sector literacy"*, through training and induction processes that is often overlooked (Johnson and Schmuecker, 2009:6). As Chapter 2 demonstrated, the experience of seeking asylum is one of great loss and trauma. Yet the unsung work of RCOs is evidence of the energy, resourcefulness and inclination towards self-help that is less likely to get media coverage or have opportunity to challenge common perception. This fund of resilience and inter-communal support can otherwise be labelled 'social capital'. The argument that social capital is less in more diverse communities is not supported by evidenced based studies (Perry, 2008).

Putnam (1993; 2000) popularised the expression to describe three definitions of the network linkages between and amidst social groups. He proposed notions of 'bonding capital' i.e. the connection between and within homogenous groups, which can, by definition, be exclusive; 'bridging capital', which conjoins otherwise diverse groups around a particular interest; and 'linking capital', the coalition that is sometimes developed between groups from different power strata. Because conceptualisation of 'social capital' is so diffuse, some commentators (Forrest and Kearns, 1999; Fine, 2001; 2007; Farr, 2004; Labonte, 2004) consider the contribution it can make to academic and policy theorising is limited. As Farr (2004)

suggests there is little consensus among the main body of scholars on this subject about whether social capital is a product, a process, an outcome or a limitless resource. Labonte (2004:117) concedes *"to its credit, social capital builds a linguistic bridge between those in the market and those in civil society"*. Nonetheless the term is extremely useful in this study to build a 'linguistic bridge' between internal and external dimensions of the capacities of refugee-led organisations. It helps to portray community empowerment in collaboration as a quest seeking to change ideology, access and control over housing services and a change in policy that transforms institutional relations e.g. between social housing providers and refugee community groups. It is also an effective term when considering approaches to capacity building associated with community group engagement in collaborative working. What needs to be recognised is that capacity building works both ways. As one case study involving a residents' group working with participation officers showed:

> *"In fact both the participation workers and the residents saw 'empowerment' as most relevant to the workers themselves – it was they who had benefited from the experiences they had had, who had developed new skills and who now felt better equipped to fulfil their role"* (Barnes *et al.,* 2007:112).

One CLG Report (2008) illustrates several case studies about projects and social entrepreneurs substantiating empowerment of individuals on the basis of social inequality because of gender, ethnicity and religion. An alternative view of social capital takes a network perspective in relation to promoting self-interest and in maximising relations with others. Lin defines the collateral notion of social capital

as "*investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns*" (2000:786). Bourdieu (1977, 1998), among others, undertook to amalgamate standpoints with the notion of 'symbolic capital', which refers to the form of power or kind of capital that has eminence in different 'social spaces' within society. Burns *et al.* (2001) proposed milestones within development of social capital, starting with belonging, safety and trust, developing towards collective norms and values, reaching out to networks, reciprocity and common purpose, arriving at participation and collective empowerment.

Some commentators make the point that social capital has a downside in that it may not always be in the 'public interest'; demonstrating exclusivity, ethnocentricity and gender blindness. Portes (1998) identified negative social capital as exclusion of outsiders; excessive demands on group members; downward levelling norms and curbs on individual freedom. Taylor (2003:50) noted that this '*dark side'* of community has many facets, racism being one of them. Spicer's study of refugee and asylum seeker experience at local level found that although, social inclusion is place-specific with the emphasis on social networks, this was found within communities rather than via social bridges with host or established BME communities (Spicer, 2008).

Shaw (2008) notes that community boundaries i.e. between communities of 'interest' can be constructed as 'other' through policy itself. The proposal about Single Group Funding from the CIC (Singh, 2007) was one such example. As part of a strategy intended to promote 'bridging capital' between community groups the

report recommended that funding awarded on the basis of a particular cultural or ethnic identity should be the exception not the rule. Consultation about this proposal (CLG, 2008c) revealed considerable censure and limited support. The idea was criticised by many third sector organisations for misrepresenting single groups and reinforcing stereotypes. For instance, the National Equality Partnership Policy Briefing (2008:4) stated that the report *"labels certain groups as problems and the cause of certain social ills"*.

Social capital and women

The workplace is a common place to establish social bridges (Finney, 2005) but refugee women entering the UK under family reunion have been found to suffer disproportionate work exclusion (Bloch 2002a). Burnett and Peel, (2001) note that policy makers tend to overlook a range of needs of refugee women including gender-based risks and violence, childcare, healthcare needs and additional barriers to employment pathways that increase refugee women's social isolation and exclusion. This appears to be part of a wider gender-based problem. Forrest and Kearns (1999), Lowndes (2000) and others observed that it was largely the participation of women in general that sustain social capital in Britain but female-dominated informal/formal networks that reflect gender specific patterns of activity are often overlooked. She noted that women were more active in voluntary activities regarding befriending, education and health while male activities tended to centre on recreation and sport. Lin (2000) evidenced similar structurally defined inequalities across racial and ethnic groups and Beazley *et al.* (2000) found in a study of the Vietnamese community in Birmingham that women were expected to

assume traditional family roles, so few worked outside the home. Goodson and Phillimore (2008a) suggest that refugee women's restricted access to social capital constrains access to other forms of capital.

Coleman, one of the first social theorists to employ the term 'social capital' critiqued the sociological perspective for omitting the *"engine for social action"* (Coleman, 1988:95-8). Community development as a driver for social action emerged in the UK in the 1970s when there was a change in prevailing ideology about the causes of deprivation and the role of practitioners was redefined. Community development entered *"a phase of increased militancy"* (Henderson, 2008:9). Social problems like community and family breakdown had been perceived pathologically and *"empowerment was scarcely on the agenda"* (Taylor, 1995:101). The assumption that local action could by itself tackle social problems became redundant, evolving from the community work that grew out of strategies like the Community Development Project (CDP), Educational Priority Areas and Urban Programme in the 1960s and 1970s. The political landscape changed during the late 1970s when black and feminist perspectives became more influential and local groups developed based on shared identity and interest (Henderson, 2008). When the modernisation agenda came to the fore in the 1990s, Taylor outlined the challenges that face community workers in empowering communities to provide bottom-up solution to the deficit in local participatory democracy:

Challenges

- The need for developing a *social economy* that would occupy a space between state and market whereby power relations between service provider and user would be fundamentally changed

- Overcoming the difficulty of reconciling identity politics with common interest and solidarity so that communities retain their identity but avoid fragmentation and marginalisation

- Bridging the gap between local action at neighbourhood level with national issues using *looser and more flexible networks*, without accountability and transparency being lost

Source: Author's summary based on Taylor (1995:107-9)

Melucci (1996) considers the building of collective identity as the start of collective action to challenge existing social and political systems and ideas. Collective action therefore sets out to *"create new democratic spaces"* (Barnes *et al.,* 2007:50); the creation of which *"allows social actors to recognise themselves and be recognised for what they are or want to be"* (Melucci, 1996:219-20). This perspective suggests that recognition of RCOs' latent or emergent power (or social capital, based in social networks) is the first necessary step towards organisational empowerment of groups on the basis of gender, race and cultural identity. Charles Taylor goes so far as to suggest that:

> *"not only contemporary feminism but also race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are under girded by the premise that the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression"* (Taylor, 1992:35).

Ledwith argues that the political context of globalisation has resulted in more *"complex oppressions"* that increase the complexity of ideas in a *"rapidly changing world"* (2005:102). Recently Pronyk *et al.* (2008:1565) in their trial study in rural Africa found that new inter-agency partnerships with local leadership structures enhanced both "*structural capital"* i.e. more participation in social groups and "*cognitive social capital"* i.e. the belief that community support, solidarity and action can achieve common goals.

Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs)

RCO dispersal and networks

Patterns of RCO community-based support, mirror patterns of migration because need is unformulated, service provision patchy and settlement strategy inconsistent (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). RCOs are largely unrecognised by statutory bodies in a formal sense that reflects, for example, the relationship between tenants associations and their landlords. They are sometimes referred to as 'below the radar' because of this. RCOs are essentially self-determining groups of refugees and refugee people seeking asylum, organised around a particular identity, sometimes underpinned by external funding, offering a place of safety, a cultural touchstone and support and advice for those seeking asylum or building a new life (Bloch, 2000, 2002; Cooper *et al*, 2002; Challenor *et al.*, 2005; Amas, 2008; Amas and Price, 2008; Hutton and Lukes, 2008; Phillimore *et al.,* 2009). Many go beyond signposting and advocacy to provide training and employment, housing, Supporting People[14] and other care services and in some cases, supplementary schools (Hutton and Lukes, 2008). Some of the longer established community organisations such as Ethiopian, Somali, Tamil and Vietnamese groups have existed at least since the 1980s (Amas and Price, 2008) and much earlier particularly in port cities (http://www.portcities.org.uk). The length of time organisations have been established does not necessarily mean that they are widely acknowledged. For example, Beazley *et al.* (2000:57) found the Vietnamese in Birmingham remained *"highly marginalised and disadvantaged"* compared to other ethnic groups in the city despite the existence of an active community organisation because their needs had never been systematically identified or

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addressed. The community had been accurately labelled 'unheard' with little involvement in civic life. RCOs proliferate in London and the South East, coinciding with the increase in asylum applications in the 1990s but national dispersal strategy in 2000 has meant that fledgling groups developed across the UK (see Chapter 2). The Government's National Refugee Integration Strategy noted the contribution of RCOs in bridging links at neighbourhood level (Home Office, 2005).

Despite a widespread willingness to form better relations with refugees and their organisations, the variety of forums and networks of key second-tier structures that exist throughout London tend to have *'as-needed'* contact in the form of occasional consultation, therefore offering only "*weak influence*" over services and policies (Amas and Price, 2008:16). Wider geographical support and development configurations have emerged such as the North of England Refugee Service (NERS) that has been operating the one-stop service contract to all refugee people seeking asylum entitled to Home Office support. The Manchester Refugee Support Network, a grassroots charitable organisation and umbrella structure is led and managed by RCOs. Birmingham New Communities Empowerment Network is a coalition of RCOs that work in partnership to deliver a range of capacity-building support. While most Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) are not refugee-specific, they have evolved from the national strategy in 2001 to counter exclusion; reduce the gap between the poorest communities and the nation as a whole and provide Local Strategic Partnerships with access to a wider community network. One survey of 85 CENs across all English regions showed that representation was

the activity that most mentioned as examples of community empowerment (Urban Forum 2008:9). They also offer potential networking opportunities to RCOs. For example, the Council for Voluntary Services in Westminster works in partnership with Westminster Refugee Consortium, an umbrella group for local refugees and refugee people seeking asylum. The Consortium is also a member of the local CEN. There are two established national organisations supporting and developing the work of RCOs; Refugee Action and the Refugee Council.

Founded in the third sector tradition of self-help, RCOs are created by asylum seeker and refugee communities themselves (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). In 2006 it was estimated there were 500-600 viable, functioning RCOs in London; 50-60 RCOs each in Manchester and Liverpool and over 30 in Birmingham. A recent local study in Birmingham (Phillimore, *et al.* 2009) suggests this figure has doubled. There are growing numbers of RCOs in cities where there are *"significant asylum, refugee and secondary migrants"* (Griffiths *et al.* 2006: 888). Because RCOs remain outside mainstream participation structures, statistics fluctuate. Griffiths *et al.* (2006) detected a regular turnover of organisations, either closing down or recreating themselves in another form. Furthermore, as Lewis *et al.* (2008) observed, refugee people refused asylum are highly mobile and rely heavily on others in order to survive. Destitution affects the demand on many RCOs for support services. Lewis' (2007:6) study of destitution in Leeds notes, *"attending to the complex needs of destitute people is emotionally draining and diverts from integration-focused activity".* The RCOs' struggle is not only over operational resource but for wider recognition and involvement in strategic decision making

(Cooper *et al.* 2002; Amas and Price, 2008; Lukes, 2009). Collaboration is generally considered the way forward (Reid, 2001; Mayo and Taylor, 2001). Work by Hinton (2001), for example, found that RCOs' ability to influence health issues in a south London project was directly dependent on them forging links with the health authority.

Funding for RCOs does not come without tension between the statutory and voluntary sector. Harrow and Bogdanova's (2006) study of voluntary and community groups note that funding is being increasingly awarded to organisations that cluster and merge. ESRC research (Fyfe and Findlay, 2006) has evidenced disquiet from the voluntary sector that supports refugees. Over half rely on national or local government for their main source of funding. The research shows that most do not agree with Government policies on asylum seekers and view independence from the state as crucial to their survival. Zetter and Pearl (2000) contend that marginalisation of RCOs is inevitable in a climate of restrictive policy and exclusion from sustainable resource. Although some networks produce regional directories, they quickly become out of date. Refugee Action and the Refugee Council have partnered to deliver the BASIS Project, funded by the Big Lottery[15] to build the capacity of a limited number[16] of constituted RCOs in each English region (http://www.thebasisproject.org.uk). As a result of their grassroots membership RCOs are supported to offer local knowledge, positive imagery, cultural expertise and advice on specialist service provision. These are the assets that it was anticipated RCOs would contribute to *Accommodate* to improve refugee access to housing services. Yet Zetter and Pearl (2000) found that funders, politicians and

partners do not generally consider RCOs to have a credible record. This is more than ever the case in the current climate of joint commissioning and tighter partnerships where statutory agencies opt instead for relations with well-established, larger, general purpose community organisations.

RCO functions

RCO attributes based on their access to insider community[17] data and local knowledge are widely acknowledged (Amas and Price, 2008). RCOs' ability to support, advise and signpost is well-documented (Challenor *et al.* 2005) as is the role they play in running cultural activities and recreating a sense of belonging (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). Nevertheless RCOs remain a largely untapped resource by national and regional service providers. Chapter 2 affirms that information about the total UK refugee population is less than reliable (The National Audit Office, 2004; Citizens Advice Bureau, 2006; Lewis *et al.* 2008). A8 nationals have freedom of movement and settlement although migrant workers often also live in overcrowded, poor housing conditions. Long working hours together with poor English language skills means they too are vulnerable in the workplace (Lewis *et al.*, 2008:4). Recent research demonstrates the role of RCOs as an accurate source of evidence and expertise about refugees, emphasising the role that RCOs play in the process of communicating face-to-face and via word of mouth with hard-to-reach groups (Phillimore *et al.,* 2007; Amas, 2008; Amas and Price 2008). RCOs support newcomers from a spectrum of migratory status: asylum, failed asylum, refugee, economic migrant or onward migrant and evidence shows that they are the first port of call over and above other agencies and service

providers (Phillimore *et al.,* 2007a). Challenor *et al,* (2005) noted the lack of positive media coverage about the plethora of voluntary work undertaken by refugee people seeking asylum and refugee volunteers within RCOs.

RCO volunteers

Refugees are allowed to work but barriers like language, employers' attitudes and health problems means refugees experience very high unemployment levels (Lewis *et al.,* 2008). Whereas a large proportion of refugees arriving in the UK have a high level of skills and education they lack employers' references or certificates. *"Under-employment"* is a common occurrence (Ager and Strang, 2008:170). For instance, out of the 27,650 estimated refugees living in Birmingham only 12% are in employment compared to sub-regional average of 68% (Phillimore *et al.,* 2007a). Additional barriers to employment include lack of work experience and knowledge of the UK system (Harrison and Read, 2005). Carter (2008) used mapping studies to develop a typology of barriers to refugee employment, which go beyond practical issues regarding employment advice and credentials to include structural issues such as discrimination, racism and lack of employer awareness.

The mutual value that RCOs offer in terms of volunteering opportunities cannot be underestimated. This is especially important for refugee people seeking asylum since 2002 when the right to work was removed. Challenor *et al.* (2005) observed that in this situation, volunteering work-experience offers the chance to overcome isolation and depression often encountered when enduring extended asylum seeking procedures; keep skills updated; gain current references; rebuild self-

esteem and build links with the wider community. Her study of UK-wide volunteering projects relating to refugee people seeking asylum noted that language-building plays an integral part in the volunteering experience. Ager and Strang (2008) observed that language was a significant barrier to accessing service provision. When volunteers assisted with translation especially with unusual dialects this helped improve English language skills at the same time. It also increased understanding of British culture and engendered trust with individuals who may be suspicious of officialdom. Challenor *et al.* (2005) also found that the volunteering experience itself was two-way in that volunteers felt they were 'putting something back'. Despite this, RCOs by themselves are powerless in countering the structural barriers identified by Carter (2008), of wider discrimination and racism and employers' lack of awareness.

Support and well-being

Challenor *et al.* (2005) highlight the vital role RCOs play in relation to the mental health and well-being of refugees and refugee people seeking asylum. Anxiety, insomnia, depression and suicidal intent are all symptoms that can occur due to a multiplicity of factors including post-traumatic experience, concerns about political unrest in countries of origin, lengthy and uncertain determination procedures, discrimination and culture shock (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007, Lewis *et al.,* 2008). Those RCOs that are able to provide advice, sympathy and understanding are critical in helping overcome isolation and depression (Challenor *et al.* 2005) and one study based on Birmingham New Communities Network of migrant and refugee

community member organisations found that community support was 'critical' to recovery from mental health problems (Phillimore *et al.*, 2009).

Identity and belonging

Stone and Muir (2007) classify the generally accepted concept of multiple identities as: national; alternative geographical; ethnic; gender-based; social class; political and religious identities. Banton (2005, 2008) suggests that ethnic identity is superseded by values and the circumstances in which people find themselves. As a sociologist, he argues, *"the concept of identity belongs in a family of concepts…including role and consequential rights and obligations"* (2005:631). Yet commentators in this field also acknowledge the importance that origins and narrative play in forming and locating identities so we can retrieve who we are (Woodward, 2002; Muir, 2007). Stone and Muir (2007:13), noted there is a stronger increase in identification with locality, as distinct from region or larger areas in the UK than elsewhere and minority ethnic groups identify "*more strongly with their local area than the population as a whole*". Several writers have concluded that this shared sense of local identity might also help to bind communities together and foster integration (Muir, 2007; Rogers and Muir, 2007; Ager and Strang, 2008). Rogers and Muir (2007) maintain that a shared identity can be cultivated by increased participation in local democratic structures. Ager and Strang (2008:175) argue that articulation of refugee rights defines the *"foundation of integration policy"*. Uguris (2004:37) concluded that participation in decision-making in the public domain is especially relevant to minority ethnic groups and central to

achieving a more "*inclusive democracy*", based on "*recognition of fluid multiple identities with shifting boundaries*" .

D'Onofrio and Munk (2004) set out to identify what techniques can be used to alleviate tensions arising from the arrival of refugee people seeking asylum into anxious local communities across the UK. As Chapter 2 outlines, the refugee experience is one of great loss and trauma that is often little understood by receiving communities. The fact that many refugees come from professional and skilled backgrounds and have much to offer is also not widely known. CIH acknowledged that the reality is many are highly educated professionals from elites in their countries of origin (2004). D'Onofrio and Munk (2004:58) find concerns of local people about newcomers *"cross social, ethnic and geographic lines"* but they are negatively affected by *"unbalanced and inflammatory reporting"* that can create a *"climate of hostility".* Their research shows the creation of opportunities for local people and newcomers to meet, is "*fundamental to developing mutual understanding*". They suggest that community leaders amongst others are well-placed to facilitate understanding between the two groups. This conclusion reflects Bourdieu's (1997:171), concept of symbolic capital as a property that can transform mechanical exchange into "*elective relations of reciprocity*" that can *"exercise action"* because it responds to *"socially constituted, collective expectations"* (Bourdieu,1998:102).

Table 3.1: RCO functions

Function	Enablers	Barriers
First port of call	High profile/credibility in community	Premises/phone/internet/admin costs
Interpretation/translation	Language and dialect skills	Often not accredited
Signposting/sharing knowledge	Knowing the system Links to other networks	Timely access to policy up-dates and changes
Work experience	Mostly volunteer run	Not risk assessed/recognised workplace
Education and training	Members trained teachers	Not accredited/schools not always recognised by education authority
Consultation for other service providers	Trust of and access to membership	Only 'as needed' contact
Social activities/ Cultural events	Volunteer resources	Finance/premises (especially since single group funding revision)
Representing community	Insider knowledge	Lack of recognition and democratic credibility – usually one-off consultations with little feedback
Bridging with other communities	Community leaders	Lack of recognition and opportunity
Influencing service provision	First hand experience	Weak influence, lack of recognition
Service delivery	Specialist knowledge, ability to identity need at community level	Commissioning and procurement procedures Scale Need for monitoring

Source: Author's summary based on an amalgam of studies and firsthand experience

Because RCOs are mostly organised along ethnic lines, each has its own particular cultural characteristics that can sometimes act as a barrier to wider understanding. RCOs from a range of ethnic backgrounds were involved in *Accommodate* and it is interesting to note that the two RCOs who occupied strong leadership positions were both Somali in origin but both diversified to serve wider groups of clients as their expertise became recognised.

RCO participation in collaboration

Of the most recent and comprehensive studies is one by Amas and Price (2008) based on over 170 RCOs in London. They found that RCO participation in strategic networks was minimal. Where RCO participation existed it was through a local refugee coordinating body such as a *"refugee forum"* (Amas and Price, 2008:19).

The study found internal and external factors created barriers to wider participation. Internal factors included language difficulties; lack of knowledge and familiarity with the procedures and complexities of participatory framework and inadequate resource: These were coupled with demands on RCOs' volunteer time to respond to more immediate needs of refugee people seeking asylum.

A *"competitive environment, lack of fundraising skills, exacting governance requirements and a lack of funders' understanding of refugee needs"* were cited by respondents as difficulties in accessing adequate funds or taking part in joint bids (Amas and Price, 2008:25). Respondents in this study identified the most common external barriers as; a hostile public environment; negative media coverage; the accessibility and openness of second-tier structures and "*local political will*". More specifically, barriers to collaborative participation included lack of openness and trust whereby mainstream organisations viewed RCOs as financially insecure and unreliable. RCOs were concerned about losing independence and being overpowered by better-resourced partners. Most respondents acknowledged the difficulties of long-term collaborative working requiring commitment and a *"great deal of trust"* (op. cit. 2008:20-24). The collateral that RCOs have to bring to the partnership table in terms of local knowledge; the trust of their communities and insider experience can be interpreted in terms of social capital. If the process of community empowerment is one of unlocking social capital; it is also one that lies in an understanding of the dynamics of an empowering approach to capacity building.

The discourse about social capital and its release via an 'engine for action' to changing power relations suggests a more specific approach to capacity building that relates to a definition of empowerment of marginalised groups in the political domain. This can be applied to this study of RCOs as a sequence of acts. The first act is one of recognition of the social capital that engages with RCOs and brings them to the partnership table, reconciling identity politics with common interest. The second act of capacity building in this context requires the adoption of what advocates of this approach call 'critical pedagogy' (Shor, 1992; McLaren, 1997; Steinberg, 2001; Freire, 2006 (original 1970); Kincheloe, 2008). Critical pedagogy, based in a commitment to social justice and equality, takes an approach to teaching and learning that encourages participants to challenge dominant ideology, engage in critical dialogue and recognise the connection between local problems and their wider social context. It embodies a transformative approach towards participation, focused on an asset rather than deficit analysis of community groups that Ledwith calls,

> "*a working model of community empowerment developing multi-dimensional insights into nature of social injustice and oppression whilst at the same time creating viable alternatives"* (1997:118).

Building organisational leadership is integral to this asset model of community empowerment.

Community Empowerment

Perspectives on community empowerment

Interpretations and understanding of the term 'community' are several but Taylor (2003) is helpful in bringing the notion of community together with empowerment. She locates community in a globally challenging environment when she classifies 'community' as those with a shared interest and shared values, both of which combine to attach agency to communities when faced with changing development in their living conditions. This accurately describes communities such as RCOs that have been excluded by *"institutional discrimination"* and interventions similar to *Accommodate* when understood as part of the *"empowered public discourse"* that seeks to enable such communities to act on their own behalf (Barnes, *et al.* 2007:10). Current application of the term 'community empowerment' in a policy context was derived from the then Home Secretary's Scarman Lecture to the Citizens' Convention (Blunkett, 2003) where it was used as part of the Government's ethos of civil renewal. 'Rejuvenating democracy' (Ministry of Justice, 2008, Pitchford and Henderson, 2008) has become a central plank of community empowerment strategy. CLG (2008b:12) defines community empowerment as *"the giving of confidence, skills and power to communities to shape and influence what public bodies do for or with them"* and distinguishes community empowerment from community engagement, defined as, *"the process whereby public bodies reach out to communities to create empowerment opportunities"*. These policy definitions imply that 'reaching out' i.e. recognising the potential for participative engagement is the first step in the process of empowerment. Concepts of community

engagement and participation do not happen *"effortlessly"* they have to be driven by *"sustained and effective community development"* (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008:94). The link between recognition and new communities is evident and as Balloch and Taylor (2001) observed, empowerment is a term more likely associated with the involvement of marginalised, 'hard-to-reach' community groups.

The notion of 'community' within 'community empowerment' is often taken for granted and seen as involving homogenous, cohesive, co-operative groupings of people on the basis of identity, culture, class or locality. Ledwith (1997; 2005) reminds us that some of the ideals behind this thinking contradict what is often the prevailing ideological norm in today's society:

> *"We have created a society that is divided by greed on one hand and need on the other: one in which collective endeavour has been ridiculed as unrealistic and any notions of ideals is met with cynicism. Advanced materialism has resulted in the commodification of everything, from welfare services to homes, partners, children and pets…. It is an environment of competition rather than co-operation; one in which individual success of the few are acclaimed at the expense of failure for the many."* (Ledwith, 1997:19)

Current policy documents however, define community empowerment as the;

> *"development of strong, active and empowered communities, in which people are able to do things for themselves, define the problems they face, and tackle them in partnership with public bodies"* (CLG, 2008b)

The emphasis here is on communities developing capacity to take on greater responsibility for problem resolution albeit in collaboration with service providers (MacLeavy, 2009). Flint (2002:622) interpreted this shift in policy thinking as *"an attempt to define the 'responsible' behaviour …. and to place standards of behaviour within commonly-held values".* Policies associated with empowerment through shared futures and shared values also reflect this. Flint (2002) argued that social change brought about by 'responsibilisation' strategies such as these create behavioural norms and increase obligations for self-conduct within them. This is in conflict with, for example, the notion of empowerment through 'social struggle' (Urry, 1982) to change the system by introducing alternative norms. New migrant communities are able to provoke social struggle precisely because they contradict the existing rules of indigenous society and assimilated BME communities (Sarre, *et. al.,* 1989). This proposes a perspective of community empowerment that sits within broader theories of social justice.

Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) reminded us that community empowerment was originally conceptualised to describe a political activity whereby community groups redressed their powerlessness and mobilised to take control and change fundamental aspects of their lives. Batliwala (2007), for example, defines community empowerment as a centuries-old expression originally associated with struggle that has been revitalised by political movements in the 1970s and 'highjacked' in the 1990s to describe how the welfare state empowers communities

to take responsibility for local issues. In its traditional sense she defines community empowerment as:

> "A process that shifts social power in three critical ways: by challenging the ideology that justifies social inequality, by changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural and intellectual resources, and by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures" (2007:560).

Empowerment of marginalised communities

The previous debate considered RCOs and refugee communities within a wider political dimension. 'Empowerment' is frequently used in the context of communities, marginalised by inequality of opportunity. Writing in the late 1990s, Humphries (1996:7) highlights the ambiguity of the political context by suggesting that empowerment is based on contradiction, because equality of opportunity represents an attempt to resolve the problems of domination "*within the forms of social organisation which gave rise to them*". She identified four themes within the context of empowerment (1996:13-17). Firstly, she describes the "*policy of containment*" of the uprisings in Black communities in the 1980s where the discourse of empowerment concealed the continuing exploitation of disparate class, gender and ethnically disadvantaged groups. Secondly, she identifies a "*collusive agenda*", where right-wing repressive groups are funded on the grounds of empowering ethnic communities at the same time as black women's groups that are organising against the same repressive groups' cultural practices. Thirdly, she outlines "*empowerment within existing socially powerful groups*", such as the

support for fundamentalist women who are part of a dominant class within their own culture. Finally she identifies the empowerment that reinforces negative stereotyping of ethnic groups, for example the oppressive lyrics of rap music as, the "*commodification of black resistance*". Howarth (2002) finds the media also plays a role in stigmatising people using negative stereotypes thus preventing real social recognition. For many commentators community empowerment can only be achieved by a redistribution of social power (Arnstein, 1969; Himmelman, 1996; Humphries, 1996; Smith and Beazley, 2000; Taylor, 2003; Batliwala, 2007). In fact Batliwala's first criterion for a shift in social power in this context would want to see the kind of empowerment that challenges the dominant ideology. Yet challenges to the dominant ideology by themselves are not enough to secure fundamental change in attitudes. Government commissioned research (Sutton *et al.,* 2007) to evaluate programmes such as the *Kick Racism Out of Football* campaign, that focused on using the media to increase awareness of the negative affects of discrimination on football stadiums throughout England and Wales. The evaluation concluded that facts and figures are not sufficient to change attitudes; it is important that target audiences engage with the type of media used. Context is important too i.e. *"social and political change may affect delivery"* (Sutton *et al.,* 2007:59).

Yoo's study of the empowerment of senior citizens finds that community leadership is "*key*" (2009:274) and Smith and Beazley (2000:857) point to the importance of leadership where power is reflected in the ability to assemble capacity to achieve "*non-routine goals*". Their analysis challenges the idea of capacity building

associated solely with resources and highlights the importance of a political analysis of community involvement. Foley and Edwards (1999) found that the production of social capital depended on the political opportunity within structures. Smith and Beazley (2000:859) point to the importance of political will where interaction, between neighbourhood and local government to influence strategic decision-making, provides a "*useful device for conceptualising community power*".

A clear understanding of community development practice is fundamental to community empowerment, the definition of which has been historically problematic. Shaw (2008) relates thinking about community development to two opposing traditions of political theory: The liberal tradition that puts the individual before other forms of social life; and the communitarian tradition that stresses communal interests, collective identity and local co-operation. However, Shaw suggests that the division between the 'professional' and the 'political' view of community development practice is unimportant in that the central community development task is to focus on the relationship between agency and structure and make a choice within that to:

> "act *as a mirror, simply reflecting back an image of 'the world as it is', in the process reinforcing existing unequal and divisive social relations of power, or it can provide a lens through which existing structures and practices can be critically scrutinised in order to find ways to create a more equal, supportive and sustainable alternative – 'the world as it could be'"* (2008:34).

Anderson (1996:73-80) noted that the most successful community empowerment projects are those where day-to-day practicalities are tackled at the same time as the community is acting strategically with a focused political agenda. From the vantage of her work with a breadth of community groups, she explored issues of capital and capacity and concluded that those communities having the opportunity to make *"informed decisions about local problems"*, ideally producing local knowledge themselves *"in their own terms"*. Those communities having been supported with funds and resources *"without strings*" and those who have been allowed time to *"do things for themselves"* rather than on their behalf, demonstrate the sustainable empowerment that brings about fundamental change. Varley and Curtin (2006:442) cited the benefit of working with an established community organisation in their study of rural partnerships in Ireland, as making the building of "*collective agency around common aim easier".* They noted that experience and continuity of community actors created a "*strong basis for critical engagement."*

Models of community empowerment

Figure 3.1: Arnstein's (1969) Ladder
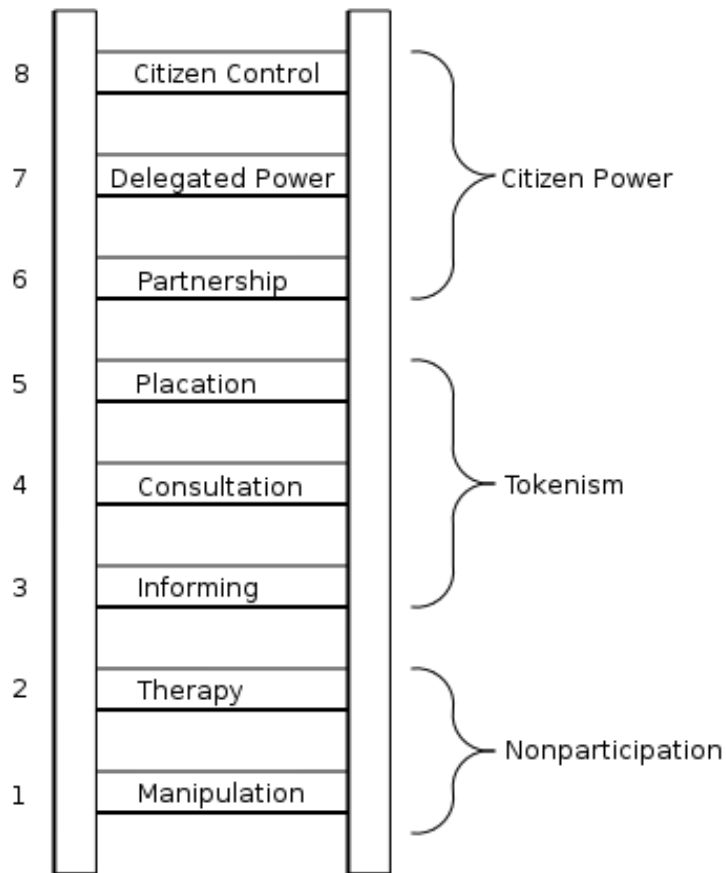
'Community empowerment' is an overused phrase and as Sarfraz Hussain, hact's Projects Director observed, is often conflated with community consultation, participation, development and cohesion (Jones, 2009). Arnstein's (1969) 'Ladder of Citizens' Involvement' in the planning process is still a useful model in analysing different approaches to engaging with communities in terms of social power (Fig. 3.1). It differentiates forms of community engagement and aligns all forms of partnership working with meaningful participation that can progress to delegated power and control.

The move to multi-sector partnerships is generally accepted as creating greater opportunities for community involvement (Smith and Beazley, 2000; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Most community-led regeneration, co-operatives and mutuals are associated with delegated powers in the UK but not all community groups may want citizen power and control. In the context of refugees and refugee people seeking asylum, this is manifest as specialist commissioned service delivery (Perry, 2005). One of the on-going contentions, relevant to developing models of empowerment is whether community empowerment is considered outcome or process (Humphries, 1996; Laverack, 2001).

Outcome or process?

Empowerment is defined as both process and outcome although the timeframe involved in realising outcome, for example policy change, often happens well after a participatory project has finished (Laverack, and Wallerstein, 2001). Viewing empowerment as outcomes along the timeline of the process of a project is one way that outcome and process can be identified simultaneously and relates to an empowering approach towards capacity building. For instance, whether third sector organisations have been involved before, during and after a programme might point to three specific milestones of outcome. Case studies examined by Barnes *et al.* (2007:111) included Sure Start[18] partnerships that spent time learning to work together and developed *"guidance notes about operating alongside each other"*. Being involved beforehand enables ownership (Watt *et al.,* 2000); involvement in strategic decisions about parameters and structures; being involved during enables involvement in and influence over objective setting and *"operating style"* (Varley

and Curtin, 2006:433) and post-project involvement in evaluation ensures that community actors are engaged in dissemination and appraisal. This longitudinal perspective belongs to an organisational interpretation of empowerment. Capacity and competence building are often seen as personal development issues. It is the case that the outcome for individuals, such as increased confidence and self-esteem, in engaging in collective action can be more readily identified as outcome. Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) argued that this analysis omits dynamic processes such as organisational capacity building, developing negotiating skills and vocalising critical awareness.

Community empowerment is more consistently referred to in the literature as a process that occurs along a dynamic continuum involving: individual empowerment; small groups; community organisation; partnerships and social and political action (Jackson *et al.,* 1989; Labonte 1994; Rissel 1994; Laverack 2001). Anderson (1996) adds a sixth point to this continuum – the power to identify agenda priorities. She considers this is important for ownership of both problem and solution. However, this continuum is not to suggest that community empowerment is simply a linear process without dynamic and context. Yoo *et al.*'s (2009:262), stepped model of community empowerment focuses on problem identification, resolution and "*transitioning to a new issue and leadership*" as operational progressions. Social and political change, with emphasis on collective action, is considered the litmus test of community empowerment by several

commentators. Wallerstein brings outcome and process together when she defines community empowerment as*:*

"a social-action process that promotes participation towards the goal of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life and social justice" (1992:198).

Figure 3.2: A Wheel of Involvement
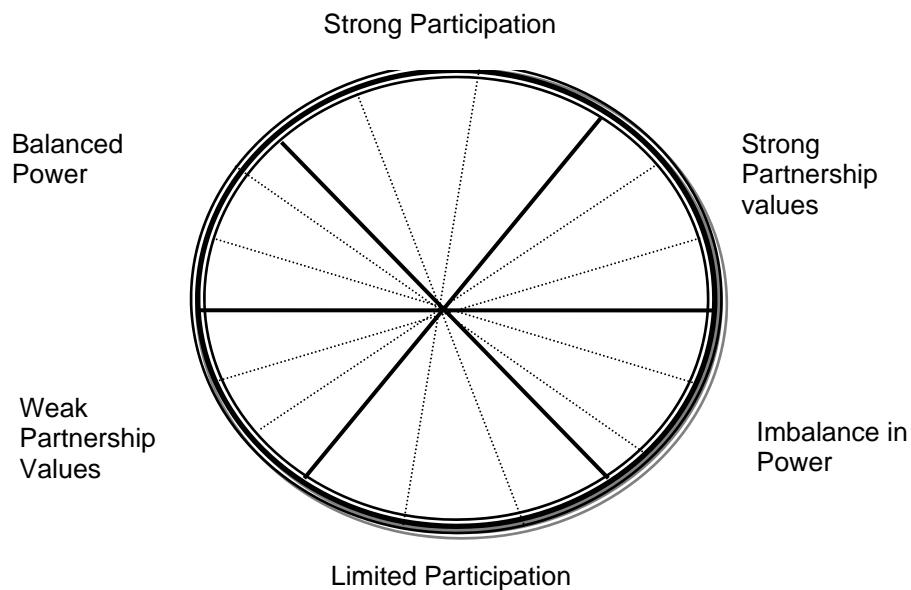
Source: Smith and Beazley, 2000:862

Smith and Beazley (2000) tackle the dynamic of unequal power in multi-sector partnership by describing the empowerment process as a wheel (Figure 3:2) that they usefully employ as an evaluative tool in calculating the balance of power in regeneration partnership projects. Strong partnership values are characterised by strong participation in the form of openness to learning, shared goals and balanced power differentials demonstrated by accountability, access to resources and

legitimacy. Weak partnerships are characterised by opposing values and imbalance of power that are negative, closed and divergent. Varley and Curtin's (2006:423), work that considers anti-poverty partnerships in rural Ireland in the context of the politics of empowerment, suggest that local area partnerships since the 1990s have created a *"new dynamic".* They propose that partnerships are vehicles for community empowerment because they create space for the political process of negotiation between the powerless and relatively powerful forces in society. Neither model accounts for the centrality of outside agents driving the empowerment process.

Hastings (1996), in her study of partnerships in urban regeneration policy, described what happens when an uneven distribution of power is accepted as the norm. She found community groups were resigned to the fact they were excluded from the behind-the-scenes negotiations which were seen as legitimate by the officer networks. These covert activities were responsible for the informal 'network culture', which excluded community groups. Smith and Beazley (2000) noted that 'hidden' or covert agendas can have a negative impact on the ability of the community sector to influence outcomes of partnership working. Commentators, who consider community empowerment to be a transformative activity, model empowerment on the basis of outcomes like a shift in attitude, in institutional practice, in media portrayal and in access to resources (Batliwala, 2007; Shaw, 2008). It is also necessary to identify process domain and progression in order to

assess transformation. Moreover it is important when discussing shifts in power to include Coleman's (1988) concept of a driving force to take the process forward.

Problems of measurement

The concept of social capital as contextually defined collective collateral (Bourdieu, 1977; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Lin, 2000) is widespread, yet measuring social capital is not simple. If the starting point is the community's existing social capacity this raises problems of establishing a baseline when measuring social capital, community empowerment and the bridging capital that is thought to underpin community cohesion. Similarly, a critical pedagogy approach to capacity building poses problems for traditional evaluation because it approaches capacity building in the belief of what is already there. It *"assumes that the knowledge, skill and experience to bring about change are latent within the people for whom change is needed"* (Jones, 2007:29). In their study of local partnerships, under European initiative in rural Madrid, Diaz-Puente *et al.* (2009:63-4) demonstrated that community involvement in evaluation became a "*tool of self-improvement"* that changed attitudes towards traditional notions of capacity building.

Local context also plays a part, so that community empowerment cannot be considered without an understanding of the volatile nature of community that ebbs and flows according to core resource stability or opportunity to influence decisions (Watt *et al.*, 2000; Uguris, 2004). In addition to harnessing the critical awareness and experience already in existence, many researchers emphasise the early

advantage of giving the community organisation a leading stake in the project generating involvement 'bottom up' rather than 'top down'. (Anderson, 1996; Smith and Beazley, 2000; Varley and Curtin 2006; Pronyk *et al.,* 2008; Yoo *et al.,* 2009; Diaz-Puente *et al.,* 2009) In this way a better understanding is created of the difference between token engagement and active participation (Arnstein, 1969) and there is acknowledgement that social capital cannot easily be generated by policy makers (Fukuyama, 2001). Community initiatives like New Deal for Communities[19] have developed evaluative frameworks for benchmarks of participation as summarised in Table 3:2 below:

Table 3.2: Dimensions and benchmarks of community participation

Opportunities for Influence: ❑ Recognised and valued as an equal partner ❑ Meaningful representation ❑ All community members have opportunity to participate ❑ Communities have access to and control over resources ❑ Community agenda incorporated into evaluation	**Inclusivity:** ❑ Reflecting the diversity of local communities ❑ Diversity represented at all levels ❑ Equal opportunities policies in place and implemented ❑ Unpaid volunteers valued
Communication: ❑ Varied methods including roadshows, newsletters, websites ❑ Two-way information strategy ❑ Programme and project procedures are clear and accessible	**Building local capacity:** ❑ training activists ❑ creating and supporting groups and forums ❑ developing community sector infrastructure ❑ working with mainstream agencies ❑ producing materials to develop statutory understanding of community engagement ❑ Communities are resourced to participate ❑ Understanding, knowledge and skills are developed to support partnership working

Source: Author based on Wilson and Wilde (2003)

While these dimensions and benchmarks are useful in assessing attitudes to power sharing, like two-way communication, they overlook the less documented organisational domains of community empowerment where the dynamic arguably lies (Yoo *et al.,* 2009). Building on earlier work (Labonte, 1994; Laverack and Labonte, 2000; Labonte and Laverack, 2001) Laverack and Wallerstein developed nine operational domains (Table 3:3) to represent aspects of community empowerment whereby groups work together towards common goals of political or social change. This presented researchers with a "*proxy measure"* for social aspects of community empowerment (2001:181). Laverack (2001; 2003; 2006; 2006a) used this framework to develop participants' organisational skills and to rank capacity building in a spider-gram mapping technique providing visual representation of the strengths and weaknesses as perceived collectively by the community (Figure 3:3).

Figure 3.3: Spider-Gram of Community Capacity Domains
(Labonte and Laverack, 2001: 131)
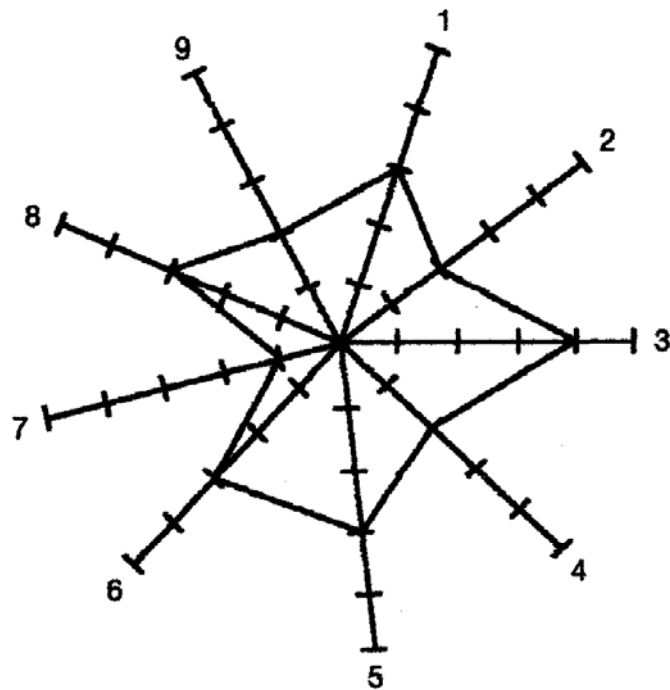
Legend
1. community participation
2. local leadership
3. empowering organizational structures
4. problem assessment capacities
5. ability to 'ask why'
6. resource mobilization
7. links to others
8. equitable relationships, outside agents
9. community control over program

Labonte and Laverack (2001) and Laverack (2003) developed the concept of operational domains to provide a link between, on the one hand individual elements of empowerment such as personal control, trust and cohesiveness; and contextual elements like the political, the socio-economic and the cultural on the other. Consequently both collective and individual empowerment could be considered simultaneously and connections made between inter-personal elements such as social capital and community cohesiveness as well as

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"contextual elements such as the political, socio-cultural circumstances of a programme" (2003:99).

Interpreting the domains

Laverack (2003, 2006, 2006a) applied these domains in a programme context based on two case studies; empowering women in low income housing and empowering the victims of domestic violence, thereby introducing progression along the empowerment continuum (Table 3:3). Participation of community members in evaluation of whether they had been empowered is an important part of the methodology for Laverack (2003). Although Laverack (2001, 2003, 2006, 2006a) and others concede an overlap between participation and empowerment, it is commonly accepted that active participation alone can do no more than influence the direction of a programme. The difference between the two approaches being in the agenda and purpose of the engagement process: Is it to reflect what the world is? Or as Shaw (2008) expresses it; bring about social and political change towards 'what the world could be'?

Table 3.3: Operational domains

Operational Domains of Community Empowerment:	Operational Domains of Community Empowerment in a programme context:
Participation	**Action to improve participation** e.g. working with others who have similar experiences
Leadership	**Develops local leadership** e.g. building on existing strengths and social networks, accredited training for volunteers
Problem assessment	**Increases problem assessment capacities** e.g. incorporating immediate needs like childcare to keep participation active over longer term problems
Asking why	**Enhances the ability to 'ask why'** e.g. raising critical awareness by involving participants in wider public awareness raising and problem resolution
Organisational structures	**Builds empowering organisational structures** e.g. strengthening the representativeness of existing community organisation; allowing for organisational evolution
Resource mobilisation	**Improves resource mobilisation** e.g. attracting resource for issues that fall outside of the funder's ideas of legitimate outcomes/raising additional resources
Links to others	**Strengthens links to other organisations and people** e.g. strategies to develop other partnerships
The role of outside agents	**Creates an equitable relationship with outside agents** e.g. maintained by critical self reflection (were they empowering? facilitating? imposing?) as well as involvement of community members in evaluation
Programme management	**Increases control over programme management** e.g. increased involvement in achieving changes in policy, legislation and levels of community action

Source: Author based on Laverack and Wallerstein 2001, Laverack 2001, Laverack, 2006

Participation and leadership are also connected. Pronyk *et al.* (2008) observed the link between 'structural capital' and the leadership structure. Leaders are necessary to develop community groups and the role of community leaders has been seen to be a crucial element in the establishment of RCOs (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). Cultural leadership of this kind evokes Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'symbolic capital' exercising leadership in a specific social space. Bringing leaders from outside the groups ignores at the cost of the success of a programme, those that are "*historically and culturally determined*" (Laverack, 2001:138). Laverack suggests there are two inter-related dimensions in the domain of organisational

structures: there is the organisational dimension that encompasses community committees and wider members as well as the social dimension where there is a sense of belonging, cohesion and concern about the same issues. Building bridging capital within organisational structures and forging links with wider networks has been seen to be critical for RCOs to exercise influence over strategic decision-making (Amas and Price, 2008). This is an essential part of RCOs development as their organisations are prone to higher levels of turnover than more established community groups (Lewis, *et. al.* 2008).

Many health programmes have highlighted the importance of community empowerment through problem assessment but programmes that do not allow a further role in problem resolution and design can also falter. Much has been documented about the value of resource mobilisation, but material resources alone cannot empower community groups. Humphries (1996) identified different strategies of empowerment where minority ethnic groups were rendered worse off because inequality, exclusion and negative stereo-typing were simply perpetuated. The lack of local and community-specific knowledge at neighbourhood level makes the role of RCOs essential in assessing problems such as housing and integration needs for refugees. As Stone and Muir (2007) have noted new communities are more likely to share a sense of local identity precisely because of the sense of belonging that has been lost.

Purpose, skills and mutual capacity to communicate are critical if resources are to be employed to maximum use. The domains approach captures internal as well as

external capacities, encompassing milestones such as the development of critical awareness without taking an organisationally introspective view such as the social capital model developed by Burns *et al.* (2001). Critical awareness, consciousness and critical thinking are expressed in the operational domain, termed 'asking why'. Laverack (2001, 2003, 2006, 2006a) points to Freire's critical pedagogy approach where people become the subject of their own learning process, in order to challenge and resolve the policy environment in which 'their' problems lie. This methodology was analogous to the one adopted by the CURS Team throughout the evaluation process in *Accommodate.*

Along with other commentators (Barnes, *et al.,* 2007; Henderson and Pitchford, 2008), Laverack cited the partnership arena as one of the social spaces in which marginalised community groups can work collaboratively to influence policies and practices that change their lives. Capacity building using the domains approach, however, seeks to increase community control over programme management and equalise relations with outside agents. Assessment focuses principally on community participants' experiences view of capacity building. Pronyk *et al. (*2008) note the development of 'cognitive capital' within community groups based in the belief that solidarity can achieve a common goal. Smith and Beazley (2000) highlighted the importance of collaboration to achieve non-routine goals such as those that can be found within *Accommodate;* and the importance of wider recognition that leads to involvement in policy decision-making. Varley and Curtin (2006) observed that critical agency was cultivated around collective aims. The role of hact in cultivating joint and shared goals in *Accommodate* can be readily

located within the domains theory of empowerment. Finally the domain of outside agents describes what is essential in driving the empowerment process forward in facilitating and steering action, raising awareness, negotiating and fostering support and ensuring sustainable and community-focused programme management (Laverack, 2001:138-141). Hact adopted a similar role to that of community development practitioners in the 1960s and early 1970s, when it set out to act as a 'catalyst for change' within *Accommodate.*

Conclusion

RCOs play an essential role in all aspects of resettlement in response to gaps in service provision. Working largely 'below the radar', they suffer from a regular turnover of leaders, volunteers, clients and organisations themselves as they struggle for resources and wider recognition. Despite the fact that some have managed to become well-established and linked to umbrella structures they generally exert weak influence over services and policy and lack credibility with funders, politicians and other partners. As several commentators have observed, structural barriers preventing organisational recognition and participation in collaborative networks are manifest at a local level (Table 3:4).

Table 3.4: Structural Barriers affecting RCOs' engagement in collaboration

• Lack of on-going contact between RCOs and statutory agencies
• Weak influence over policy and decision-making
• Turnover due to exclusion from sustainable funding and restrictive policy
• Turbulence due to staff, organisation and user turnover
• Lack of organisational credibility
• Absence of positive media coverage
• Local ignorance of refugee and asylum circumstances
• Employers' exclusionary and discriminatory attitudes

Source: Author's summary based on amalgam of studies and firsthand experience

It is not surprising that the political will to locally-champion RCOs is sometimes disincentivised in such a complex and hostile civic landscape. When RCOs are located in a structural context it demonstrates what a challenge a Project like Accommodate presented and what daunting barriers hact had to overcome to ensure the RCOs' social capital was fully utilised. Engaging these capable yet hidden community groups in a radical empowerment process together with other partners from different organisational and cultural backgrounds was a complex task. Structural barriers at local level (Table 3:4) meant that hact acting as 'engine for action' was faced with the difficulty of negotiating, balancing and sustaining the interests of RCOs with the interests of statutory service providers and other agencies in different political and socio-economic contexts. Hact's achievement was in developing the type of management of the network that, as Taylor described operated as: *"a practice which can work with allies across the institutional map to find the possibilities for change in an increasingly turbulent environment"* (1995:110).

The progressive body of literature that supports a transformative view of community empowerment in which fundamental change is the ultimate goal, is important to this study. In reviewing the challenge to understand community empowerment as either process or outcome we can usefully consider it as both, when looking for evaluative framework. Some constructive concepts have emerged from this review about collaborative community empowerment that have confirmed a need for an organisational perspective on agency, process and structure to be able to focus on both interactions and dynamics.

Table 3.5: Why the domains theory framework?

It offers a proxy measure for the social aspects of community empowerment
It includes self-assessment to capture the internal perceptions of community groups themselves
It forges a link between individual empowerment and context e.g. political, socio-economic factors that form structural barriers to the engagement of marginalised groups
It presents an interpretation of community empowerment that has evolved from programme context and has been practically applied
It engages with a radical interpretation of community empowerment defining social change in terms of ideology, institutional practice and structures and distribution of resources
It understands the finer points of capacity building in collaboration e.g. working with community leaders that are historically and culturally determined rather than being imposed or appointed by more powerful partners
It understands the need to embed community groups into wider networks (especially important for RCOs that are less stable and prone to turnover)
It raises the issue of critical awareness as integral to problem assessment and resolution
It endorses the value of local knowledge and experience (information that is lacking about refugee housing needs at neighbourhood level)
It creates a model of capacity building that links to external context and networks and is not assessed in terms of community capabilities only
It treats participants as subject of their own learning process thereby acknowledging the importance of participants' ownership of project direction and development
It seeks to increase community control over project management and equalise the community partners' standing with outside agents
It acknowledges the critical role of outside agents in the community empowerment process

Source: Author based on Laverack and Wallerstein (2001); Laverack (2001, 2003, 2006, 2006a)

The spider-gram is therefore the most comprehensive model (Table 3.5) in evaluating community empowerment. Arnstein (1969:218) states that her typology does not include significant roadblocks and structural contexts such as *"racism,*

paternalism…and the community's political socioeconomic infrastructure". Smith and Beazley's wheel is a sophisticated tool appropriate for developing comparisons between strong and weak values and in testing the balance of power across similar partnerships yet does not fully address the role of outside agent. What Laverack and Wallerstein's model offers is insight into the tensions and wider contexts together with the potential for negotiation of social power when broken down into a series of domains (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001). The concept of domains transfer and are easily applied to cope with diversity in the *Accommodate* Project's Partnerships. However, questions about the model remain unanswered from Laverack's outline of operational domains: Are some domains more important than others? Are there domains that are missing? Operational domains theory also poses two subsidiary research questions: How does hact's role as 'outside agent' impact on the process of RCO empowerment? At what point in the empowerment process can empowerment be considered to be an outcome? The next Chapter considers the first of these research questions by exploring the role of agency in a partnership structure through the theoretical lens of network management theory.

Chapter Four: Network development and the exercise of social power

Introduction

As the previous Chapter concludes, it is difficult to understand RCO empowerment without an organisational perspective to uncover agency and structure in the process. Chapter 2 articulated the influence of external and internal contexts on this process, including constraints, enablers, aspiration, attitude and outlook. Following the discussion about the nature of community empowerment in Chapter 3, this Chapter brings together two bodies of work that are central to understanding community empowerment within partnership dynamics.

Firstly, the Chapter draws on core concepts concerning network management theory that are relevant to the network of *Accommodate* Partnerships. Particularly since the 1990s, networks have become a prominent governing structure in Britain as an alternative to markets and hierarchies. The management and governance of networks can be developed to address complex urban issues, dubbed 'wicked problems' (Rittel, 1969), creating an opportunity for the community to become part of the solution. Pioneering work at Erasmus University in Rotterdam (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004) was carried out on the management and governance of complex networks to enhance service delivery and policy performance. Exploration of this theory indicates that the *Accommodate* Partnerships can be classified as a complex network because they are defined *by "dependency, variety of actors and goals, and relations"* (Klijn, 1997:29). Strategies, concepts and tools described and identified in the management

process help to organise and explain interactions and dynamics evidenced between partners.

The second interrelated theme concerns the 'power' in 'empowerment'. Concepts of empowerment entail inclusion in the decision-making process yet most social theorists do not consider power to be static and absolute. Giddens' (1979; 1984) theory of structuration forms the basis of much academic thinking about the volatile nature of power in interaction between actors (or agents) in social systems, affecting process and structure. In the same context, Lukes (2005:71) defined this social power as the "*capacities of social agents"* to influence social life; the two-way power of action, (or inaction) and interaction between agents. Building on the earlier work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1970) Lukes (2005) suggests there are three dimensions to social power that define interaction and influence. The first dimension relates to power exercised from a position of authority. The second dimension of power is the conscious or unconscious control of what issues are to be negotiated, often resulting in only 'safe' issues being open to arbitration. The third dimension of power concerns the exercise of domination over the interests of others. These dimensions help to identify the boundaries and barriers impacting on the potential contribution that marginalised groups, such as RCOs, can make to networks in the policy decision-making process.

Finally, alongside related literature exploring interest, goal and outcome; the Chapter reflects on the part evaluation plays in RCO empowerment in the *Accommodate* Project. This Chapter concludes that network management theory

offers an appropriate framework in which to study *Accommodate* in relation to the empowerment of RCO participants with particular reference to hact's role as network manager steering and acting as catalyst for change.

Locating Accommodate within network management theory

The answer to 'wicked problems'

The idea of 'wicked problems' was conceptualised in the late 1960s when technology and scientific reason were directed towards resolution of urban issues. Horst Rittel coined the term in 1969 and outlined the following attributes:

Table 4.1: Attributes of 'wicked problems'

1. The process of formulating the problem is interconnected with the process of its solution
2. The logic inherent in the problem does not tell you when to stop the enquiry
3. There is nothing in the problem to say how the solution should be judged
4. There is no immediate test of the quality of the solution
5. There is no ultimate test of a solution
6. Once committed to a plan of action change is consequential
7. There is no prescriptive set of actions
8. There are no well-defined solutions - you can have many or none. The probability that a wicked problem has one solution is null
9. Every wicked problem is unique
10. The problem solver has no right to be wrong. Designers are responsible for their work (in a planning context)

Adapted source: Lecture by Horst Rittel, Berkeley 12th October 1969 (in Skaburskis, 2008)

Mowlam *et al.,* (2008) investigated how people perceive social evils today by revisiting what Joseph Rowntree believed to be the worst social evils in 1904. Research findings echoed many of the originally perceived social evils concerning family breakdown, poverty, inequality, drug and alcohol misuse, crime and

violence, but identified in addition, immigration and responses to immigration as problematic. A second stage (Watts, 2008) followed, with focus groups discussing immigration and revealed perceptions of unfairness (when compared with host communities) about housing provision and allocation for newcomers. *"Influential bodies"* were identified as having impact on all social evils including the media, big business, government and religion as well as restricted life chances (Watts, 2008:18-20). This finding suggests that corporate political will is a factor in perpetuating as well as resolving 'wicked problems'.

Recently the term 'wicked' has been revived to describe social problems that require collaboration across sectors and it is used throughout the literature (Mason and Mitroff 1981; van Bureren, Klijn and Koppenjan 2003; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2007). Most advanced economies now nurture community participation, examined in the previous Chapter, to help address 'wicked problems' (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Williams, 2003). The present Government's community empowerment agenda promotes it as a solution in itself (CLG, 2008a).

Theory to understand structure

For over 40 years theoreticians have appreciated that policy making does not rest on a division of labour between the politicians making a decision and the administrators carrying it out (Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2007). Work on policy and collaborative networks has been conducted since the 1970s but the last twenty years has seen an escalation in organisational practice, research and theoretical

literature investigating inter-agency collaboration as a route to resolving common social problems (Mason and Mitroff 1981; Pfeffer, 1987; Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; van Bureren, Klijn and Koppenjan 2003; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Mullins and Rhodes, 2007; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2007; Mandell and Keast, 2008). Networks differ from the other two main forms of coordination used in fields such as housing, to acquire resources to reach their goals, specifically, 'markets' and 'hierarchies'. Markets use *"supply and demand"* as a means of coordinating their activities; hierarchies use *"command and control"* regulation; but networks are driven by values such as trust and *"agreements (*and*) self- and joint-regulation"* (Mullins and Jones 2009:110). Academic theory that has more recently focused on network governance and management of networks is particularly relevant to *Accommodate*. This entails reliance on outcomes that are a product of negotiation between actors rather than coercion or financial incentive (op. cit.). Even so, different sector actors do not always share the same interpretation of what working in partnership means. All too often perceptions collide, as Sullivan and Skelcher describe:

> *"Voluntary sector definitions of partnership with the state are typically imbued with notions of dialogic and consensual decision-making and inclusive structures and processes. State agencies' views of partnership with the voluntary sector typically operate on design and principles of committee decision-making shaped by powerful actors through pre-meeting caucusing". (2002:5)*

Commentators in this field have shown that collaboration across sectors is laden with complexities, intricacies, complications and difficulties that have made

researching, understanding and evaluating the collaborative process a considerable challenge. Inter-agency collaboration is fraught with conflicting interests, power struggles and unequal authority, resource imbalance and the exercise of agency. The normative body of literature that developed the theory of network management captured some of the strategies and steerage employed to build relationships where common interest, shared aim and joint outcomes have to be negotiated. This is because no single actor has the authority or the power to dictate to others from above. Network management theory lends the process and outcome of community empowerment an alternative and specific vocabulary to communicate the political dynamic. The literature emphasises the network manager's non-hierarchical, critical role as change agent in steering and reframing perceptions and building collaborative goals.

The complexity of networks

Systems theory and network theory have evolved from different disciplines but they share similarities; both emphasis relationships between people and/or organisations and the *"dynamic tension between structure and agency"* (Mullins and Rhodes (2007:2). Five key strands of network/systems theory in the field of housing studies research have been identified by Mullins and Rhodes (2007:3-6) including, policy networks; network governance; supply networks/chains; organisational fields and complex systems and a brief summary follows: Some researchers focused on structure and others on agency within, the first strand of 'policy networks'. Those identifying structure produce a continuum to define policy networks ranging from tightly knit policy communities to looser *"issue networks"*

that are more open to outside interest groups (see Marsh, 1998, Chapter 2). Networks perceived as a form of governance is a second strand that recognises 'networks' as a clear alternative to 'markets' and 'hierarchies'. Literature from Erasmus University developed practical application of this strand and introduced the concept of network management that closely aligns with hact's role within *Accommodate*. The third strand, 'supply networks/chains' refers to the management of resources through strategic alliances of individual firms and identified the notion of 'core competences' made up of knowledge and skills. Parallels to this strand can be found within *Accommodate* in capacity building activity organised by hact to build a bridge and equalise differentials between knowledge and skill bases of sector partners. Fourthly, 'organisational fields' bring together elements of boundaries, culture, power relations between organisations and myth-building. This relates closely to the housing partners within *Accommodate* and their ability to change and repackage their organisational and cultural environment to acknowledge and include the particular housing needs of refugees. Finally, 'complex systems' feature degrees of dependency and connection between agents and perceptions on reaching goals within the negotiating environment that differ from start to finish. This strand presents a holistic view of perspectives about complex systems that focuses on change created in a feedback loop to agents that have engaged in interaction. Network theory is yet to become a widely used theory within housing studies (Rhodes, 2006), but it reflects the thinking that underpinned the inception of *Accommodate* which was a Project intended to create change in behaviour, thinking and outcome.

Rethemeyer and Hatmaker's (2007) work brings these strands together and suggests a three fold *"network systems"* model where policy networks and associated collaborative networks intersect with fiscal prioritisation (Figure 4:1). Progress via collaboration, they note, becomes inevitably interlinked: "*In the long run*, *adjacent systems become more heavily intertwined due to social, institutional and ideological pressures"* (2007:626). The example they use is the administrative merger of two adjacent services in Connecticut combining treatments for mental health and substance abuse. The link between adjacent services was already being made within *Accommodate*. One RCO provided sustainable tenancy support to traumatised refugees and another housing regeneration scheme recruited volunteers with mental health issues e.g. people with learning difficulties and people recovering from illness associated with drink/drug misuse.

Figure 4.1: Network systems and transformative change
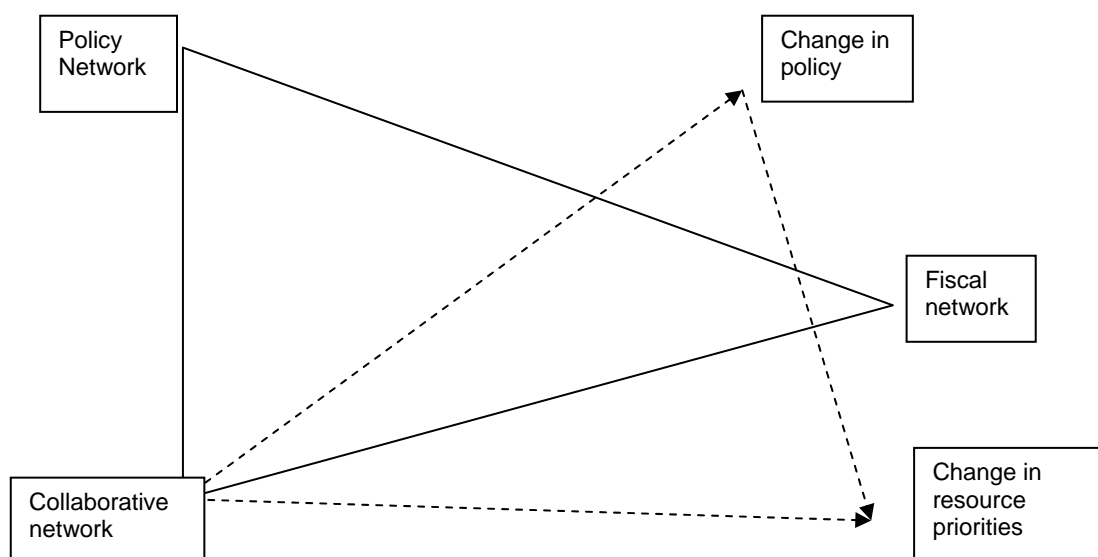
Author based on Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2007

Having worked since the 1980s in building and supporting individual RCOs, hact concluded that a more formalised dialogue was required between RCOs and housing providers. Hact occupies an unusual twofold position. On the one hand hact occupies a role in *policy networks* working strategically as agent of policy change building on relationships with housing associations and government bodies at national level: On the other, grassroots work with marginalised communities means hact has an operational role in *collaborative networks*. Their position is easily located within Rethemeyer and Hatmaker's notion of network systems in collaborative housing projects, bringing these roles together to affect change in policy and resource priorities in *fiscal networks* (Figure 4:1).

Complexity, however, is compounded between levels, across sectors and interest viewpoints, via change over time and through different network types. Mandell and Keast (2008) attribute the complexity of collaborative networks to their breadth of operation *"within and across layers"* of government and other sectors. Klijn (2005:3) describes networks as "*mercurial by nature, operating in complexity and chaos where nothing seems to stand still and seems to be manageable"*. Complexity is also reflected in the "*range of actors"* sometimes including voluntary participants involved in decision-making (Ansell and Gash 2008:544). Other than the structural intricacy of networks there are generally considered three causes of complexity:

- that decisions are made from the perspective of a rational set of actors, influenced by their own organisational values, interests and perceptions (Klijn, 2005)

- that decisions also evolve from a multiplicity of perspective negotiations and interactions (Mandell and Keast, 2008)

- that knowledge, despite the authority of scientific research, is always to some degree subjective and therefore contested (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004)

Mandell and Keast (2008:690) make a distinction between *co-operative* networks, *coordinative* networks and *collaborative* networks based on levels of interaction and degrees of change (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Interaction in networks

Type of network	Level of interaction	Degree of interdependency	Impact on policy
Collaborative networks	highly interactive	Interdependent	Fundamental change
Coordinative networks	Interact in order to better individual efforts	Remain independent entities	Marginal improvements
Co-operative networks	Only interact when necessary	Independent sharing of expertise and knowledge	Low risk and little development of practice and methods

Source: Mandell and Keast (2008:690)

Collaborative networks

The generally accepted definition of collaborative networks (Mandell 2001; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Klijn 2005; Agranoff, 2006; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2007; Ansell and Gash, 2008) can be summarised as a gathering of government agencies, public, private and voluntary sector partners working to provide public

service or goods under the conditions outlined below (Table 4:3). *Accommodate* Partnerships were intended to operate as a collaborative network in which practical resolution and fundamental policy change was sought via close interaction and interdependency between RCOs and the statutory/voluntary sectors.

Table 4.3: Conditions for collaborative networks

• There is an identified gap/blockage in service provision
• The private sector is unwilling or unable to provide this service/goods
• Collaboration includes public agencies
• One agency alone could not deliver
• Each agency has a degree of self interest in delivery
• Delivery of the service/goods is part of a complex, wider social problem
• It includes community participants in decision-making
• A struggle about values is inevitably involved
• They are political in nature

Source: Author's summary based on amalgam of studies

As Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) observed the motivations for collaboration can be several; to acknowledge common problem; share vision; resolve conflict and deliver public policy goals where there is a shortfall in public service delivery. Klijn (2008) suggests that 'wicked problems' compound these reasons and may encompass lack of effective service delivery, social tension and contested space. Networks, when referred to in this theoretical context are horizontal, complex, involve several actors from different disciplines and sectors and are concerned with solving composite policy issues or 'wicked' as opposed to 'controlled' social and environmental problems (Klijn, 2008:8-11). For this reason Mandell and Keast (2008:696) comment that *"collaborative networks are rare, but exciting"*, and contend that they are, *"about depth of relationships and ideology"*. This view is

endorsed by Klijn (2008) who defines the dynamic in policy evolution as one of struggle about values because governance processes are essentially political in nature.

Barriers to recognition

The levels of complexity described by writers on collaborative networks show how challenging it is for community groups to participate as equals with statutory and other partners. Commentators suggest that for 'below the radar' groups such as RCOs there are both internal and external barriers of marginalisation and disparity that leaves them in a doubly challenged position. A full description of these barriers can be found in the work of Humphries (1996), Howarth (2002), D'Onofrio and Munk (2004) and others reflecting on issues of identity politics in marginalised communities (see Chapter 3). For refugee communities who have lost identity and a sense of belonging, there is a need to tackle marginalisation before being able to develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to interact assertively with others. Commentators highlight necessity for new communities to consolidate their cultural and ethnic identity as a first stage towards creating a sense of belonging in a new environment. The work of RCOs in running cultural events and activities to retain heritage and language from countries of origin is an important step.

Theoretical work on the three dimensions of power (Lukes, 2005) presents a useful structure and conceptualisation when exploring the barriers that new communities overcome before they can participate in projects such as *Accommodate*. Lukes' work in this field has significance for research into community empowerment in

collaborative networks. The marginalised and excluded not only lack structural recognition (Humphries, 1996) but often have internalised negative identity that this has imposed upon them, affecting perceptions of themselves (Howarth, 2002) and their rights. We might call this the physical evidence of the third dimension of power, discussed below.

One of the principal intentions of community participation within the collaborative agenda is to tackle social exclusion by creating physical place, i.e. accessible housing; and social space i.e. an opportunity to voice needs (see Chapter 3). Haynes (2001:262) contends that the *"physical and social aspects of geographical space are connected and need to be understood together".* Bourdieu (1998:33) suggests the unifying power within a group depends on members occupying the *"same social space"* where they can recognise each other and recognise themselves in the same project. The *Accommodate* Partnerships provide the 'social space' but interaction and negotiation between actors does not exist in a vacuum. Arenas are where *"the game of problem solving takes place"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:50) Decision-making takes place in different arenas that each belong to different networks. The institutional characteristics of different networks impact on interaction within arenas, and *"is an important cause of uncertainties in problem solving in decision-making"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:69). Yet it is the political power over the agenda that remains a key dynamic at stake. The next section turns to theories of social power to understand what drives the agenda-setting dynamic in the social space offered by collaborative arenas such as the *Accommodate* Partnerships.

Social Power and the role of the Network Manager

Agency, structure and the process of decision-making

The focus in this study is on political power over the direction of housing, immigration and settlement policy at national level directly affecting the service access of refugees at local level. *Accommodate* employed a network/systems approach to renegotiate 'social power' in order to ameliorate and influence national policy from local initiative. Kruythoff (2008: 637) describes this as the *"continuous interplay between bottom-up and top-down processes"*, echoing Marsh's (1998) two models of policy implementation (See Chapter 2)*.* Mannheim was one of the early sociological analysts to conclude that the driving force in this process is the dynamic of competition; a contest where different actors in their various groups, each with their own interpretations of the world, struggle for the power to define reality (Delanty and Strydom, 2003). Since networks are characterised by interdependence and negotiable goal, power over the dominant ideology must also be variable.

The previous Chapter explores the resource that RCOs have to bring to collaborative working in terms of social capital yet Griffiths *et al.* (2005:205) question Putnam's basic premise (1993, 2000) that organisational proliferation indicates a vibrant civil society. They suggest instead that "*state-sponsored forms of incorporation and limited opportunity structures"* are the barriers preventing refugees taking part in other social spheres. This argument is germane to the role of hact in creating *Accommodate* as a new arena to realise the social power of RCOs.

Some social theorists concentrate on the dynamic in this process: Sayer's (1992, 2000) work suggests that it is important to discover how the process of power is negotiated and changed by interaction. Lukes (2005) builds on the innovation of Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1970) to develop analysis of the three dimensions of power. From this vantage, this section reviews networks as structure and actors as agency in an evolving negotiated process of social power within the *Accommodate* Partnerships. There is potential, adapting Giddens' (1979; 1984) theory of structuration to reframe the institutional structures, to change ideological attitudes and to influence the distribution of resources. Hact as 'agent of change' is therefore paramount as the engine for social action (Coleman, 1988) in the role of network manager and reinforces Batliwala's (2007) interpretation of community empowerment as one that seeks fundamental change (see Chapter 3).

It is important to secure the research within the parameters of some of these salient debates because study of partnership working necessarily means *"locating power to fix responsibility for consequences from the action, or inaction, of certain specifiable agents"* (Lukes, 2005:58). Lukes' present-day critique of his original work in 1974 is found to be particularly relevant. When considering this context of social power empirically, it could take many forms: We could anticipate that social power encompasses the power of authority to make choices and decisions over ideas, strategies, resources, structures and others. We could also anticipate this power being used to influence, represent, manipulate and give expert opinion. Power might also be exercised to act, veto or withdraw. In the case of RCO

partners, all these manifestations of power entail notions of competence, confidence, voice and recognition.

The first dimension of power

Hact carried out a great deal of pre-Project work with RCOs as well as on-going capacity building and support to facilitate more equitable relations between partners by building competence and knowledge. Chapter 3 establishes that the RCOs', largely unrecognised, fund of local and experiential knowledge represents considerable social resource that could add to the sum of partnership social power. In his original and influential work on the willingness of subjects to comply with the power of domination, Foucault (1980) contends that knowledge is intimately connected with power. Bourdieu (1977) and Gramsci (1971) more explicitly contend that ownership of knowledge is a major dimension of political power because it entails the symbolic power (capital) to construct public reality. Yet, as discussion about barriers to recognition reveals, conceptual recognition is a two-way process. This decision-making by those in authority, to recognise social resource is commonly referred to as the 'first dimension' of power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970; Lukes, 2005).

Collaborative governance can enable community participants a share in decision-making on the authority of the social power or social capital that they bring to the partnership structure. Nonetheless, Bourdieu reminds us:

> "*These objective structures are themselves products of historical practices whose productive principle is itself the product of the structures which it consequently tends to reproduce*" (1977:83).

Therefore the organisational cultures of other partners, political will, local context, prejudice and attitude have potential consequence for the contribution new partners might make. Uguris (2004:277), a Turkish refugee herself, brings all definitions of 'otherness' – whether on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, class, employment and residential status into the *"multidimensional nature of power and powerlessness*" where identities and contexts are constantly shifting. In her study of tenant participation, she concludes that local authorities need to be concerned with more than one kind of racism as "*power is the key to them all*" (2004:291). Government commissioned research (Sutton *et al.,* 2007:14) describes a typology of racism and makes a distinction between structural racism that *"operates on a national scale including prejudicial laws"* and institutional racist practices that includes *"employment selection criteria and failure to meet certain cultural needs".*

Rules of the game

The concept of *"rules of the game"* in a policy context is not new (Lowndes, 2005), but was used by Bachrach and Baratz to describe institutional procedures (1970:43). As organisational organisms in their own right, networks display certain characteristics in terms of game rules. Four main characteristics are associated with the theory (Haffner and Elsinga, 2009); *interdependency* between players (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997); degrees of *closedness* exhibited by players (Shaap and van Twist, 1997); the *multi-faceted nature of organisations and goals*

(Klijn and Teisman, 1997) and the concept of *dynamics* both within and external to the networks (Termeer and Koppenjan, 1997).

'Pluriformity' is a term closely associated with *interdependency* and refers to the diversity of norms that individual actors as well as partner organisations might possess (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997). *'Pluriformity'* is used by de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof (1997) to describe the complexity of governance perceptions that a game may start with before everyone accepts and adopts common rules and develops mutual trust. The level of *pluriformity* is influenced by the variety of players' perceptions and goals (van Bortel, 2009). Inevitably *pluriformity* causes a collision of perceptions (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002) as different interest groups with different outlooks struggle over what Bourdieu (1977) labelled the 'symbolic' power to construct public reality.

The antithesis of *pluriformity* is *interdependency* (Kickert, Koppenjan and Klijn, 1997). Regrettably *interdependency* does not refer to a simple quid pro quo relationship between partners where one brings bread and the other butter. Relations can be simple but they can also be very complicated as de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof (1997:123) demonstrate so that "*actor A is dependent on actor B, B on C and C on A"*. Actors can be dependent on one another for anything from political support to material resource. In a critique of his earlier work Lukes (2005:64) suggests that the discussions about power in binary relations (the power of A over B) must give way to address more "*complex, multi-agency structures where divergent interests collide"* and power is relational and dynamic. An additional form

of interdependency was introduced in van Bortel's (2009:171) study of urban renewal in Groningen, a northern city in the Netherlands by the shift in policy emphasis from 'bricks and mortar' to achieving sustainable social economic investments such as creating job opportunities for the long-term unemployed. Interdependency is therefore integral to goal setting and is revisited in the later section about multiple goals and outcomes.

The second dimension of power

Bachrach and Baratz (1970:18) further explored definitions of equality in power relations developing their well-known exposition on the second dimension of power; the power, either consciously or unconsciously exercised in order not to engage; that is the practice of limiting the scope of decision-making to "*safe*" issues. Urry and Wakeford (1973) identify these as decisions that do not alter the basic institutional structures in society. My own experience found that 'talking shops' (shorthand for collaborative practice that does not develop beyond fruitless consultation) quickly alienate the involvement of community groups, perceived as "*empty rhetoric ….rather than as sincere attempts to participate in genuine dialogues*" (Hertting, 2009:141). From the outset, *Accommodate* began by engaging with this dimension of power in tackling 'unsafe issues', that is refugee housing needs, where nationally little attention or recognition of the issue existed (see Chapter 2 for more discussion about institutional barriers in this context).

Bachrach and Baratz (1970:44-45) describe the second dimension of power as non-decision-making and exclusionary. This is exclusion as *"a means by which*

demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced". Bachrach and Baratz might have been discussing RCOs when they suggest that exercise of this dimension of power is particularly effective against transient or weakly organised groups that cannot sustain a fight or prolonged delays in decision-making (see Chapter 3 for further indication of the organisational vulnerabilities of RCOs). It is easy to see how some actors can unconsciously exclude others in the social domain but these norms can also be deliberately invoked, reshaped or strengthened to exclude others in the cognitive domain. 'Others' often signifies the community sector that wields little sustained power over agendas.

Closedness is the network management term used to describe exclusion where sometimes one power bloc e.g. the professionals, dominate (van Bortel, 2009:171-2). Bourdieu's (1977) concept of structures, based on historical practice to reproduce similar structures pre-empted a relationship between *closedness* and political will. Uguris' (2004) work on tenant participation structure endorses this. Network management characterises the network dynamic in the *games* (interactions) that takes place with the use of the concept of *closedness* in both the *social* and *cognitive* domains (Schaap and van Twist, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004). *Closedness* can be simply understood as the degree of inclusivity that a partner might enjoy depending on how uncomfortable/welcome they feel culturally (in the social domain) within a partnership meeting or how deliberately/inadvertently they might be made to feel comfortable/unwelcome (in the cognitive domain) by other partners. This suggests that partners from different

organisational and ethnic cultures can be consciously or unconsciously included or excluded in the game and underlies the power dynamics relevant to the five Partnerships comprising *Accommodate*. Termeer and Koppenjan (1997:79) argue that it is not only power relations and conflict of interest that influence policy progress but also the perceptions of the situation by specific actors. When actors are unable or unwilling to challenge their own perceptions it may lead to "*fixations*" that impede collaborative interaction and bring negotiation to a halt.

Reframing perceptions

The network manager therefore has an active role in reframing perceptions to tackle *closedness* in either the social or the cognitive domain. Of course change in perceptions has a chain reaction; whether from one of the actors or from an external context it affects all actors accordingly. Haffner and Elsinga (2009:155) describe a deadlock brought about by changes in housing policy, *"social variation"* in communication and lack of cohesive goals creating an impasse that could only be broken through by perception management with the arrival of new actors bringing fresh ideas. There are often no 'done deals' in complex networks (van Bortel, 2009) and uncertainty can take many forms: Conflicting strategies affecting levels of unpredictability can create 'strategic uncertainty'. The lack of a shared reference framework for knowledge can lead to 'substantive uncertainty'. 'Institutional uncertainty', for example, can arise from different organisational cultures, jargon and values (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004).

Part of the role of a network manager in the horizontal model of collaboration is to reduce uncertainty by bringing diversity together in a normative culture that all actors can relate to and by introducing common aims that engage all interest groups. This can involve reframing perceptions and employing various direct and indirect strategies to lift roadblocks, affect process, develop outcome and build agency, i.e. empower the least powerful actors (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997). The use of network management concepts and literature helps to create a theoretical framework and language to describe and interpret how the dynamic for internal change within networks can be managed or 'steered'.

Forms of steerage

Once this framework is applied within a network, the power dynamic in practice becomes apparent in a variety of ways. Power can be manifest strategically, substantively and institutionally and it is a difficult challenge that faces any agent attempting to manage this process in order to redress the power balance, strengthen the network or affect outcomes. Theoretical commentators describe a variety of methods that a manager can utilise with different methods of steerage. Direct regulatory instruments such as rules and terms of reference can be used to change actors' behaviour: Indirect regulatory instruments such as the redesignation of an actor's role or the introduction of a new actor can affect the balance of power (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997).

The management of perceptions has already been described as a practical method of steerage. Actors are not always aware of their prejudice. In this instance,

progressive change can only be achieved by the confrontation of existing perceptions with different ones (Termeer and Koppenjan, 1997). Often referred to in the 'win-win' terms of negotiation, the management of perceptions is said to be about *"creating a minimum of consensus"* (Agranoff 1986:9) where actors are encouraged to concentrate on joint efforts rather than joint aims. Measuring outcomes in collaboration is therefore one that takes place in the same multi-dimensional plane as the networks themselves. Designation outcomes and goals are often linked to the different levels of resource and status that each partner brings to the network and to levels of interdependency.

The third dimension of power

The third dimension of power is founded on a perspective where power is structurally and unequally distributed. Lukes' third dimension of power is interpreted as '*domination' or* constraint upon the interests of others. *To* exercise constraint upon others, Lukes (2005:146) argued requires a value-laden *"external standpoint"*: One in which, powerlessness, i.e. the inability to even choose to exercise power, presupposes concepts of justice and rights.   This thinking translates in this study to institutional barriers to RCO involvement that are embedded in political will and lack of formal recognition (see Chapters 2 and 3).

> *"The unrecognised can be seen as dominated because both 'the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or contemptible picture of themselves' thereby 'imprisoning them in a false, distorted reduced mode of being"* (Lukes, 2005:119).

In later work, Lukes identified a final context in which to conceptualise power, the *evaluative* context; in other words, evaluating societal arrangements that determine powerlessness as injustice. This analysis finds an echo in the work of Anderson (1996), Ledwith (1997; 2005) and more recently Pitchford and Henderson (2008) that links community empowerment with social justice. For Himmelman (1996), reflecting Lukes' notion of the evaluative context of power, collaborative networks were also an opportunity to challenge existing power relations towards increased social justice especially where marginalised and disadvantaged communities were concerned i.e. they had potential for transformative change. It appears that needs, rights, identity and recognition are interconnected in this.

Lukes' (2005), in a similar vein as structuration theory (Giddens, 1979, 1984) described the fluctuating possibilities for agents to achieve redress via structure, agency and process as summarised below:

> *"Social life can only properly be understood as an interplay of power and structure, a web of possibilities for agents, whose nature is both active and structured, to make choices and pursue strategies within given limits, which in consequence expand and contract over time"* (Lukes, 2005:69).

Agency and representation

The ebb and flow of opportunity for the powerless to exercise agency by becoming part of the solution instead of part of the problem is embedded in the notion of 'wicked problems', where social life has become too complex to be resolved by one policy making agent (Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2007). Nevertheless studies of

collaborative working are fraught with difficulties about legitimacy, representation and accountability especially with effect to the voluntary sector. Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:165) endorse that these difficulties are compounded in representation from communities of identity or refugee communities especially those "*lacking full citizenship".*

Sullivan and Skelcher's description of power relations is based on *"differential assumptions of status, authority, expertise and legitimacy"* that combine to undermine the ability of collaboration to take action (2002:111). Throughout *Accommodate,* hact's concern was to develop the partnerships at strategic level to transform housing and fiscal policy (Figure 4:1). If Sullivan and Skelcher are correct in drawing correlation between levels of collaboration and participation then hact's intention should evidence representation of RCOs becoming wider-ranging and more structured as the stakeholder configuration increases in complexity (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Levels of collaboration and citizen participation

Implications for citizens	Strategic	Sectoral	Neighbourhood
Role	Representative – focus on community leaders and umbrella groups	Participative – focus on users and beneficiaries	Representative and participative – focus on users and community members
Proximity to community	Distant – infrastructure necessary	Close	Close
Remit	Wide-ranging	Focused on specific service	Focused on local well-being
Presence	Citizens one of many stakeholders present	Users a key stakeholder with providers and commissioners	Citizens one of many stakeholders, but with greatest interest

Source: Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:167)

It is a widely held view (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002) that a key characteristic of many UK partnerships is they are externally imposed. Local partners are often a condition in order to access funding so national Government usually has the most power over which communities are involved in collaborative action. Strategy for involvement of the socially excluded began with deprived neighbourhood communities but later involvement of marginalised communities meant communities of place, origin, identity and interest (Phillips, 1993; Etzioni 2000, Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Since the shift in focus from 'bricks and mortar' to wider social and economic considerations, network management theories are increasingly being used in housing research to better understand the complexities of decision-making (van Bortel, 2009); possibly because of the breadth of cultures and communication variation across a wide range of professional and voluntary sectors. Furthermore, network governance is being viewed as a beneficial method of engaging the community and in supporting social integration in urban regeneration programmes, on the assumption that a more level playing field engenders greater trust between partners (McLaverty, 2002; van Bortel *et al.,* 2007). However, community representation and legitimacy are interlinked and can be problematic especially within marginalised communities that are *"dynamic and changing"* (Wells, 2008:154). Sullivan and Skelcher (2002: 170-173) outline six main issues that compound the representativeness of community leaders in collaborative networks:

- The selection of community leaders without community credibility can affect the accountability and wider community involvement in the network

- Community leadership positions may be short-lived and can be silenced if representativeness is questioned

- There are tensions between the gatekeeper and gateway roles that community leaders play

- Community leaders can become incorporated and end up as unpaid professionals

- Individual community leaders are under great pressure and voluntary time commitment which can lead to 'burnout'

- The extent to which community representatives can engage depends on the level of capacity available to support them

Craig, Taylor and Parkes (2004) add to this the issue of autonomy of community leaders being threatened by their insider role although Craig *et al.* (2004:237) concluded that there will always be *"tensions between organisations operating at different ends of the spectrum"*. All these issues are relevant to *Accommodate* and the challenges involved in engaging marginalised and excluded communities are particularly germane. Past evaluation of the involvement of BME groups in regeneration confirms this (Loftman and Beazley, 1998). Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:177) note that lack of trust between such communities and statutory organisations can be linked to minority communities' *"scepticism"* that racist attacks and measures to address them are being taken seriously. They subsequently proposed (2002:181) that lack of trust and other barriers to engage hard-to-reach groups presented a challenge that required additional support like the creation of a

specialist body whose role it is to act as a *"block of influence"* within networks. Normative literature on network management theory points to the role of the network manager in this.

The role of the network manager
It is unlikely that actors build consensus by themselves and as Koppenjan and Klijn (2004:203) observe, managing the process relies *"crucially"* on a non-partisan facilitator that all actors trust, yet as commentators show, this role is not a neutral one. Klijn states that:

> *"Management is a fervently political activity; defined by the manager's attitude to solution seeking; their value system; their selection processes of both network actors and management strategies as well as the levels of transparency and accountability the manager demonstrates" (2008a:20).*

Governance and institutional capacity of a network would be deemed to be high and the outcome in the public interest if all stakeholders work together collectively (Neuman, 2000; Buitelaar and de Kam, 2009). It is commonly held within new public management literature that the theory of network management offers insight into three possible routes out of complexity and towards productive collaboration. Klijn (2005:3) summarises these as:

- an opportunity to manage the decision-making process
- an understanding of the stabilising factors that reduce complexity
- a set of managerial strategies to discover order and outcome

As has been discussed, opportunities can be taken or created and intricacy of interests and priorities can be reduced by building consensus through an understanding of the power dynamics; but managerial strategies are often developed in practice before they are acknowledged in theory. Since collaborative networks are horizontal; traditional instruments that worked in vertical structures are not necessarily effective. Also the network manager is not at the same altitude as the traditional governing actor so does not occupy the same overview and power of authority (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997).

Table 4.5: Strategies for network management

Game management	Network activation
	Arranging
	Brokerage
	Facilitating
	Mediation
	Arbitration
Network structuring	Influencing formal policy
	Influencing interrelationships
	Influencing values, norms, perceptions
	Mobilisation of new coalitions
	Management by chaos

Source: Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997:53)

Managerial strategies develop to steer both game and network structure (Table 4:5) in an environment characterised by many actors with multiple perceptions, unequal power and different values. The management dynamic seeks to affect the internal balance of values and norms as well as the interchange and interaction between players. Provocation and conflict can be used to 'jumpstart' a change in perceptions or behaviour.

Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:52) employ the image of *"institutional templates"* as a way of categorising institutional cultural norms, an image that Lowndes (1996) had previously espoused to show that organisations adapting to the dominant organisation's template achieved access to greater resource.

Challenges for network management

From the generally accepted understanding of the conditions for collaborative networks (Table 4:3), the challenges for network management can be summarised as follows (Table 4:6):

Table 4.6: Challenges for the network manager

- Identifying the gap in service provision
- Evidencing the reasons that the private sector cannot deliver
- Understanding the wider social complexities of the problem
- Getting the right actors together
- Maintaining actor interest
- Retaining a 'value' position
- Being able to identify the political environment

Source: Author's summary

The network manager's role is clearly problematic from the outset of the process: Identifying a gap in service provision implies tackling redistribution and reordering of resources and challenges the judgment of policy makers that has omitted addressing this gap. Identifying exactly what the gap in service provision consists of, relies on achieving consensus and engagement on the premise that it is in everyone's interest to redress the shortfall. It is therefore as much an ideological challenge as a practical one.

It could be argued that the UK is a social democracy where the common interest is defined by electoral decision and mandate. Issues about service provision are closely aligned to the fundamental question of who decides, what the 'common good' is. Yet Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2007:618) draw attention to the quest by social scientists over the last 40 years, for conceptualisation of governance processes evolving from the unresolved relationship between policy and administration where *"bureaucracy no longer provides the primary tool for 'social steering'".* Interests, suggest Koppenjan and Klijn (2004:142) are *"guided values"* that are linked more to the actor organisation's identity and perceptions than to specific social problems and are more enduring than policy objectives.

At the same time as retaining a value position, network managers have to take account of other contexts that are in a perpetual state of change. *Accommodate* took place in a swiftly changing policy milieu surrounding housing, dispersal, migration and integration strategy, the consequences of which had failed to interface (see Chapter 2). As Klijn (2008a) argued, network management has to consider conflicting values and priorities within a continual changing environment. What is more, Klijn noted difficulties arose in assessing boundaries because contact between actors does not necessarily correlate with interest levels.

Lukes, uses an apt example (relating coincidentally to the provision of housing) to address the point of interest levels:

"Because of the way the housing market functions in large cities, many ordinary non-affluent people lack access to decent, affordable housing. This can be seen as a structural problem insofar as it is the uncoordinated and unintended outcome of the independent actions of large numbers of actors pursuing their varied real-estate brokers, developers, land-use regulators, transport planners and so on. … So, of course, at the individual level, discriminatory landlords and corrupt officials have power; but at the city, corporate or national levels, politicians and others in 'strategic positions'… can be viewed as powerful to the extent that they fail to address remediable problems". (2005:67)

Getting the right actors together includes the community itself. Ansell and Gash (2008), along with earlier network/systems theorists found the engagement of service user themselves is central to identifying gaps in service provision. Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) and others illustrate the barriers to engaging with 'community leaders' especially those from marginalised communities. Beyond the practical difficulties of language and cultural barriers lies the more complex issues of lack of trust in a system that has failed to demonstrate equal treatment, equal protection and concern previously observed (for example by Challenor *et al.*, 2005). Community empowerment literature discussed in Chapter 3 concedes it is the process of exploring the problem with communities *"without imposing an external view"* that liberates thinking towards creative resolution (Ledwith, 1997:68). These considerations help to build a picture of what a 'transformative' network manager looks like; operating as hact does as 'agent of change'.

Outcomes, goals and evaluation

RCO empowerment evolved as one of five common purposes identified by the CURS Team in the early stages of *Accommodate*. To evaluate RCO empowerment as outcome means considering empowerment as both process and outcome (see Chapter 3). RCO empowerment in the process of *Accommodate* is therefore embedded in contextual measurement incorporating recognition, attitude and perception change. Measuring RCO empowerment as positive outcome often happens well after a project has finished (Baistow 1995; Anderson 1996; Laverack, and Wallerstein, 2001). Social policy can be performance driven and predetermined performance indicators are characteristic of a metric-driven approach. However, by definition, network management precludes predetermined outcomes where goals are negotiated and collaboratively supported. Koppenjan (2008:711) suggests that assessing performance by ex ante performance measures *"will not lead to learning processes, but to power struggles and blame games."*

Accordingly, an alternative theory-driven approach to evaluation is more appropriate in collaborative performance where joint-interest and purpose are modified over time by *"context, interaction and change"* (Skelcher and Sullivan, 2008:752). Buitelaar and de Kam (2009) note that in housing development; markets, hierarchies and network processes and structures are prone to change. The less hierarchical the governance structure, the less likely an outcome can be predicated from pre-ordained goals. For some authors there are two concerns about outcomes: whether actors were satisfied with the process and the way it was

steered, called the 'satisficing' principle (Crozier and Friedberg, 1980) or whether actors were more concerned with consensus building (De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1997).

Accommodate was established in such a way that outcomes were neither sanctioned in advance nor predicated by hact as funder: *Accommodate* was primarily innovative. It set out to learn by creating models to meet need and resolve tensions between migrant, ethnic and indigenous groups due to scarcity and availability of resources in the context of a housing market open to supply and demand economics and some limited state and third sector provision. Joint interests were therefore fundamental. Mullins and Jones (2009) concluded that joint interest evaluation was three-fold; satisficing, multi-goal achievement and decision-enrichment, but that a distinction needed to be made between joint goals i.e. everyone signing up to the same achievements and multiple goals where there was something in it for everyone:

> *"The solution to maintaining activation could be as much about acting on several tracks to meet high and low, short and long term goals with specialisation of actors in those areas of most interest to them, rather than involving everyone in joint actions" (2009:121).*

The CURS Team operated an evaluation framework in the role of 'critical friend', supporting self-assessment processes and national knowledge exchange workshops negotiated within five general areas of purposeful outcomes. These outcomes were seen to be modified both by contextual factors as well as network

management design. Later, in considering a theoretical analysis of outcomes, the CURS Team explored multiple goals versus joint goals and concurred with the hact member who observed in the final workshop:

> *"Those partnerships that had a clear and demonstrable purpose that was aligned to the interest of individual partners appeared to be most satisfied with the progress they made. These outcomes enabled small and large organisations engaged in the Partnership to develop some joint objectives. It galvanised support"* (Mullins and Jones, 2009:121).

The public actor's role

Network management theorists conduct an instructive debate about the setting of outcomes in partnerships by asking which actor(s) decides what is in the public's best interest. This debate recalls the previous discussion about political will (Chapter 2). De Bruijn and Ringeling (1999:152-162) explore in depth where the horizontal nature of networks prevents the local authority actor from occupying a traditional role. Some products of networks may differ from the political preferences of the local authority.

Traditionally a public sector role; making decisions about priorities in a fully engaged network may be jointly and consensually made or may be the source of great conflict (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). Klijn (2008:19) and others suggest a general pattern of correlation between the number and intensity of network management strategies and 'good' i.e. 'socially relevant' outcomes (Steijn *et al.,* 2008; Meier and O'Toole, 2001; Agranoff and McGuire, 2003). If the public sector

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is not in the management role and/or not aligned to the consensus or conflict, the public actor is in an invidious position. Klijn (2008) notes the basic function of a public body is to 'allocate values' that meet high moral standards in several ways:

- The special status of a public body is to guarantee the constitutional rights of the people it democratically represents

- Public organisations therefore have long-standing accountabilities when social problems arise

- Unlike other actors, public organisations have a number of instruments at their disposal like legislation and regulation

- Public organisations are the subject of democratic and political legitimisation which gives the public actor special status

These public sector characteristics relate to the tensions in collaborative networks in a particular way because democratic decision-making within the network can challenge the legitimacy of the public sector as it is about *"breaking down such positions of power"* (De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1997:154). It can lead to a lack of credibility and compromise if the decisions within the network are at odds with the standards and values that legitimise the public actor's authority. Recent research into the role of councillors and community representatives in community leadership suggests that participatory democracy can be employed alongside representative democracy to help resolve some of the issues raised by diverse communities where minority interests can get lost in *"mainstream generic representation"*

(Gudnadottir *et al.,* 2009:14). Mandell and Keast (2008:695) point to the importance of outside facilitation exercising awareness of potential sector conflict by using 'interest-based' negotiation and *"conscious management of networks" based on the strategies public officials use and the political choices made"* .

This issue is referred to as *"democratic anchorage"* in network governance regarding housing and regeneration projects (Munro *et al.,* 2006). It has become increasingly prominent as governance networks emerge as a more normative alternative to hierarchical decision-making at local level (Van Bortel and Mullins, 2009). Yet it is rash to assume that horizontal governance automatically leads to increased transparency or greater democracy and accountability (Mullins and Rhodes, 2007). As van Bortel and Mullins (2009) observe, critiques are surfacing to suggest that far from alternative governance underpinned by increased public participation, the collaborative network masks inequalities where the state is still dominant (Jones and Evans, 2006) or stronger professional partners dominate (Swyngedouw, 2005).

 Van Bortel and Mullins (2009:207-208) contend that *"governance networks can only have a positive effect on the democratic functioning of a society if these networks are themselves democratic",* therefore the rationale in democratically anchoring governance networks is to ensure that decisions are made in the interests of the political majority. Van Bortel and Mullins (2009) suggest that political control in this sense has been redefined as 'meta governance'. Sorensen and Torfing (2005:203-204) distinguish three different forms of meta-governance:

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network design i.e. by empowering certain actors to become key players with enhanced resources; *network framing* i.e. formulating goals, allocating resources and setting guidelines for interactions and *network participation* i.e. involving politicians in order to achieve insider knowledge and use political authority and leverage. While hact is not part of the democratic process itself, the role that hact played attempted to exert transformative change including the recognition of the constituency of RCOs within the democratic decision-making process about housing at neighbourhood level.

Conclusion

Network management theory enhanced understanding of the way that *Accommodate* delivered outcomes. Outcomes evolved collaboratively as partners developed local resolution to the problem of refugee access to housing services and were replicated as models to promote the learning. Network management also lends a language and vocabulary to identify and interpret the power dynamic that can sometimes only be observed and not evidenced in the traditional sense (see the next Chapter for more discussion about research methodology). It assists in understanding the role of hact who work simultaneously at national and neighbourhood level, as well as locating hact organisationally within network/systems where policy, collaboration and fiscal networks interrelate to promote change.

The discourse about social power established the structural and contextual parameters within which *Accommodate* had to operate. Conceptualising agency,

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structure and process helps to identify the 'engine of action' or agency that is required to support organisational power interests to converge and to bring 'unsafe issues' onto the governance networks' agenda. The literature shows that we cannot assume that resource-rich partners are inevitably the most powerful. While community actors can be disengaged if they perceive interaction as a 'talking shop', they can also be empowered by the acknowledgement of the value of their expertise and influence in decision-making. Locating the nature of social power in these Partnerships helps to clarify other drivers for action (or inaction).

Exploration of ideas of who decides what is in the 'common good' show that successful innovation and change in policy making rests on the negotiation of perceived or actual joint and multiple goals. Sorensen and Torfing (2005) and van Bortel and Mullins (2009) critically explore the progress that network analysis makes in defining levels of political control in governance networks. This meta-governance perspective can also help to further illuminate the initiatives that hact took in the *Accommodate* Partnerships. Finally this theoretical framework offers an alternative view of capacity building that is couched in terms of organisational empowerment to overcome the difficulties preventing marginalised communities' full engagement in the decision-making process.

Chapter 5: Approaching methodology and analysis

Introduction

Dynamics and innovation within *Accommodate* meant that researcher perspective, methodology and analysis required careful consideration (see Chapter 1). The decision to focus on RCO empowerment and what could be learned about theories of empowerment was concerned with building on existing theoretical frameworks. This Chapter begins with a discussion of the relationship between researcher's aim (*purpose*), the topic being researched (*object*) and research method[20] (Sayer, 1992) that is characteristic of a critical realist perspective (Fig.5.1). Consideration of the research approach using this model helped to meet the challenges inherent in *Accommodate* (Table 5.2)*.* By outlining how a critical realist tradition was adopted to address the power dynamics intrinsic to cross-sector collaboration, this section ends with a synopsis of the relationship between a critical realist perspective and the grounded approach that emerged as 'best fit' methodology to achieve research aims.

The next section illustrates the research methods in detail[21]. These are described in three discrete stages reaching beyond the three-year Project[22] designed to create a longitudinal perspective (Perakyla, 2004; Reason and Bradbury, 2008). An intense first stage identified emerging themes and took a thematic approach to data analysis. Stages 2 and 3 built links between themes to conceptualise findings and compare with existing theories. Taking a grounded approach to methodology i.e. researching concepts until saturation has been reached, enabled movement

and reflection between fieldwork and theory to stimulate thinking and build on established theory about power and empowerment (Figure 5.3). Data saturation is considered to have been reached when data has been gathered to *"the point of diminishing returns"*, when nothing new has been added (Bowen, 2008:140). Charmaz (2003) describes this as fitting new data into categories that have already been devised. Theoretical saturation is described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as the point at which no new themes or new insights can be obtained; Bowen (2008:148) calls this *"thematic exhaustion".* Longitudinal techniques were employed to capture the evidence of evolving power dynamics in the Partnerships (Chapter 4). Longitudinal study and constant comparison between categories to identify core concepts helped to satisfy the need for data and theoretical saturation. The methods and analytic process are outlined in this section followed by a discussion of ethical considerations especially when working with vulnerable participants.

While all data were coded to enable identification during the analysis stage, they were anonymised for writing up purposes. In this thesis the source of all data gathered in interviews, observations and conversations is unspecified. Where it was significant to the analysis individual respondents' roles were indicated. This became more important when considering data in terms of network management theory because the focus was on power dynamics between sectors (Chapter 7). My approach is best summarised as *"consequentialist-feminist ethics"* (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:37), committed to building empathetic long-term relationships. The decision to anonymise participants and Partnerships was made for three reasons:

Firstly it nurtured trust and overcame the association with negative trauma of a forced migration experience (Harris, 2004). Secondly, in not identifying specific Partnerships, it was easier to promote the learning without being openly critical, supplementing the Project's overall aim of 'promoting wider change' (Mullins and Goodson 2005, 2006, 2007). Thirdly, it allowed participants more autonomy because confidentiality was assured (Duke, 2002).

Lastly this Chapter reflects retrospectively on the research process and the impact my eventual approach had on the original research design (Appendix B). It concludes that a CASE-studentship opportunity can be maximised if a collaborative approach is taken to the research and benefits can be mutual. I had not realised how important reflection would be in a research project of this timescale. Reflection coupled with an interdisciplinary approach such as Holton (2006) describes linking personal, political and intellectual thinking helped to promote substantive theory building. With hindsight I could have made some judgments about recurring themes at an earlier stage but without a critical realist approach it is questionable whether a layer of synthesis could have been reached to deploy and develop theories of community empowerment and network management to conceptualise the social inclusion of marginalised communities.

Overcoming challenges

The work of Sayer (1992; 2000) was found to be particularly helpful in clarifying research aims, analysing the challenges and developing techniques to overcome them (Fig. 5.1) as the next section explains. It was also useful in helping to develop a robust approach to data analysis.

Figure 5.1: Selecting appropriate methods
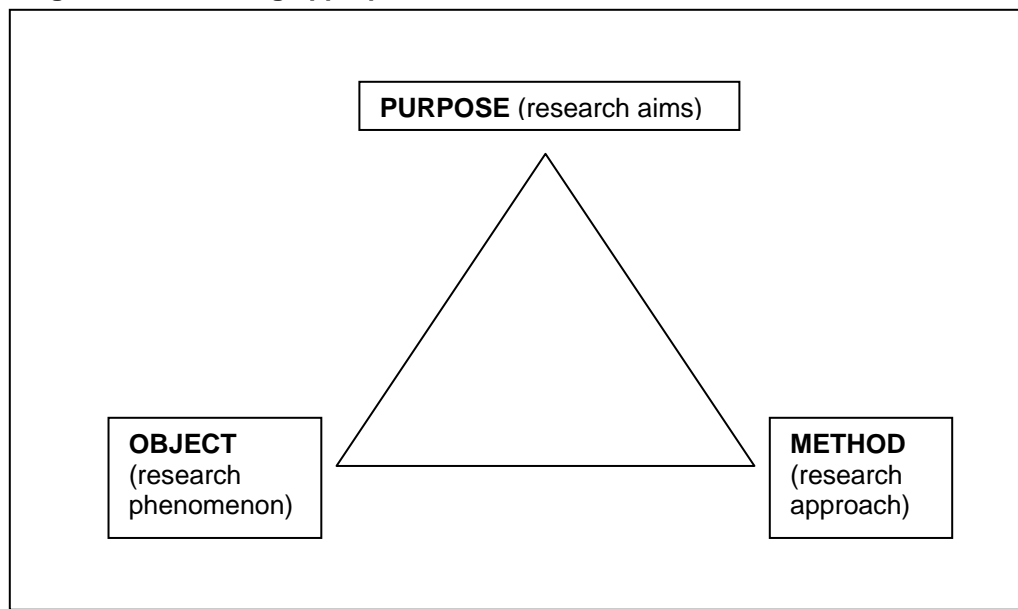
Source: Author based on Sayer (1992: 22-35)

In adopting a critical realist approach I was able to unravel the inextricable and sometimes indistinct relationship between *purpose*, *object* and *method*[23] (Sayer, 1992). This perspective uncovered the main challenges presented in the research field and developed the approach to deal with them. Several key interlinked challenges emerged (Table 5.2):

- *Working sensitively and constructively with people who have experienced forced migration (see column 2, Table 5.1)*

- *Accounting for the power differentials between partners*

- *Identifying and interpreting dynamic change and study process*

- *Developing research design where there has been little previous analysis of similar partnerships*

- *Managing and capitalising on the presence of other agencies involved in monitoring and evaluation*

- *Overcoming communication barriers*

- *Documenting good practice without unproductive narrative about what had not worked*

Using Sayer's model of 'purpose', 'object' and 'method' identified the most suitable research approach to overcome difficulties in research design and achieve my aim of exploring the dynamics within *Accommodate* in terms of community empowerment theory.

Table 5.1: Purpose, Object and Method to meet challenge

PURPOSE AND OBJECT	Challenge	METHOD
PURPOSE ❑ To learn from a research case Project that has little precedent within the UK refugee housing field ❑ To maintain a constructive narrative in promoting the learning	*Being faced with a unique set of partnerships and no methodological blue prints*	Adopt an 'emic[24]' inductive, reflective, approach during the entire research process.
	How to avoid damaging and negative reference to poor practice without distorting findings *How to deal sensitively with people who have experienced forced migration*	Focus on contextual factors to explain external barriers that inhibit partnership development. Anonymise quotations, camouflage, changing gender and avoid reference to place unless relevant.
BOTH PURPOSE AND OBJECT ❑ To work productively alongside hact (and other external agencies) and CURS Evaluation Team	*How to avoid duplicating findings and alienating RCOs and other partners by over-researching the field*	Take up opportunities to work together. Adopt participative roles in order to build relations and share ideas. Develop an independent PhD focus.
OBJECT ❑ To focus on the less powerful voluntary RCO partners ❑ To explore the partnerships as a dynamic changing process ❑ To study RCOs within their own cultural context as well as within the organisational cultural context of partnership working	*How to account for the differences in power and resource*	Employ a grounded approach to involve RCO participants in defining the initial focus and direction of the research. Explore the concept of power blocs between statutory and voluntary partners.
	How to study process and capture findings that indicate the changes both within and without the partnerships over the time span of the Project	Maintain a critical realist perspective to encapsulate societal structural change. Focus on interaction and emergence to identify where change happens. Employ staged entry into research field. Consider the implications and logistics of longitudinal analysis
	How to overcome barriers on the basis of language, perception, culture, understanding and communication. *How to ensure my own community development experience did not bias my findings*	Heighten awareness of culturally specific interactions e.g. between genders. Take an ethnographic approach. Use communities' own sayings and descriptors where possible. Question first assumptions of what is apparent especially in observation.

To a great extent hact's intent of innovating and disseminating learning from *Accommodate* defined *'purpose'*. The CURS Team developed this into two elements: *"achieving success together"*, focused on relations within the Partnerships and *"promoting wider change"* concerned with wider policy impact at national, regional and local level (Mullins and Goodson, 2005:4). Documenting learning inevitably leads to narrative about mistakes and lessons learned. In addition to hact's *purpose*, the CURS Team collaboratively agreed five thematic purposes (see Chapter 1). The PhD had to devise a way of working independently and collaboratively at the same time. Hact monitored and supported the Partnerships and brought other agencies into the Project at a later date. The on-going evaluation approach of the CURS Team meant regular visits to the Partnerships and increased activity in the research field.

The nature of the Partnerships, each with individual learning to offer, called for a qualitative, reflective outlook. Being spread across three regions meant access was a consideration; not only logistically but in hampering regular contact to build trust with participants. For the first six months of the PhD I worked as member of the CURS Team. This gave me an inside understanding of the evaluation strategy as well as the opportunity to put my own questions and develop links with all five Partnerships and helped develop researcher persona (Appendix C). Following the first stage of fieldwork I withdrew from the CURS Team in order to increase trust and ensure confidentiality and create an independent profile to facilitate what Miller and Glassner (2004:138) express as a more *"open-ended"* approach to participants.

An active role was maintained within hact e.g. as workshop facilitator and I discovered that this association supported my position of looking, as hact was, for social change for the better (Sayer, 2000). I was able to spend time with RCO partners and observation of power dynamics at play from their viewpoint was helped by taking a critical realist perspective (Glaser, 1993). Maintaining a constructive narrative and highlighting good practice was a challenge that came later and was on-going. This was dealt principally by anonymous and confidential data handling techniques. Later, RCO participants wanted assurance that their reflections would be integrated as *"legacies"* into my research (Miller and Glassner, 2004:131) which was an indication that this solution had been the right one.

An early decision had been made to concentrate research on the 'empowerment of RCOs in the process of partnership' creating two research focuses in terms of *object* (Sayer, 1992). Both participant and process were *objects* of the research in that RCO partners as well as the dynamic process of empowerment in collaboration were focal points. A principal challenge regarding *object*, therefore, was in developing a sensitive and respectful approach to RCOs, the partners least likely to have much power in the process of partnership working. Closely aligned to this challenge was the question of researching power dynamics. Change and complexity common to partnership working are brought about by the building of relationships and development of goals and outcomes (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; Sullivan, and Skelcher, 2002). External contexts brought about

change through revised migration and housing policy directives, activated at national, regional and local levels, often at the same time.

Some of the dynamic was prompted by hact who managed the network and invited other agencies to work across the Partnerships. The CURS Team represented an evolving relationship with participants perceived initially as external evaluator and transforming into the role of 'critical friend'. I quickly realised that fulfiling a CASE-studentship PhD entailed a challenge in its own right in building relationships with other agencies working on *Accommodate*. Managing this process emerged as both *object* and *purpose* as I found myself positioned within both agency and structure (Giddens, 1979, 1984). The generosity of hact and the CURS Team meant that over time, I was able to progress this challenge into an opportunity and develop researcher persona. Productive reciprocal relationships were cultivated as I adopted different roles inside their interventions to mutual benefit (Appendix C).

I worked collaboratively with the CURS Team, making a practical input into the community researchers' programme (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008) together with participation in the role of 'critical friend' (Mullins and Goodson 2007). This ensured I had regular interaction with all participants, which reflected my community development experience so it felt right to have this kind of recurring communication. Offering community development sessions to RCOs demonstrated that I was willing to reciprocate participants' time. The sharing of academic ideas was invaluable and pursuing joint writing opportunities with the lead member of the Team was an important capacity building exercise in my role as researcher (e.g. Mullins and Jones, 2009; Jones and Mullins, 2009). Supervision from within the

Team also proved extremely rewarding as one supervisor in particular was a seasoned qualitative practitioner and supportive of the wider perspective created by *"embrace"* of epistemology, ontology and methodology issues in a broader approach to research (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004:185). These working practices link back to practical challenges of *purpose.* Relationships with hact and the Team helped to overcome geographical dispersal, raised the PhD profile and endorsed credibility in the second and third stages of fieldwork.

Researching power dynamics

Closely aligned with the adoption of a critical realist perspective and the use of grounded methodology was the challenge of dealing with power differentials within this research field (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Lukes (2005) argued that our conceptualisation of power is always contested. What we are trying to understand and explain shapes our interpretation of the power dynamic, a methodological question that remains politically and morally contested. The combination of a critical realist perspective and grounded approach to methodology helped to focus attention on the interaction between partners within the partnership arena, an approach best illustrated by the critical realist concept of *"emergence"* (Sayer, 2000:11).

One of the basic characteristics of critical realism is the idea of *emergence;* that is, two conjoined features, which together create a new focus, built on interaction and inter-relation. This is particularly applicable to the study of partnership dynamics and was valuable in directing both fieldwork and analysis in contrast to reductionist

approaches that ignore emergent properties (Bhaskar, 1979). *Emergence* determines that roles and identities can only be explained in relation to one another or to institutions. A simple representation of this interrelation might look like this:

Figure 5.2: Emergence – a simple interpretation
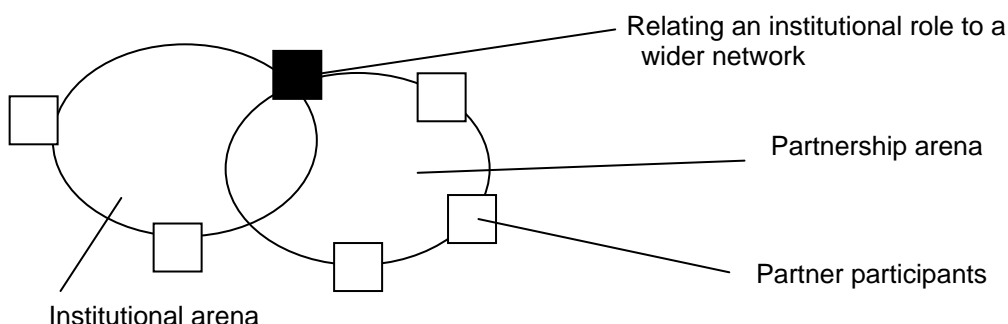
Source: Author based on Sayer (2000:12-13)

The reality, as commentators (See Chapter 4) have shown is that interrelation of roles and identities are far more complex (Fig 5.2). The complexity of contexts means that constituents cannot be reduced to single exchanges as social phenomenon is subject to change from all quarters (Sayer, 2000). This interpretation brings me to the second challenge connected with the *object* of the research, the difficulty in studying process.

Continuing interactions, the ebb and flow of relationships and trust; new actors joining and established actors leaving; together with a shifting policy climate, made a serious challenge when studying partnership dynamics as research *object*. In order to access rich and meaningful data (Geertz, 1973) the overall approach was intended to develop trust and long-term relations especially with RCO partners.

Good working practices with hact and the CURS Team assisted with this. However, it was the critical realist concept of causation that clarified how this challenge was to be overcome.

Causal power is an idea characteristic of a critical realist approach where a combination of constituents reacts with or on one another (Sayer, 1992). Causation helped me to cope with some of the complexities in the field. At the same time as several partner roles are being played out there are other conditions to take into account. For example, access to capacity building training and out-of-pocket expenses was observed to have a similar stimulation on RCOs' involvement in decision-making as interactions with other actors. Causation is a term borrowed from the natural sciences but in this perspective is not a method ratified by the number of times something happens as natural scientific experimentation is conducted. Evidence of causation depends on identifying causal mechanisms and how they work, in other words the "*production of change"* (Sayer, 2000:5). Material condition is therefore a factor affecting the relationship between causal mechanisms. Where material context is different similar mechanisms can react to produce different outcomes.

Within *Accommodate*, for example, the presence of an RCO Forum underpinning RCO involvement may also be a consideration but not necessarily an essential one. In conducting causation research, the fundamental question is how to identify relative causal mechanisms within the context they are operating. Sayer suggests that there are two guiding principles here: Firstly, to study the same causal

mechanisms to examine why they are producing different outcomes, in other words to discover 'contingent necessity' (1992; 2000). In practice for example, this might mean examining the contexts surrounding refugees being selected to carry out the Project Worker's role in different partnerships to examine why the outcomes are dissimilar. The second principle is to locate basic research questions in terms of what is necessary for causation. Rather than asking how regularly one occurrence affects another, the question would be, what is fundamentally for this reaction to occur? In relation to the existence of local Refugee Forums, a practical example of such an approach might be to enquire: What does the existence of a Forum presuppose in terms of RCO engagement in the *Accommodate* partnership? Could RCO engagement exist without the support of a Forum? What is it about a Forum that enables it to influence RCO engagement in partnership working?

The final challenge regarding RCOs as *object* was one of communication barriers. Included in this is not only language, understanding, interaction, and ethnic cultural difference but accounting for the different organisational norms in each Partnership. I was also consciously dealing with my own assumptions in terms of community development experience. Reflection via the use of memos, reflective, chronological notes on field research experience that are *"analytical and conceptual"* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:217) was a useful tool in meeting this particular challenge. Data were reconsidered several times especially where assumptions could more easily have been made, for instance during observations (Adler and Adler, 1998). For example, when one RCO leader walked out of a meeting, where there had been some misunderstanding, I thought it was related to

his dissatisfaction with the outcome of the discussion and focused on communication issues. When he did the same thing about the same time in a later meeting I discovered he had gone to collect his children from school. The observation reflected on instrumental issues like the timing of meetings that could have been better arranged for parents.

One of the benefits of employing a longitudinal approach was that similar incidents, attitudes, interactions could be examined more than once and interpretation reconsidered. A fundamental principle of a grounded approach is to research concepts until saturation is reached i.e. themes recurring rather than evolving (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). An attempt was made throughout to take an ethnographic stance, to learn more about the historical, political and cultural backgrounds of the refugee communities and to incorporate where feasible research terms couched in participants' own words (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). This was not to say that participants' contributions were accepted without question but the aim was to *"integrate"* their explanations into the wider *"interpretations"* of the thesis (op cit. 291).

Developing methodology
A critical realist perspective was particularly fitting where the intention was *"to engage marginalised people in the rethinking of their socio-political role"* (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003:439). Although the critical realist tradition is open to interpretation there were several key characteristics (Table 5.2) that guided my thinking about methodology as have been described above:

Table 5.2: Key characteristics of a critical realist research perspective

Characteristic
Society is believed to be made up of institutional structures within which power is unequally distributed
Generalisation to support a theory in research not only come from testing cause and effect many times over but by employing 'causation' i.e. studying dynamic interaction and outcome and asking how and why this has happened
Emergence, conceptualisation and change are essential elements of the dynamic
The 'object' i.e. phenomenon/topic does not change even if the policy focus changes[25]

Source: Author's summary based on Sayer (1992; 2000)

This tradition steered me towards a grounded methodology that seemed to be the 'best fit' to address the research challenges of *Accommodate* for a number of reasons. A grounded theory perspective is one of the most widely used qualitative interpretative frameworks in the social sciences to date and answered a need for qualitative research to relate to a *"good science model"* (Denzin, 1998:330). At a critical juncture in social science history grounded methodology countered the view that quantitative studies exclusively provided systematic method for scientific inquiry (Charmaz, 2003). The focus is on analytical strategy and consists of a qualitative, systematic yet inductive process to collecting and analysing data (Appendix D). It forms a robust qualitative research approach with a set of well-developed connected themes *"systematically inter-related through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework"* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:22) to explain socially relevant phenomenon such as RCO empowerment. Key elements of a grounded approach are; a clear set of defined steps (Denzin, 1998); a fit with feminist and other post-modernist interpretative styles; (op. cit.) and an inductive approach to collecting and analysing data with a view to building social theory

(Charmaz, 2003). The purpose in this study was to build substantive theoretical frameworks to develop *"analytical interpretations"* of data (Appendix E). Initial interpretations helped to guide the next stages of fieldwork which were used to *"inform and refine"* theoretical analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:249-250). A grounded approach is conducive to theory building and the on-going cycle between interpretation and analysis provoked reflection and the interplay of ideas (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Layder (1993:152), however, critiques grounded theory for only examining power at micro-interactionist level, thereby limiting a wider analysis of tensions and conflicts between people and networks. He argued that application of this approach without a structural overview is in danger of neglecting *"macro institutional realities"* and he emphasised the need for notional theories of power. Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:96-97) also noted that the level at which collaborative arrangements operate, concerns *"fundamental questions about the distribution of power and authority between major groups in society"*. The principal aim of *Accommodate* was to learn from local models in collaboration where power dynamics were to the fore. The relationship between researcher perspective and methodology addressed these concerns in *Accommodate.* In this study at both partnership and institutional levels the development of a theoretical standpoint was important in order to consider the bigger picture: A perspective was required in which assumptions could be made to account for power differentials, for example, that established Westernised cultures are not *"unproblematically democratic and free"* (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003:436). Institutional barriers such as racism and social exclusion applied equally

to the constraints surrounding refugee housing needs and aspirations as did access to voice at local level. (See Chapter 2 for more discussion about barriers to RCOs' participation).

Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989) argued that it is relatively easy to come to the conclusion that ethnic disadvantage is created by a combination of cultural choice, economic disparity, institutional policies and practices and racial or cultural discrimination. The researcher's challenge is to clarify how they combine and how opposites like cultural choice and economic determination are *"mutually reinforcing"* in practice (1989:39). They suggest that it requires a research method that can identify the combined impact of a range of factors together with a theoretical position that interprets interaction between factors and levels (op. cit.). They look to the structuration school (Giddens, 1976; 1979; Bhaskar, 1979; Thrift, 1983) that attempts to address the gap between an individual and a structural approach and one which allows for a *"strong role for structures in explaining events, even where they involve apparently free choices"* (1989:42). Giddens (1976; 1979) interprets the gap between structures and individual as 'system' i.e. the rules and resources that individuals draw upon to make choices. Urry (1982) proposes that structures change through 'social struggles' which can include innovation like the advances made in *Accommodate.* Sarre, Phillips and Skellington (1989:52) argued that studies of migrants appear to have a particular potential for studies of the process of structuration i.e. social struggle because they may *"behave in ways which contradict the new structural rules of both the indigenous society and /or assimilating ethnic minorities".* These conceptualisations

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of structure helped me to understand RCOs potential for social change within *Accommodate* and resonated with a critical realist view of power especially its redistribution to enable inclusive housing and integration policies. A grounded methodology further assisted in being able to analysis interpretations of the organisational development of RCOs within theories of organisational power dynamics concerning community organisations on the margins of society. This kind of reflection helped to refine my original research design.

Methodology

Revising the original research design

Originally I had hoped to track individual refugees benefiting directly from each Partnership's solutions to housing services, in order to create an image of how the process developed (Appendix B). Both refugees and RCOs are prone to outside pressures and kinship demands. They suffer more unpredictability in their lives than settled communities (Bloch, 2002) so it would have been difficult to develop sustained long-term relationships under these conditions. This shift to an organisational focus did not rule out learning from individual experiences, which I did throughout the fieldwork but I realised the earlier decision of trying to track a cohort of individuals was impractical. An alternative, and one more appropriate to researching power dynamics within networks, was to track the organisational advance of RCOs as *Accommodate* progressed. I used mixed methods at appropriate stages during the fieldwork to achieve this including; guided conversation, semi-structured interview, varying degrees of participant observation and participatory action research.[26]

Data collection, analysis and interpretation became a two-way on-going process, each stage informing and helping to direct the next towards theoretical precepts within the literature for comparison (Figure 5.3). In this way I was able to explore links between themes with the aim of developing substantive theories in the field (Appendix F).

Figure 5.3: Steps in a grounded approach

•	First Step:	6 months rigorous grounded fieldwork
•	Second Step:	analytical comparison with existing theory
•	Third Step:	re-entry into the research field to test theory
•	Fourth Step:	further analysis of findings
•	Fifth Step:	ethnographic case study to further explore theory
•	Sixth Step:	further analysis and theory-building

Source: Author's summary

Figure 5.4 below depicts an overview of the three stages of fieldwork and the assumptions that defined each stage. An advantage of the first and most rigorous stage was that participants were involved in identifying the main research themes. The key research question: "*How did RCOs become empowered within the Accommodate Project?"* developed by the main research themes and examination of theoretical frameworks to evolve five subsequent research questions as follows:

- *What was the significance of organisational recognition in the process of RCO empowerment?*
- *What were the barriers to RCO engagement and involvement in the process?*
- *How were these barriers overcome?*
- *How did hact's role impact on RCO empowerment?*
- *At what point in the process can empowerment be considered an outcome?*

Figure 5.4: Three Stages of Fieldwork

Stage One: 11.05-06.06
Grounded approach, evolution of research THEMES

1. **The Confidence of RCO partners**
2. **The role played by hact**
3. **Partnership rules of engagement**
4. **External Contexts**

Network Management Theory

Theories of power in society

Stage Two: 11.06-09.07
Participant Observation and structured interviewing to explore

The power dynamic within the Partnership arena
External power dynamics

Stage Three: 01.08-04.09
Ethnographic Case Study using action research

Community empowerment

Social capital

Inter-community relationships
RCOs' role in social cohesion
The power of recognition

Scope for further research:
- ❑ RCOs and social transformation
- ❑ The politics of migration
- ❑ RCOs at meso-level
- ❑ Marginalisation as process
- ❑ The role of women in RCOs
- ❑ Citizenship, rights and belonging
- ❑ Social class, asylum and settlement

Source: Author's summary

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In Stage 1, four main themes evolved enabling a robust appraisal against existing theory about the negotiation of social power in collaboration. Themes and inter-relations between them were reconsidered using network management theory (see Chapter 4). In Stage 2 this theory was used to assist explanation of both partnership dynamic and network management in role played by hact. It presented a framework for further exploration of power to incorporate both partnership and wider contexts. The third and final fieldwork stage took an in-depth ethnographic case study approach focusing on an exit study with key RCO participants in one of the five Partnerships) to examine theories of community empowerment and social capital (see Chapter 3). Studying the development of the core theme (RCOs' confidence) at a micro level stimulated reflection about the power of recognition to overcome institutional barriers to engagement (see Chapter 6).

Staging the fieldwork

In summary, a grounded methodology approach fitted the research project and theoretical perspective most appropriately for a number of reasons:

Figure 5.5: The benefits of a grounded approach

• It is highly inductive and promotes reflection
• It enables respondents to participate in the process
• Process and thinking can be tracked
• It brings together the procedure of data gathering and analysis in order to account for change
• It is not method-bound i.e. a variety of data gathering techniques could be used
• It is both systematic and creative
• It is commensurate with substantive theory building

Author's summary based on amalgam of studies

Stage One

Fieldwork evolved into three discrete stages. The first stage was opportunity-led and comprised 19 semi-structured interviews; 7 guided conversations and 20 participant observations. Fifteen of the semi-structured interviews were by phone to participants from Phase I and II of the Project (Appendix H) while the remaining four were with Project Workers from Phase II in the role of research student as were the guided conversations. Twelve of the participant observations were made as a member of the CURS Team, the remaining eight was conducted in the role of workshop participant/facilitator (Appendix C). The taking on of roles within fieldwork can be problematic but Sayer's (2000) notion of 'emergence' was evidenced by the way these encounters changed the extent to which I was accepted and trusted over time. Taking on this role, and later the role of participant/facilitator across the Partnerships, helped to introduce and promote the study. It also overcame some of the geographical challenges and provided openings to forge relationships within the Partnerships.

Coming from a white British background I had some reservation that miscommunication might hamper qualitative interviewing and was aware of the argument for a 'matching' approach between interviewer and interviewee on the basis of mutual identity. Nonetheless, fieldwork experience in the first stage convinced me of the validity of Gunaratnam's (2003:81) critique of *"matching analysis"*. She argues that making race and ethnicity a primary variable in the interviewing process is a simplistic analysis using only one *"category of difference"* when there are so many multi-cultural realities and interpretations to take account

of. While I was alert to the need for cultural sensitivity my approach of transparency, reciprocity (Wallerstein and Duran, 2003; Maiter *et al.,* 2008) and the offer to use my community development skills to support RCOs built trust and good relations. This approach added to the goodwill between partners and the CURS Team's and benefited their emerging role of 'critical friend'. Following this stage it seemed timely to withdraw from the evaluation process to establish confidence and confidentiality in the researcher/participant relationship.

In keeping with a grounded approach, I avoided adopting structured interview techniques. Instead, I encouraged, particularly RCO partners, both as volunteers and in the role of Project Workers to expand on their views of the Project and its progress in the partnership process. I was able to compare views together with notes shared from visits by the hact Project Manager and the CURS Team. Memos promoted reflection and assisted in identifying 'contingent necessity' and analysis during this period (Sayer, 1992; Charmaz, 2003). Analysis of the first stage of fieldwork data was participant-inspired and systematically categorised (Appendix D). Themes were allowed to emerge through the data, analysed chronologically to reflect change and suggest dimension within themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Findings were influenced by external contexts and the complexity of social and interactive dynamics that go beyond simple interpretation reliant on ethnicity, gender, age and class (Gunaratnam, 2003). It appeared that the central drivers affecting '*RCO confidence'* (theme 1) reflecting empowerment were equally the '*partnership rules of engagement'* (theme 3) and '*the external role of hact'* (theme 2) and demonstrated a synergy between them (Fig. 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Interplay between four core themes

4. External Contexts

1. Refugee Community Organisations – CONFIDENCE to engage

3. Partnership Rules of the game

The role of the Local Authority Partner

The Role of the Project Worker

2. The outside role of hact (agent of change)

RCOs' self-help functions in countering loss of identity and belonging

A role in resettlement

Refugees' Quality of Life
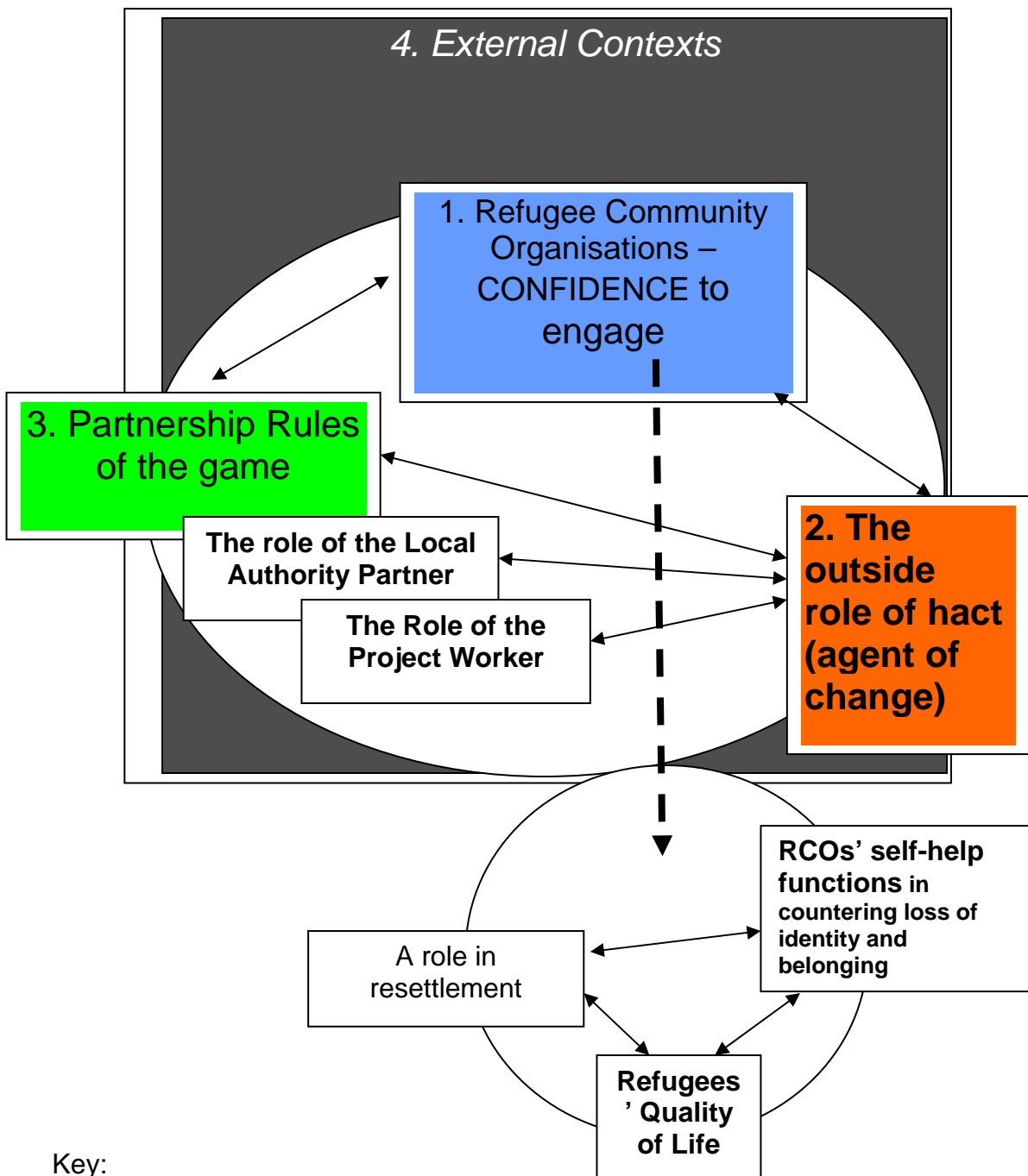
Key:

RCOs' potential for partnership working linked to confidence to participate (1)

The 'agent of change' role played by hact (2)

Internal partnership working governed by formal and informal rules (3)

External contexts that affect interaction within and without partnership working

Source: Author's summary

Stage Two

Four core themes (linked by sub-themes e.g. *the role of the Project Worker and the Local Authority Partner*) evolved from the grounded approach (Fig 5.5) that characterised the first stage. Comparison of findings with network management theory supplied a highly relevant framework in interpreting the role that hact played (theme 2). It also shed light on the effect hact had on the partnership process (theme 3). In addition to the influence of contextual changes in migration and housing policy (see Chapter 2) apparent in theme 4, it appeared that many of the characteristics of network management theory could be identified in the power dynamics observed during the first stage of fieldwork. Therefore a second stage was devised to explore the theoretical 'fit' more closely and research methods were selected accordingly.

Initially a structured topic guide (Appendix G) was used to explore the notion of 'power blocs' between the 'political' sector of local authority partners, the 'social' sector of independent housing providers and the 'voluntary' community sector. This attempted to find commonality between Partnerships on the basis of organisational culture and outlook, resulting in 31 interviews. Alongside this approach 25 observation days took place across the partnerships, locating the perspective within the RCO element where possible. This involved shadowing Project Workers, taking a voluntary participant role in RCOs' day-to-day activities and attending Partnership and Refugee Forum meetings where possible. Many opportunities were created for data gathering and trust building through numerous informal

conversations during this stage. The chance to observe how changes in policy at national level were dealt with firsthand was of additional benefit.

Stage Three

While three of the core themes appeared to act as drivers and qualifiers of the pivotal theme of RCO confidence within the partnerships, I felt a need to further pursue RCOs within their own cultural context as well as within the organisational cultural context of partnership working to improve my understanding of empowerment (Fig 5.6). RCOs engaged in considerable outside activity that impacted on their role within *Accommodate.* I wanted to understand the lack of rationale that emerged in the first Stage between RCOs' internal self-confidence compared with the way they were sometimes perceived as a precarious business risk (see Chapter 6). I was aware from my own experience and other studies that RCOs operated in an unrecognised zone delivering a variety of services 'below the radar', and fulfiling social, collective and individual needs in a way that was not generally acknowledged by service providers (Chapter 3).

Accommodate did not isolate housing from resettlement and the RCOs role in it. Intriguingly RCOs, from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds had worked smoothly together on the Project and I wanted to investigate this in the context of integration as well as community empowerment. One Partnership had delivered a newly-established Resource Centre as outcome of *Accommodate* and offered an ideal ethnographic study opportunity. The lead partner underpinned the project with a guarantee of rent and maintenance for three years, tackling two of the principal

barriers to RCO activity, those of premises (place) and social recognition (space) (See Chapter 3).

Even without the consideration of research reciprocity (Wallerstein and Duran, 2003; Maiter *et al.,* 2008) it would have been indefensible not to have taken part in the daily routines of groups working there; some RCOs were embryonic and struggling for their first funding break and others trying to deliver services in an uncertain economic climate. In return, RCO representatives were generous with their thoughts and time so I was able to supplement observations with in-depth conversations. As well as helping generally I was fortunate enough to take part in the inauguration of the newly-emerged international women's association that brought together female refugees, secondary migrants, host BME community members and economic migrants under one banner. I was invited to contribute my support on the management committee.

Use of secondary data
The CURS Team reports and hact's Project Co-ordinator's notes have been used as secondary data to substantiate primary data. Reports, policy guidance and good practice examples are an important resource to stimulate questions and creative thinking, increase analytical sensitivity and add to theoretical sampling as well as confirm findings or identify discrepancies (Strauss and Corbin: 1998). However, a critical realist perspective is conscious of political bias so that, *"documents are now viewed as media through which social power is expressed"* (May, 2001:183). A more obvious example of potential bias is negative media coverage of refugee

issues but policy documents and guidance are politically partial. As far as possible secondary data were put through the rigour suggested by Scott's four criteria of *"authenticity; credibility, representativeness and meaning"* and a critical analytic stance have been taken to examine *"the ways in which a text attempts to stamp its authority upon the social world it describes"* (Scott 1990:195).

The data handling and interpretative process

My thinking developed on the handling of data as the study progressed and was incorporated into the research design (Fig. 5.4). Some researchers use qualitative methods but analyse them quantitatively (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). A grounded approach meant qualitative data were put through a *"nonmathematical process"* in order to discover concepts and relationships between them. (op. cit. 1998:11) At the outset data were systematically organised into themes that eventually developed properties and dimensions. For example, one sub-theme that seemed to be emerging was *refugees' quality of life.* Properties emerging from this asked further questions of the data such as:

- Are all the negative dimensions context-related?

- Do some refugees suffer greater stress than others?

- How does loss of status affect people's self-esteem?

- What role do RCOs play to improve quality of life?

- How is housing need being defined by local providers?

Dimensions were charted to examine to what degree these properties were evident. Another emerging sub-theme was *RCOs self-help functions*. My previous experience working with Somali self-help groups was useful here. Properties relating to this ask questions such as:

- Is accountability an issue for this partner?

- Does this partner represent their own or their constituent views?

- Does this partner think strategically as well as locally?

- Is there a typology of RCOs emerging?

Dimensions emerged from properties such as levels of entrepreneurialism and degrees to which the RCOs were networked or recognised by other agencies.

The next interpretative step was to define and rate themes according to their properties and dimensions – to 'conceptually order' - and evolve sub–themes where necessary. (A theme is a phenomenon such as a problem, an event or a happening that is significant to the respondent). The first stage of what grounded theorists term theory building (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), as opposed to theory testing, was to reference relationships between the most developed themes; for instance, the link between the second and third theme i.e. how exactly did the 'role of hact' (theme 2) impact on 'partnership rules of engagement' (theme 3). I began to examine how all partners defined their roles, what happened when there was an overlap or mismatch in roles, how was partner-interest maintained and what role did hact play.

In this way, theory development brought together structure and process. 'Structure' in this context represents the contextual conditions that created a situation for the 'process' of synergy, action and interaction to take place. A Partnership meeting is one of the most obvious structures to examine. Observing process within that might mean focussing, for example, on what routines and procedures enabled or disbarred RCOs from making an input. Approaching initial data analysis in this way meant that I was equipped with a participant-led dataset based upon considered interpretation that paved the way for further theory development in subsequent stages of fieldwork.

Taking a qualitative approach
Qualitative participative methods offer a series of advantages when researching policy and implementation networks (Duke, 2002:42-43), making it easier to:

- focus on broader questions rather than narrow ones
- access thick descriptions by entering the world of those involved in the observed networks than from the side-lines because perceptions and experiences are key to interactions and conflicts
- explore innovation and originality
- recognise the viewpoint of the respondents and therefore behave ethically in interpretation and analysis

Data gathering was not a straight-forward process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Reflection extended from the raw data to analysis, from analysis to theory and back to raw data again before consolidation, throughout all stages. Using memos as self-reflective notes helped the interpretative process. Choice of methods was

defined by purposive and ethical considerations best summarised as *"consequentialist-feminist ethics"* committed to nurturing trust and long-term relationships (Denizen and Lincoln, 1998:37). These methods are discussed individually below.

Guided conversation

Guided conversation was a common feature of both observation and participatory action research methods throughout. Note-taking was done either during (if the situation allowed without contrivance) or as soon after the conversation had ended. If there was a memorable quote I would ask permission to use exact words, otherwise I recalled the substance of the conversation in a diary by use of 'trigger' words. 'Triggering' is a teaching device often used when helping students retain an example of a particular technique or skill by associating its application to something already memorised.

Some of the conversations I had with participants were strategic and prepared. Many were opportunist and helped to picture build themes and sub-themes. Where conversations were guided I was able to make notes and ask permission to use verbatim quotes, ensuring anonymity at all times. Where conversations were ad-hoc I used trigger mechanisms to recall the framework of what had been discussed. The nature of communication differed a great deal within the Partnerships and relied on organisational culture. Some Partnerships met formally, used a fixed agenda and took minutes of meetings; others communicated regularly in between meetings using informal methods, emails, phone conversations etc.

The majority of ad-hoc conversations were with the RCOs because I spent most time with them. As the Project progressed they were increasingly frank with me about their reservations, expectations and aspirations within the Partnership process.

Observations of non-verbal issues like pauses, turn-taking, demeanour and tone were included when writing up data gathered in this way (Adler and Adler, 1998) so that the *"meaningful character of discourse or communication interaction is emergent rather than reducible to physical behaviour"* (Sayer 2000:5). Whether the actor was an independent housing provider, Local Authority or RCO partner was indicated where relevant and all conversations were located within a political, cultural or social context as applicable. Wherever possible actors own words and perspectives have been closely adhered to in the writing up of guided conversations.

Observation

All observations have been carried out as a participant to varying 'insider' degrees, whatever role had been assumed. I was conscious of this and tried to be as transparent as possible when undertaking observations. I moved *"between two thought positions",* from an *"insider perspective"* to the *"perspective of an imagined outsider"* (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003:373). Being aware of contexts avoided jumping to conclusions and led to questioning initial assumptions about people's apparent behaviour. An extract from this memo captures the process: *"Participant observation puts pictures in your head that you can return to over and over again*

and eventually some of it comes together like pieces of a jigsaw" (2Xr2).

Qualitative researchers value the opportunity to observe, as one that enables them to get close to the participants' perspective. Interpretation of actions often falls, as Silverman puts it, between the two stools of "*rational logic" or "logic of sentiment"* (2004:344). Yet context and the myriad ways in which people behave in different contexts, had to be taken into account. For Sayer (1992), these considerations are fundamental to conceptualisation: Even when events are put into context there are difficulties in making deductions:

> *"The dangers are clear in cases where associations, which are accidental or 'contingent' (neither necessary nor impossible) are treated as if they were necessary properties of objects. For example, bad housing may be associated with occupation by members of racial minorities and racist thinking may treat this contingent – and hence changeable – relation as a necessary, essential characteristic of such people by virtue of their race. In unexamined thinking, sets of associations can inadvertently 'leak' from one object or context to fix upon another".* (1992:61)

It is considerations such as these, which made clarity about researcher perspective so crucial at the outset. Consideration of research methods within this perspective is expanded below.

Participant Observation (role-taking)

In keeping with a grounded approach I entered the research field with little preconception about the Partnerships apart from past professional experience of multi-agency working. I adopted roles on the basis of opportunities offered as well

as research strategy (Appendix C). Adler and Adler (1998:84-86) define observer-as-participant roles into three categories. Firstly the 'peripheral membership role' is one where insider identity is established with little participation in core group activities and best describes the role that I took in relation to the Partnerships as a member of the CURS Team. Secondly, the 'active membership role' describes researchers becoming involved in activity without full commitment to members' values and goals. This relates to the role taken in the second stage of fieldwork, involved in the day-to-day activities of the RCOs. The third definition is the 'complete membership role' where study is done from the inside. It reflects the role I took in participation action research in the third and final stage. Several roles were adopted in all, partly due to the nature of the CASE-studentship and partly due to the longitudinal perspective taken to fieldwork: I functioned as an evaluator, a facilitator for hact, as a community researcher mentor (also in Stage 2) and as a volunteer participant.

However, it was the issue of taking on roles that prompted reflection about researcher persona in research methods. People reacted slightly differently to me depending which role I adopted. For instance, when I operated as a member of the CURS Team, people behaved as if there was an assessment element to our interchange, not apparent when I presented in the role of PhD student. Whereas in the role of volunteer action participant, despite the fact that users were introduced to me in a research capacity 'our resident student', there was an expectation that I would get involved. I supported some of the longer-term needs of community

groups such as accessing funding and public liability insurance, designing promotional material and helping to build membership bases.

On reflection, my final thinking about participant observation was that it seemed to evolve its own dimensions. In other words, I found that trust and acceptance built up over time and interviews were more productive where these relationships had been developed (Table 5.3). In fact it was easier to investigate quite sophisticated research phenomena like empowerment, exclusion and integration. This was most apparent in later stages of fieldwork when people were at ease with the interview process, assured that their opinions and experiences would be accurately aired within the study.

Table 5.3: Interviews and their dimensions

Format	Role	Setting	Purpose	Stage
Structured	CURS Team member	Formal: pre-arranged	Assessment/ Participant self-evaluation	First
Semi-structured	PhD Student	Formal: pre-arranged	Exploring theory	Second
Semi-structured	Participant in action research	Pre-arranged In field	Exploring research phenomena	Third
Semi-structured	Facilitator	Pre-arranged	Exploratory	First
Semi-structured	Participant observer	Pre-arranged In field	Comparative	Second
Semi-structured	Participant in action research	Spontaneous in the field	Exploring research phenomena	Third
Informal	PhD student	Spontaneous in the field	Exploratory	First
Informal	Participant observer	Spontaneous in the field	Comparative	Second
Informal	Participant in action research	Spontaneous in the field	Exploring research phenomena	Third

Source: Author based on Fontana and Frey (1998:55)

Interviewing

When using a mixture of interview formats in different settings and taking on various roles, correlation appeared between the staging of the interview and its purpose, rather than the role, format and setting (Table 5.3). One possible conclusion is that trust, accumulated over time, was a more significant factor than the interview format, role and setting itself, in matching method with *purpose*. I noticed that interviews in early fieldwork did not achieve the same rich data as later interviews even when they were informal and spontaneous. In addition, the five Partnerships selected for diversity and innovation meant comparators did not evolve but became to some extent, contrived.

This was particularly evident in attempting a power bloc analysis, trying to compare the views of the voluntary sector, the independent housing sector and the sector embodying political will i.e. the Local Authority partners across the network. While there were clearly dynamics at play affecting RCO empowerment that could be identified by the notion of power blocs and evidence of network management tools to overcome obstacles to power-sharing, I sensed that the analysis could fall into the trap of reductionism. I needed to also account for causal powers to understand **why** actors behaved the way they did as well as **how.** I needed to understand what was happening "*in terms of powers, which may exist even when not being exercised*" (Sayer, 2000:6; also in the work of Lukes, 2005). This understanding is fundamental to a critical realism perspective that focuses on the least powerful partners. This was part of the reason I went on to complete a third stage of fieldwork exploring the social capital that RCOs had within the context of their own

communities. By using participatory action research I was able to get close to the RCOs in this case study and better understand the obstacles and barriers that RCOs faced and better understand the process of community empowerment (see Chapter 4 for more discussion about social capital).

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

There were methods other than PAR that could have been adopted at this stage but the PAR tradition embodied perspectives that were the most appropriate to a critical realist stance. Action research has been associated with the promotion of social justice for some time (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Greenwood, 2002; Lennie, 2005; Hilsen, 2006). Lennie (2005:392) notes the increasing use of PAR methods since the 1980s as part of a more *"inclusive, social justice-based"* approach to community-based interventions. Yet PAR is not without challenge.

Table 5.4: Why Participatory Action Research?

- It is concerned with oppressed/marginalised communities
- It attempts to address power imbalance by working in partnership with researched communities
- It values the expertise of the researched communities
- It tries to create action as a catalyst for social change
- It is developmental and depends on a cycle of research, learning and action

Source: Author based on Reason and Bradbury, 2008

Grant *et al.* (2008) stimulated my thinking about strategy to overcome some of the challenges in adopting a PAR approach and in doing so outlined some of the key skills necessary for effective community development practice (Table 5.4), most of which coincided with a community development practitioner's role.

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Table 5.5: Overcoming the challenges of PAR

Challenges	Strategies	Required Skills
Building relationships	Honest communication Learning about the communities Building informal relationships Regular meetings	Communication skills Able to express needs Able to help others express needs
Power sharing	Reflect on sources of inequity View research project as learning opportunity for all Demystify research process Encourage community involvement at all stages Create mechanisms to address abuses of power	Reflexivity Humility Facilitation and group process skills Awareness of the mechanisms of power and oppression Willingness to cede power Capacity building
Encouraging participation	Address barriers to participation Offer options for participation Be prepared to renegotiate Communicate regularly with all stakeholders	Communication skills Organisational skills Flexibility Motivational skills Capacity building skills
Making change	Accept that change can be a slow process Discuss purposes of project and the pace of change Work together to create a plan for change Recognise times for the researcher to step away Understand action and research as complementary and iterative	Knowledge of intervention strategies Negotiation skills Facilitation skills Capacity building
Establishing credible accounts	Encourage community control and participation at all stages Privilege community knowledge Be clear about decisions Work with most interested community members	Knowledge/skill related to a variety of research paradigms Humility Motivation skills Facilitation skills Capacity building skills

Source: Author adapted Grant, Nelson and Mitchell (2008: 589-601)

Ragland (2006:171) captures the experience of participatory action research most closely for me when she says that *"we act in the present with a sense of our own past"* to create a perspective necessary to evaluate involvement and participation in practice. Although I found myself, sharing ideas and experiences and taking a hands-on stance to whatever was happening at the time as I would have as a practitioner, I was able to control the distance that I needed to take a disinterested

view of my own actions. I typed up one RCO's annual report, designed flyers, helped with consultation at a Refugee Forum, analysed a questionnaire and worked on house renovation (my skills with a hammer did not endear me to others!). There was a possibility that locating myself in such proximity to RCOs might have led to a reluctance to be critical and to record mistakes that they made. This issue was tackled in retrospective discussions after the Project had finished. However, the proximity that a participatory approach cultivated with participants ensured careful thinking about ethics.

Ethical considerations

Ethical responsibility towards participants

It is generally accepted, by researchers involved with refugee people seeking asylum that sensitivity is required when using textbook research methods (Bloch, 2007). For example, the use of written consent forms and tape recorders can be associated with negative trauma and border checks from the forced migration experience. Fieldwork was approached with this understanding. Adler and Adler (1998) noted that observational research is one of the least intrusive data gathering techniques but it can fall into the trap of invasion of privacy and misrepresentation. Great care was taken in making assumptions and I waited for invitations to observe meetings etc. and participants were reassured that their contributions would be treated confidentially. What was interesting in this was that the offer of confidentiality also helped me in most cases, to get as Duke's (2002:46) calls it, *"beyond the official line".* Powerful gatekeepers, who otherwise may have resisted researcher intrusion, were more willing to talk *"off the record".* The writing up of

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fieldwork data was dealt with similar rigour to ensure anonymity so camouflage devices such as changing the gender or location of a respondent were employed to safeguard this. This was a major challenge in relation to the spatial focus of the five Partnerships and led to some careful thought and supervision discussions, resulting in the decision to concentrate my account on themes and issues rather than attempting crude comparisons between the geographical areas.

There was some concern that role-taking could mislead participants but hact and the CURS Team were conscientious in introducing the PhD role even when I was invited to facilitate or evaluate. The modest scale of the study field ensured everyone became aware of the CASE-studentship. Turnover in Project personnel, particularly within the RCO partners, was a further consideration. Being aware of it ensured I regularly explained my remit and role. During participant observations in Stage 2, I was invited to sit-in on advice sessions and meetings that RCOs were conducting. Each time I introduced myself in a research role, interaction was interrupted and interpretation used to explain the situation. I found one Partnership where volunteers suffered with mental health issues slightly problematic at first. It was a highly interactive situation not conducive to note-taking. One memo reflected: *"Felt underhand trying to take notes in this situation. Tried writing down trigger words in the loo but that felt unethical. Anyway there was only one toilet and a queue for it! Glad of the long bus ride home, made full notes while observations fresh in mind"* (2Z1). I resolved this by explaining to volunteers that I was taking notes so that other places could learn from the way they were working,

emphasising that I would not write down anyone's names. I also shared observation notes to be ratified with the full-time workers.

Throughout the second and final stages of fieldwork the principle of researcher reciprocity worked satisfactorily and one group invited me to facilitate a project planning day for their refugee network. The Resource Centre users involved me in their day-to-day activities and due to this level of involvement an exit strategy was constructed to put support mechanisms in place e.g. securing external funding before I finally withdrew from the field. I have retained an interest in the women's association that I helped inaugurate. As a concluding mechanism I was pleased to be commissioned to write up findings about RCO empowerment in briefing papers accessible to Local Authorities and RSLs.

http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/housing/files/housing-brief12.pdf

http://www.better-housing.org.uk/briefings.htm

This was an opportunity to promote model recognition criteria for RCOs to put them more visibly on the voluntary sector map.

Conclusion

At the outset I did not realise the significance of working in a research field with interactive agencies like hact, and CURS. I was initially concerned that findings would be duplicated and particularly voluntary RCO partners would be alienated by over-researching and unnecessary imposition on their time. Instead I found there were mutual benefits of working as a team. We supported one another to build up relations with participants and stimulated thinking in the sharing of ideas. The

construct of Sayer's (1992) *purpose* and *object* helped to conceptualise this three-way relationship.

An *emic* perspective that recognised participants' values (Vidich, and Lyman, 2003) was determined by considerations of research design ownership; the researcher role and the link between research and action that have influenced my methodological approach. My experience is that research design is an often less than clear-cut process and is frequently modified as fieldwork progresses. Methodology in its entirety has benefited from a reflexive approach, yet reflexivity is not a new research technique. Commenting on the Brown University conversations with Talcott Parsons, Holton (2006) commends his interdisciplinary and reflective approach that links the personal, the political and the intellectual. For me interpersonal and political reflection has been the bridge between the theoretical and the empirical. Together with the critical realist perspective adopted at the outset, research questions emerged such as: What does the phenomenon of community empowerment in this Project really mean? How is it manifest? What are the barriers to community empowerment in partnership context? How do RCOs contribute to integration? These helped to develop the study towards substantive theory building in a relatively uncharted research field. Being able to track my thinking via conceptual memos has been invaluable and I am indebted to Dr Goodson for suggesting this so early in the research process.

Grounded theory is a self-confessed messy process (Sayer, 1992) but the bigger picture created by a critical realist perspective helped to retain focus even when

data reached substantial proportions. The concern was to wait for patterns to be repeated but with hindsight and a little more confidence I could have made some judgments about loops of change at an earlier stage than I did. Without this approach and perspective it would have been more challenging to get to a layer of synthesis that revealed the essential role hact played in managing the partnership dynamics. By this means I gained insight into the role network management can play in this case study in the empowerment process of marginalised groups. Focus on power differentials revealed the collective and representative voice of RCOs, recognised and endorsed by their communities within the resettlement process: One that has much to offer a long-term relationship with housing service providers.

Partly due to my practitioner experience, I endeavoured to be transparent with partners about my intentions as I am aware that it takes time to build up the kind of trust needed to explore sensitive issues directly affecting people's quality of life. Being reciprocal also stems from this perception and this too has been rewarding in trust-building especially with RCO participants. Early investigation about theoretical and methodological aspects of this research Project proved to be productive to build on and add value to existing evaluative and monitoring work. In taking this approach, if I have contributed even minimally to the development of theory in this field so much the better:

"Although we do not create data, we create theory out of data. If we do it correctly, then we are not speaking for our participants but rather are enabling them to speak in voices that are clearly understood and representative. Our theories, however incomplete, provide a common language (set of concepts) through which research participants, professionals and others can come together to discuss ideas and find solutions to problems. Yes, we are naïve if we think that we can 'know it all'. But even a small amount of understanding can make a difference". (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:56)

Chapter 6: RCOs - Newcomers at the Partnership Table

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the Government's modernisation agenda has meant that cross-sector collaborative partnerships have become widely used as a vehicle for generating community-wide resolution (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Varley and Curtin, 2006). Following earlier successes supporting and building RCOs' capacity to address refugee housing need, hact set up the Refugee Housing, Training and Development Project in 1998. The Project updated RCO housing advisors with the latest client information, and sought to signpost and engage them in mainstream networks. Hact realised RCOs were, as *Accommodate*'s architect described, *"working in isolation",* and *"fire fighting"* and brokered the idea of creating a collaborative local dialogue (G5:2). The work that hact had already done nurtured the trust of RCOs, which is why they were prepared to take a 'leap of faith' by working in the *Accommodate* Project.

The strategic aim in setting up *Accommodate* was to create an arena where synergy could take place between statutory housing providers and the organised voluntary refugee sector to bring about fundamental change. Local Authority partners lent this process legitimacy. By focusing on the RCO partners' perspective (see Chapter 5) this study expanded upon one of the jointly agreed aims, "*RCO empowerment",* considered by several of the Partnerships to be their most *"significant challenge"* (Mullins and Goodson, 2005:17). I have adopted a transformative interpretation of community empowerment, one that looks for

fundamental change in ideology, resource distribution and institutional structure (Humphries, 1996; Batliwala, 2007; Shaw, 2008, see Chapter 3 for more discussion).

The purpose of this Chapter is to examine the organisational capacity of RCOs and the perceptions and barriers that defined, encouraged and sometimes inhibited their involvement in the Partnership process. Findings relating to the core theme; *'Confidence of RCOs to engage'* bring together three sub-themes; *'RCOs' role in resettlement'*; *'RCOs' impact on members' quality of life'* and *'RCOs' self-help functions'* (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.6). Evidence has been sourced from all three stages of fieldwork and from secondary data in the form of hact's feedback notes on Project visits, interim reports produced by the CURS Team and self-assessment forms. Data include interviews with participants from Phase 1 that did not progress to Phase 2. Themes are described in terms of their properties (characteristics) and dimensions using a grounded approach to data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The first section of this Chapter considers variation that was discovered when exploring findings in terms of RCOs' levels of confidence to engage (Theme 1). Findings indicated organisational maturity was important to engagement and confirmed that RCOs ranged from well-established to embryonic. Data from an RCO perspective were organised to illustrate how they rated their internal capacity and competences. It also explored the external perceptions of other agencies about RCOs' ability to take an active part in Partnership working. As might be

expected, most of the other Project partners valued those RCOs who were mature, representative and organisationally developed and anticipated their potential being realised at the Partnership table. There is however, a puzzle within these findings which suggested that in some cases there is an anomaly between what might be expected and what was found to be the case. Despite the organisational maturity of RCOs, some external agencies[27] remained unconvinced about their capabilities and potential. Exploration of these findings points to a connection between dimensions of organisational recognition, power and internal and external perceptions at the core of this analysis. The relationship suggests a link between wider institutional barriers (see Chapter 2) and political will and positive leadership necessary to overcome negative labelling of RCOs at local level. The section ends with a reflective analysis based on findings about cultural identity and how the recognition of the need to reaffirm lost identity, supports rather than hinders the integration process.

The second section reviews findings in the light of integration and illustrates that this complex and long term process is affected vertically by time along various milestones. The integration process can extend over decades between the different generations of migrant communities. It investigates the role that RCOs play in resettlement and shows the horizontal dimension in which RCOs operate, linking new communities with information, services, neighbourhoods and institutions at local level. Findings endorse the positive role that 'clustering' plays in the choice/constraints debate (see Chapter 2) about minority ethnic groups' access to secure and adequate housing. The case study of several RCOs sharing

resources clarifies the distinction between physical place (Robinson and Reeve, 2006) and social space (Haynes, 2001; Zetter *et al.* 2006, Ager and Strang, 2008) and illustrates how important this is at local level to counter political tension and create opportunity for inter-community understanding.

Finally this Chapter reflects longitudinally on indicators of integration arriving at a number of conclusions. It is evident that political will and positive leadership are fundamental in overcoming marginalisation of RCOs at local level. This is the case especially when marginalisation is based on unfounded negative perceptions distorting the recognition that RCOs' deserve. Findings prepare the ground for further investigation of changing dynamics in the process of recognising RCO potential to collaborate. These conclusions inform the next step which uses a theoretical framework to explore hact's role as network manager in more detail in Chapter 7.

Mapping recognition

RCO partners
Accommodate engaged a total of 163 RCOs at various stages (Mullins, 2008) in pre-Project activity and during both phases of the Project process. Expressions of interest were invited from across Britain. Some RCOs were newly formed, emerging in areas of recent dispersal strategy in response to need, as Zetter and Pearl (2000) observed. Selection of the final Partnership areas was on the basis of innovation; each having a different focus, leadership and size. The five

Partnerships from across Britain that reached selection in Phase II were based in the Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire and Humber regions.

Two Partnerships included established RCOs in strong leadership positions, suggesting that organisational maturity was an important initial factor in the ability to engage. Both of these RCOs undertook strategic functions. Partnership A was led by a Somali RCO mental health service provider established in 1992. This RCO is supported by four staff and trained volunteers. It is funded by Supporting People[28], offering information, advice and tenancy support to community members suffering mental illness and post-traumatic stress. In 2001, this group hosted a national conference with health and social care professionals on Khat[29] and mental health to address the psychosocial and economical problems associated with Khat use. Their strategic aim in *Accommodate* was to promote and mainstream specialist services. Partnership B used the local Strategic Housing Partnership as a springboard and invited one RCO only into formal Partnership arrangements. This RCO was the largest Somali organisation in the area and was well-established, operating a variety of services out of Council-funded offices supported by six paid staff and thirty volunteers. The strategic focus in this Partnership was on the little known housing needs of the growing Somali population.

Partnership C engaged with a relatively new African umbrella organisation. The organisation was trying to promote a holistic approach to what they considered was the biggest problem for refugees, the lack of transitional support when status was determined and NASS housing withdrawn (hact notes, 10.11.05). The umbrella organisation was formed in 2004, with local authority backing but was engaged in

longstanding struggle for recognition of the emergent African community as a community of interest in the District. This organisation is typical of those organisations that are simply resourced distinct from those that are formally recognised, as described by Hinton (2001) and later (Lukes 2009). Findings suggested that material resources alone cannot guarantee a role in influencing local policy.

Partnership D operated an open-door approach to membership and targeted fledgling RCOs, offering confidence-building and practical resources. They anticipated fluctuation in RCO engagement due to their *'vulnerability and transience'* (CURS Team notes, 12.05). Partnership E was led by a charitable housing enterprise where contact with the organised refugee sector began when individual refugees and refugee people seeking asylum sought work as volunteers. This relationship developed into the provision of office space for newly-formed RCOs. Established in 1998, this enterprise operated a refurbishment scheme to bring derelict properties back into use. It involved self-help solutions to homelessness and skills-building through volunteering. This Partnership aspired to a model of community cohesion in action at local level (Mullins, 2008).

Although RCO organisational maturity was a factor affecting degrees of engagement, the involvement of RCOs in an on-going way was a step forward; compared to the typical 'as-needed' contact that (Amas and Price 2008) found proliferating in London between RCOs and second-tier structures, prohibiting sustained influence over services and policy. The benefits have been far-reaching

for many of the RCOs involved directly in *Accommodate*. Organisational capacity of newly-formed RCOs has been strengthened. For example, in one area the initiative led to the establishment of a city-wide Partnership to provide organisational development and promote social inclusion.

Compared to traditional community organisations such as tenants and residents associations (TRAs) recognised and developed by housing providers to build dialogue; RCOs are largely self-organised, structured and provide the potential for collective voice. In some regions there are umbrella organisations and wider networks[30] (Jones and Hussain, 2010). It would be reasonable to anticipate that RCOs' confidence in their own abilities and capacity in relation to their organisational maturity would automatically attract other partners, but findings suggested that this was not always the position. While mutual respect between RCOs and other agencies was wide-spread there seemed to be some anomaly in a number of cases. Some agencies did not recognise the potential and capacity of RCOs however competent and well-established.

RCOs' credibility as partners
The first stage of fieldwork answered a crucial question about RCOs' self-conceptualisation. The identity of RCOs was not interpreted by them in terms of ethnicity or race, it was explained in terms of the difference between how they saw themselves compared with how other partners saw them. Benton (2005:631) explores the difficulties of exploring ethnicity and race but suggests that *"the many meanings of the word 'identity' can be disciplined by focusing on a particular*

question" regarding self-concepts*. Analysis of data illustrating perceptions of RCOs' confidence to engage, demonstrated certain positive and negative characteristics. Analysis of these findings meant that RCOs' credibility as a potential partner could be assessed both from the RCOs' perspective as well as from the viewpoint of other partners (see Figure 6:1). Both negative and positive perceptions were logged. As might be expected most other partners were positive about RCO potential to engage in collaborative working. However, there were some puzzles. As Figure 6:1 indicates there was an anomaly between mature RCOs having confidence in their own competences that was not reflected in the way that others sometimes perceived them. Negative labelling locates RCOs within a wider political dimension that is linked to community empowerment (Chapter 3). Both Humphries (1996) and Howarth (2002) point to the role that a dominant ideology plays in negatively stigmatising and preventing real social recognition. We have to turn to the concept of recognition to explain the unexplained in these findings.

Where RCOs were embryonic, it was reasonable to expect that it would take time before other partners had confidence in them to engage. However, in this study, variance was observed between the internal confidence of mature RCOs and the lack of confidence external agencies had in them. This anomaly emerged very early on in the fieldwork. While some RCOs involved in *Accommodate* were newly-formed others had been established for, in some cases, years and were still struggling to find stable funding to fulfil all the support activities that writers describe (Chapter 3). Others were involved in service delivery, filling gaps in

provision with the volunteering ethos documented by Challenor *et al.* (2005); yet were often treated cautiously by other agencies. Despite the fact, as Lukes (2009) notes, that many RCOs were experienced in exercising social and political influence, community empowerment did not take place automatically after community engagement had been initiated as policy advised by 'reaching out' (CLG, 2007).

Figure 6.1: An anomaly in perceptions
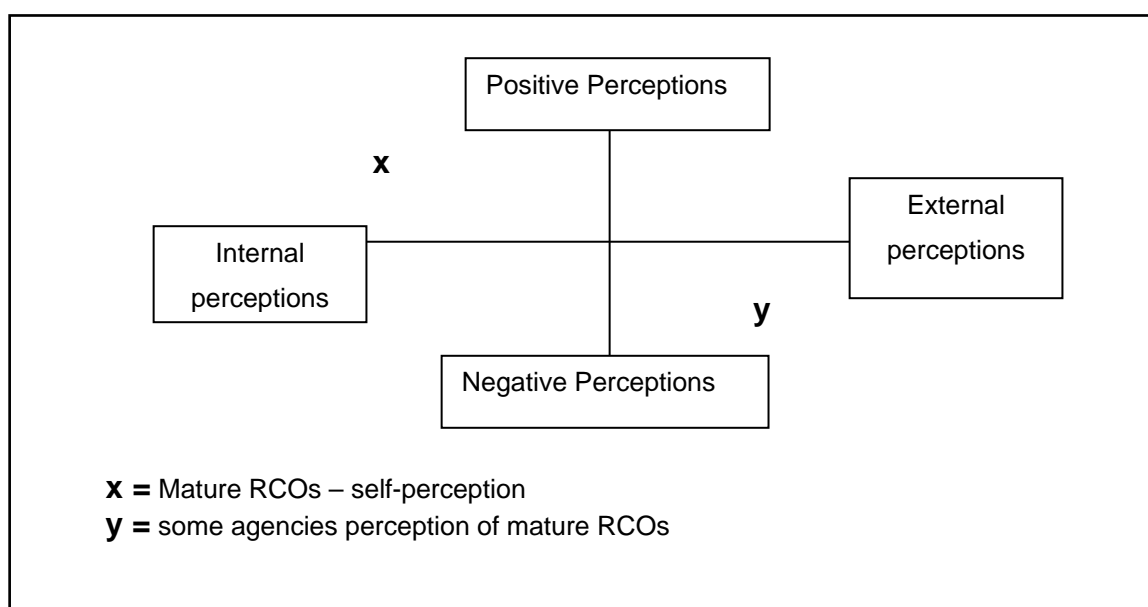
Source: Framework developed by the author

Positive perceptions

Themes evolved around their properties and dimensions (see Chapter 5 for more on data handling methods). Within this property of 'perceptions', data were grouped around positive and negative dimensions. It was noted whether the perceptions came from the RCOs' own self-perception or another agency's viewpoint. As might be expected, RCOs that had been established for some time perceived their own organisations in a positive light. One long-established RCO

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considered themselves a model for other community groups because they demonstrated: *"democratic structure, inclusivity, voice, service and social activities"* (Xo3T) and others because they used the *"power of research"* (Xo1) putting issues which affect the community "*on the radar as a baseline"*[31] (Xr1). Having a good track record, using good practice precedents and being involved in other pilot studies and collaborations were mentioned by several RCOs. Prolonged experience and being successful because aims were clear was highly valued: *"we are focused and have a sense of purpose"* (UI1); especially where aims and outcomes were linked together: *"our aim is to increase members' confidence so they go from being a caterpillar to being a butterfly"* (Xi3). What is perhaps missing from the current reviews of RCO activity is recognition of the evident development from operational to strategic working that evolved in this study alongside organisational maturity.

Most refugee participants spoke favourably of their organisation and were proud of the *"real strength!"* of the volunteering tradition and enthusiasm underpinning their success (XrT). Challenor *et al.* (2005) noted that volunteers were pleased to be able to 'put something back'. Volunteering in these findings illustrated an essential ethos in terms of service provision including the "*endless tolerance"* of volunteers[32] (Z1). This was evidenced in an alternative working culture where: *"We are continually doing work we have not been funded for"* (Y1); an ethos described enthusiastically as *"the **passion** we have – that's why we survive!"* (VII:2).

These views align with Taylor's (1995:107) definition of a social economy occupying a *"space between state and market"* whereby relations between service provider and user is *"fundamentally changed".* Perry and El-Hassan's (2008) guide to commissioning migrant and refugee community organisations (MRCOs) is a practical contribution to this process of change. MRCOs naturally adopting a "holistic" approach to people's needs are an added advantage to commissioning bodies (2008:45). The entrepreneurial potential of RCOs was viewed favourably by other partners. Attributes such as 'ambition' were prized and one local authority partner suggested entrepreneurialism was a by-product of high levels of diversity and tolerance: *"Entrepreneurship works in ***** because we are already diverse and there is a high tolerance of BME communities"* (Xi7T).

Other partners and agencies valued the representativeness of RCOs in collaboration. Representation, community credibility and legitimacy are closely associated in discussion about social power (see Chapter 4). Democratic representation of wider membership was important considerations when selecting an RCO partner as this housing partner noted: *" **** had the nature, was constituted and we felt they comfortably represented the community"* (Xo3T). RCO involvement or prospective involvement in wider community forums was favourably regarded: Another housing partner hoped that the RCOs would be *"taking part in: local democratic wards"* (NW1) and it was an aspiration in one Partnership that RCOs would engage with other community representation structures in, for example: *"having a voice on tenants' groups"* (Xr2).

Negative perceptions

Despite these positive views, several RCO participants especially in the early stages of *Accommodate*, expressed frustration and puzzlement with other agencies who continued to perceive RCOs as a 'business risk' despite their track record. They suggested reasons for the reluctance of partners to collaborate with them: One established RCO spokesperson, operating since 1985 and previously engaged in consortia, associated recognition with the perceived size of his organisation rather than its maturity. He felt that their wide networks (national) and credibility with the grassroots were overlooked because they were a small organisation[33]:

> *"In many of our other partnerships, others know we can 'get people'* (to ESOL classes for example) – *we have close links with the community, that is our strength"* (UI:1).

This anomaly between the experience and knowledge of seasoned organisations and the lack of confidence that others had in them was expressed in a number of ways by RCO respondents. One RCO reported that the Local Authority was *"shy of working with us"* (UI:17) another said: *"we had talks ten years ago with the Local Authority"* (but have) "*still not become part of the decision-making strategy"* (Xi7T). Some felt they were being side-tracked with excessive monitoring; *"we spend more time recording effects than doing it"* (Xi7T) while another RCO cited unrealistic demands on them *"finding time to get together with the experts"* (Xr2) in order to develop capacity. One noted that volunteers *"get tired and disappear"* (Xi3) because of this.

RCOs blamed the initial negative reception they received in new areas of dispersal on a general lack of local awareness about newcomers; a view supported by this voluntary agency partner who cited local negative attitudes as barriers and claimed there was an issue about strategic awareness-raising of refugee dispersal. She said angrily, *"there is no prospect of consultation with receiving communities when people are just **dumped!"** (*U1:2). The institutional racism (Chapter 2) that "*fuelled social strife and racial tension in dispersal areas*" (hact/JRF, 2003:4) leads to negative labelling as described by Howarth (2002) and Humphries (1996). One African RCO participant thoughtfully captured this as an issue of 'territoriality' (Kintrea and Suzuki, 2008), contested place and social space:

> "*I can see both as a refugee and at a strategic level the underlying concern about migrant communities accessing traditionally host community areas – I didn't see it at first but now I think about the perception of 'they are taking over our town'*" (Xr11)

Despite successful determination of refugee status and the right to work one female RCO representative said, *"We are still perceived as foreigners at the Job Centre"* (Y7T). These and similar comments show researchers such as D'Onofrio and Munk (2004) and Finney (2005) are quite right in their concerns about the lack of opportunities for mutual understanding and the climate of hostility that can be created by negative reporting. For as much as RCOs were viewed as a positive element in promoting integration, other agencies sometimes viewed them with skepticism because of the perceived limitation on account of their voluntary status. One second-tier organisation participant suggested that unlike her own

organisation, *"nationality self-help groups* (are) *often available only one day a week and staffed by volunteers whereas we are open Monday-to-Friday and are staffed by two full-time* workers"* (U1:3). Lack of professionalism was another criticism by other agencies: perceptions suggested that RCOs are not able to *"communicate on level terms"* (G16) nor have the ability to develop: *"RCOs have not got confidence to take part in training staff"* (Xi2). This issue of cultural alienation from the system was later observed by a full-time refugee worker who noted:

> *"I work with the NHS in X….. on 'cultural competence' training for staff. The most notable thing is that we are in a system that is designed for native people and outsiders get forgotten – the understanding is not mutual"* (UI:3).

A Housing Association representative expressed frustration with the system's lack of coherence about involvement of RCOs beyond the consultation stage; "people are on consultation overload – now we are being told 'just go away and do it'" (Xi7T). One refugee community development worker summarised the fragility and transient nature of RCOs: "Sometimes groups grow up then die down. Those who are serious about their aims and objectives survive. We are trying to build leadership" (Z4T).

Political will
It appears from the previous findings that the lack of confidence some partners had in RCOs had less to do with RCOs' organisational and strategic maturity and more to do with subtler barriers. These included; negative labelling, systemic cultural alienation, ideologically-driven low expectations, a view of volunteers as amateurs

and a perception that RCOs' capacity to develop would remain limited. Overall, it reflected the picture illustrated by D'Onofrio and Munk's (2004) concept of 'the stranger', being 'foreign' and 'outside'.

Findings suggest that where these negative perceptions were neighbourhood-wide, political will to engage was affected. In areas of high political sensitivity[34] RCOs were more likely to be used as sounding board for consultation exercises that did not progress beyond the ad-hoc. Taylor (1992:35) cited this phenomenon in a structural context when he noted that multiculturalism was "*undergirded by the premise that the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression*". This proposes that the act of recognition of RCOs as credible partners is the first step towards organisational empowerment and findings show that this is what happened as Phase 2 *Accommodate* took shape. The interesting point about formal 'recognition' of TRAs for example, is that it begins a relationship that can only be ended by organisational dissolution or 'de-recognition'. It transforms the relationship between statutory and voluntary sector from 'as-needed' contact to 'on-going' contact, opening the way for regular involvement in policy and decision-making (Jones and Hussain, 2010).

Dimensions of recognition

Organisational recognition (as opposed to the recognition of individual achievement) was found to be a multifaceted, accumulative process. It relied on RCO leaders' recognition of their own ability, knowledge and powers of community representation i.e. social and cultural capital (see Chapter 3). It also relied on the actions of external agencies to accredit these attributes with value,

encouragement, resource and to recognise the 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998) of RCO leaders at the Partnership table (Figure 6:2). This study suggests that complexities of recognition are at the centre of the credibility deficit that Zetter and Pearl (2000) identify in the climate of joint commissioning where the importance of community representation in Partnerships has become more strategic in focus (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002).

Figure 6.2: Components of organisational recognition
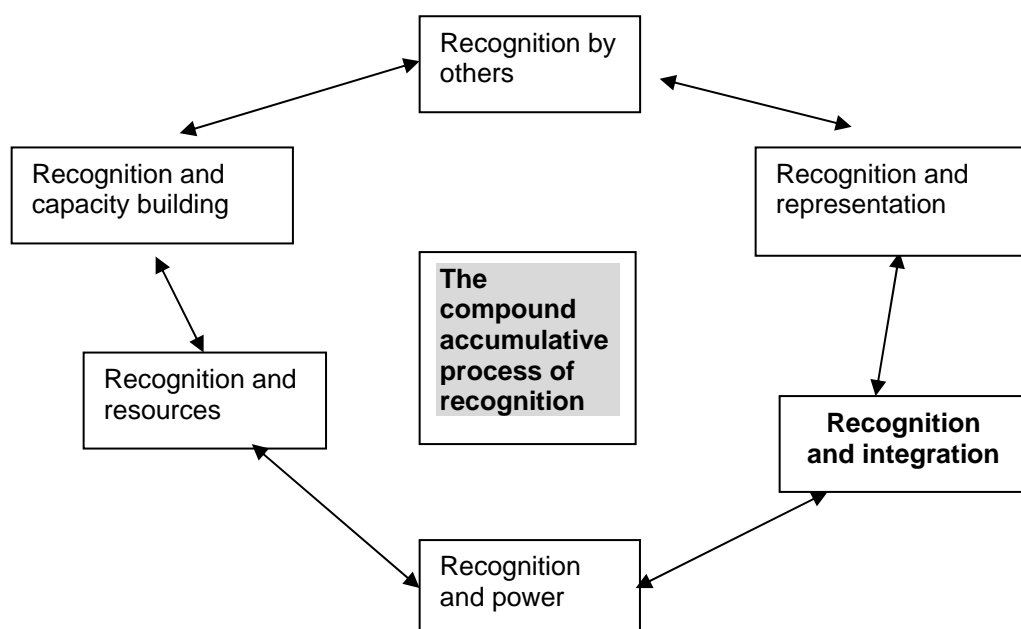
Source: Framework developed by the author

Recognition by others

There was ample evidence of the cultural capital, symbolic ties and informal networks identified by Castles and Miller (2003) and Bloch (2002) that RCOs had to offer the Partnerships. RCOs accumulated grassroots knowledge and awareness of their own communities' needs and local aspirations, together with a wider understanding of the historic, socio-economic and political causes underlying

the refugee experience. Data and statistics about newcomer numbers and household composition are notoriously slender at neighbourhood level and RCOs represent an invaluable source of firsthand insight into some of the challenges surrounding housing need. RCO expertise was discussed in terms of knowledge ownership. Several respondents talked of: the *"power"* of firsthand knowledge (about community) (Xr1, FPI:2,3,5) and RCOs in the *"role of experts"* (Xr2) and as *"educators"* of lead agencies (Xi1). One RCO, using their own community researcher to overcome lack of trust, conducted a rigorous survey with the support of the local university to detail housing need and aspiration.

However, knowledge-sharing was not necessarily two-way. One Housing Officer observed in frustration: *"We don't tell RCOs the obvious like Housing Benefit needs reviewing every 12 months"* (Xi7T); another mentioned the lack of information-sharing about *"housing rights and entitlements"* (FP1:2). One respondent described how demotivating it can be, being kept 'out of the loop': *"The voluntary sector is groundhog day",* he complained, *"exactly the same conversation each day…pretty useless"* (G7) Another refugee participant made a connection between lack of resources to participate and exclusion from Partnership procedures: *"There is a lack of protocol in partner RCOs being able to put their case for resources"* (G16). This link between confidence, knowledge and exclusion is explored in depth in Chapter 7 concerning the core theme (3) '*Partnership Rules of Engagement'*.

One RCO leader, who had worked temporarily for the local authority housing department protested: *"we don't know the difference between private and public*

accommodation, about Right to Buy and about evictions" (Xi3). This *"lack of knowledge-sharing"*[35] (FP1:2) impacted on the ability of RCOs to participate as reflected in this researcher observation:

> *"We had RCO leaders sitting patiently and silently through a two and a half hour Partnership meeting about awareness-raising strategy. There was no way of knowing whether they understood what was going on, lacked confidence or were waiting for an opportunity to speak. They were not encouraged to take part in either discussions or agenda setting. As I left I couldn't help feeling frustrated on behalf of these eight community representatives whose opportunity to have some influence over policy had been missed" (*Researcher observation Xi10*).*

One workshop contributor echoed Taylor's (1992) perspective that withholding recognition was a form of oppression in calling this closedness of others, *"the injustice of recognition"* (NW1). Correlation can be made between confidence; recognition; the 'below radar' position occupied by many RCOs; and the lack of a formal on-going relationship between RCOs and service providers that inevitably offers only 'weak influence' over provision (Amas and Price, 2008). Some writers (Reid, 2001, Mayo and Taylor, 2001) suggest that struggles for wider influence are more successful where RCOs are configured into network structures. Chapter 8 explores the 'networkedness' of RCOs as a factor in community empowerment.

Recognition and capacity building
Definitions of what refugee participants called 'capacity building' differed on the basis of the type of capacity building activity being discussed; where it took place;

how it was conceptualised and how it linked with representation and resources. Some valued *"building organisational capacity"* (Xo2) or linked capacity building to outcomes: *"community achievement gets recognition and something to take to the press or through funding streams and training routes"* (G7). Others thought that it came through involvement in process, for example, via the *Accommodate* bidding experience itself. There were various references made to the challenges and disempowering consequences of the lack of capacity building. This was capacity building in the sense that Pitchford and Henderson (2008:89) use it, of communities being brought together using a *"neighbourhood approach"* to identify needs for themselves.

RCOs and their members were hampered by: *"language barriers"* (Y2) *"no access to Email"* (FP1:20), *"limited knowledge of the British system"* (FP1:20); *"lack of time to plan an event, facilitate referrals and attend time-consuming training that also requires funds"* (Y2). The pressure that many RCOs were under created a catch-22 situation where they had, no time for development because *"we are the first port of call"* (G5). The CURS Team embraced refugee participants in a community researchers' programme (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008) that took a critical pedagogy approach to capacity building where participants were involved in setting research agenda and negotiating learning outcomes. This empowering approach to capacity building is revisited in greater depth in Chapter 8 as a factor directly affecting organisational empowerment.

Recognition and power

One organisational barrier that is less apparent within the literature refers to the voluntary ethos of RCOs. This was highlighted in discussion about voluntary/statutory relations that one volunteer called: *"mixing with the big boys……… the trouble is we fit in with little of the ethos of other initiatives"* (Z3T). This resonates with earlier observations in this Chapter about the organisational cultural divide between the statutory and voluntary sector. There appeared to be an unmistakably different ethos driving the voluntary sector fostering alternative values and working culture. Passionate beliefs, identified as 'added value' by Perry and El-Hassan (2008) meant powerful commitment for some volunteers and brought with it a freedom to define stakes and the autonomy to exercise 'veto' power, i.e. withdrawal from process and Partnership. These concepts link most closely with the theory of network management that is detailed in Chapter 7. One dynamic in evidence here evolved from the relationship between RCOs and the Local Authority partner and his/her power to lend legitimacy, constrained or enabled by political will (Chapter 2).

Recognition and resources

Participant observation within RCOs' offices prompted me to compile an inventory of the practical resources that were not always available but which RCOs affirmed were necessary in order to function effectively (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: An inventory of practical resources for RCOs

- Premises including utilities and maintenance
- Meeting/social facilities as well as interview privacy for client protection and confidentiality
- IT/Internet and telephone access
- Photocopying and printing facilities; stationery, storage and publicity materials
- Updated service information e.g. regarding Housing Benefits and access to research
- Running costs including cyclical maintenance
- Skill building
- Paid hours to support volunteer time

Source: Author's summary based on findings

One Partnership went on to fulfil most of these requirements for 22 fledging RCOs. Anderson's (1996) analysis of successful empowerment projects where day-to-day practicalities were tackled at the same time as strategic action was in evidence. This particular Partnership focused on establishing a hot-desking suite of offices for RCOs so they could pursue their activities at the same time as building consensus, capacity and strategic focus. Empowerment together with access to and control over material resource were considered synonymous by RCOs: *"it's all very well to say empowering RCOs is good but it is another thing to take it to pockets and look where pots can be found"* (Xr6). Accountability over resource was raised as an issue by RCOs: *"groups need supervision and guidance over sharing resources"* (Xi7T). Sometimes though where resources could be accessed, they were not necessarily adequate: *"the **** Resource Centre had a tiny antiquated photocopier and so little paper, it was impossible to produce a few spare copies of the agenda – not impressed with basic resources!"* (Researcher observation, Xi4).

Recognition and representation

Observations witnessed that RCO leaders were treated deferentially by their members, invested with the 'symbolic capital' that Bourdieu (1977) identified.

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Leadership and service to the community were synonymous to most community leaders. Sometimes this could be traced back to educational or social status in the country of origin as described here with some dark humour by one leading activist:

*"In *** I was one of the few people with a car and I was asked, could you take my wife to hospital she is having a baby? Then I was asked, my wife has had the baby could you bring her back from hospital? Then I was asked, could you take us to the Cemetery the baby has died? I was working for the University at the time and when you are working for the University you are working for the people. I used to get gifts of hens, sheep and bread"* (CS, Obs:14)

Where RCOs worked together under one roof, there were many instances of RCO leaders taking an active part in promoting mutual understanding, interpretation, local information and each community members' needs. D'Onofrio and Munk's (2004), recommendation that community leaders act as brokers in overcoming cultural barriers was extensively supported. This collective approach can help to overcome some of the pressures on community leaders that Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:170-173) found such as 'burn-out'; community leaders being exploited as unpaid professionals and reduction of tension between their gatekeeper and gateway role.

In wider studies of inter-collaboration Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) found community representatives being undermined by other partners' questioning their representativeness, especially if they were in disagreement. Some refugee

participants raised more practical issues about representing their communities and identified a link between recognition, resources and the ability to participate: *"To develop people to stand on their own feet, you should offer bus fares etc to attend meetings"* (Xr6). My findings also demonstrated the importance of the cultural context of representation. One experienced refugee worker expressed the personal view that *"**** (RCOs within one area of the city) are so divided they couldn't have a collective political voice"* (Xi8T). The Project Worker in another Partnership area observed that RCOs had a community conscience.

There was evidence of external political barriers to integration, such as those attitudes encouraged by the far-right. One housing association partner was concerned that a *"history of deep hostility, about refugee access to housing affected working class people more than anything else"*, an attitude that she thought needed urgent address in areas where the far right was making political gain via these misconceptions (Xi7T/Xo2T). Similar political barriers were described that inhibited RCOs working alongside white community groups. One Partnership leader was concerned when *"***** Forum (were invited) to share an Office in a known BNP area with a local community group"* a group that lead *Accommodate* partners were worried*, "may have another agenda"* (Z3T). Such a broad discussion surrounding recognition and representation posed unresolved research questions. The purpose of the third stage of fieldwork was to explore how RCOs interacted with one another as well as with local established communities. Participating with different communities, contributed useful insight into the issue of

inter-ethnic representation, which prompted thinking about the link between recognition and integration.

Recognition and integration

Language barriers and lack of understanding of the British system were the principal reasons that one RCO leader gave for his community's inability to socialise. He said that even *"basic cultural differences like analogue clocks and the British calendar can pose hurdles for newcomers"* (Y4). Another RCO leader summarised the challenge of integration like this:

> *"The key issue relating to the integration of refugees is security of people. People need to feel that they are not alien. You can't exclude indigenous communities – there has got to be a balance. It is a two-way thing. We have got to break down the prejudice about asylum seekers and refugees that says they will beg, borrow and steal to an acknowledgement that the majority are able and talented people"* (FPII:11,27).

This respondent appreciated the two-way communication necessary for successful integration including support, endorsed identity and security from hostility together with culturally sensitive services and shops that has been promoted by other writers (Simpson *et al.* 2006; Robinson and Reeve 2006). These considerations need to be explained in the dialogue between host and newcomer communities (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004; Jones, 2007) to counter myths about refugees and people seeking refuge (Finney and Simpson, 2009).

This perspective also illustrated some of the housing issues surrounding debates about integration. As some commentators have suggested the debate about integration is founded to a great extend on short supply and a history of institutional barriers to minority ethnic groups' access to good quality housing. Amas and Crosland (2006) found that inter-community tension was related principally to competition for houses, jobs and benefits: A competition, McGee (2006) argued, that is whipped up by the far right to encourage racial prejudice. The next section further explores the role that RCOs played during *Accommodate* in promoting understanding between one another and the wider local community and considers some of the political barriers that other partners especially the local authority might encounter when faced with the strategic responsibility and complexities of resettlement.

Findings from the longitudinal case study where several emerging RCOs were sharing resources demonstrated that, far from the inability to develop collectively, there was a sense of what Ledwith calls, *"collective endeavour"* (1997:19). The mutual support and resource/information-sharing in evidence appeared to be founded on common experience of the losses suffered by each refugee community. For instance, one RCO giving migration advice set up a recruitment scheme for another organisation's training classes. 'Bridging capital' based on mutual empathy was generated across RCO communities in this instance. As communities became established, members of the local community, staff from the local school and nearby job centre also got involved. The case study reflected the

thinking that a respondent from an established BME community had expressed in an earlier interview:

> "*There is a view that people are living in ghetto-like isolation, which misses the point. I don't think you can establish a base for progress, creativity and entrepreneurship unless you have the cultural identity. The way to integrate is a paradox; you can actually get people involved and empower them through their identity rather than by dispersing them*" (G7).

Integration and resettlement

The integration process

The migration debate is characterised by resettlement and integration strategies (Chapter 2). There is a widely held view that institutional and historical constraints influence minority ethnic groups' access to adequate and permanent housing. Traditionally, UK resettlement policy for refugees had a tendency to focus more on reception than on long-term settlement and integration issues Wright IV *et al,* (2005). The 'parallel lives' question focused the debate onto spatial integration, ignoring the stages, such as clustering, that many newcomers undergo to reaffirm identity and recreate belonging.

This section reviews findings in the light of integration as process and illustrates that this process is an extremely complex journey. Many examples confirm, in accordance with past research (Chapter 3), that RCOs wage an on-going struggle to address the gap in members' unmet needs to resettle. One refugee respondent described the gap as: *"an enormous fault line between the host population's attitude to integration and the refugees themselves"* (G7). Another mapped the

milestone of determination in the process, commenting that; *"integration doesn't start when you get status…..but it's the one big marker, you feel you've got some rights, status makes people feel safe"* (Xi3). Safety is largely discussed in the literature in terms of community safety but some respondents reported feeling unsafe while waiting for the outcome of determination appeal procedures, fearful of the prospect of forced return, so that safety from 'state process' was also found to be an issue. Many participants observed that communication within the integration process needed to" *flow two-ways"* (FP1:2).

Clustering for community safety reasons, as Cole and Robinson (2003) document, is common but can often conceal housing need. One Partnership conducted community-led research into the needs of the local Somali community. This was in an area predominantly occupied by EU secondary migration integrating with refugees and long-established community members where clustering was developing for cultural and socio-economic support. Interviews with over 100 people revealed stark housing needs with almost half saying their home was in need of repair and nearly one third reporting that they had less access to opportunities as other communities (hact, 2008). As Harris (2004) also found, the sensitive use of a community research approach was significant in gaining access to interviewees. The lead community researcher, a Somali herself, said she was able to overcome *"people's suspicions"* and the obstacle of "*people being paranoid"* over the issue of hidden households because community members trusted the RCO leading the research that *"had worked with them already on a regular basis"* (XoII:C:1).

Integration as a vertical process

I formed a view from conversations with young adult members of RCOs, especially those who had been resettled in Britain from early childhood, that they interacted more freely within the wider community that the previous generation. For instance, one young woman told me that while her mother preferred to shop in the local Somali stores she preferred to shop and have a night out in nearby Manchester. The picture I built from RCOs' discussions generally was that integration is a 'vertical process' that takes considerable time, sometimes over generations, and RCOs are perpetually trying to bridge the gap, horizontally, via two-way communication, access to information and service provision (Figure 6:3).

Figure 6.3: Horizontal and vertical impacts on the integration process
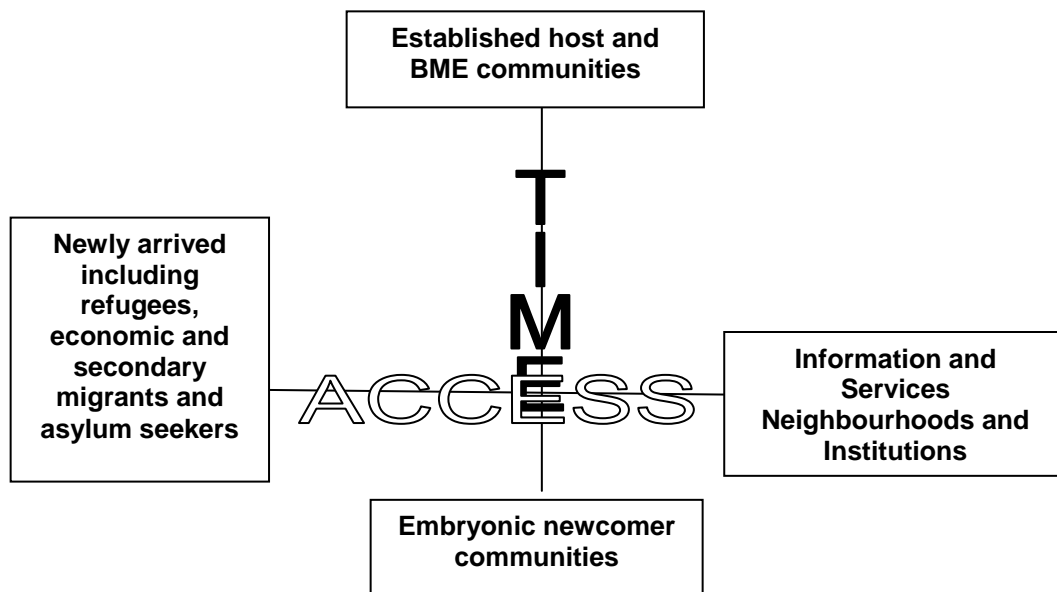
Source: Framework developed by the author

Some refugee participants spoke of a lack of understanding of their situation by housing service providers, particularly in the homeless section and little inside

knowledge of their culture or communities. One RCO leader had a clear opinion about the information his community required in order to take part in the stock transfer voting process: *"They need to explain stock transfer[36] etc in different languages and to hold public meetings to include different community organisations"* (Xi3). It was noted by some refugees that the jargon surrounding integration was empty rhetoric: *"community cohesion is meaningless on the ground"* (G7). The tendency of community cohesion policy to conflate all newcomer communities regardless of social class or educational status noted by Uguris (2004) was also mentioned by refugees. One respondent said that socially, over and above any other category or ethnicity, she found herself "*quite easily leaning towards more educated people*" (G2). This reflects Banton's argument that ethnic identity is superseded by values and the *"ways in which they interpret the situations with which they are faced"* (2008:1282).

During one interview a refugee said: "*It is good to have multi-identities: you have many exits*" (G5) doodling a hexagon with opening sides on a piece of paper as he spoke. This insight supports the argument made by Uguris (2004) and Stone and Muir (2007) that integration and inclusive democracy have to be built on an understanding of the shifting boundaries of multiple identities. The UNHCR (2008) has revised rules on statistically recognising people as refugees if they have been 'settled' for 10 years or more in Europe, yet research on resettlement programmes finds that *"a refugee's functional, social, and psychological adjustment from a forced migration experience may last a lifetime"* (Wright IV *et al.,* 2005:7). These are issues that this study cannot resolve but it calls for a deeper understanding of

integration, participative democracy and identity instead of a crude 'community of identity' analysis.

Social integration and the importance of place

There was some scope for mapping where integration takes place[37] and in what form that social space is 'occupied'. I was able to note some of the connections made about the link between a sense of belonging, mental well-being (Jones, 2007) and the need to create physical space to develop mutual understanding at neighbourhood level (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004, Uguris, 2004). This presents an important finding and a clearer distinction between the concepts of 'place' and 'space' that are sometimes conflated in commentary about newcomers. Some writers (Stone and Muir 2007) have observed that minority ethnic groups identify more closely with their immediate locality than host communities and a study in one region found that about 50% of refugees remained in the dispersal area (Phillips, 2006b). Together with findings about horizontal and vertical aspects of the integration process (Figure 6.3) this research also demonstrates the role that community leaders can and do play in the process.

Temporary accommodation is often the first place where refugees seeking asylum get *"an opportunity to mix in pre-dispersal hostels"* (FPI:2). Sometimes relationships forged here affect post-determination settlement decisions that fall foul of the Local Connection rule, when refugees attempt to resettle near to relationships forged at this stage of dispersal (see Chapter 2). Another place/occasion where it was suggested integrative exchange might occur is outside

the school gates and one refugee respondent reflected on whether *"social class"* might be the dominant identity here (G5). Female refugee participants in particular, mentioned ESOL classes as a place for social interaction, as well as other College courses and training opportunities. One participant suggested there was potential for inter-community participation, inside the organised tenants and residents movement (FPII:11) and one Housing Association partner was pleased to inform me that the *"*** Iranian Organisation has formed a tenants group and is sending a representative to our Federation meetings*" (FP1:5).

Housing and school places were interlinked because of the practical, and sometimes availability constraints on choice within neighbourhoods. Schools were referred to both as place of incidental interaction, *"when I take my children to school, those who are parents with me will be friends"* (Xr6) and strategic interface where there is a huge benefit in bringing the community dimension into schools. The multi-ethnic newcomer centre in one Project relied heavily on the local school as a conduit to engaging refugee mothers in the surrounding neighbourhood in a health information project.

Another Partnership that created a model for community cohesion in the workplace noted that excluded pupils learned firsthand about the refugee experience: *"A lot of hard-nut kids work with refugees and discover they are people with feelings"* (Z3T). Several housing providers considered the concentration of newcomer population to be an advantage. Interviews revealed that settlement of newcomer communities into areas of the city where existing BME were established was a

good thing, from the point of view of visibility and cultural availability of services: *"We have 200 properties concentrated in ***** that merge into the background quite well and services are available there"* (Xr10T). A degree of settlement concentration was seen as practicable where settlement grouping was *'in pockets'* (FPI:4) and another observed that *"working in clusters is easier for community cohesion"* (Xi7T).

RCO view of integration

Many RCOs stressed the need for a holistic attitude to the integration process[38]. Housing was seen as pivotal: *"housing is fundamental to health and integration – local connections have got to start somewhere!"* (Y6T). There was a call for *"political will in the national agenda"* (FPI:29) and *"a need for bridge-building and community support between communities"* (FPII:2). Reference was made to the Asylum Act 1999 that eroded asylum rights to work. The *"importance of the ability to work"* (FPI:29) was stressed as an essential component in the integration process. On the other hand there was a fear voiced that *"mutually agreed segregation can creep into places where communities live close together"* (Y6T) and a *"good mix all over the Borough"* (Xo3T) was considered more integrative in the long-term. The political dimension of the integration debate was neatly summarised by one refugee participant as *"the tension between dispersal as a deterrent and dispersal as an integration element"* (G5). Some RCOs suggested that flexibility and greater housing choice would improve long-term integration strategy where refugees could *"move cities because of personal need for*

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community support" (Xi3) and existing social housing mechanisms like *"[39]Home Swap would help dispersal procedures to facilitate settlement"* (G5).

The importance of timescales in resettlement was mentioned throughout. Those participants who supported the ECRE[40] Campaign thought that integration should start on Day One although it was considered that integration as a process takes place over generations. The time factor regarding the determination process was obviously a huge consideration to many RCOs, when the 28 days notice-to-quit created such a *"huge gap in access, knowledge, support mechanisms and practical barriers to getting permanently re-housed elsewhere"* (FPI:14).

Positive communication

Community-led communication was not only considered fundamental to integration strategy but fundamental in order to *"challenge misconceptions"* (FPI:16) and ensure that *"initiatives are local and imaginative"* (FPI:21). *"There's got to be a good-neighbour way"* (G7) one participant stated coupled with the need for *"culture change"* within organisations *"to incorporate refugee perspectives"* (Xr8, NW2). One Partnership tackled this with a training programme for partners' frontline housing staff that was eventually rolled out across the city. Another way it was suggested culture change might impact on the housing sector was via targeted recruitment from within refugee communities. *"Not many people (refugees) apply for jobs in housing because nobody has involved them!"* (Xr6). Even established communities are not involved in this way, *"**** has one Vietnamese advice worker for all the Neighbourhood Offices"* (Xi7T). This last statement demonstrates the

point made by Amas and Price (2008) that even established RCOs have gained little real structural influence. Chapter 7 describes hact's post-Project initiatives to challenge prevailing perceptions and ideology about refugees.

Sharing resources

Overall participants took a very realistic approach to the availability and limitation of resources and suggested that different RCOs shared what was available in several imaginative ways[41]. One Partnership was promoting the re-designation of an underused local West Indian Community Centre for African groups (Xr11). Another partner offered sharing their office space with RCOs (Z1) and there was one proposition that community facilities like allotments (FPI:20) as well as the more obvious community centres (NW1) were places for sharing and mixing. It was proposed that activities as well as place became a shared resource e.g. homework clubs and group meals (Xr2) and training sessions (Xi6). One partner proposed that a shared resource would offer a more in-depth study opportunity (FPI:13)[42]. During fieldwork to explore domains of integration Ager and Strang (2008) noted that discussion seldom focused on physical housing conditions such as size and design. Respondents in their study were concerned with the *"social and cultural aspects of housing"* and *"valued the continuity of relationships over time"* (op. cit. 2008:171). Discussions and observations within this study suggested a sub-set of indicators that reflected integration at neighbourhood level encompassing, place, time, concepts of shared cultural space and participation in democratic structure. These are illustrated in Figure 6.4 and supported by typical examples. Interestingly most show the refugees rather than the host communities being pro-active.

Figure 6.4: Integration Outcome Indicators

Indicator	*Example*
Stability	90% of newcomers chose to stay in *** (Xo3T)
	Aspiration for home ownership and employment (Y4)
Mutuality	Refugees using local slang and dialect (Z1)
	Mutual respect and leisure time spent together (Z1)
	Types of jobs (that refugees don't usually do) e.g. in housing (Xr6)
Multiple Identity	'Somalis are Boltonians too!' (Xo3T)
Civic engagement	Political engagement on neighbourhood panels (Xo0)
	Young Somalis intending to stand (for election) in **** (Xi7T)
	Involvement in local forums e.g. Tenants Associations (Xr11)

Source: Framework developed by the author

Conclusion

The anomaly between RCOs' competence and perceptions from other partners suggests marginalisation can only be overcome at local level by political will that starts with recognition of community potential. RCOs are demand-led organisations fulfiling functions necessary for the survival, settlement and well-being of asylum seekers, refugees, and in some cases, other newcomer migrants. Their powers are largely latent and invisible. Recognition that these organisations are capable of an on-going relationship rather than the as-needed contact observed by researchers (Amas and Price, 2008) is a significant step forward that implies a lasting and developing relationship. It realises the significance of 'organisational recognition' as a mechanism for perpetuating involvement and participation in the empowerment process of RCOs. Within the tenants' movement, de-recognition of a tenants association would only happen if an organisation folded or did not meet the requirements of the recognising body, for example, failure to consult with members: Even then best practice would require support from housing providers in holding consultation activities and building leadership. This parallel raises some

questions about who is the recognition body to replicate the landlord/TRA funders. In this study hact is the recognising body.

What does seem to be overlooked in the accumulative process that has been identified as 'recognition' is the asset of strategic vision held by some of the more organisational mature RCOs. It appears there is often an operational/strategic dividing line that organisations crossed as they became more established and economically stabilised. There are parallels here with the tenants movement where a prevailing view persists that tenants are not interested in strategic issues sometimes used as an argument against tenants having a place on management boards. Yet RCOs are neither strategically recognised nor fully employed in resettlement procedures. Far from being a business risk, it is more likely that RCOs could offer a great deal in collaboration including service delivery. What commissioning bodies may fail to notice is the 'added value' that RCOs can bring via the volunteering ethos and commitment to members. Evidence suggests that RCOs as service providers provide us with a 'social economy' model that occupies an innovative place with an alternative ideology between 'state and market' (Taylor, 1995). The volunteer ethos is strong and reflects alternative values that drive some of the RCOs who struggle for survival and resource. That diversity fosters entrepreneurialism, is an interesting observation in this context in so far as it suggests that diversity provides the fertile ground where collective social capital can grow and delivery structures evolve that can challenge what Ledwith (1997:19) calls *"the advanced materialism that has resulted in the commodification of everything"*.

What are the barriers to RCOs engagement and involvement was a research question implicit from the outset. This Chapter specifies barriers to RCOs' participation that adds to those noted by commentators in Chapter 3. Lack of political will to take recognition beyond a token stage was discussed and the disillusioning effect this can have on RCOs, depleting enthusiasm and social capital. Another barrier was summarised by one respondent as 'refugees taking over our town', referring to contested ownership of place. Place and space have been highlighted in this Chapter as a crucial element in settlement and integration. Significantly, as Stone and Muir (2007) note, minority ethnic groups associate more strongly with locality than the population as a whole and, in the light of this study, could be associated with regeneration of belonging and a new beginning. The physical regeneration that refugees often bring to run down areas in need of economic regeneration is another advantage of ownership of place. Negative attitudes evolving from perceptions of having to 'share' existing resource revealed an array of barriers including negative labelling; cultural alienation from existing systems; low expectations; and lack of confidence based on a hostile view of 'the stranger' as many commentators have previously noted (Humphries, 1996; D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). This is a hostility that the far right can exploit and which therefore becomes another impediment to political will to publicly engage with refugee people seeking asylum.

At local level, the evidence for racist attitudes points as much to competition in a climate of shortage over housing, jobs and benefits (Amas and Crosland, 2006) as to structural barriers perceived at national level (see Chapter 2). A vital task for

each Partnership was harnessing political will to challenge this damaging ideology and re-create an alternative creed based on the two-way dialogue that authors and respondents repeatedly call for. Central to the Government's modernisation agenda is the rejuvenation of democracy and several of the partners expressed aspiration that RCOs would become involved in tenant structures and local ward committees. None of these respondents, however, identified the barrier that many refugees face when seeking involvement with elected members, that exclusion from full citizenship rights can mean exclusion from mechanisms of constituency representation and governance.

The lack of recognition itself can become a *'form of oppression'* (Taylor 1992:35) that compounds existing barriers and obstacles; hampering RCO active participation in wider networks. It was noted that some partners' willingness to recognise community leaders was related to perceived levels of democratic accountability. This Chapter has focused on an RCO perspective but what has often intrigued me in a professional capacity is the lack of representation that some of the other partners exhibit in terms of their employing organisations. Sometimes partners fail to reflect the strategic focus of their organisations, or to have decision-making power or frontline understanding of key agenda issues. In addressing the research question about overcoming barriers, inter-collaborative dynamic is explored in more depth in the next Chapter. Most RCOs regarded recognition and resource as one, which was not always the view of other partners. One Partnership in particular recognised the collective capital that could be engendered as newly-formed RCOs worked together.

Findings from this longitudinal research support the precept that the refugee experience itself accumulates a form of social capital. As some of the initiatives noted in this study have indicated, RCO leaders could play a greater role in integration strategy because of this. Their collectivity, insider community knowledge and symbolic and social capital suggest they have much to offer especially at neighbourhood level where newcomer communities begin to build an affinity with the locality. RCO respondents expressed a desire for a holistic approach to integration that challenged barriers at national level as well as neighbourhood level and the issue of housing choice in resettlement was refer to as a practical component in ensuring stability. Wider opportunities for refugees to take up employment in housing and restoration of the right for refugee people seeking asylum to work were seen as essential to promote mutuality at local level. The scope for exercising multiple identities was mentioned by several respondents as an essential factor in the integration process as well as enabling active participation in civic life.   The role of hact as a force for social action and agent of change is paramount because recognition in this context is a social process. It is evident that hact's role impacts on the community empowerment process as a whole but this final conclusion informed the necessity for a theoretical analysis of hact as network manager, explored in detail in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Changing the rules of engagement

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to explore the power dynamic evident within the *Accommodate* through the theoretical framework of network management theory. As described in Chapter 4 it offers a way to understand links between core theme 4: '*hact: agent of change'* and core theme 3: *'Partnership rules of engagement'.* It also sheds light on the relationship between hact and the role that the Project Workers played (sub-theme D). Power dynamics have been ever present within *Accommodate.* The researcher standpoint was based on a critical realist tradition, which is concerned with the uneven distribution of power (see Chapter 5 for more discussion): It assumed that power is unequally distributed within the institutional structures that make up Western society (Sayer, 2000) and that oppression does not come from economic factors alone, but can exist in may other forms (Bourdieu, 1998). Network management theory allows for the role of network manager in collaborative relationships to broker power between partners.

Inevitable inequalities in power between partners meant the role of hact as a force for social action as an agent of change may be paramount. Power was manifest in different ways within *Accommodate.* The power of authority was in evidence over ideas and strategies; resources; structure and over others. The power to act as an individual or as a collective was modulated by capacity, legitimacy and recognition. The power to influence was linked to the authority to do so. Whether by virtue of organisational or membership representation or individual expertise, authority was

exercised according to the degree to which other partners recognised those powers (see Figure 6:2 for a model of the complexities of recognition). Critical powers were used to veto, withdraw or question proceedings according to the confidence and legitimacy that the Partnerships accorded each partner. Power and the negotiation of power were evidenced as an ever-present, mercurial element within *Accommodate*.

This Chapter draws upon data from interviews with hact personnel together with a study of hact's early Annual Reviews to explore and analyse the underlying values behind the distinctive position of hact as 'catalyst for change'. To discover how hact's role was first perceived by other partners, data from of the first stage of fieldwork, including observations of Project Workers' Away Days, provided examples of different facets of the role. Data gathered in participant observation while working alongside Project Workers assisted in understanding how their role was brokered and encouraged by hact. In addition to this steerage, hact involved external consultants to reconfigure perceptions between partners and influence outcomes. Findings from these inter-Partnership sessions as well as data from participant observations were used to understand the degree to which this was effective. In conclusion this Chapter argues that network management theory was an implicit theory in use that furthered understanding of the Project and the evaluation process. It reflects on the importance of a network manager with a set of values working to achieve community empowerment of marginalised communities through partnership working. Chapter 8 explores the findings from longitudinal study to discover whether the empowerment of RCOs endured.

The unique position of hact

Hact's hands-on involvement with *Accommodate* was intriguing from the outset because it behaved like no other funder. Hact was enthusiastic and inclusive about the progress of the CASE-studentship and the relationship that developed proved mutually rewarding. Being invited to give an interim presentation at one hact staff meeting in 2006, I heard hact's position succinctly expressed by one of its patrons:

> *"Hact is like the wings of an aircraft – in order to stay in flight the wings have to achieve the perfect balance between stability and flexibility. For hact to be effective it needs to be flexible to respond quickly to change. The stability is largely in the core values (G18)".*

This description together with exploration of hact's Annual Reviews provided evidence of its core values (Fig. 7.1), commitment; pioneering spirit; its positioning between the grassroots and national policy level and its capacity as a charitable organisation to adapt and survive. Each of these elements is now discussed in turn.

Commitment to core values

Figure 7.1: Hact's core values

• Productive and careful use of funds and resources
• Projects to influence policy
• Housing provision within a community-wide perspective
• The importance of advice and knowledge
• Adopting the role of catalyst for change
• Championing the marginalised
• Changing negative public attitudes to homelessness
• Housing is a right not a privilege

Source: The Author based on early 1980s Annual Reviews since hact became an independent charitable organisation

The opportunity for actors, other than government to direct and steer, especially housing development processes, has arisen because of the shift in policy-making and goal-setting from vertical hierarchical government towards horizontal network governance (Rhodes, 1997). As Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2007) and Buitelaar and de Kam (2009) suggest, this enables a transformative model in which to shape the institutional environment, described as *"the legal, social and political rules that determine the context within which activity takes place"* (Buitelaar and de Kam, 2009:187). Figure 7:2 depicts the leverage that collaborative networks can exercise on policy and fiscal networks.

Figure 7.2: Network systems and transformative change
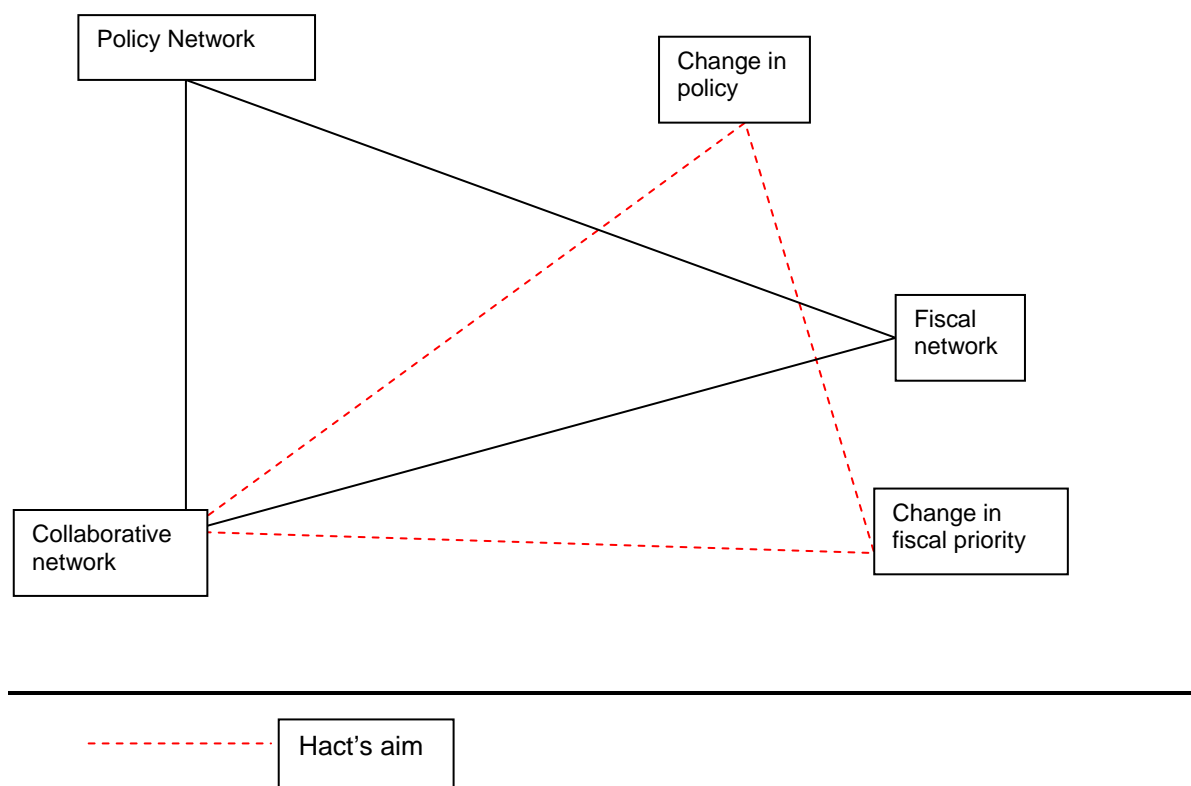
Source: The Author based on Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2007

Successful steering requires an unswerving sense of purpose, based on strong core values, particularly in areas of policy such as refugee housing needs where there has been a *"failure of political will"* (Mullins and Jones, 2009:108) to address the problem. In the case of hact, Figure 7.1 has traced some of the main core values identified from its literature. From hact's foundation in 1959 by Sir George Parker Morris, the aim was to provide a pool of charitable funds, comprising both loans and grants, to assist affiliated members of the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA). This created a resource to carry out work for which statutory funds were not available and thereby to address gaps in housing provision. By 1980, though, hact had an independent existence under the new Trust deed: Apart from some of the main donors laying down rules regarding their money, the Trustees operated within very wide general guidelines. Hact's core values evolved and became more distinct in this period shaping its more independent identity. Annual Reviews from this period demonstrate an ethos whereby funding and resources (often shared) were used productively with the overall aim of provoking housing policy change and attracting mainstream finance. By 1981 the Trustees demonstrated progressive thinking embracing a community-wide perspective and *"embarked on plans for a number of new joint projects which will not only be of benefit to the homeless, but also to the community at large"* (Annual Review 1982:4).

At this time the advisory role of hact began to expand and the wider housing movement recognised hact's housing and financial knowledge as a considerable asset that could be called upon. Analysis of project together with policy was

another early characteristic of hact's culture and marked the intention for the Trust to 'act as a catalyst' so that voluntary and rural housing associations could obtain funding for new projects. During this period, Shelter's estimates on homeless reached crisis proportions and hact, tackling the blame culture that was common in the popular press at the time, stated that *"homelessness is not the fault of the unfortunate people who find themselves in a big city without any form of accommodation"* (Annual Review 1982:6).

At hact's 1984 Silver Jubilee the Chairman's statement summarised their national campaigning role to change attitudes:

> *"Some will blame 'the Government' – this is easy to do, but not constructive in a democracy where government policies reflect widespread public attitudes …… all that the housing lobby can hope for is that public opinion will swing towards a greater awareness of the basic need of every man, woman and child for a decent home"* (Annual Review 1984:3).

Indeed the campaigning commitment to meet the housing needs of *"disadvantaged groups whether they arise from poverty, infirmity, frailty or social stigma"* (Annual Review 1983:3), is an enduring characteristic of hact. As early as 1981, the Annual Review[43] established the organisation's strategy of using funding for *"new pioneering ventures that might lead to the provision of Government funding rather than bricks and mortar, furniture and equipment[44]"*. Annual Reviews therefore tell a story of an organisation with a long-established mission, capable of adapting to changes in policy in order to survive as an agent of change.

Pioneering spirit

Hact's history has shaped its identity, and its pioneering spirit is a trademark of hact as a force for change today. A pioneering spirit, however, cannot be fostered without risk-taking. *Accommodate's* instigator describes hact's pioneering approach in this context:

"It's very important for hact working with marginalised groups to take risks. As long as you want to learn you've got to take risks and if you are working with marginalised groups you want to trust them and work from them. In many cases hact was the first funder for many groups that we fund like RCOs - that other people would not touch. I mean mistakes happen but that's the price to pay…." (G5).

Risk-taking is an attribute that Kickert and Koppenjan (1997:58) associate with *"commitment power"* and the quality of leadership to *"create consensus"* and establish support for new ideas. Commentators stress the role of network leadership in that *"the very act of establishing collaborative activity is a consequence of leadership"* (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002:125).

Hact's style of leadership is to prioritise experimentation, imaginative interplay and allocate time for ideas to develop. The internal synergy that takes place in their offices is captured by one of *Accommodate's* consultants:

"A and B are bright people and they spark off one another... The most interesting thing is they have a little bit of luxury to explore ideas. When they chose the Partnerships they chose them in a laudatory way, in that they

didn't just chose the ones they were interested in, they also chose them
because they were very different from each other. I don't know what the
choice was – one big one, one action one, one local one – that was clever
too... so that they learn from the diversity" (G7).

Working at different levels

It may be that hact's ability to maintain a balance between stability and flexibility is due to the unusual position it occupies. Hact remains independent but is involved in strategic networks and decision-making bodies at national level at the same time as working at grassroots level with groups that others sometimes feel are 'risky' to fund. Due to this ability to work simultaneously with housing associations and policy makers nationally as well as with groups such as RCOs locally, hact has earned, as one associate recognised: *"the respect of two sectors by working with both"* (G5). Hact arrived at this position because of their continued strategy of model replication. An explanation of this was made at the first *Accommodate* Project Workers' Away Day: *"We are looking for a legacy from the Projects to show a system that can be replicated as well as looking at what doesn't work"* (G0). In this way hact endeavours to invoke policy change and reconcile grassroots knowledge with national strategy.

Adaptation to change

This ability to maintain a balance between stability and flexibility means hact must also be receptive to change from within. In fact staffing for *Accommodate* has been extended because the change management role has perpetuated beyond the life of the Project. This demonstrates hact's commitment and drive in developing

continuation strategies for some of the RCOs involved. Staff continue to embed the 'networkedness' (see Chapter 8 for more explanation of this aspect of community empowerment) of RCOs as firmly as possible in each locality in order to raise their strategic profile. This was a planned not responsive proposal. Evidence of post-Project initiatives appeared in notes of meetings as early as April 2006: *"(hact) is scheduled to meet X who works for JRF in **** and could be a potential resource to take forward the Accommodate work beyond hact funding"* (Xr7). Support for *Accommodate's* refugee partners continues via a series of routes: developing the asset base; strengthening networks; using match-funding to promote other investment; introducing community development initiatives; promoting further local roles for RCOs; donating associate consultant hours on a no-win-no-fee basis; brokering meetings with other strategic players; drawing in additional funds; helping evidence track records and using their influence with useful local contacts.

Hact's approach to transformative empowerment is reinforced by clear mission and unwavering values. As Gary Craig, Professor of Social Justice commented when he was interviewed about the purpose and role of community development: Community development without a "*value base and without a theoretical framework" is a '"skill-base occupation"* that can be undertaken by any organisation including the BNP (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008:41). Hact's steerage in collaboration during *Accommodate* is further defined as this Chapter conceptualises hact's role using the language of network management theorists (Chapter 4). Hact's role is described by one of the participants as a *"moulding role"*

developing the Partnerships from *"operational to strategic"* (Y1) in order to bring about fundamental change.

Creating networks

The very act of creating a network is a consequence of leadership as Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) have noted, but the leadership role cannot stop there. Despite claims made about governance networks being able to solve complex problems (see Chapter 4), Van Bortel and Mullins (2009) point out that we cannot assume automatic equal power, mutuality and trust between participants. They argue that there is a conflict between governance networks and democratic accountability. This aspect they call, 'meta-governance' can only be solved if the networks themselves are democratic. Networks are generally classified and analysed in terms of the levels of interaction, their interdependence and function to identify what level of change (purpose) can be achieved (Figure 7:3). Mandell and Keast (2008) developed this analysis by identifying synergies in three case studies. This analysis suggests that 'collaborative networks' achieve fundamental change because there is a higher level of interaction, interdependency and action between agencies.

Within *Accommodate,* it became evident that levels of interaction and degrees of interdependence as well as functions (Figure 7:3) were also affected by time, the building of trust and contextual aspects of complexity as collaborative network theorists agree (Klijn, 2005, Koppenjan and Klijn, 2008).

Figure 7.3: Types of Networks

Type of network	Levels of interaction	Degrees of interdependence	Purpose	Function
Collaborative networks	highly interactive	interdependent	Fundamental change	Action between agencies
Co-coordinative networks	Interact in order to better individual efforts	Remain independent entities	Marginal improvements	Outreach i.e. engaging the activities of the developmental information and exchange
Co-operative networks	Only interact when necessary	Independent sharing of expertise and knowledge	Low risk and little development of practice and methods	Informational and developmental

Source: The Author based on Agranoff, (2006) and Mandell and Keast (2008:690)

Synergies and dynamics were largely stimulated by hact in the role of network manager and this role appears to be missing from the typology of networks in Figure 7:3. The above analysis was challenged by findings comparing the meeting culture of Partnerships within the *Accommodate* Project. One of the Partnerships held few regular inter-agency meetings yet achieved a model that others sought to emulate; another Partnership began with an inner and outer circle of actors that met separately but achieved fundamental change in attitude and mainstream service provision. Another Partnership held monthly meetings, with formal procedures and minute-taking but did not achieve their originally stated outcome because of external changes in asylum dispersal policy. The role of hact, while not part of the established democratic structure was akin to concepts of meta-governance:

> *"Accommodate Project meta-governance initiatives did not originate from elected politicians but from a relationship with a funding organisation, hact, operating at national level but aiming to facilitate local political integration"* (Van Bortel and Mullins, 2009:215).

The next section explores the role of hact through the eyes of other partners and charts examples of hact's influence on interaction and outcome. Van Bortel and Mullins' (op. cit.) concept of meta-governance is evidenced in concrete outcomes that had a 'positive effect on the democracy of society': Local policies such as Choice-based Lettings were developed more sensitively and piloted with one Partnership's Refugee Forum. Influence was brought to bear in service areas besides housing such as health. The issue of Khat abuse, for example was taken up by the regional Primary Care Trust. Long-term relationships were developed between the local Authority and some Partnership RCOs. One Somali RCO was able to influence the New and Emerging Communities Strategy and broaden their community representative role to supporting other minority ethnic groups including Roma clients.

Hact: agent of change

Hact through the eyes of others
From the start of the Project it was evident that hact had an unusually high profile for a funder. Participants from both Phases of *Accommodate* referred to hact in various roles. A list of actor persona to describe hact's role in the Project emerged from interviews, conversations and meetings with participants. There was evidence of the many different ways in which hact facilitated its main aim before *Accommodate* began; using research, recognition, encouragement, guidance, communication, network hosting, co-ordination, support and promotion. Facets of hact's role are illustrated in Figure 7:4 with example of how others perceived hact at this stage.

Figure 7.4: The many faces of hact

Facets of Role	Reference	Perceived by:
Research	**Both academic and fieldwork:** The Refugee Project came out of research in mid 80s, early 90s that *"just convinced Hact that this is a separate issue to other BME issues"*. It came from *"having their ear to the ground"* where they found RCOs *"fire fighting – with no time to develop or even get updated with the continually changing situation"*. Prior to *Accommodate* hact instigated an information gathering/training Project that operated both-ways (G5)	Hact Associate
Recognition of strengths and challenges	**Recognition of the role of RCOs**: *"Future Projects need to address the knowledge of established grass-roots organisations"* (U1:3)	RCO leader
	Recognition of the complexity of barriers: *"The main weakness of the project is the political sensitivity of the issue of refugees especially in Kent with the port of Dover at hand… but the reality is that although refugees arrive in numbers at Dover, they only settle in pockets"* (U1:4)	Former Director
	Recognition of the policy challenge: *"Refugee is now seen as a bad word. Policies are not in the interests of refugees. I know we need control measures but they are seen as a burden – there is such a struggle to get a positive decision that it becomes an alienating experience so that entitlements and integration are not taken up as enthusiastically as they might be"* (U1:2)	RCO leader
Guidance	**Defining the problem:** *"The housing market is open to 'supply and demand' economics; secondary migration and global movement influence this in waves. Scarcity and availability of resources creates tension between ethnic, indigenous and migratory groups. We need a model which will meet need as well as resolve tensions"* (G0)	Hact's introduction to Project Workers' Away Day
Development	**Capacity building:** *"Hact is enabling us to reach a higher level"* (NW1)	Full-time RCO worker
Communication	**As activity:** *"Each time I see *** (from hact) I am conscious of his continual drive to seek out ways of improving relations between RCOs and housing providers"* (M2)	Researcher observation
	As instrument: *"A communication tool kit was thought about for people to use. For example we even went into where there's a press release, what they should say about hact – things to avoid, being sensitive to host communities and so on..."*(G5)	Accommodate instigator
	As development: *"The (hact's) communication and engagement strategy will be linked to communications/media training"* (Y3)	Notes of a Partnership meeting
Network hosting	Amongst broader activity hact facilitated Project Worker Away Days, RCO Away Days and national events to promote learning and interaction between and outside Accommodate partners.	

Support	**Resources:** *"I thought capacity with RCOs would urgently be a problem and that is why the Project had this central support element"* (G5) **Strategic support:** *"They key central support plans for 2006 include inter-Partnership work, forward/exit strategy and communication and engagement strategy"* (Y3).	Accommodate instigator Notes of a Partnership meeting
Promotion	**In the Media:** *"A community event will be held on ... hact has requested whether this could be used as a photo opportunity involving a local MP"* (Y3) **Of a more refined definition of 'vulnerability':** *"The main thing to say is that the effort has not been about refugees, it has been to take them and integrate them as part of the community and I think it will be an achievement if we are able to get Accommodate as a voice, to get to know that this group is much more vulnerable than the general"* (Xr6)	Notes of a Partnership meeting Refugee housing worker

Source: The Author's findings based on interviews, conversations and meetings

Hact's approach to research

Hact took a two-pronged approach to research. In the forefront a senior researcher kept a keen eye on the latest reports, policies and findings; but hact also employed an 'ear to the ground' approach. The Refugee Housing, Training and Development Project was set up by hact in 1998 to equip RCO housing advisors to give more accurate initial advice to their clients and be able to signpost them and engage in networks. This work meant hact nurtured the trust of RCOs over time and so they were prepared to take a 'leap of faith' in partnership working in *Accommodate* (Jones and Hussain, 2010). The training was a two-way process that also provided a source of grassroots information to understand the needs and role played by RCOs in addressing refugee housing issues. Hact's approach in working alongside RCOs in this way is typical of *"emancipatory action research"* that Ledwith (2005) describes being:

*"rooted in **dialogue**, attempting to work **with**, not **on** people, and intends that its process should be empowering for all. More than this, it is committed to collective action for social change as outcome (2005:73)."* (her emphasis).

It is indicative that RCOs and other voluntary agencies expressed a sense of mutual ownership of the problems to be faced and an understanding of hact's enabling approach to capacity building. Hact's two-pronged approach to research is demonstrated by the way that the first Project Workers' Away Day was facilitated. To begin with hact presented a strategic analysis of the bigger picture of the tensions associated with housing shortage. They then invited participants to network and share resolution in helping create a model within those contexts (see Chapter 2 for discussion about tensions surrounding housing shortage). Support for RCOs to participate was strategically devised by hact to sustain not only material resource but promotion; engagement and post-Project continuation strategy (see Chapter 8 for an analysis of resource mobilisation). The words of one refugee housing worker summarised hact's comprehensive vision of *Accommodate* when he referred to the need for a redefinition of technical 'vulnerability' for refugees (see Chapter 2 for more details about this aspect of housing policy):

"The main thing to say is that the effort has not been about refugees, it has been to take them and integrate them as part of the community and I think it will be an achievement if we are able to get Accommodate as a voice, to get to know that this group is much more 'vulnerable' than the general" (Xr6)

Setting up Accommodate

Hact's approach to setting up *Accommodate* was initially characterised by the funding environment at the time. Loss of substantial donations from big funders like Barings Bank in the late 1990s limited hact's autonomy: *"If you have funding which some people trust to you, you have a free hand, you are looking around, seeing what are the issues …. If you don't have to worry about funders or pleasing funders you can be more courageous - this is an issue for hact"* (G5). Hact provided relatively modest funding[45] to *Accommodate* Partnerships and had little formal Authority over the five Partnerships (Figure 7:5).

Figure 7.5: Map of *Accommodate* Network mapping one local Partnership
Source: Mullins and Jones (2009: 104)
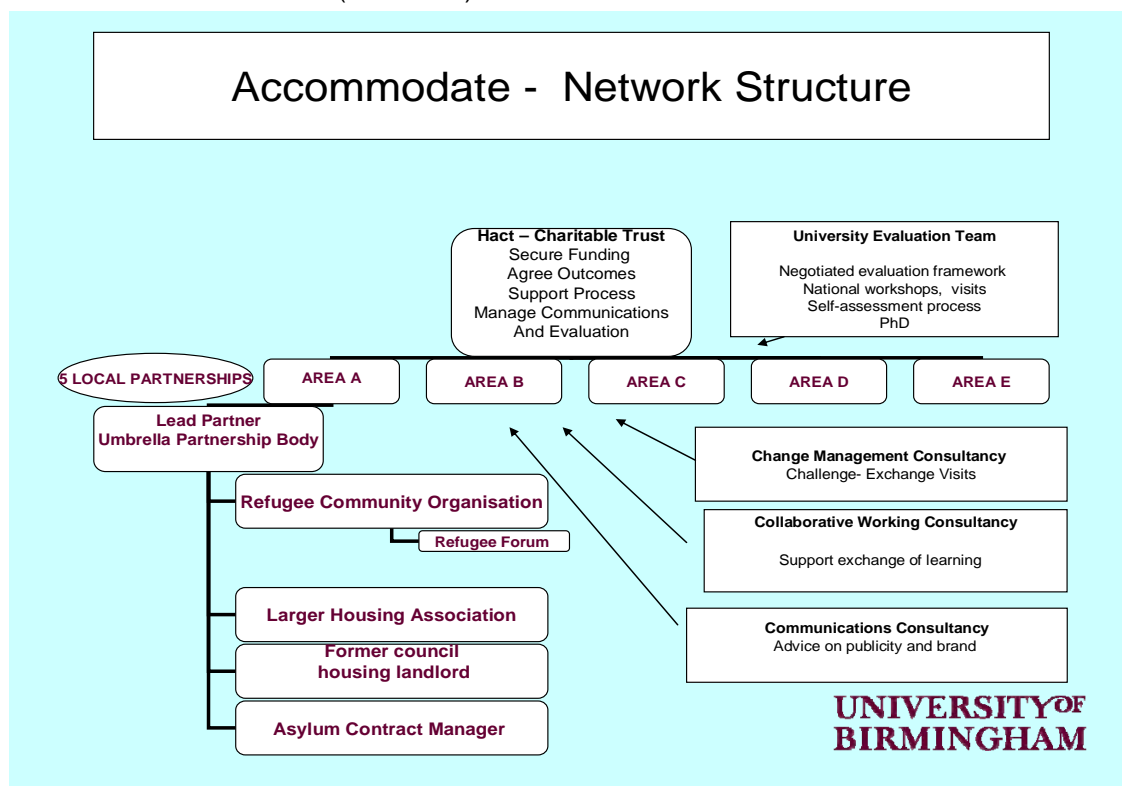
In collaborative networks it is commonly noted the network manager has less leverage and authority than his/her traditional counterpart in a more vertical

hierarchy. The Partnerships were set up as collaborations because hierarchical agencies were not addressing refugee housing needs. In the words of one *Accommodate* RCO activist : *"If the Partnership was not there it would be 'business as usual' for them and 'suffering as usual' for these people"* (Xr6). Mullins and Jones, (2009:112) claimed that the success of the Project therefore depended on *"non-hierarchical forms of steering"* being developed so that Partnerships could be regulated, learning shared and mutually agreed outcomes achieved.

Roles of other partners

Other actors developed early perceptions of the roles they played in *Accommodate*. Some considered their roles 'structurally': referring to a 'lead' role; a 'supporting' role; a 'marginal' role; a 'core group' member; an 'outer group' member or in terms of their office: Chairperson, Secretary etc. Others described their role 'functionally' denoted by the contribution they made, for example to research and design; capacity building; day-to-day management; needs assessment; advocacy; data collection and local knowledge. Yet others described their roles as; 'champion'; 'impassioned volunteer' and some considered they played a critical role as 'challenger'; 'diplomat' or 'scrutineer'. One Chief Executive thought that: *"Partnerships only work if champions attend"* (Xr8). (The next Chapter examines the operational domain of leadership in more detail). One distinction seemed to be between those actors who considered they played a strategic part and those engaged operationally. There was some duplication of roles observed particularly at the 'norming' stage of *Accommodate*. Hact promoted the internal role of the Project Worker, a position intended to address the issue of *pluriformity* i.e.

conflict/cohesion of organisational cultures within the network (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997:122) and role duplication. It is not uncommon for network managers to harness third parties to help in developing collaboration and *"managers will usually try out more than one arrangement"* (Klijn and Teisman, 1997:110).

De Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof's (1997) concept of 'instruments' applied to network management is a useful one. They identify three families of instruments; *'orders and prohibitions"*, *'economic'* and *'communicative instruments'* (1997:120-121). The choice of steering instruments is often constrained. Hact did not have a great deal of authority or funds to exercise the first two 'families' of instruments but were able to bring to bear communicative instruments in the shape of RCOs' workshops, Project Workers' Away Days, national workshops, information in various forms, collaborative and change management consultancies to challenge perceptions through inter-communicative workshops (see Figure 7:6). It could also be argued that communicative instruments such as these were familiar hact methods, as de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof (1997) observe, organisations using them are: *"used to working with (*communicative instruments*)…and possess the relevant knowledge and expertise to use them. They are interwoven into the fabric of their culture."* (1997:121). However, it could be also be argued that hact also employed 'economic instrument' when it actively promoted the recruitment of a Project Worker within each Partnership using Project funds. Hact's focus was on creating a constant learning space and Away Days were just one of the mechanisms that hact set up to support the Project Workers. The full-time role of the Project co-ordinator

and the central support team, electronic bulletin and regular contact across the Project was a key element of hact's network management strategy. It is interesting to note that hact took a more regulatory approach ('orders and prohibitions') to secure the involvement RCOs in selection and recruitment in the *Accommodate* Wales Project a few years later.

The Role of the Project Worker

During the establishment of *Accommodate*, each of the five Partnerships was encouraged by hact to select and recruit a Project Worker in order to enhance internal leadership and communication across the network. De Bruin and ten Heuvelhof (1997:119) noted: *"Governance instruments perform their function on the level on which governance is taking place, that is, the operational level".* Project Workers fulfilled different functions, had different levels of authority and were faced with contextually diverse demands for each Partnership. However, they were encouraged to define their role at the Away Days and collaboratively identified a broad range of functions (Figure 7:6). In this way the perceptions of what the role entailed was brokered by hact and open discussion about differences served to spread the learning about this role across the network.

Figure 7.6: Project Workers commonly agreed functions
- Administration or the supervision of it
- Fundraising for RCOs
- Sign posting
- Brokerage
- Intelligence gathering
- Credibility building
- Driving outcome delivery
- Liaison-communication-networking
- Negotiating and managing tensions
- Accountability (to line manager or Partnership as a whole or to RCO(s)

Source: Author based on Away Day notes

Challenges in the role

At the Away Days, the six Project Workers (two were job-sharing) contributed their views about day-to-day challenges and barriers they faced. Some challenges were connected with pressures of the post particularly where Workers had other commitments and spoke of; *"juggling other duties elsewhere"* (G0). Another challenge concerned the fact that the role was a new one to some and they felt *"inexperienced"* (Xo0) in it. Inexperience meant there was occasionally a need for more *"inclusivity and communication"* (Obs. Xi10) especially with some RCO volunteers who needed positive encouragement in making a contribution. Hact tackled the issue of inexperience in various ways. External support was offered to one Worker who later said: *"it's very good that I am able to talk to X outside of the Partnership because she has a lot of experience that she shares" (*Xr6) and hact *"widened the Partnership group (of another worker) to support her (incipient role) as a researcher"* (Xo0). Hact ensured that community development good practice was the subject of Away Day discussions.

Many of the challenges centred on the scope, size and internal strengths of the Partnership and can be linked to hact's role in brokering the power dynamic within Partnerships. Project Workers spoke of the logistics of *"coordinating the powerful"* (G0) that had a direct effect on being able to fulfil the role and*: "not being able to contact high-flying partners in between meetings affecting the speed of the work"* (Xr6). We have to be *"careful and diplomatic and try not to offend"* (G16) was how one Worker described coping with more powerful partners and another: *"the bigger the partner – the bigger the problem!"* (Xo0). Frustration was expressed at the lack

of authority that this power imbalance created: *"I am not able to contact the person"* (directly involved in the Partnership)… *I am directed to people at the front end and have to start all over again explaining what we are trying to achieve"* (Xr6). The *"size of Partnership"* (G0) was cited as a challenge by more than one Worker. There were solutions put forward to cope with the scope of networks. For example one Worker, who felt she was obliged to attend *"too many Forums",* adopted a system of delegation and *"used other partners as substitutes"* (Y2). Another Project Worker articulated the development of his expertise in the role saying: *"a new person would have to start again ……and I have got a lot of information in my head"* (G16).

Support for RCOs

At the second Away Day, hact invited two community development workers to lead a discussion on how the six Project Workers jointly recognised their support role for RCOs. Firstly there was clarification on what they considered were the benefits of working with RCOs. Most Workers recognised RCOs' *"potentiality"* (Lukes, 2005:69) and their *"emergent"* (Sayer, 2005:55) power was clearly understood (see Chapter 4 for more explanation of these aspects of power). Project Workers cited their *"insider knowledge and specialist information"* (Y2) as the main advantage as well as presenting *"networking opportunities to roll out a training project"* (Xi5) for instance. The community development workers endorsed good practice in working with community groups in highlighting *"two-way communication …. (and) …..backing up with planning, monitoring and evaluation"* (G0) as fundamental components in building credible relationships. One experienced Worker observed

that *"regular word-of mouth contact"* (Y2) with RCOs was the most effective form of communication in keeping abreast of issues. Another view of the relationship with RCOs was to act as advocate, *"being a voice for refugees"* because of being able to *"see that refugees are put at a disadvantage by the policies practiced by certain service providers"* (Xr6), and *"to offer leadership in chairing the Refugee Forum"*[46] (Xr11). One Worker emphasised the need for *"resource gathering"* to materially support RCOs, for instance persuading housing associations to help pay for basic operational costs e.g. *"phone calls"* (Xi5). *"Negotiating and manoeuvring"* were skills that another identified (Xi10).

In fact the last contribution to this discussion provoked thinking about the political dimension of the role of Project Workers; a political dimension encompassing operational leadership, networking and trust. Certainly the issue of RCOs in the lead role had previously raised the question of their ability to *"strategically lead"* (G5). One Worker expressed the view that their own track record within the refugee community was a component linked to the political power of the role, being part of *"a lead organisation based in the community"*, she said, *"enables trust"* (Y2). The issue of trust is at the forefront of a network management analysis where bargaining and mutual adjustment between actors leads to power being dependent on position and resources. *"Trust"*, as Koppenjan and Klijn (2004:84-86) assert, *"is an important factor in the creation of desired interactions and cooperation"* and *"develops over time"*.

The development of trust

Within the context of network management theory trust is defined as *"perceptions of the good intentions of other actors"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:83). The RCO partners were well aware of the power differential between themselves as voluntary sector actors and other resource-rich and more influential partners. They were quite frank about their perceptions of the intentions of other actors. One respondent described a general view of statutory partners: *"Some are community-minded and others are business-minded and there to tick boxes"* (Y1). This was a typical perspective in the early days of the Project. Actors, as Klijn and Koppenjan (2004:72-74) observed, act on their perceptions: *"The trust of an actor concerns the expectation that other actors will refrain from opportunistic behaviour even when there is occasion for such behaviour"* and they contend that these patterns of behaviour form an actor strategy that is: *"The most dynamic element of networks in the game"*. The development of trust between partners therefore can easily be unsettled by change, for instance when actors in one Partnership *"worried about new players",* who join at a later date, because they may have *"competing agendas"* (Xr2).

While Klijn and Koppenjan (2004:74) noted that trust did not have to be reciprocated, they suggested that this could not be sustained for long in a network. *"Stable perceptions",* they argued are, *"characterised by a high degree of trust".* *Accommodate* demonstrated that trust of this sort is developed over time and was linked to clarity of roles as one participant partner described: *"We had often been at loggerheads – now we better understood one another's working constraints"*

(FPII:3). The role of hact was fundamental in developing this mutual understanding by engaging in reframing the 'perception of intentions' (Termeer and Koppenjan, 1997). Hact applied a purposeful focus to changing the perceptions of actors: *"the hact model is to engage, understand, intervene and steer… the key success ingredients are people rather than Project design or money"* (HF3). (Mullins and Jones, 2009:113). Tackling '*cognitive'* and '*social closedness'* (see Chapter 4 for the theoretical background to these terms) as the next section describes, is fundamental to the process of developing trust which can *"facilitate innovation"* (most important for hact) and reduce *"uncertainty about opportunistic behaviour"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:85).

Social and cognitive domains of closedness

Network management theorists assert that much of inter-collaborative communication is related to perception. In this study, perception was to the fore for a number of reasons; cultural differences both organisational and ethnic, preconceived assumptions about different sector players' intentions and general lack of information and knowledge about each other's sector. Network management theory's emphasis on adjusting perceptions extends beyond dealing with *pluriformity* at the 'norming' stage of establishing a network, to developing the framework and resolution of problems. Often barriers to progressing from this stage form because actors cling to their own interpretation and reject *"information that would challenge the correctness of a problem definition or preferred solution"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:32).

The problem of closedness in a social domain relates to the exclusion of certain actors because their contribution is not attributed value. This form of closedness can be exercised both consciously and unconsciously by other actors. The problem of closedness in a cognitive domain is the deliberate creation of a *"cognitive blockade or stagnation"* (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004:33). The literature has developed a useful model that clarifies closedness in three forms: *"veto power"*, *"frames of reference"* and *"network culture"* (Shaap and van Twist, 1997:62-78). Veto power exists because actors are interdependent and relates to actors' power to obstruct others' objectives. *Frames of reference* relate to different actors' perception of the facts as they see them. *Network culture* includes both symbolic tradition as well as rules. Findings showed that this model is more complex, as Koppenjan and Klijn (2004:80) noted *"there is a continuous interaction between the rules, the structure of the network, and the games in which these rules are applied."*

Veto power was exercised by one RCO very early on in the Project. The RCO leader withdrew from the Partnership because he felt that he and other RCO partners should have been involved in the recruitment and selection procedure for the Project Worker's post. Hact followed up an internal meeting about this in discussion with the lead agency and the Project Worker. Hact described their role at this point as "*an outsider, but with a vested interest"* and expressed an interest in the incident, not as a complaint, but as a lesson to learn about *"whether RCOs partners are developing a leadership role"* (Xi1). The lead agency admitted that they had little experience of working with RCOs as a group and realised that they

needed to do more to cater for the diverse needs and expectations of RCO partners. Hact was able to use this incident to broker a closer relationship with this Partnership. The lead agency and the Project Worker were encouraged to seek hact's assistance and engagement in the future. In this way, hact in the role of network manager took advantage of the RCO partner exercising veto power to help reframe the perceptions of the lead agency.

Hact made use of a change management consultancy (Figure 7:5), which described itself as a *"leadership development organisation",* (XO3T/XR9T) to help reframe some of the perceptions across the network or in hact's words to *"mix things up a bit, to change the dynamics' in the hope of a more dramatic reframing or 'mind set change'* (HF4)" (Mullins and Jones, 2009:119). The change consultant ran a series of exchange visits, where people were free to say things they could not voice within the Partnerships. He stimulated discussion with provocative statements like: *"Xr and Xi (Partnership areas) have not got it right – the volcano goes off now and again!"* (Xi7T/Xo2T). Many 'unsafe' issues (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970) were discussed within these visits including; misconceptions of refugees 'queue jumping' housing waiting lists; whether working with only one RCO partner provokes jealousies amongst other RCOs; problems facing young refugees whose asylum seeking applications had failed; the fragile nature of cohesion; infighting between host and newcomer communities; institutionalised racism and the role of the press. The intervention was widely credited with transformative change within the network including policy change surrounding destitution and Choice-Based Lettings procedures. In later encounters and workshops the

exercise achieved *"symbolic status"* within the network culture (Mullins and Jones, 2009:119). This exercise did not only reframe perceptions but also influenced the *"traditions"* and *"myths"* of *Accommodate* (Shaap and van Twist, 1997:71).

Tackling the power dynamic

Although Project guidelines intended RCO participants to have an equal voice, hact was aware that there was an imbalance of power (Mullins and Jones, 2009) and was unsure whether *Accommodate* would *"create magic or disaster"* (G5). As Peterman (2000) identified and Flint (2002:624) later termed *"responsibilisation strategies",* there are plenty of examples of 'empowerment' interpreted as increasing community responsibility in involvement without increasing influence in decision-making. There were instances of lead partners making *"decisions on the hoof as we can't always wait to go back to Committee."* (Xi7T). There were many examples of hact playing a mediation and brokerage role in negotiating the balance between RCOs taking on responsibility and exercising influence. Sometimes hact's role was to rationalise less powerful partners' aspirations with outcomes: *"The experience so far suggests that **** plans have been a little too ambitious (and need) to be fully aware of the pros and cons. Meanwhile (hact) will liaise with *** to see what kind of role they could play in supporting further brainstorming around the development"* (Z2).

Network management theory makes a distinction between game and network levels. Game level refers to the interaction process and interdependencies between actors. This is guided by rules and interventions and underlines the

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"highly interactive nature of policy processes" (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997:46). The previous sections have illustrated hact's interventions in this role. However, these processes do not take place in an institutional void, so intervention is also required in contexts at network level. Hact was able to manage at both game level and network level because of its position, operating both nationally and in the localities and Figure 7:7 captures some of the examples within *Accommodate*. Often these occasions arose in response to external context like strategies to manipulate housing supply and demand, changing patterns of migration or fluctuation in the funding regime. Sometimes partners were tempted with the allure of 'other games'. For instance Investment Partnering (See Chapter 2) meant that nationally fewer lead partners were eligible for social housing investment, but those that were, could form consortia with other organisations. This impacted indirectly on the Partnerships because reconfigurations and opportunities for housing associations to merge competed for housing partners' attention and created 'other games'. Hact turned this to *Accommodate*'s advantage and played a key role in linking debates about the types of organisations to be included in consortia and argued that grassroots BME housing associations and RCOs should be involved. Figure 7:7 helps to identify the levels at which the networks were managed but Mullins and Jones (2009) noted that there was a link between interventions to manage ideas and interventions to involve people.

> *"For example, were the common measures to support refugee forums found in each of the Partnerships an example of selective activation and arranging links at game level or were they more about building long-term institutional capacity to change the network structure and position of actors?"* (2009:116).

Figure 7.7: Analysis of Accommodate activities

	Game Level	Accommodate examples	Network Level	Accommodate examples
Strategies Aimed at Ideas	Covenanting Influencing perceptions Bargaining Common language Preventing/Introducing ideas Furtherance of reflection	Self-assessment framework National workshops	Reframing Changing formal policy	Change management intervention
Strategies Aimed at Interactions between actors	Selective (de) activation Arranging Organising Confrontations Developing Procedures Facilitation, brokerage, mediation, arbitration	**Support for Refugee Forums** Central support function **Intervention in disputes between actors**	Network (de) activation Constitutional reform (De) coupling games Changing incentives Changing internal structure and position of actors Changing relations Management by chaos	**Mix of RCO, housing providers, statutories in each partnership** **New rules for Accommodate (Wales)** **RCO Awaydays Support for RCO forums**

Source: Mullins and Jones (2009:112) based on Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, (2004)

Managing outcomes

It took some time for hact as well as the CURS Team to encourage an appreciation

of the *Accommodate* monitoring technique, or 'self-assessment framework' as it

was known. To begin with, some organisations saw it more as an assessment

rather than support mechanism. Actors, particularly those from statutory organisations, were wary about the issue of monitoring and in the beginning some negative views were expressed: *"The Partnership is not happy about the monitoring – they consider the funding peanuts… most (partners) see hact funding as seed-funding when looking for big money"* (Xr2). As it became clear that monitoring was being done as part of a participatory empowering process, then, as this Chapter has discussed perceptions were reframed. Elements of the evaluation framework included visits, self-assessments returns and workshops that linked to the final grant monitoring framework. At the closing workshop one housing provider declared that self-assessment had been: *"Good that it was being taken seriously, attention to detail, kept us on our toes and public accountability, welcomed early adjustments to the approach"* (FW3) (Mullins and Jones, 2009:122). Eventually the concept of 'critical friend' particularly in relation to the CURS Team became common parlance.

Accounting outcomes

Buitelaar and de Kam (2009) assert, the less hierarchical the governance process in housing policy, the less likely an outcome can be predicated from pre-ordained goals. The evaluation framework had originally been negotiated to establish five common purposes: improving housing and support services; empowering RCOs; changing policy and practice; building successful Partnerships and meeting local needs. The question was whether all developed a mutually agreed goal or whether goals existed on different levels for different sector participants.

Tangible outcomes, based on self-assessment report were quantifiable and useful to the grant monitoring framework (Mullins and Goodson, 2007). Achievements relating to increased participation comprised greater RCO representation on one Partnership body; and involvement in focus groups to ensure refugee hopes and aspirations about housing were included in the local Pathfinder's consultation exercise. The results of a community-led survey were reported at a dissemination event to senior members of local housing service providers and greater links were forged between another Partnership and the local Refugee Forum. The acquisition of office space and facilities for RCOs was achieved in two Partnerships. Capacity building training was delivered to 12 RCOs in another Partnership. The community researchers' programme succeeded in 22 trainees achieving one or more passes across three levels of programme module. Five of these trainees achieved accreditation on all three (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). Awareness-raising was achieved via training for city council and housing association frontline staff in one Partnership and a well-attended Refugee Housing and Well-being Awareness Day in another. Most of the outcomes were qualitative; Partnerships generated a wealth of promotional material including videos; newsletters, recruitment posters and web pages. The Project leaves a *"considerable institutional heritage that can be built on for the future"* (op.cit. 2008:78-81).

Within network management theory there is a conflict between outcomes that are pre-determined especially to meet the requirements of a funder; and outcomes that are emergent, based on a common aims approach. The purpose of horizontal networks is to find the solution to complex problems through interaction so

outcomes do not reflect the individual goals of partners at the beginning of the process. Koppenjan and Klijn (2004:62-3) categorised outcomes, beyond the notion of solution into three groups; *substantive*, *process-level* and *institutional* and noted that outcomes are achieved during the process as well as at the end. From the point of view of the *Accommodate* Project and hact's purpose, substantive outcomes were those where *"goal intertwinement"* was in evidence. For instance the community researchers' programme met the individual aspirations of the community researchers to develop their skills. At the same time it contributed to the aims of each Partnership, for example one Partnership wanted to discover the level of engagement of RCOs and another wanted to explore attitudes to mental health in the city (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). There was no compromise or compensation between partners to reach these goals. In the community researchers' programme a solution had been found that did not *"necessitate the exchange of objectives"* but one that managed to *"simultaneously achieve the varying objectives of parties"* (op. cit. 2004:63).

Mullins and Jones (2009:121) make a distinction between *"joint goals"* and *"multiple goals"*. Joint interest, as Klijn and Teisman proposed, (1997:114) will *"drastically change the outcomes"* and this was the case in *Accommodate.* The CURS Team developed five guiding purposes at the outset and each Partnership evolved and reconstructed outcomes as contexts changed and interactions progressed. The evaluation approach was one of capturing and promoting the learning rather than checking that a-priori goals had been achieved. Yet Mullins and Jones (op.cit) speculated whether multiple goals were more about keeping

partners on board, as hact did. Hact ensured throughout that *"high and low, short and long-term goals with specialisation of actors in those areas of most interest to them"* were achievable. Mullins and Jones (2009) observed that there is a difference between making sure there is something in it for everyone and everyone being persuaded to sign up to the same goals. This interpretation creates a multi-dimensional aspect to setting and achieving goals that supersedes the linear approach to a-priori goal setting and compliance evaluation prevalent in vertical hierarchies.

Conclusion

Taking a grounded approach to research method meant that themes emerged tangentially, without the blueprint of substantive theory. Following the first six months of fieldwork I revisited organisational studies literature and with great excitement discovered network management theory. Couched in the terminology of organisational, policy and political science, the concepts of *closedness*; *social and cognitive* dimensions; *steerage*; *perception management* and *emergent outcomes* fairly jumped off the page to describe and endorse the power dynamics evidenced in data gathered to date (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn. 2004). While core theme 1: *RCO confidence to engage* had always been central in understanding the process of organisational empowerment, network management theory helped me to interpret the synergy that existed between core theme 3: *Partnership rules of engagement* and core theme 4: *hact as agent of change*. Both these themes seemed to act as drivers on the confidence levels displayed by RCO

partners, and network management theory gave me the language to elucidate what I had already observed but not translated especially in the puzzle of hact's role.

Although hact did not consciously employ this theoretical approach to achieving objectives as agent of change, the tools that were used can be clearly identified as typical of a network management approach. In order to encourage other partners to go from recognising RCOs to legitimising them and to build confidence in smaller partners hact used reframing and communicative instruments. They brokered, negotiated and introduced third parties (Termeer and Koppenjan, 1997) to tackle social and cognitive closedness and power imbalance. Hact's steerage at game and network level helped Partnerships develop from operational to strategic purpose and promote and speed up the exchange of learning across the network. Finally hact encouraged consensus towards joint and multiple goals. In the final evaluation workshop hact's approach was appreciated by most partners, especially the RCO actors. One said:

> *"There was very strong support for the positive role played by hact – other funders should work in similar ways: through brokerage, establishing a vision, accessible, constant and consistent support, information-signposting to policy making forums, support for project workers and capacity building training and attending events"* (Mullins and Jones, 2009:122).

Mullins and Jones (2009) concluded that joint interest evaluation was three-fold; 'satisficing', multi-goal achievement and decision-enrichment, but that a distinction needed to be made between joint goals i.e. everyone signing up to the same

achievements and multiple goals where there was something in it for everyone. Network management theory created an appropriate analysis of hact's goals; engineering a change in attitudes, resource distribution and institutional culture.

This Chapter has demonstrated that network management theory has been a useful framework for interpreting and analysing findings relating to power dynamics, the nature of collaborative networks and emergent outcomes within each Partnership. Later discussions confirmed with hact that this framework helped to conceptualise and scrutinise the role that they played. A final research question remained. At what point in the empowerment process could empowerment be considered an outcome? The next Chapter examines RCO community empowerment as both outcome and process and reviews findings within operational domains to discover how this process took place.

Chapter 8: 'Outsiders Inside': towards organisational empowerment

Introduction

Chapter 7 explored the role that hact played as network manager at Partnership (game) and Project (network) levels. It demonstrated the importance of management to drive the empowerment process and illustrated how the role operated to address unequal power within *Accommodate*, with regard to RCO partners. Drawing on the work of Laverack and Wallerstein (2001), the purpose of this Chapter is to link theoretical frameworks concerning power dynamics, to explore the community empowerment process in greater depth.

Some researchers analyse community involvement in terms of the dimensions of participation. Wilson and Wilde (2003), for example, devised benchmarks concerning approach to the participation process (see Table 3.2). For other authors, this approach omits the less documented organisational domains of community participation, which is where the dynamic arguably lies (Flint, 2002; Yoo *et al.,* 2009). Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation in the planning process is still widely-quoted and was an early contribution to unveiling the power dynamic by linking methods of participation with organisational control and a shift in power. Smith and Beazley (2000) calculated the balance of power using a 'wheel' that charts the ballast between strong and weak partnership values and participation strategy. These analytical models allude to definitions of community empowerment that seek transformation of attitudes; institutional structures and

resource distribution (Batliwala, 2007). Yet this aspect of collaboration is difficult to evaluate and measure (Chapter 3).

Most commentators agree that community empowerment is both process and outcome (Chapter 3) and evidence in Chapter 7 endorses this. Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) define community empowerment as process because it:

> *"offers most insights into the ways in which people are enabled through the programme to maximise their potential and to progress from individual action to collective social and political change"* (2001:182).

Some commentators consider the political aspect of community empowerment along a dynamic continuum that starts with individual empowerment and progresses to include small groups; community organisations; partnerships; the power to identify agenda priorities and social and political action (Jackson *et al.,* 1989; Labonte 1994; Rissel 1994; Laverack 2001; Anderson 1996). Research into participatory health promotion is prominent in this field.

Figure 8.1: Organisational domains

1. The role of outside agents
2. Programme management
3. Participation
4. Resource mobilisation
5. Problem assessment
6. Leadership
7. Critical engagement (Asking why)
8. Organisational structures
9. Links to others

Source: Author based on Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) and Laverack (2005)

Laverack (2003; 2005) tested this theoretical framework in designing a methodology for building community capacity in rural Fiji, in empowering victims of domestic violence and empowering women living in low income housing. Labonte and Laverack developed a 'spider gram' (Figure 3.3) as a mapping technique providing visual representation of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by community members.

This Chapter employs Laverack and Wallerstein's framework as a guide to understanding the dynamics within the process of community empowerment as well as its drivers. With the help of network management theory, Chapter 7 interpreted hact in the role of network manager. This role has much in common with the role of the outside agent In Laverack's paradigm (2003:100), which *"increasingly transforms power relationships"* (Laverack, 2003:100). Hact managed the Project from the outset; acting as network manager in the domain of 'outside agent' to instigate, broker and negotiate interactions and contexts. Domains 1 and 2 (Figure 8.1) emerged as the starting point in the RCO empowerment process within *Accommodate*, whereby hact recognised the value and potential of RCOs in a collaborative approach. What remained to be explored was the relevance of operational domains theory to the process of community empowerment and whether it could help to identify at what in the process empowerment could be considered outcome. The domains theory thereby offers opportunity to further explore the relationship between agency, process and structure. Each domain (Figure 8.1) is considered in turn.

This Chapter draws on the thick description and interpretation (after Geertz, 1973) from fieldwork stage one and two comprising participant observations, informal conversations and unstructured interviews as well as data from the longitudinal case study (see Chapter 5). Three core themes: *"RCOs' confidence to engage"* (1); *"hact agent of change"* (4) and *"external contexts"* (2) are brought together in this way to explore relations between domains and theories of community empowerment. In addition the Chapter draws on my own experiences of inter-agency collaboration in the community participation field.

It concludes that community empowerment is an accumulative process across the network. Yet this is not a linear process; the process is both combined and uneven (development is not evenly paced) between Partnerships. Most partners changed their organisational culture during the Project. The role of hact as network manager (outside agent), together with the necessary communication skills that are "*interwoven into the fabric of their culture,"* (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997:121) are overriding in driving forward participation. It suggests that a further domain of 'communication' would help develop this model. Community empowerment as achieved within *Accommodate* had strong resonance with Laverack and Labonte's (2000:258) account. It enhances the capacity to *"change specific policies*… (which in turn) *"generalises to other issues of interest to community members"* (see outcomes in Chapter 7).

Participation

Participation and communication

This study observes that domains of participation and communication are closely woven. It also suggests that communication deserves to be considered a domain in its own right particularly when marginalised communities are involved. While there is ample evidence of hact's use of 'network by design' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005, also see Chapter 4) especially in the pre-Project stage, programme management rested on the use of 'communicative instruments' (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997) so that communication and communication skills were essential to early community engagement. Laverack and Labonte (2000:257-8), suggested that overall programme design is *"the first opportunity where the top-down and bottom-up tensions can begin to resolve"* and highlight not just time but scale and marginalisation as key characteristics for empowerment at this stage. Laverack (2003:105) noted that implementing an empowering methodology in a health promotion programme differed, *"according to the level of communication, support and follow-up between participants".*

When engaging with RCOs, one of the most obvious barriers to communication is language but *Accommodate* demonstrated the need for a multifaceted approach to communication that encompassed language, non-verbal communication and reflective understanding of organisational and ethnic cultural differences. Even though the RCOs were resource-rich in interpreters, translation itself could sometimes cause misunderstanding. One of the interpreters said she often found it

necessary to rephrase literal sayings. For example, a woman talked about her daughter '*eating her head'.* Her interviewer construed that the girl was suffering from psychosis. The interpreter had to explain the woman meant her daughter was '*doing her head in*' (CS1).

The field observations undertaken during the second research stage highlighted that communication is much more than the ability to share language. Non-verbal communication can be used to share a joke, elaborate on language constraint and illustrate a political perspective. For instance, on one occasion during a participant observation week, I was about to leave the RCOs' Centre at five o'clock:

> *"X was dealing with the last query of the day, a young student who needed advice about extending his visa. X's wife and daughter were waiting for him to lock up and go home with them. An elderly, portly white man came puffing into the Centre and sat down to get his breath back. Once the student had gone, the man leapt into the middle of the room and made a long speech about the power of prayer. He was politely thanked then left as abruptly as he had arrived. We exchanged looks and more from surprise than anything else, started to laugh. X's wife said 'in our country too….Imam' and in case I didn't understand she stroked an imaginary beard… It was then I realised that the man was the local vicar (2Xi:2)".*

Non-verbal communication was not always as clear as this example though. There were several occasions where meaning became clearer over time. The following extract is taken from a period spent in one RCO's busy office that illustrates how easily non-verbal communication can be misunderstood.

"X was dealing with a refugee needing a work permit. After she'd left the office, X showed me the application form to help me understand the interview as it had just been conducted in Farsi. I asked whether the application was likely to be successful. X, shrugging and writing a signature in the air to signify how powerful that official was, said: 'It is up to the man with the pen'. A Housing Association employee, who was visiting the office, commented: 'That's Shakespeare – the pen is mightier than the sword', interpreting X's gesture as the triumph of civil agreement over conflict rather than the arbitrary power of the official. X might have meant either.

Later, (following the case of a young Afghani, whose fingerprints had been taken in Greece despite him not seeking asylum there), the volunteers discussed the Dublin Convention 1997[47]. One interpreter stated that asylum seekers' fingerprints are regularly taken en route to prevent passport fraud, ID theft etc but it also 'ups the figures' for EU allowance under UNICEF for accepting asylum claims. Another volunteer, also seeking asylum said that she had led a campaign against the hostel conditions where she and others were first accommodated awaiting dispersal. Although she managed to get the group re-housed, her new address was not passed on to the Home Office (deliberately she thought) and five years later, she was still awaiting the outcome of an appeal. From this discussion and others throughout the week there emerged a collective view that bureaucracy is more likely to be arbitrarily corrupt than not". (2Xi, 1and2)

This observation also reflected the reservations that some refugees have of the establishment if their reason for flight has been persecution by abusive and corrupt regimes. It demonstrates a need to build up trust and understanding with the British system (Challenor *et al.* 2005) if refugees are to be encouraged to participate fully

in the democratic process. A broader vision of communication than is usually documented is required to reach marginalised communities for these reasons.

Laverack (2001:136-8) noted *"articulateness"* within the community competences of areas of influence and Chapter 7 documents the network manager's role in promoting improved and less hindered communication in what van Bortel, (2009) describes as complex decision-making. This complexity is doubly compounded in *Accommodate* not simply by the nature of the social problem but because of the breadth of cultures and communication variation across a wide range of professional and voluntary sectors within the network. Haffner and Elsinga (2009:155) describe how *"social variation"* in communication can create an impasse that can only be broken through by perception management (see Chapter 7 for more examples). Findings suggest that the community empowerment process is accumulative within this as trust develops over time.

Levels of participation

Laverack (2006) describes the participation domain as an action. The interactive role of hact throughout *Accommodate* indicates participation is a driven, planned and on-going process (see Chapter 4). The concept of levels and steps is a familiar one in describing progression in this field (Arnstein 1969; Yoo *et al.,* 2009). This is one way of accounting for the dimensions that evolve from the first step of recognition of RCOs' potential (see Chapter 6) to the final stage where RCOs are able to exercise agency themselves. Arnstein (1969) aligned citizen power with citizen control. This translates in practice as forms of community control over

resources and management. We can find a parallel in this research context with organisationally-mature RCOs commissioned as service providers. Being funded to deliver specialist service implies an in-depth knowledge, level of experience and professional competence. If community empowerment were a linear process it would be reasonable to expect that RCO service providers would wield greater influence than those engaged in voluntary activity.

One of the Partnerships was led by an RCO service provider: Yet they did not have as powerful a position in collaboration as Arnstein's ladder would suggest*: "We are not important enough to warrant their time* (statutory organisations) – *we've been shouting for years about these issues* (Y1)", was the view of one established RCO service provider. While *Accommodate* lent kudos to RCO partners *"we're a Project of national importance"* some of the statutory partners came to the table with premeditated outcomes, *"they have got their targets prioritised"* (Y1). These instances suggest that organisational maturity is not the only prerequisite for meaningful participation in collaboration and while the process of community empowerment may be accumulative, it is not linear.

Accumulative empowerment
Laverack's continuum defines participation as a numerically accumulative process, where individual community members grow into larger organisations but notes that there is an *"overlap between the concepts of community participation and community empowerment"* (2001:138). By involving participants in assessing problems, identifying solutions, programme contribution to build skills and

competences; Laverack and Wallerstein (2001:182) argue that programme design can allow *"both a participatory and empowering approach"*.

Hact engaged RCOs at all stages of the Project; consulting widely before the partnerships were launched in 2003 and actively engaging with the Partnerships between 2004 and 2008. Since the conclusion of *Accommodate* hact has involved some of the original RCO participants in later Projects to promote policy change. For example; the 'Communities R Us' Project took forward 'bridging' activities between diverse communities at neighbourhood level with the help of a leading RCO from *Accommodate* (Wilson and Zipfel, 2008). Especially in project-based findings some researchers refer to the concept of milestones of community participation covering before, during and after project completion (Anderson, 1996; Smith and Beazley, 2000; Varley and Curtin, 2006). Varley and Curtin (2006) observe that policy change often happens long after a project has finished.

Some of the RCOs were well-established while others were embryonic, so their starting point in the participatory process was different, suggesting that organisational maturity is a major factor in achieving community empowerment: One reputable RCO viewed their own role proactively:

> *"We selected the other partners and have skill, business and people. We looked for support to develop our capacity. We were at the forefront, pushing, a real opportunity to have a big say and a big input"* (Bo3T/Br9T).

This RCO was well-focused but it is difficult to judge whether it was their organisational maturity that helped to develop collective agency around shared aims, or whether this Partnership was successful for other reasons. This Partnership had a defined number of actors with clear roles. There were few changes in partner personnel and one principal RCO partner so, as one statutory housing partner commented, the size of the partnership could also have contributed to this RCO's level of participation. That the five Partnerships were qualitatively different in terms of culture, outlook, political will and in opportunities to influence local housing policy had been identified as a challenge from the outset (see Chapter 5). What became apparent in studying the levels of participation and reasons for discrepancy was the approach that hact took as outside agent, to the role of RCO community development. Hact promoted a continuous learning space that meant Partnerships could import or 'borrow' innovative practice from each other without having to go through every stage of development in turn.

Problem Assessment

Agenda setting

It is generally considered good practice when involving local communities in collaboration over local problems to also include them in initial assessment (Laverack and Wallerstein 2001). This analysis returns to the issue of agenda setting. Laverack's (2005:7) study of working with women living in low income housing shows how incorporating immediate needs to keep participation active over longer term problems increases problem assessment capacity. To tap into the knowledge that the women already had about their community, they were engaged

in a broader form of problem assessment that incorporated their immediate needs, such as a children's play area as well as wider issues of neighbourhood security. Planning new activities therefore kept participation active at the same time as forming the basis for long-term engagement around underling causes such as the lack of employment. Promoting shared interests and concerns *"strengthens their sense of struggle and community activism through the process of community empowerment"* (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001:182)

One Partnership started from a lower base in terms of RCO engagement than any of the other Partnerships. At the start of the Project the organiser of a key RCO partner returned to his country of origin. Links were forged with an umbrella organisation but the Partnership worked predominantly with embryonic RCOs. Although this Partnership's strategic aim was to raise awareness and enable RCOs to influence local policies and services (Mullins, 2008), the acquisition of office equipment and meeting space addressed immediate need in order for capacity to develop. The Project Worker described it as *"a good example of cause and effect developed from the initial hact initiative"* (2Xi2).

Hact's pre-Project work with the Refugee Housing, Training and Development Project took a participatory empowerment approach and has already been cited as an example of hact building trust with RCOs at the grassroots (Chapter 7). One Partnership learned from this approach of meeting short-term needs to build problem assessment capacity in the long-term. The RCO partner was engaged in researching their community's housing need as the same time as their role in

managing short-term accommodation was being developed as an interim solution. The research was conducted by a community member and the local authority partner commented:

> *"The idea came from the community, they'd got the links, language and skills and it was an opportunity for someone. We realised the skills gap was a big issue but hact's role was to identify it and ask what we were going to do about it"* (XoII:B1-2).

There are two interesting observations in this example. One is that individual empowerment leads to community empowerment and vice versa, suggesting that the process linking the two is an 'accumulative loop' rather than linear continuum as commentary on the community empowerment process proposed (Jackson, Mitchell and Wright, 1989; Labonte 1994; Rissel 1994; Laverack 2001). Secondly, this example adds to the debate about community empowerment being either outcome or process and indicates it is likely to be continuously evolving as both. This is demonstrated by the RCO's involvement in the community research process, where confidence built up so that the RCO moved into a position of agency in active decision-making at each stage. Problem assessment and complexity were relative as longitudinally observation demonstrates.

Dealing with complexity

Where RCOs were involved in problem assessment and resolution the rationale for dealing with the problem took place over a period of time but relied on resolution being an agreed aim. One local authority partner described being overwhelmed by

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complexity without common goals: "*we have long conversations and a useful response, a good response to events and it's interesting. There are some solutions, but ideas from down the back of the sofa can't solve the problem, it's easier to drive the fog off the Mersey*" (2Y4). Another statutory partner similarly described complexity without jointly agreed aims: "*the breadth of remit is the problem, if only people had been focused on problem solving being part of the culture*" (2Xr4).

Any interactive, dynamic process is bound to bring its challenges. As Rittel (1969) described, the process of formulating the problem is interconnected with the process of its resolution. One RCO directed problem assessment and involved different layers within the partnership depending on levels of problem complexity. In this instance, research amongst the growing Somali population had been a starting point in establishing levels of housing need and aspirations but the consultation process was not without on-going operational problems. Community expectations were high and the Project Worker said she was "*trying to calm people's expectations down. People automatically assume you are the miracle one, they have high expectation and for me that was a bit of a challenge'* (XoII:C1). At this level the problem was dealt with directly by the RCO, using their own organisational structure to counter false expectations: '*They knew the clients and had worked with them on a regular basis so they helped to spread the word of what to expect and what not to expect'* (XoII:C1). This example also demonstrates how community-base researchers can be in a better position than external researchers to tackle the common problem of raised expectations.

The next operational problem to emerge was the issue of 'hidden households' as a result of overcrowding and the provision of accommodation to friends and relatives in need, noted in studies about refugee housing provision since 1992 (Quilgars, 1993). This more sensitive problem was taken wider in the partnership structure to the census sub-group where the addition of a yes/no question ensured confidentially for these households. The Project Worker said:

> "W*e were afraid that if we went into too much detail people would get paranoid so it could be for a number of reasons, it could be asylum seekers or it could be they haven't got enough money to get their own place"* (XoII:C2).

Indicative of the leadership role evolving in this RCO; resolution was taken further: One RCO leader explained how they also took ownership of the problem at this stage:

> *"Hidden households are a challenge. They could be people who have been refused benefit whether they are secondary migrants, asylum seekers or failed asylum seekers. We tried to raise it at partnership level and we supported them financially with housing and food"* (XoII:A2).

Dealing with emerging problems
Some unanticipated problems arose from external contexts. A basic proposition of network management theory is that interests and solutions are decided collaboratively (Klijn, 2008, 2008a). Tension sometimes arises between funders (ex ante) envisaged output and collaboratively negotiated (ex post) outcomes (Mullins and Jones, 2009). Destitution emerged as an unexpected and unplanned agenda

item half-way through *Accommodate* (see Chapter 2). The Project had been promoted by the gap in access to services, once status had been confirmed and the same problem existed where status was denied. One housing provider described the practical fallout of this problem: "*NASS support being withdrawn is not good. Newcomers don't know what they are entitled to, so hotbed or sofa surf and they are soaking up the private sector*" (XoII:B2).

There were several attempts by RCOs to get the increasing problem of destitution on the Partnerships' agenda. One RCO representative attempted local resolution outside of his Partnership when he met with inflexibility because the agenda had moved on to prioritise economic migrants rather than refugees. He told me he had visited a disused church "*to view using the building for destitute asylum seekers*" (2Xr1). By December 2006 destitution was still being handled largely below the radar by voluntary and faith-led groups, although lobbying was initiated around the rights of failed asylum seekers to work: This observation documents the scale of the problem in one Partnership area:

> "*I caught a bus to the Town Hall for the lobby of Council. A resolution had been sent by ASSIST[48] supported by 4 councillors to restore the right to work for failed asylum seekers. The public gallery was full. One or two people tried to get in downstairs on the grounds of disability but were not allowed. As I milled about with the others wondering what to do, I was 'highjacked' by a fast-talking, fast-walking elderly woman, with a rucksack who took me to the 'conversation club' down a side street into the Methodist Victoria Hall. She showed me two rooms full of people from different cultural backgrounds, sat around tables, drinking tea and talking to one another[49].*

One room was for specific advice, and one room divided by tables for conversations on one side and tables where ASSIST gave out £20 donations per person per week, on the other. I spoke to a woman from Ethiopia. She had been granted limited leave to remain in the UK when she'd arrived seeking asylum a year ago. Her husband was in prison in Ethiopia. The Home Office had withdrawn support because she had grandparents in Eritrea (she had never been there) and they were arguing that she could have dual nationality and go there for asylum. She was living in a 'host' house with three other people, which she said was better than the streets. She was hoping to get a positive decision in appeal so that she could release the room to someone else who needed it. I asked her what she was living on she said the £20 that ASSIST gave her. It was very humbling…. Back in the city centre the festive lights, the twenty-foot-high glittering Xmas tree and young people in uniform with first aid kits on their belts and the titles of 'city ambassador' emblazoned on their jackets, made the rooms full of failed asylum seekers seem other worldly – which, for the time being, is where the issue is kept". (2Y3:Obs).

RCOs exerted considerable pressure at partnership level to bring this problem into the open, which at one point created division rather than consensus. One Partnership meeting I attended seemed completely polarised. The divide was between the voluntary agency and RCOs on one side and housing providers and local authority on the other. "*It is quite split*" (2Y5), admitted one of the RCO representatives (2Y5). At this point the RCO did not have the capacity to challenge the agenda but later launched an awareness raising event to bring destitution to the attention of service providers.

Resource mobilisation

Laverack linked community development and capacity building, using the spider-gram (Figure 3.3) to consult with communities to indicate which domains need strengthening:

> *"…communities do not usually have the resources at their disposal to address all the domains as a part of the same strategy, unless assisted by an outside agent. The ability of the community to mobilise resources from within and to negotiate resources from beyond itself is an important step toward developing the skills and organisational structures necessary for community capacity "*(2005:273).

Material resource

Community development practitioners emphasise that material resources are fundamental to support self-help organisations especially at inception (Taylor, 1995; Ledwith, 2005; Varley and Curtin, 2006). Several RCOs also remarked that organisational competence is necessary in order for communities to apply for funding resource although embryonic organisations rarely know the range of what is available. Many RCOs protested about the time spent chasing funding streams. As funding is often policy-directed RCOs, like other voluntary organisations, struggle to match members' needs and aspirations with funding parameters and expected outcomes.

One RCO worker spoke of the misconception of their need for resources: "*Sometimes when you think of RCOs you think of them draining resources*" (XoPO:1). Laverack (2005:273) distinguished 'internal resources' i.e. those raised

within the community such as *"people skills and local knowledge"* from 'external resources' introduced by the outside agent i.e. *"technical expertise (and) 'new' knowledge"*. In addition, the outside agent acted:

> *"as a link between the external resources and the community and to assist its members to 'map' or identify the internal resources that they already had to help them build from a position of strength"* (op. cit. 2005:273).

Capacity building resources

Laverack (2005:267) argued that the distinction between a capacity building and an empowerment approach lies in the agenda and purpose of the process: "*Empowerment approaches have an explicit purpose to bring about social and political changes,*" whereas capacity building does not *"explicitly include political activism".* Social change was enabled by capacity building in one Partnership where the statutory housing partner and hact worked alongside the RCO to develop and update their knowledge of housing advice and housing benefit legislation etc. This RCO was able to take on the role of community advisor with renewed confidence and their role in the community was enhanced.

Hact did not finance RCOs directly but focused on bringing in capacity building agencies including the Project Workers' role to develop confidence, learning and strengthen recognition of RCOs' internal resources so that they could influence local policy (see Chapter 7). One Project Worker described organisational challenge, for instance, competition over resources: *"There's a 'your gain is our loss' attitude if the cake does not increase in size"* (2Xr3).

One of the Project Workers adopted community development with newly-formed RCOs as part of her role. When we visited an emergent RCO's office she explained her thinking about a support model for RCOs:

"It is important for fledgling RCOs to have people in the background to give stability and 'water down the politics'. (I ask what she means) "From my own experience so far, community associations based on the storming, norming old model don't get past the storming and they have had a constant struggle for control. For example, one chairperson left then returned, one treasurer stood up and resigned at a public meeting. It is important to have representation from other communities on the management committee – who need to remember they are in a supporting role and not take over even when they feel passionate about things. Empowering is OK but you still have to have someone to hold the fort. Working is needed at micro-level". (She deals with the incoming post, 'tuts' at two unpaid bills including buildings insurance and says they may have to close. There is no heating on and the building is very desolate). She told me earlier that there are about 27 RCOs in the city but some of the needs are too micro for the Refugee Council to fulfil. She thinks the Asylum Team should recognise and fund RCOs and says the Drop-In surgery we were about to attend meant about 6-10 people a session with anything from NASS to health, vacant properties to destitution. "Sustainability of RCOs, she said, "is most important in helping them to get a voice" (2y2:Obs3).

This Project Worker's understanding of empowering capacity building is one that operates at different levels at the same time and takes account of the uneven nature of development in this field.

Pooled resources

Pitchford (2008) identified changed perceptions about capacity building from the 1970s when the language of 'needs' and enabling' reflected a bottom-up, jointly-agreed approach between communities and practitioners, to lobby funders. This concept, he noted, has been replaced by a language of 'capacity', 'engagement' and 'active citizens' that reflects a more centrally directed approach in line with government priorities. Ledwith (2005) found that resource, recognition and legitimacy were inter-dependent. Sharing of resources sets the basis for reciprocity and integration and is supported by the assumption of dual legitimacy (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002).

However, reciprocity did not always deliver, as one RCO deliberated: "*We could ask for support from the local authority for RCOs? Support has been non-existent while we are ticking local authority boxes"* (2y2). Pooling/sharing scarce and limited resource is generally considered good practice not least because it promotes integration (Perry, 2005). There were several examples of this, particularly regarding inter-community amenities; one project included local white, Asian and Slovakian members amongst its user group (2Xr2); another multi-cultural project shared officer support; and a community resource centre employed 'hot-desking' for incoming RCOs. Consideration of shared resources encouraged my thinking about the importance of place, space and the idea of place representing more than one identity (Uguris, 2004).

Place as resource

Convinced that the lack of stable, accessible, low-cost office bases, training and support to enable RCOs' self-help work with their community members was a major barrier to their work, one Partnership was keen to fulfil the need for organisational and developmental space. The Project worker focused efforts on securing premises and funding at a time when he felt that the political climate was changing favourably from *"reaching communities to connecting communities"* (ET1). He viewed the need for a building as a place where fledgling RCOs could "*take charge of their own affairs"* (ET1:1). The lead partner guaranteed the rent for what was initially called a 'refugee resource centre' but, to reflect the diversity of users, became a 'new communities' resource centre' located at the heart of one of the most culturally diverse parts of the city. The Council supported on-going costs and the building also provided a venue and visual stimuli for visits from high profile policy makers to further discussion about the potential contribution that social landlords can make to working with refugees. This initiative has given the RCOs a place on the local map and this new space achieved social change *"as social change and spatial change are intrinsic to one another"* (Uguris, 2004:18).

What I found interesting in the development of this resource centre was the link between spatial resource and structure. For communities of identity to have place and space has meant they have a base to engage within the neighbourhood arena, providing evidence of a link between this kind of resource and networking. In the case of the resource centre, the building offered resource in a variety of ways; an opportunity for inter-community interaction, a local profile, a promotional billboard

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and a practical space. The occasions for shared learning between embryonic and formalised RCOs was emphasised by all users. In practical terms knowledge-as-resource sharing was captured within the centre even where there was a turnover of volunteers and clients, countering the 'churn' that Flint and Robinson (2008:18) had identified as one of the *"drivers of segregation."* Furthermore, interaction between communities was able to address the problems of highly mobile newcomers being unaware of their entitlements or rights. Case study work at the centre prompted reflection about shared experiences within the domain of organisational structures.

Organisational structures

Organisational structures and representation

Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) emphasised the need to strengthen the representativeness of existing community organisation, allowing for organisational evolution. Organisational structures usually underpin organisational representation and legitimacy especially with other stakeholders (Smith and Beazley 2000). Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) suggest that community leaders without community credibility can affect the accountability and wider community involvement in a network; leadership positions may be short-lived and can be silenced if representativeness is questioned. Conversely community leaders can be drawn into a professional role requiring complex negotiations that contradict their *"membership democracy qualities"* (Hertting, 2009:135).

Some Partnerships highlighted accountability and representation as the 'currency' for RCO credibility. One Executive Director said: *"We are aware of the need for accountability and representation of RCOs but admit that it's the nature of participation that a few individuals come forward to do all the work"* (Xr8). Many of the RCOs valued their ability to represent their communities as one leader said:

 "*I know there's a lot of people claim to represent people out there for what they can get, but* (our organisation) *is well-established and well-run and because of day-to-day experience, knows what big concerns are in the community"* (XoII:C5).

One of the main devices for increasing representation of RCOs across the Project was the development of Refugee Forums. Established Forums were in evidence in two Partnership areas before the Project began. It was widely accepted that fledgling RCOs needed support in establishing structure, and one participant made two important contributions; organisations takes time to mature and the voluntary sector policy landscape is changing*:*

 "There are courses all over the place but RCOs don't know what's on offer. They need help with structure... For example policies as a charity…. our organisation took 30 years to get here and we are expecting RCOs just to do it. The culture of organisations has also changed, now you need all sorts, like adult and child protection policies" (2Y6).

There is no doubt that the RCO Forums in *Accommodate* performed a much needed advocacy role and created a regular opportunity and umbrella structure

from which to negotiate collective voice. The establishment of a Forum, however, was considered only a first step in community empowerment. As one RCO leader suggested:

> *"We need RCOs in more decision-making bodies. There's a danger that an agenda gets 'pushed through' the Refugee Forum and external bodies become more influential"* (XoII:A1).

Time to develop and create a mutually cohesive culture was necessary as much in the RCO Forums as within the Partnerships themselves. This RCO leader continued by saying:

> "*We are still trying to find our feet…. We've got a core group of about 9 who regularly contribute but we still have a relationship where the agenda is set by an outside agency and we are in a passive listening role" (XoII:A1).*

One of the Forums foundered before the Project ended, as one support worker believed, because the position of chairperson was filled by a community leader who came from a different area of the city suggesting the importance of representation from leaders that are *"historically and culturally determined"* with the support of their members (Laverack, 2001:138).

It was evident that structure alone was not enough to ensure that less powerful partners had an equal say. Following one partnership meeting about housing strategy, the Project Worker told me that a pre-meeting with the RCO Forum had

agreed that the main item for the agenda was to explore the scope for a working group on asylum seeker and refugee housing needs. When this was raised during the Partnership meeting the housing provider dismissed this as unnecessary. Later the Project Worker told me she thought the housing provider representative had been *'pulled back'* by senior management' (2Y2).

Several references were made to partnership structures being directed by external politics, so that external context was always an element governing political will to progress (See Chapter 2 for more discussion of political will at local level). At the end of the Project a Local Authority partner confided: "*People could have used the opportunity better. Some have the boot of the state hovering at their head*" (2Y4) and a Project Worker remarked: "*People's hands are tied; people round the table just don't have decision-making powers*" (2Y5). Nonetheless building relations with other stakeholders was more often the means to progressing community empowerment than not.

Structures in context

Structures that are developed to address one area of social need can sometimes be overtaken by another agenda. This happened several times at strategic city-level. One TSO complained that "*we are always adjusting to change in strategic direction, our Strategic Group agenda has been taken over by the A8^{50}* (2Xr1)". One RCO activist advocated progressive action. The suggestion from this respondent to extend the constitutional remit, typifies the call for a "*more benign*

and better-informed debate" (Robinson and Segrott, 2002:64) about migration as a whole (see Chapter 2):

> *"Things have changed though during the last five years. There are a lot of advocacy agencies in XXX and it has become quite 'organisation-rich' when promoting the cause of asylum seekers and refugees. It is frustrating on the Strategic Group when they will only talk about economic migrants and have passed over refugees. How they arrived may be different but the issues they face are the same. Our organisation is in the process of asking the Management Committee to change their constitution at the AGM to reflect this change in client base. 'There is an RCO in Doncaster that has changed their constitution to include EU migrants coming in. It is not fair; it is high time we embraced everybody. Other forums are becoming a stronger voice and tapping resources at both ends by changing their names to reflect their support for EU migrants". (2Xr3).*

The dimensions of structures

Laverack (2001:139) argued that organisational structure alone was insufficient to galvanise and mobilise a community. He interpreted organisational structures in two inter-related dimensions: *"the organisational dimension of committees and community groups; and the social dimension of a sense of belonging, connectedness and personal relationships".* Findings related to the development of an international women's association demonstrated the relationship between the two dimensions.

The role of refugee women is under-researched. Lowndes (2000) noted the contribution that women generally make to social capital in voluntary networks. For

refugee and other newcomer women oversights of gender-based needs exclude women (Burnett and Peel, 2001; Bloch, 2002a) and restrict access to other forms of social capital (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008). Challenor *et al.* (2005) found that women were more active than men in RCOs but less likely to be found in leadership positions. Burnett and Peel (2001) pointed to added burdens on refugee women, required to take on new roles as head of household. Bloch and Atfield's (2002) study of female single-parents in Somali households confirms this. The longitudinal case study conducted at one resource centre enabled me to examine the role of women in voluntary networks in more detail. I was able to participate in the inauguration of an international women's association that included leading representatives from most of the RCOs active in the centre.

The role of women

The association began modestly in January 2008 as a 'Chat and Coffee Club' in response to a need identified by one community leader whose organisation was at the forefront of delivering ESOL classes. She realised that new barriers were preventing newcomers from enrolling in her classes:

> *"because now the students have to prove what their earnings are if they are working, what their immigration status in this country is, how long they've been here and so forth"* (XiCS13).

In the first instance the funding changes to eligibility rules were deterring people from attending. Moreover, she identified that some newly-arrived women were reluctant to attend mixed gender classes for cultural/confidence reasons. ESOL

class participants had been distressed by exclusion under the revised eligibility ruling, for example*: "This poor girl (Kurdish) was crying, she hadn't been able to speak any English at all when she first came, but after a few sessions she was doing really, really well (XiCS13)".* The Chat and Coffee Club conversations were stimulated by encouraging women to bring family photographs, games, and food to inspire storytelling and inter-cultural learning. Some of the communication was mimed which led to a lot of laughter and bonding.

As well as attracting women from a wide range of countries, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe we found participants had various migratory status. Alongside refugees were women who had achieved their status in other parts of Europe; women who had come to the UK to work under EU accession regulation from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Poland and women who had come via family reunion as well as under the custom of arranged marriage. By April 2008 we had adjusted the timing of the weekly meetings to include as many women as possible. Members bringing ethnic food became a fixture of the meetings. We held international cuisine afternoons, giving cookery demonstrations and shared food knowledge from all over the world. A series of inclusion activities to bring women in the local area together was piloted including recycling afternoons, where books, school uniform and other clothing, toys and household goods were bought and sold to local parents and residents. This led to building relations with the headmistress and parent participation worker from the local primary school. They were willing to

promote further events and activities and allowed us to do questionnaires and surveys at Open Evenings.

The association hosted RCO-wide events including a series of sessions with the Council's external funding coordinator. In talking to local women about their needs we concluded, in accordance with recent research, that there are three main areas where gaps in provision exist – welfare rights (including housing advice), employment (including childcare) and healthcare. When the Lithuanian community organisation joined it put the group on a more organisationally formal footing. Their enthusiasm and experience helped to agree a constitution and elected a committee to try and organise further activities to meet the needs of women in the area. Countering social exclusion for newcomer women became a central aim. The association was awarded a share in funding from the Migration Impacts Fund to run a health information exchange project in response to local surveys and wider research (Burnett and Peel, 2000) that shows refugee women's profoundly low uptake of screening and health programmes.

The women's association generated an unusual example of a new organisation simultaneously evolving social and organisational dimensions across ethnicity, refugee and migratory status. This example brought together Laverack's (2001) organisational dimension of committees and community groups with the social dimension of a sense of belonging, connectedness and personal relationships. Initially, embarking on such a broad inter-ethnic structure, I anticipated more misunderstanding, suspicion and lack of cohesion due to cultural barriers. What I

found was that differences were soon aired, for example about marriage, mothers-in-law, husbands, employment, careers and children in an atmosphere of wanting to learn about others, resulting in bonding capital being quickly established. When I compared my professional experience of building resident management committees and associations I was struck by the instant bond all newcomer women forged on the basis of common understanding, a kind of 'experiential capital'. They were all aware of what it is like to be isolated in another country and alien culture often without key family members and friends. Female leadership came from the established community organisations reaching out to the less developed RCOs.

Leadership and 'asking why'

As with other domains, leadership and critical faculty are closely related and I have linked these two domains together because, in this Project, challenges to the Partnership agendas came from RCO community leaders on behalf of communities and led to changes in policy. As Laverack (2003:100) argued, *"participation and leadership are closely connected"* and both play an important role in the development of community organisations. Laverack describes the *"crucial stage"* of 'asking why' as the ability of a community to *"critically assess the social, political, economic and other causes of inequalities"* (2003:100). These two domains are brought together in this study to describe 'assertive participation' i.e. the ability to initiate, be critical and take control.

Hact capitalised on what Laverack (2003:99) termed existing *"functional leadership"* by encouraging RCOs into leadership positions in two of the

Partnership Projects: In one, A, they were formally positioned as lead agency from the start of the Project, in the other, B, the RCO evolved into the role. The Project Worker from A described how being in the leadership gave them power over the selection of other RCO partners who were *"quite established as individuals and were chosen for that reason".* For example; *"M is a development worker as well as a representative of the Eritrean community. It has been a more bottom-up approach and the statutory sector has listened (2Y5)".* The RCO leadership in Partnership A encountered some initial difficulty in getting the "*big guns"* around the table (Y1). Over time, however, this RCO became highly critical of an agenda that overlooked destitution and finally achieved increased city-wide awareness of the issue, demonstrating authority in the leadership domain. This could be described as a critical juncture in the empowerment process, where agency in the role of an outside agent engenders agency in the RCO that had been supported into a leadership position.

In Partnership B, other elements appeared to influence the process that helped develop the RCO's leadership qualities. Firstly, the RCO themselves had particular characteristics: They were internally well-organised with clearly defined shared leadership roles: *"Leadership of the Centre is X, Y and Z: X does presentations, Y does information, translation and sport and Z does funding applications and academic stuff" (XoPOII:1)*; Secondly other partners generally perceived them in a positive light. The local authority considered them "*a well established"* RCO group that "*knows their limitations and is not afraid to say what they are capable of doing and what they are not capable of doing"* (XoII:C1); thirdly they maintained a

positive self-image. Being critically assertive became a feature of the RCO's participation in this Partnership. In the later stages of *Accommodate*, when asked if they felt to be equal partners, one representative from this RCO said: *'now we are because we've got the tools to stand up and put our views across – we feel we can disagree' (XoII:A4).*

There were instances of RCO leaders being critically assertive in other Partnership areas. The most significant example concerns Choice-Based Lettings. Leaders lobbied around the impact on refugees who were still not getting fair treatment under this scheme, intended to ensure that allocations were more responsive to customer choice, and which entailed a greater emphasis on date of application than previous needs based systems. The issue of backdating registration prior to dispersal was first raised by community leaders. This was translated into effective policy change alongside their recommendations for more detailed ethnic monitoring categories to highlight outcomes for different 'Black African' sub-groups such as the Somali community (Mullins and Goodson, 2007).

Links to others

It is evident from the previous section that linking with others through partnerships and voluntary alliances can assist a community in *"addressing its issues"* (Laverack, 2003:100). These findings show that interface with other structures either within the Partnerships or with wider institutional structures was a productive activity for RCOs. RCOs were involved at all stages of the Project including in the critical activity of monitoring.

Monitoring was seen as an influential and participative activity. One housing provider explained: '*the BME monitoring group has power as the issues raised there go up to the ALMO's lobbying group which is powerful and feeds into the Strategic Board* (2Y2). Joint working between organisations was also highlighted as good practice. A voluntary agency partner said: "*we support our Somali clients by joint working with X* (RCO). *It is a good model of partnership. We are well established and knowledgeable and we have good organisational skills and time to do the work"* (2Y6). This 'networkedness' links very closely to the capacity building work done by hact. As the Project came to an end one leader's final description of his RCO was as a *"well represented and constituted, mature organisation that has made lots of connections"* (XoII:B1). There were examples of sustained links with others especially between RCOs and the housing provider. A housing professional told me his long-term aim was to integrate the RCO Forum into his organisation's participation structure:

> "*We have 76 Tenants Associations (TAs) and 14 Neighbourhood Housing Panels attended by delegates, Councillors and Housing Officers. There is constant Officer-support developing what is; rather than setting up new organisations. Our area is a 'beacon of good practice' for tenant involvement"* (XoII:B2).

Another Tenant Involvement Officer expressed similar views considering: "*RCOs are Tenants Associations in the making"* (2Xr2). In one Partnership, the idea of developing the lead RCO into a Tenant Management Organisation-type was discussed. Partnerships are also hoping to emulate the cohesive, self-help housing

model that was demonstrated in Partnership E. As Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) argue, exchanging the learning is linked to addressing the practicalities in making community empowerment operational. Networking plays a powerful role in this.

The power of networking

Participating in the development of the women's association presented a first hand opportunity to identify critical events leading to transformation in the organisation's confidence, collectivity and development. There were three incidents that had a noticeable effect. The first occurred when a suggestion was made that the women's organisation delivered support services in partnership to women seeking employment. One member from the emerging communities' network of Polish, Latvian, Russian and Lithuanian migrants reported: *"We are overwhelmed with requests to help fill in forms, job applications and give advice"* (CS31). Her organisation had tried to supply this service but had failed due to lack of basic funds for room hire etc. The idea of partnering was developed and links were made with the local Job Centre. This was the first advance that the women's association had made to an organisation outside the resource centre:

> *"X from the local Job Centre came to chat with us. She said they were actively outsourcing support for clients from local voluntary organisations that had certain expertise. We talked about the possibility of us doing this then almost as a group we had a light bulb moment. We could see that if we partnered with the Job Centre we could offer confidence building, CVs, a variety of languages for refugees, newcomers and economic migrant*

women. Everyone became very excited and it felt as if we had reached a point where we were clearer about our role in the community than ever before" (CS,Obs32).

Although this particular initiative did not flourish it led to a strategy of reaching out to other bodies in the area and connections were subsequently made with the local school and Primary Care Trust (PCT). Contact with these bodies resulted in a successful bid for funds to deliver a health service awareness project in conjunction with both the Parent Participation Worker at the school and the Patient Public Involvement Officer in the local PCT. At this point the management committee adopted a more professional attitude, circulating emails and pre-planning diaries. The final critical event was the renewed interest that a major funder took in a previously rejected application for a salaried women's development worker's post. The management committee met beforehand and prepared their case together, supported with documentary evidence (an activity that would have seemed meaningless months beforehand). These three critical junctures, identifying a partnering strategy; delivering an externally funded project and formalising the organisational structures to forward plan meetings with others were indicators of some of the connections that this organisation made as they became more empowered. The timeline for all these events to take place was about 18 months.

Conclusion

The domain theory of community empowerment has proved to be a fitting theoretical framework to aspects of research, monitoring and evaluation activity within *Accommodate* for a number of reasons. Some theories do not consider the power dynamic in a wider context but Laverack and Wallerstein's framework forges a link between individual empowerment and political and socio-economic circumstance. This was also reflected in the critical realist perspective I had adopt at the outset to engage with social change in terms of ideological, institutional and resource distribution through renegotiation of organisational power. The domain theory is a way of exploring a bigger picture view of community empowerment. My practitioner experience appreciated the finer points in Laverack and Wallerstein's model that mirrored my own interpretations; for instance the distinction noted between community leadership that evolves from within communities from that imposed from outside. Laverack (2001, 2003, 2006a) developed the framework through practical application that has resonated with the emancipatory and reciprocal attitude taken to research, monitoring and evaluation within *Accommodate*. *"Consequentialist-feminist"* (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:37) methods have emulated this in building long-term empathetic relationships with participants, some of which have outlasted the Project timetable.

The adoption of critical pedagogy approach to capacity building was a key feature of hact and the CURS Team methodology; developing self-assessment; encouraging critical awareness and responded aptly to the domain of 'asking why'. This model raises the issue of programme ownership and influence over project

direction and progress that mirrors RCO development within *Accommodate.* Some capacity building approaches remain within the boundaries of organisational capabilities and competences. Crucially, the domains theory includes the development of organisational structures and links to others, taking a network approach to building capacity. 'Networkedness' emerged as a crucial element in the process of community empowerment especially the interpretation adopted by the domains approach where the goal is to equalise community partners' standing with other partners and outside agents.

Applying Laverack and Wallerstein's (2001) domain theory of community empowerment as a framework for reviewing findings from *Accommodate*, it became apparent that the domains are interlinked. Activities, actions and strategies in each domain overlapped into others. For instance, it is difficult to examine growth in a 'leadership' domain without the confidence that develops from this growth becoming manifest into critical faculties that Laverack (2006) captures as the ability to 'ask why'. Similarly it is not easy to develop discussion about the capacity building dimension of resource mobilisation without relating it to the capacity underpinning strong leadership.

The domain of 'outside agent' reflected hact's role as network manager driving the empowerment process forward. Findings indicated that a multi-faceted approach to communication in the participation domain also aligns with concepts of 'communicative instruments' within network management theory. Communication appeared so regularly in the findings that this study has confirmed that the

communication domain is a necessary development for assessing empowerment of particularly marginalised community groups.

The domain of programme management mirrored much of the negotiation, perception management and brokerage that hact engaged with that has been discussed in Chapter 7. Laverack and Wallerstein's (2001) domains theory added another dimension to the progression of community empowerment. Although it is apparently an accumulative and evolutionary process, it is not a linear, but a dynamic concept as Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) first contended. Place and space were recognised by all the Partnerships in different ways as a starting point, not merely for organisational development but for accommodating changing identity that is part of the process of resettlement and integration into the wider community (see Chapter 6).

Analysis suggests that combined lessons were shared in the learning space nurtured by hact where each Partnership galvanised initiatives from across the network. This, rather than other factors such as organisational maturity was the reason that development was uneven and the empowerment process non-linear. Analysis recognises that empowerment works on different levels: The practical and operational in the short-term help to build capacity to develop organisational political activism in the long-term. There were examples that showed process and outcome were interrelated and interlocked as opportunities for influence arose over time. This better reflects Wallerstein's (1992:198) definition of community empowerment as a *"social-action process"* promoting participation towards the goal

of *"social justice"*. Analysis of findings in the domain representing organisational structures concluded that structure alone was not enough to ensure RCO partners had an equal say. The next chapter brings together thinking about domains of community empowerment within collaborative networks together with the network management role of outside agents to consider RCO empowerment in its entirety in terms of agency, structure and process.

Chapter 9: Agency, Structure and Process: Theory into Practice

Introduction

This concluding chapter brings together layers of theory (Figure 9.1) to reflect on the process of community empowerment in conjunction with issues of agency and structure to develop Laverack's model illustrating operational domains of community empowerment (Figure 3.3). It adopts a transformative perspective of community empowerment operating to achieve fundamental change in ideology, resources and institutional practice (Batliwala, 2007). Community empowerment is defined by Wallerstein as a *"social-action process"* promoting participation towards the goal of *"social justice"* (1992:198). This perspective can also be identified in the original objectives of *Accommodate.* Hact's overall aim was two-fold: to *"improve refugee access to decent housing* (and to) *influence policy and practice at all levels"* (Pike, 2004:1). The CURS Team worked collaboratively to develop this into an on-going framework of five discrete inter-related purposes (Mullins and Goodson, 2005; 2006; 2007; Mullins, 2008):

- Improving housing and support services for refugees
- Empowering refugee community organisations
- Changing policy and practice
- Building successful partnerships
- Meeting local needs

Findings have demonstrated that the RCOs' role in collaboration was at the heart of both hact's aim and the CURS Team's purposes so that RCO empowerment can be observed to be, both process and outcome. This synergy between process and

outcome has been noted by other commentators (Labonte 1994; Rissel 1994) as a dynamic continuum that takes place over time. *Accommodate* sat within hact's mission that defines the purpose of their work and their role within it; to 'act as a catalyst for change' in improving the housing conditions of 'people on the margins' of society (hact, 2005). A grassroots understanding of RCOs' self-help culture meant that hact anticipated RCOs would become more visible and be acknowledged by statutory partners and other agencies, in improving refugee access to housing services and resettlement procedures. Resettlement entails assisting with school places, employment and training; benefit claims and health care in addition to continuing day-to-day compensatory activity for loss of status; choice and control that result from the experience of seeking asylum (Chapter 2). This thesis set out to improve understanding of the process of empowerment in collaboration by asking the question, *'how did RCOs become empowered within the Accommodate Project?'*

Five subsidiary questions emerged from this enquiry:

- *What was the significance of organisational recognition in the process of RCO empowerment?*
- *What were the barriers to RCO engagement and involvement in the process?*
- *How were these barriers overcome?*
- *How did hact's role impact on RCO empowerment?*
- *At what point in the process can empowerment be considered an outcome?*

This Chapter forms a conclusion to the entire thesis that addressed these research questions, which was initially positioned within the critical realist perspective and grounded research approach outlined in Chapter 5. A 'wide screen' participant-led framework was created to enable the development of substantive theory building. Chapter 2 described the migration and housing policy contexts in which *Accommodate* was operating. Study of both fields explored dispersal and settlement patterns together with integration mechanisms and revealed structural and institutional barriers to social inclusion. Chapter 3 focused on what researchers have discovered about RCOs, why they emerge, how they function and sustain. This Chapter considered the barriers to RCOs engagement in collaboration against the backdrop of theories of community empowerment. It helped to distinguish the empowerment of community organisations that takes place in relation to other partner organisations, from the empowerment of individuals, thereby setting out parameters for the study of power dynamics within *Accommodate*.

Chapter 4 moved towards theories about network management and governance prompted by analysis of findings from the grounded first stage of fieldwork in Chapter 6 that identified barriers such as the lack of recognition that prevented the full involvement of RCOs in collaborative working. Chapter 4 considered dimensions of power and identified network management theory as a theoretical lens through which to view the interplay of partners within the *Accommodate* network. The role of hact as network manager and 'power broker' was highlighted in this analysis as paramount in overcoming barriers. Chapter 7 was able to test this framework throughout the second stage of fieldwork that focused on participant

observation and in-depth interviews. This Chapter identified hact in the role of driver of the empowerment process.

Chapter 8 analysed findings from the third stage of fieldwork characterised by a participatory action research approach working alongside several RCOs in a Newcomer Resource Centre. The purpose of this final stage of fieldwork was to explore the process of empowerment through Laverack and Wallerstein's (2001) operational domain theory. It concluded that the communication domain was an additional and significant dimension in the empowerment process and one essential to the engagement of marginalised groups. Building joint and shared outcomes was a key feature of successful network management. Empowerment could be interpreted as outcome when the relationship between RCOs and other partners reached a point where critical input was embraced and all partners were equally valued and mutually respected.

This chapter is organised in the same tradition as Giddens' theory of structuration (1979; 1982; 1984) that reconciled notions of agency and structure within social processes. Agency in these terms is related to actors engaged in a series of actions and interactions in a *"continuous flow of conduct"* (Giddens, 1979:55). It concludes that the agency role of hact as network manager was a crucial starting point in recognising the latent potential in RCOs to achieving resolution in collaboration. Hact's values were an important factor in this. The Partnerships created a networked structure in the sense of a place and space where the power and influence of RCOs could be brokered. The experience of RCOs working

together provided a powerful model of inter-communities capital that could be harnessed to help deliver a social inclusion agenda. Empowerment was seen to be accumulative (Figure 9.1); learning between the Partnerships was combined across the Project resulting in lessons being applied in a dynamic rather than a gradual manner. Studying this process in terms of organisational domains provided a practically relevant model for achieving 'transformative' community empowerment. The conclusion brings together insights from theory and literature review (Chapters 2-4) and empirical findings (Chapters 6-8) to put forward a cumulative model of the steps (Figure 9.2) that advanced the empowerment of refugee community organisations involved in partnerships.

Figure 9.1: creating a bigger picture view of power dynamics
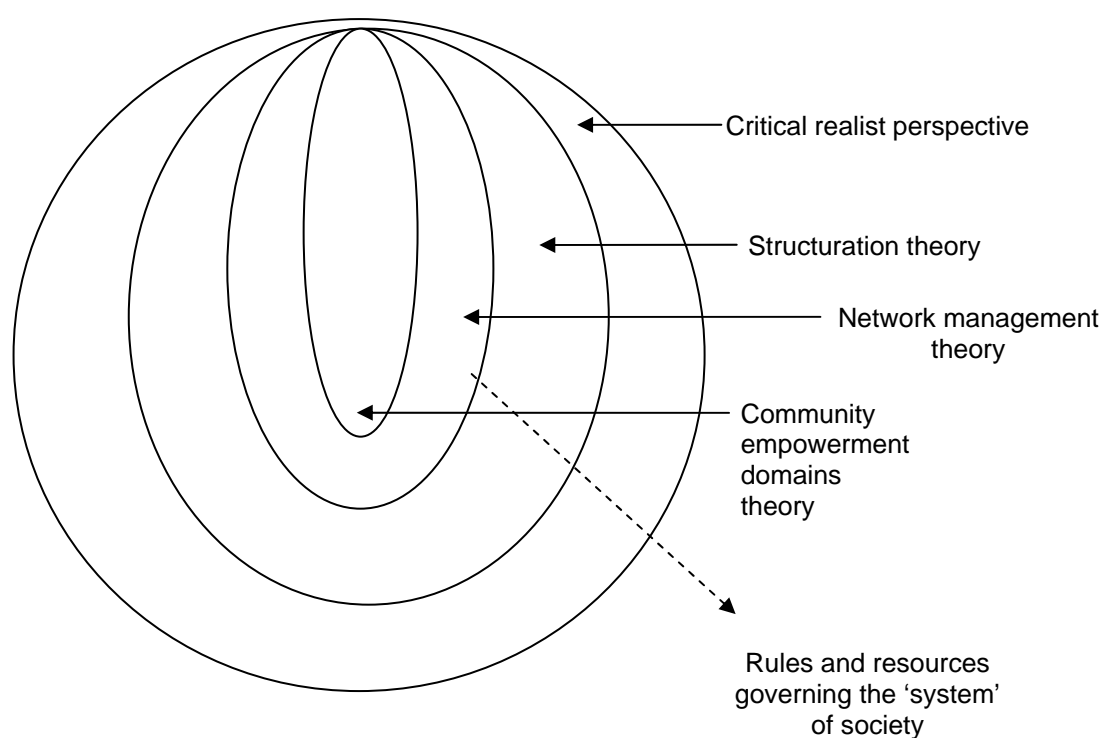
Source: Author's summary

Approaching theory and analysis

My research aim was to understand and interpret the process of community empowerment organisationally within *Accommodate* from the viewpoint of the least powerful partners, the RCOs. This meant that the RCOs themselves as well as the dynamics evidenced in partnership interchange were subjects of the research (see Chapter 1). RCOs became participants rather than 'subjects' because of the emic approach that was taken. One of the dangers of taking a conscious bias, especially towards vulnerable organisations that might be viewed as beyond criticism such as RCOs, is reluctance to record shortfalls. To ensure that this was not the case I was keen to learn retrospectively of the mistakes that RCOs felt they might have made.

Self analysis included overconfidence where one RCO professed they were overstretched and admitted defeat due to a skills shortage when trying single-handedly to launch an OCN course. The short-term nature of external funding also created problems as one RCO confessed to finding themselves 'chasing the pound' especially when the end of a funding stream meant the demise of someone's post. He said that they eventually learned not to panic and to draw on their volunteer base until the appearance of more appropriate funding opportunities. Another outcome of RCOs continually responding to the demands of mainstream service was the development of the self-assumption that they must have all the answers. One RCO leader pointed out that it is easy to become part of the establishment and start talking in jargon. He said that it was important to take a

'reality check' by making the strategic relevant at all operational levels of the organisation. Being part of the voluntary sector can bring its own problems, described by one leader as being sometimes *"the most cut-throat, conflicting and competitive sector"* (Xo:Ret). His organisation's learning about what works involved knowing what they were really good at; knowing what others were really good at and being big enough to relinquish goals more suited to the strengths of other organisations.

My objectives in the research process were to capture and promote the positive lessons working productively alongside hact, the CURS Team and other agencies active in the research field. Although close relationships developed here, they were identified principally by the different roles that I played as described in Chapter 5. Furthermore the Project cultivated a robust climate of airing and learning from mistakes so there was not the same danger of predisposition as there might have been working with organisations such as RCOs. Hact, for example, was critical of the lack of regulatory instruments that it had used in *Accommodate*, so in the sister Project, *Accommodate* 2, it set out rules about RCOs being involved in selection and recruitment procedures. Issues such as the timescale in setting up Accommodate being too short to fully involve RCOs in the process were captured in early evaluation and assimilated into the lessons for the future. Ultimately I was able to benefit from the relationships that developed with other agencies in the field. Various layers of theory assisted my thinking (Figure 9.1) helped to identify the structure within which the process of empowerment took place and evidence the changes in power relations necessary for empowerment to occur.

Layers of theory

Table 9.1: Theory and barriers

Theory	Barriers	Overcoming barriers
Critical realism	Unlevel playing field Manifestations of racism Social exclusion Exclusionary practices	The importance of political will The power of change Redistribution of resources Alternative values - social justice
Dimensions of power	Dominant ideology Negative media coverage Keeping 'unsafe' issues off the agenda Lack of confidence of marginalised to engage	Sharing place Creating social space Alternative imagery Acknowledging the intricacies of power dynamics in collaborative structures
Structuration Network management theory	The systems in society Different organisational norms (pluriformity) Limitations of horizontal structures The power of negative perceptions (closedness)	The role of the network manager Indirect instruments Regulatory instruments Communicative instruments Building joint interests Satisficing goals Shared and joint outcomes
Operational domains of community empowerment	Exclusion from problem assessment lack of control over agenda lack of continued involvement the need for structure and leadership lack of resource to participate	Building capacity of all partners Freire approach to learning The domain of 'communication' Networkedness The development of a long-term mutually beneficial relationship with a 'critical friend'

Source: Author's summary

Chapter 5 describes how research was conducted in a grounded tradition in order to discover *'a set of interrelated concepts, not just a list of themes'* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:145). This methodological approach was positioned within a critical realist perspective (Bhaskar, 1979; Sayer, 1992; 2000; Fleetwood, 2005) to present a bigger picture view (Figure 9.1) that other methodologies might have overlooked (Layder, 1993). Critical realism helped to locate the study within the wider context of migration policy and discourse concerning resettlement in addition to housing policy debates about social exclusion and community cohesion. This view enabled a perspective that recognised the structural and institutional barriers

and norms facing RCOs before they can begin to exercise agency in partnership working (Table 9.1).

Theory from the structuration school (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979, 1984; Thrift, 1983), guided me towards the concept of 'system' in society i.e. the rules, social structures and resources that define the structural context within which interaction occurs between groups (Figure 9.1). It was here where power dynamics were evidenced within the *Accommodate* Partnerships. Sarre *et al.*, (1989) were some of the first applied researchers to appreciate that structuration theory was particularly appropriate to the study of migrants who may behave outside of the accepted norms of the system. I was able to learn from this and make the connection between descriptive data and theoretical frameworks such as network management theory that are associated with organisational power, power brokerage and empowerment. Findings and analysis indicated that the role of hact as network manager was paramount in reframing perceptions, redistributing resources and developing new rules and norms.

My final layer of analysis built on Laverack's (2001, 2006) existing model of operational domains of empowerment to develop theory of community empowerment in a multi-agency partnership setting to include the role of hact as outside agency acting as a catalyst to drive the process along. It is a commonly accepted premise that the traditional instruments used in vertical networks are not as effective in collaborative, horizontal networks. The application of an operational domains framework highlighted the domain of 'communication' especially as hact

used communication instruments over and above other management instruments such as indirect or direct regulatory instruments, in the role of network manager (see Chapter 7). Multiple layers of theory were used in this way to understand structure, process and agency. Therefore research was conducted within the hypothesis that structure and process must be *'inextricably linked and unless one understands the nature of their relationship (both to each other and the phenomenon in question) it is difficult to truly grasp what is going on"* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:127).

Grounded theorists analyse findings to help to achieve a *'unifying concept'* (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:155). Adopting this methodology has helped to develop theory to apply to analysis of practice in the field of empowerment and social inclusion. This was achieved by making links between bodies of theory from different disciplines (politics, management and sociology) that are not often connected. Lukes (2005) theory of the three dimensions of power together with the substantive theory of network management (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004) and operational domains of community empowerment (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001; Laverack, 2006a) were extremely useful in understanding dynamics within *Accommodate*. Findings identified essential elements in the organisational empowerment process as agency and structure.

Figure 9.2: Agency and structure in operational domains
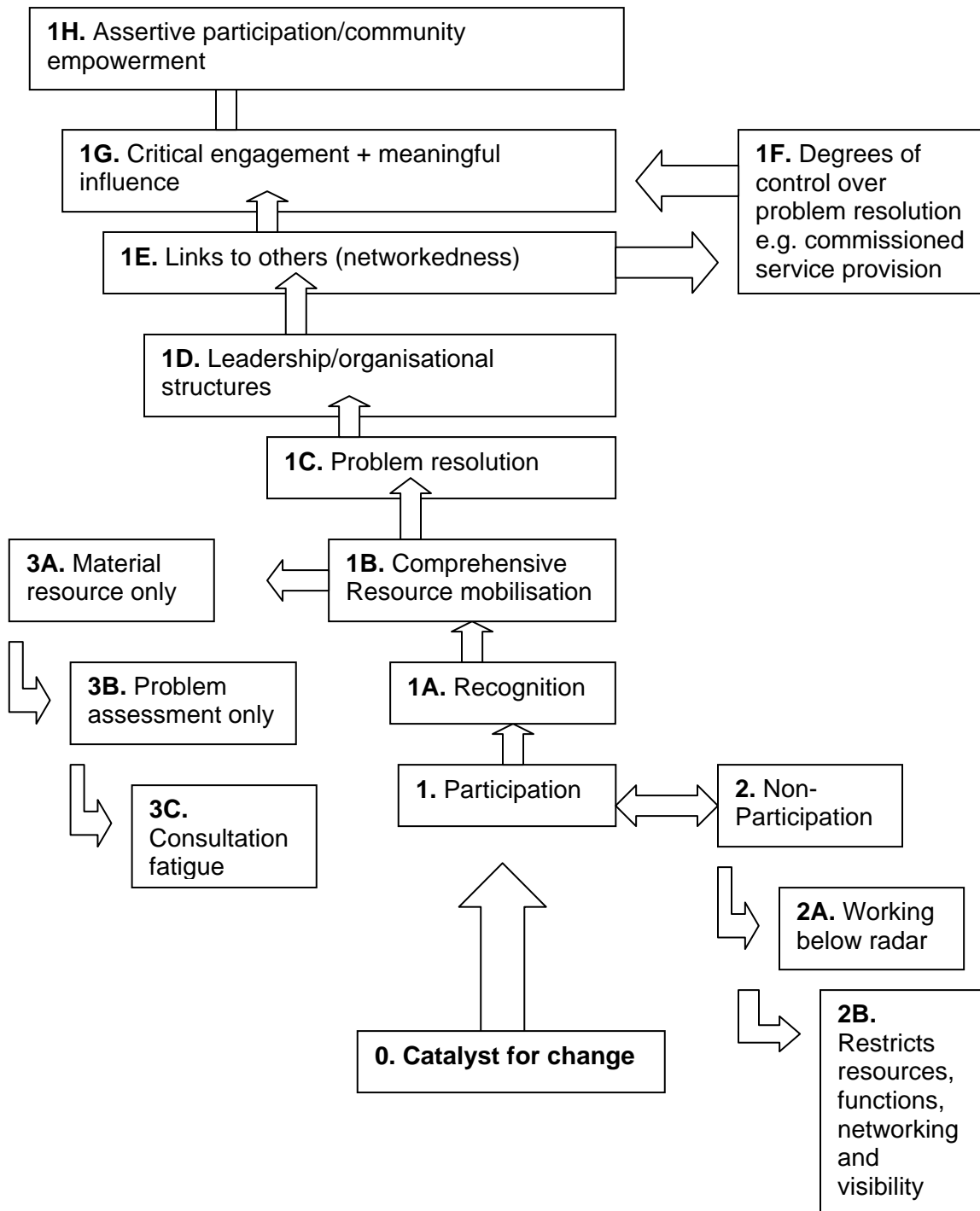
Source: Author after Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001

Figure 9.2 (and the numbered steps within) is the paradigm discussed throughout this Chapter to represent the cumulative but uneven process of community empowerment as it was tracked during the *Accommodate* Project. Beginning with zero to signify hact initiating the Project, the upward steps denote the community empowerment process unfolding using Laverack's operational domains as reference points. Once hact as 'catalyst for change' (Laverack and Wallerstein identify this role as the 'outside agent') set up the collaborative opportunity there is an immediate junction where other partners and agencies can encourage participation (Steps 1-2). Where this encouragement is lacking, non-participation persists. Many RCOs remain in the region of little or non-participation, commonly termed 'below the radar' that leads to restrictions and barriers, creating a struggle for existence (Steps 2, 2A, 2B). We can speculate that this is a zone where negative rather than positive social capital prospers (Portes, 1998; Taylor, 2003). Alternatively participation and recognition (Step 1A) creates a place at the partnership table and potentially the social space to voice needs and aspirations and to share problem resolution.

It has been shown that resources to engage as well as function are a fundamental requirement at this stage of engagement (Step 1B). Where material resources are offered following involvement at problem assessment stage only, this too can lead to disenchantment with a consultation-only role; a conflated 'talking shop' in the partnership process (Steps 3A, 3B, 3C). Alternatively, resources can be mobilised comprehensively as part of the recognition process including capacity building of all partners to engender mutual respect and understanding about roles, knowledge

and the value of experience and Figure 9.3 expands on this step. This can have a reciprocal effect on both community organisation as well as statutory and other agencies as Figure 9.4 illustrates. In this case some RCOs developed leadership and organisational structures and were better able to represent their communities (Step 1D). Where RCOs built a reputation and alliances outside of the network (Step 1E) the next stage offered the option for some to engage in service provision with the support of other partners (Step 1F). Confidence levels at this stage were shown to be sufficient for some RCOs to engage critically, to disagree with priorities and agenda setting (Step 1G). What is more, this step signifies an acceptance of all partners that the on-going relationship with RCOs in the role of 'critical friend' is the point at which community empowerment can be considered an outcome because it entails the joint of interests of all parties.

The final stage represents the on-going influence where RCOs themselves exercise agency and has been evidenced in some of the organisations becoming involved in future partnerships and projects (Step 1H). One fundamental conclusion from the findings is that the process was not always sequential and depended on the degree to which the steps were managed as well as the influence of contextual factors. By creating a learning space across the network, hact ensured all partners were able to learn from one another's ideas and initiatives. Further discussion in the Chapter is arranged under section headings; 'agency', 'structure' and 'process' and seeks to synthesis the conclusions about interplay between core themes: hact as agent of change; partnership rules of engagement; the confidence of RCOs and wider contexts.

Agency

The role of outside agents

Outside agency (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001), was discernible in several ways in this collaborative process. Hact acted as the *"engine for action"*, (Coleman, 1988) by initiating *Accommodate* from previous experience of collaboration, work and research with RCOs and persisted in the role of 'catalyst for change' (step 0). Without hact exercising agency in this way, few other steps could have been pursued in this Project. Chapter 7 illustrated how hact behaved as implicit network manager, working to help level the playing field and manage the collaborative process (Figure 9:2, step 1 and 1A). Step 2 and 2A denote where RCOs are usually located, outside of the collaborative process, invisible and largely unrecognised by statutory and other agencies (see Chapter 6). Step 2B suggests the consequences of lack of recognition and recalls Taylor's (1992:35) view that *"the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression"*.

Figure 9.3: Components of organisational recognition
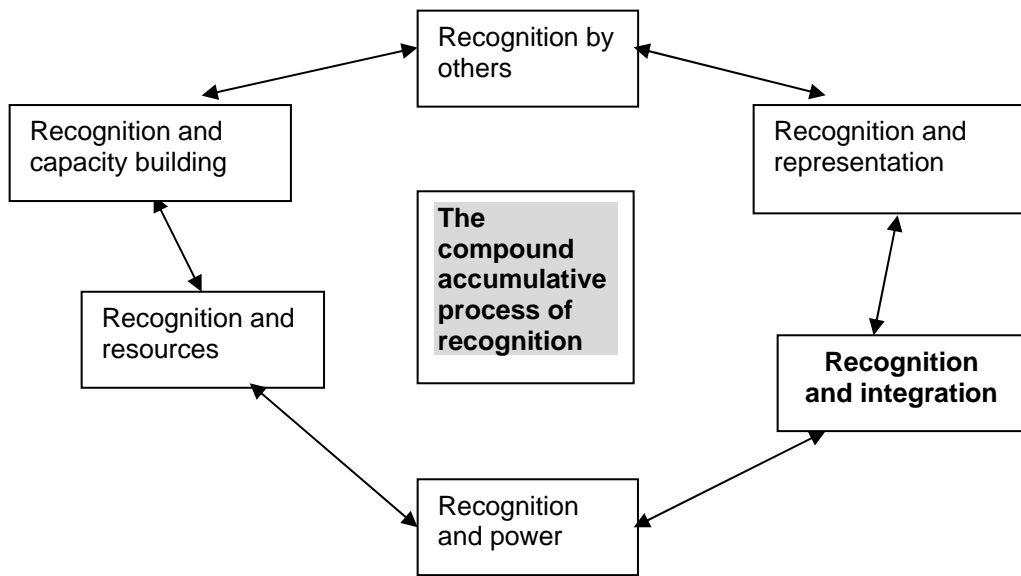
Source: Framework developed by the Author

Although I have used recognition as one step in this paradigm, Chapter 8 describes the intricacies of the process of recognition which is significant in sustaining community participation. The act of recognition is linked throughout the other stages so that networking and capacity building together with greater representation and accountability become part of a mutual relationship (Jones & Hussain, 2010). This stage can be considered a step towards mutual and shared interests that is fundamental to the concept of outcomes within network management theory. Although this relationship was not formalised within *Accommodate*, it highlighted the mutual benefits (Figure 9.4) to all partners. The use of outside agencies demonstrates that hact viewed step 1B; 'resource mobilisation', not merely as material resource but as a way to *"create a more equal, supportive and sustainable alternative"* (Shaw, 2008). As Figure 9.3

suggests, recognition is an accumulative process that brings all forms of resource together.

Step 3A indicates the isolation and low visibility (step 3B) that limits material resource when lacking a role in the process. Beazley *et al.'s* (2000:22, 57) study of the Vietnamese community is a classic example of this. Although Vietnamese refugees settled in Birmingham in the 1970s and were given a community centre of their own, they remain perceptually *"the archetypal iceberg"* marginalised and disadvantaged with little involvement in public life or politics of the city. As some commentators have noted material resource is vital to the capacity to engage. Yet resource in terms of building capacity to change things from below, as Taylor (2003) argued, is an approach that is more likely to be achieved by capacity building done across three phases: Confidence building; building organisational capital to engage politically and the capacity building that develops agency e.g. networking with others (Step 1E). It is in this way that learning is shared as well as accumulated.

As part of their role hact engaged other outside agencies to operate at arms-length on their behalf. The CURS Team was appointed by hact to evaluate in the role of 'critical friend' following a mutual learning model (Freire, 2006; also see Chapter 3); encouraging self-assessment and fostering the exchange of ideas and good practice via national workshops. A change management consultancy conducted a series of exchange visits that challenged perceptions and cultural norms. A communications consultancy consolidated corporate identity through Project and

inter-Project work to improve profile, promotion and communication. Each Partnership was encouraged to recruit a Worker and once appointed, these post holders were brought together by hact to share learning and develop a network identity (see Chapter 7).

Hact employed outside agents in the tradition of critical pedagogy where the activity of capacity building is led by a facilitator to release social capital i.e. organisational and experiential assets that are latent but already there (Ledwith, 1997; 2005). Hact's insistence that RCOs be involved in problem assessment (step 4A) was fundamental to the process. Anderson, (1996) noted that power over the agenda (Step 1C) is essential to ensure that community groups own the solution as well as identify the problem. Consultation fatigue, disaffection with partnership opportunities and leadership divorced from the members can be the result (Step 4B and 4C). The *'mixing it up a bit'* (HF4) that the change consultancy organised, reframed perceptions and resulted in a change in agenda setting. It enabled RCOs to get issues like destitution and fairer treatment within Choice-Based Lettings systems onto the Partnership table. They were supported in this by hact's initiator reporting the issue directly to the national Refugee Integration Forum Housing and Community Sub Group (Kanthasamy, 2006). These interventions were widely credited with transformative change within the network including policy issues such as destitution and Choice-Based Lettings procedures. In later encounters and workshops the exercise achieved "symbolic status" within the network culture (Mullins and Jones, 2009:119). This exercise not only reframed perceptions but

was transformative in influencing the *"traditions"* and *"myths"* of *Accommodate* (Shaap and van Twist, 1997:71).

The PhD undertook participatory action research and became involved in activity in a case study with emerging RCOs and newcomer organisations. Supporting the development of an international women's association was in the spirit of empowerment that looked to organisational structure to effect change. It was observed that bonding social capital from each individual organisation quickly developed into bridging capital and linking capital (Putnam, 2000) as the group reached out to link with other groups and partners at different levels (See Chapter 8). Refugee women-specific issues (Burnett and Peel, 2001; 2001a) had not been raised in the Partnerships. The alacrity with which this extremely diverse group of women crystallised was noted and helped to formulate conclusions about combined learning based on common experience. Trust and reciprocity were highly visible components of this group.

Women are generally the least visible members of RCOs (Challenor *et al.* 2005). In the process of being recognised as leaders who could identify and address the needs of refugee and newcomer women in the area, the women's group developed organisational structure and capacity for problem resolution (step 1C). Chapter 6 reflected that, despite internal organisational confidence and maturity, RCOs were often considered lacking in capacity, professionalism, member representation and accountability that made them risky collaborative partners; a misconception that one workshop contributor called, *"the injustice of recognition"* (NW1). The case study

showed that refugee and newcomer women could share resources and work together to create considerable reserve. Learning from the more experienced groups translated to embryonic groups so that they could develop at a faster rate than they would have in isolation. One of the outcomes meant a major funder recognised the need to put this organisation on a longer-term footing via paid support staff and strategic business planning.

How hact exercised agency

Interviews and observations detailed in Chapter 7 led to the conclusion that hact acted implicitly as network manager and had the skills base to do so. Analysis within this theoretical framework offered interesting insight into the significance of a network manager's ideology. Practice in driving collaborative networks has sometimes involved the use of 'champions' from within individual partner organisations. Hact's core values were consistent in a way that other interest groups could not always have been. Organisation-based champions are often subject to the competing attractions of other games and arenas (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997). Since they are located within a partner's organisation they can become constrained by the *'institutional templates'* (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2001:52) of that organisation's culture and self-interests, which in this case may relate to arenas other than *Accommodate.*

When hact operated in the role of change agent it demonstrated the importance of a sustained ideological position that considered housing as a right not a privilege and the value of long-standing commitment to the housing needs of those on the

margins of society (Chapter 7). Marsh, (1998) argued that housing policy process is more open to disagreement, debate, change and fluctuation than many other elements of the welfare state because it is based on negotiation not universal rights. Marsh proposed a bottom-up model of policy implementation where implementation is the product of negotiation and compromise between different interest groups with different values. In this way, common priorities bring the operational and the strategic together. Hact's approach to *Accommodate* is consistent with this view.

Hact's pioneering leadership style that was prepared to take risks in order to learn, is described as a fundamental characteristic by one hact associate:

> *"It's very important for hact working with marginalised groups to take risks. As long as you want to learn you've got to take risks and if you are working with marginalised groups you want to trust them and work from them. In many cases hact was the first funder for many groups that we fund like RCOs - that other people would not touch"* (G5).

Most respondents acknowledged hact's ability to operate on different levels. One of the key characteristics for their success with *Accommodate* enabled them to bring together understanding of refugee housing need at the grassroots; influence in policy making at national policy level while retaining the respect of both the social housing and the voluntary refugee community sectors. The building of mutual trust and respect enabled hact to steer the networks that they had no official

authority/sanctions or large-scale funds to steer through hierarchy (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997). One participant described this quite candidly: *"Most partners are committed to hact anyway. They see the funding as seed-funding, as peanuts by comparison"* (Xr2).

Prior to *Accommodate*, hact recognised and supported the emergence of RCOs' capacity or 'social capital' to help refugees access housing services. While hact realised that statutory partners did not always concede the assets brought by RCOs they set up *Accommodate* as an unprecedented collaborative network to create visible interface and translate learning into policy. In this way hact acknowledged the latent or emergent power of RCOs, organisations that largely operated 'under the radar' up to that point. 'Below the radar' is a commonly used phrase but in this analysis it has been used to describe the consequence of non-participation (Step 2A and B). Interviews with mature and well-constituted RCOs at each stage of fieldwork confirmed that lack of recognition was a fundamental problem. Other agencies did not engage with RCOs because as one leading RCO observed: "*They were not a recognised one* (organisation) *in the role they fulfilled"* (XoPO:2). Hact's realisation that the 'below radar' position of RCOs was responsible for 'weak influence' (Amas and Price, 2008) over housing policy decisions was crucial. Their understanding of the need for organisational integration and two-way organisational dialogue demonstrated an awareness of the structural dynamic of integration strategy as a two-way process within collaborative networks (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004; Finney, 2005).

To help establish an RCO 'seat at the table' was therefore the first step in empowering RCO voice but did not automatically include a say over the agenda and in decision-making (step 1C). Research into hact's role as network manager showed that recognition rested on the concept of increasing mutuality i.e. a 'dual legitimacy' deal (Figure 9.4) meaning, the more visible and recognised RCOs became, the more they were involved in problem resolution, the more public significance was attached to issues of representation and accountability so RCOs worked more actively towards formal constitution (step 1D). Figure 9.3 builds on Figure 9.2 to illustrate the dynamic nature of this process. The more that external partners recognised the value of internal community knowledge and self-help in countering isolation, loss and exclusion; the more that RCOs' voice in policymaking was validated (step 1F). That is not to say that recognition alone can empower. Hastings (1996) observed in the context of regeneration that recognised community groups may be resigned to the fact that negotiations still went on behind closed doors. Some MRCOs expressed concern that commissioning might curtail autonomy and one voluntary organisation declined 'Supporting People' funding because it changed the way that they wanted to work with their clients. The recognition process within *Accommodate* could not have evolved effectively without hact's drive and strategic input. Hact also appreciated the 'credibility gap' (see Chapter 6) described by one RCO leader when he said, the Local Authority is *"shy of working with us"* (UI:17). Hact ensured that *Accommodate* included Local Authority partners to secure legitimacy and political will necessary for policy change at strategic level.

Figure 9.4: Two-fold benefit of recognition
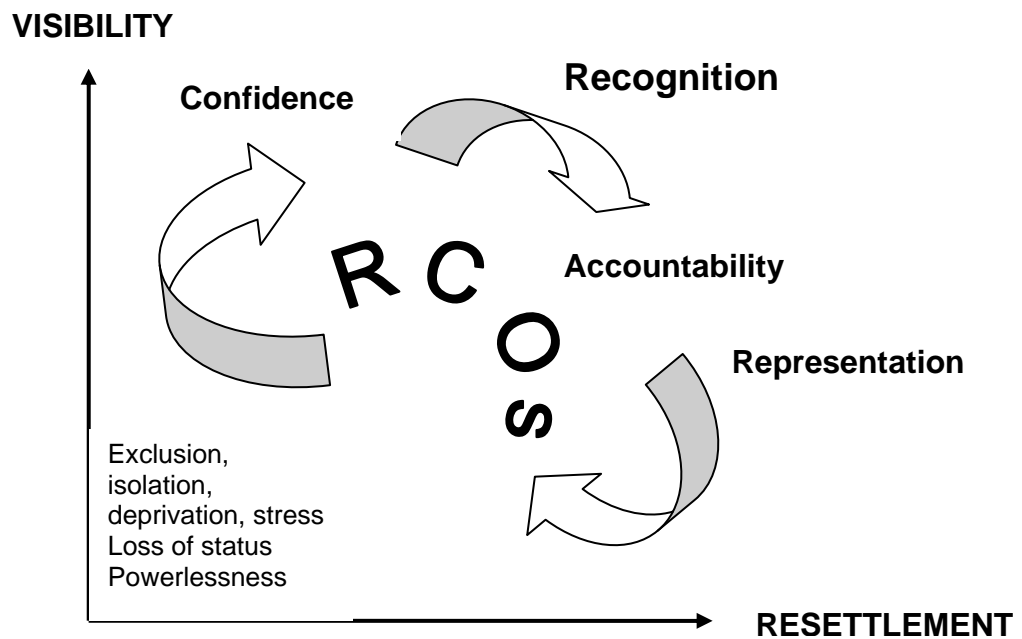
Source: Author's framework based on findings

The degree to which hact was prepared to take risks is attributed as an indication of leadership: Network management theorists define this model of leadership as one committed to creating consensus and support for new ideas (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997). Hact's approach set out to challenge misconceptions and attitudes that governed ideology about refugees and their rights to adequate housing. Hact understood that the issue of trust is at the forefront of a communities' network analysis. It is inevitably linked to an understanding that bargaining and mutual adjustment between actors relies on power created by position and resource. Looking at the bigger picture, trust and the ability to fully participate are factors that affect refugees in the wider context. There is also a need to build up trust and understanding of the British democratic system of public provision (Challenor *et al.* 2005) if refugees are to be encouraged to participate fully in the

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democratic process. Involvement and having a voice in, for example, ward committees, tenants' panels, housing forums etc. encourages change in institutional structures in accounting strategically for the needs of refugees.

Figure 9.5: Hact exercising agency

Hact as agent of change	Pre-Project	During-Project	Post-Project
Taking risks	Recognising RCOs as an organisational force for change	Creating a radical learning space to advance learning via change management	Developing asset bases and strengthening networks
Levelling the playing field	Up-skilling refugee participants e.g. in the role of housing advisors	Altering perceptions by presenting the 'bigger picture'	Dissemination and lobbying for policy change
Encouraging assertiveness	Involving RCOs in problem assessment and problem resolution	Supporting agenda-setting via awareness-raising events	Continued central support for practical outcomes e.g. building other partnerships with PCT etc

Source: Author's summary based on findings

Recognition and democratic anchorage

Hact took a *"participatory and empowering approach"* (Laverack and Wallerstein 2001:182) to the engagement of RCOs in programme management (Figure 9.5) at each stage of the Accommodate Project process. Hertting (2009:142-3) explored the capacity of ethnic organisations like RCOs to contribute to political integration and revealed both potential and problem within collaborative working. *"New bargaining resources"* for ethnic organisations involving participation in wider local politics were found to be countered by restricted *"membership democracy"* as the organisations became more professional and centralised. It is essential, however, to consider formal recognition as a tool rather than a panacea in the empowerment process as critique of the relationship based on recognition imply. This point was further exemplified by one refugee participant who realised that recognition of RCO

structures on their own would not empower, but democratic integration in a political dimension was also required:

> *"We need RCOs in more decision-making bodies. There's a danger that an agenda gets 'pushed through' the Refugee Forum and external bodies become more influential"* (XoII:A1).

Arms length agency

As has been described (see Chapter 7), hact contrived agency through others: External consultants were employed to help manage perceptions and to improve communication and profile. The Project Workers' role was used to create a coherent network. The CURS Team was recruited to act as 'critical friend' and develop on-going and mutual self-assessment as well as mutual learning (Mullins and Goodson, 2007). One interpretation of the five inter-related purposes (Mullins and Goodson, 2006, 2007, 2008) suggests RCO empowerment was at the heart of the process: Meeting local need and improving services could not have been accomplished without empowering RCOs: Neither could successful partnerships nor changes in policy and practice been achieved without bringing RCOs as a critical player and asset base into the collaborative process. The CURS Team was sensitive to the problem that some RCOs were embryonic and had sprung up relatively quickly in response to NASS regional dispersal strategy. Agency was exerted by the Team to stimulate individual empowerment. Community researchers were recruited and engaged in accredited, assessed fieldwork in each of the five Project Partnerships, fieldwork that added dimension to the existing evaluation process (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008).

CASE-studentship as agency

It could be argued that the research student role also exercised agency in the community empowerment process. Over the years my interest in this field has developed from firsthand experience in various voluntary and professional roles. From the late 1970s I was drawn into community activity, together with other Council tenants in sheer frustration with the poor standard of housing we occupied. Recognition of the legitimacy of our tenants' association was unexpected fallout. We were gradually acknowledged as a voice for the estate and became a point of contact for future consultation, campaign and influence. Later, as I followed a career in community development work, the nature of empowerment has continued to intrigue me and I have since witnessed many arenas, in rural and urban areas; with local and newcomer communities; where power dynamics over decision-making has been played out between activists and professionals. My observations regarding the inequality of resources and power that exists between the voluntary and statutory sector resonate in Sullivan and Skelcher's description of *"differential assumptions of status, authority, expertise and legitimacy"* (2002:111). Above all, I am familiar with the discrepancy between the long volunteering hours community activists work, in contrast to the often modest influence they eventually come to exercise over grassroots service provision where it "*takes time and great amounts of effort to achieve relatively small gains"* (Bailey, 1996).

I was encouraged by a desire for deeper understanding of the community empowerment process to take a greater agency role in the final case study. The crux of action research is not that the researcher brings resolution to the problem

but that participants, often considered 'the problem', are part of the solution (Grant *et. al.,* 2008) (Step C). RCOs had never been considered the 'subjects' of my research but 'participants' in it. Participants, which Greenwood and Levin (2003:149) maintain, *have "extensive and long-term knowledge of the problems at hand and the contexts in which they occur, as well as knowledge about how and from whom to get additional information".* This translates effortlessly to the position of RCOs in *Accommodate* where the strength of their contribution to partnership working is one of local knowledge, community access and firsthand understanding of the refugee experience. Greenwood and Levin's (2003) discourse about expediency helped me to clarify that RCOs are the 'object' (Sayer 1992, also see Chapter 5) of my research only to the extent that they are participants first.

Findings implied that, to varying degrees, refugee insider knowledge was both recognised and acted upon, giving RCOs what might be called double powers; the status that comes with recognition together with the authority to engage. For example, one RCO conducted a survey of their community's housing need and both research and the community researcher were well supported by the addition of a specialist partner from the local university. Another RCO led on awareness raising events to a wide range of service providers about the mental health issues associated with trauma and flight. It would have been too easy to take this for granted and try to investigate all partners equally under the semblance of objectivity: but taking an equal approach to all partners risked perpetuating inequality and would be the antithesis of what this study sought to address;

unequal power relations. Lukes' third face of power is particularly helpful here. In Lukes' analysis 'empowerment' can be understood as:

> "*An empirical basis for identifying real interests which is not up to A (the controller) but to B (the compliant) exercising choice under conditions of relative autonomy, and, in particular, independently of A's power – e.g. through democratic participation*" (Lukes, S. 2005:146).

This is what Step 1H, 'assertive participation' illustrates. A critical realist perspective looking at structure and process "*allows critical researchers new tools to rethink the interplay among the various axes of power, identity, libido, rationality and emotion*" together in each actor and partnership arena "*where the psychic is no longer separated from the sociopolitical realm*" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003:438). This holistic view of actors, together with the language of network management theory, helped to identify them as either 'acted upon' or 'acting' to bring concepts of agency, structure and process together in analysis. Sometimes the result of on-going action, then interaction makes it difficult to establish a clear distinction between agency and structure. Ratcliffe, (2002) illustrated this very clearly with the example of minority ethnic entrepreneurs filling a niche market in response to discriminatory behaviour within the sector. This challenge to "*preconstituted power, meaning and moral structures*" (Sarre, *et al.,* 1989:45) is precisely how institutional change evolves.

Figure 9.6: Researcher Perspective

Source: Author building on Sullivan and Skelcher: (2002:36)

Research Question	Optimist Perspective	Pessimist Perspective	Realist Perspective	Critical realist Perspective
Which factors/characteristics and theory affect voluntary participant capacity and practice of collaboration?	Individual factors	Organisational factors	Institutional factors	All these factors plus transformation of institutional structures and procedures
	Reticulist skills, and abilities, trust	Culture, bureaucracy, professionalism	The mediation of individual and organisational factors	All these plus change in the distribution of and control over resources
	Collaborative empowerment theory (Leadership): - regime theory	Resource dependency theory	New institutional theory	A theory of transformative community empowerment emerging from steerage at network level to address the imbalance of power

Sullivan and Skelcher's influential work on collaboration across boundaries brings together three researcher standpoints, *pessimistic, optimistic* and *realist* that would substantively affect the research question that underpins my research enquiry into the question of RCO empowerment in *Accommodate*: "*Which factors/characteristics and theory affect voluntary participant capacity and collaboration*?" (2002:36). My approach suggests a fourth perspective (Fig.9.6) could be added to this matrix, the critical realist perspective: A perspective that would more likely focus on power dynamics and the transformation of ideology and institutional structure and redistribution of and a change in the control over resource. A perspective inspired by a community empowerment process that

entails recognised voice, critical engagement and meaningful influence and autonomous exercise of real choice (Step 1F and 1G).

Structure

Context as structure

Chapter 2 describes the wider structural barriers that also discriminated against newcomers gaining equal access to adequate housing. These barriers took three forms according to Robinson (2002:96) as '*subjective racism'; 'institutional racism' and 'structural racism'* resulting in constrained housing choice and escalating social exclusion. Somerville and Steele (2002) contend that social exclusion in housing has particular characteristics that make it different from exclusion in other spheres because it impacts on other life chances. Poor housing conditions can impact on access to education, health, employment, leisure and the removal of racist constraints can be most effectively removed by involving minority ethnic organisations themselves in the implementation of race equality strategies *"in leading roles"* (2002:316). Somerville and Steele (2002) argued that the moral panic over refugees and refugee people seeking asylum has changed the nature of racism in that it drives further division between established BME communities and newcomer communities towards a form of 'sophisticated' racism that is:

> *"Increasingly allied with nationalism …. A very old and crude boundary-marking exercise, but in its sophisticated version, it allows BME communities already in England to place themselves on the 'right' side of the boundary… This racism is sophisticated because it does not altogether deny the legitimacy of BME citizenship but makes it conditional on forms of*

allegiance that are seen (by the racists) to be quintessentially English…This
racism therefore delegitimises the possession of multiple national identities"
(2002:314)

Hact understood that tackling ideology and negative attitudes was fundamental to the success of *Accommodate* and shows the importance of a counter-ideology when looking at community development practice (see Chapter 7). As Craig commented, community development without a "*value base and without a theoretical framework" is a '"skill-base occupation"* that can be undertaken by any organisation including the BNP (Pitchford, 2008:41).

One refugee activist said: "*I can see both as a refugee and at a strategic level the underlying concern about migrant communities accessing traditionally host community areas – I didn't see it at first but now I think about the perception of 'they are taking over our town'"* (Xr11) showing that negative attitude existed at both neighbourhood and strategic level. The area he referred to was one predominantly occupied by established BME communities and strategy was dominated by a desire not to be seen allocating housing resource unfairly. Hact saw the importance of building the kind of partnership leadership that was able to redefine priority need e.g. definitions of 'vulnerability'. One Partnership found that both male and female single refugees were not being treated as a priority because they were not considered vulnerable. This was in spite of the fact that many are traumatised; suffer mental illness and face language barriers as well as the handicap of not knowing the British system. Other Partnerships were able to

challenge misconceptions of unfairness in allocations to newcomers with clear facts about the scarcity of resources (Chapter 7). By improving local Choice-Based Lettings allocation schemes, Partnerships were able to ensure that procedures were culturally sensitive at the same time as illustrating more accurate representation of what social housing was available to both host and newcomer communities. For example, a CBL scheme in one area was later supported by information about ethnic shops, facilities and places of worship so that applicants could make better choices.

Overall this changing character of racism refines the concept of 'the stranger', being 'foreign' and 'outside' illustrated by D'Onofrio and Munk's (2004) to include any 'newcomer' communities regardless of race or reason for migration and makes the plea by Robinson and Segrott, (2002:64) for a *"more benign and better-informed debate"* about migration as a whole even more pressing. The term 'Migrant and Refugee Community Organisations' (MRCOs) arose in response to the fact that RCOs were also helping economic migrants in accessing information and services and could potentially engage with the commissioning process as part of the third sector agenda (Perry and El-Hassan, 2008). Within *Accommodate* one mature RCO organisation recognised this and changed their constitution to reflect a wider remit (Chapter 8); another leading RCO changed their name and a refugee resource centre redefined itself to indicate broader description of newcomers. By raising the profile of MRCOs, hact set out to tackle the less obvious barriers like language and cultural difference via structural change of the institutions that delivered services i.e. institutional racism observed by one participant who had

said: *"The most notable thing is that we are in a system that is designed for native people and outsiders get forgotten – the understanding is not mutual" (UI:3).*

Structural exclusion

Limited resources like housing are allocated on the basis of need as well as the length of time on waiting lists. Prioritisation of housing need and allocation procedures can be the cause of tension and exclusion of minority ethnic applicants (Phillips and Unsworth, 2002). Ratcliffe (2002) cites exclusionary housing policy after World War II for affecting housing mobility. This has compounded with restrictionary practice within social housing where residence requirements have denied access to better quality accommodation than could be found in the private sector. Cantle (2001) reported that high levels of residential segregation particularly between Whites and South Asians were a root cause of the 2001 riots in northern cities.

Other critics noted a failure of political will to integrate refugees existed at both national and local levels. Carter and El-Hassan argued that the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act eroded the housing rights and benefit entitlements of refugee people seeking asylum and created "*institutionalised exclusion*" (2003:10). Kundnani (2001) blamed 20th century segregationist housing policies. Ratcliffe *et al.* (2001) alluded to white flight as another and perhaps more dominant factor contributing to segregated communities. This link between confidence, knowledge and exclusion is explored in depth in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 but what these interpretations have in common is a connection between housing and inclusion.

From the outset hact had a clear understanding of the link between housing and inclusion. *Accommodate*'s initiator, described housing as the basis for refugees inclusion into the wider community, a view supported in hact's literature, "*with the security* (permanent housing) *it gives, they are enabled to make their own contribution to society*" (Nother, 2004:6); associating secure and permanent tenure with the opportunity to engage. This study found that it is unworkable to divorce housing from other elements of resettlement and that permanent housing is the first step towards this end. The part that RCOs play in the resettlement process (Chapter 6) is therefore an important factor in resolving housing issues for refugees.

RCOs and resettlement

It is suggested in the literature and supported by examples within *Accommodate* that community leaders can play a crucial role in the resettlement and integration process. Examples of RCO leaders, for example, taking up health issues like the effects of Khat-abuse and helping schools to identify places for the children of newcomer families support this. Many studies link health, well-being, educational and professional attainment to quality of housing, neighbourhood stability and community security and safety. Recent national consultation has confirmed that access, allocation and planning of housing provision are pivotal to community engagement (Tenant Services Authority, 2009:10).

RCOs often run cultural activities and Saturday schools to keep memory, tradition, local dialects and language alive. Findings have suggested that, far from creating

cultural barriers between refugee people seeking asylum and host communities this form of engagement helps newcomer communities to integrate. It has been widely documented and evidenced in this study that clustering fosters community safety. One respondent described this as *"The key issue relating to the integration of refugees is security of people. People need to feel that they are not alien".* (FPII:11,27). However, it is also evident that endorsement of identity and belonging builds confidence:

> "*There is a view that people are living in ghetto-like isolation, which misses the point. I don't think you can establish a base for progress, creativity and entrepreneurship unless you have the cultural identity. The way to integrate is a paradox; you can actually get people involved and empower them through their identity rather than by dispersing them*" (G7)

Integration in the sense of assimilation is a process that can take generations, but integration at neighbourhood level in terms of building mutual understanding is a crucial step. These findings confirm the contribution to 'vertical and horizontal integration where links are made over time between newcomers and RCOs and newcomers and neighbourhoods and institutions in the wider community (see Figure 6.3).

Collaborative structure

The interesting premise of formal 'recognition' in a community participation sense is that it begins a relationship that can only be ended by formal dissolution or 'de-recognition' and transforms the relationship between statutory and voluntary sector from *'as-needed'* contact (Amas and Price, 2008) to 'on-going' contact, opening the

way for regular involvement in policy and decision-making. Part of the *Accommodate* continuation strategy demonstrated this as new partnership relations were brokered with the PCT for example, to achieve health-related housing services and to influence health authority priorities. Where RCOs reached step 1H (Figure 9.2) there was the opportunity to sustain involvement evidenced by RCOs from *Accommodate* continuing to participate in later hact programmes. Reid (2001) and Mayo and Taylor (2001) suggest that struggles for wider influence may be more successful where marginalised community groups are configured into networks of like-minded organisations to campaign for and directly influence change through collective action (1E). The extra step in *Accommodate* was to link Refugee Forums with powerful statutory and independent housing providers. Umbrella structures like the use of Refugee Forums continued to performed this function and configurations like the New Community Empowerment Networks demonstrated a growth in reticulist skills emerging as additional post-Project outcomes to *Accommodate*.

One of hact's objectives was to raise the partnerships from operational to strategic levels in order to assist policy change. It is likely that this bottom-up process enabled strategic focus to develop while still retaining collective links at neighbourhood level. Also it is possible that RCOs put greater value on their positions as leaders as they influenced strategic decisions. This bottom-up approach to raising the strategic level increased our understanding of the traditional typology of networks, introducing a more fluctuating dynamic than figure 9:7 suggests. Levels of interaction and degrees of interdependence as well as

functions were affected by time, the building of trust and the development of strategic purpose out of operational activity.

Figure 9.7: Types of Networks

Type of network	Levels of interaction	Degrees of interdependence	Purpose	Function
Collaborative networks	highly interactive	interdependent	Fundamental change	Action between agencies
Co-coordinative networks	Interact in order to better individual efforts	Remain independent entities	Marginal improvements	Outreach i.e. engaging the activities of the developmental information and exchange
Co-operative networks	Only interact when necessary	Independent sharing of expertise and knowledge	Low risk and little development of practice and methods	Informational and developmental

Source: Author based on Agranoff, 2006 and Mandell and Keast (2008:690)

RCOs' organisational structure

Generally RCOs have been found to be transient and fragile. It was evident that the collaborative structures themselves, the partnership arenas and the *Accommodate* network were not enough to foster RCOs empowerment. There was an additional synergy that developed the organisational maturity of RCOs as they began to engage, an accumulative process that built on recognition and mutual trust. The voluntary sector landscape is changing as more emphasis is put on organisations to formalise and acquire skills:

"There are courses all over the place but RCOs don't know what's on offer. They need help with structure – if you don't know, how do you know what you need to know? For example policies as a charity…. our organisation took 30 years to get here and we are expecting RCOs just to do it. The culture of organisations has also changed, now you need all sorts, like adult and child protection policies" (2Y6).

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Although organisations take time to mature, the recognition process can be part of this as the tenants' movement demonstrates. The recognition process governing newly formed tenants associations generally includes officer support and training to up-skill activists so that recognition criteria concerning representation and inclusivity can be met. More recently it has been common to up-skill officers' *"third sector literacy"* (Johnson and Schmuecker, 2009:6). RCOs were involved in helping to deliver awareness training for frontline staff in one Partnership area. RCOs, like any other community organisations can benefit from help building structure in this way. The recognition process cannot guarantee that community power will be exerted. Other studies (Smith and Beazley, 2000; MacLeavy, 2009; Dalziel, 2009) expose recognition that has led to attempts to coerce communities to engage with top-down initiatives; Tenant Compacts for example (Dalziel, 2009). Therefore, recognition does not lead automatically to transformative community empowerment as discussion in Chapter 3 indicates. It relies very much on the political will of the recognising agent to adopt a participatory approach to challenge dominant perceptions, ideology and resource distribution.

Participating in the development of the women's association in fieldwork stage 3 (see Chapter 5) presented a firsthand opportunity to identify critical events leading to visible transformation in the organisation's confidence, collectivity and development. These episodes could be identified as critical to development by the way that participants began to emphasis leadership, structure and collective action as important factors. They were provoked by links with other organisations (Step

1E). The group identified a partnering strategy which gave them a degree of control over problem resolution that they had not previously had. The process of delivering an externally funded project to meet local need meant that formalising the organisational structures became a meaningful activity and developed collective action. Within the structure of the wider partnerships, however, development of RCOs' organisational structure alone was not enough to ensure that they had an equal say over the agenda. This example highlights the importance of maintaining internal control over objectives i.e. agency over structure. It is a clear example of the intertwined nature of structure, process and the role of agency that Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined as methodological challenge.

The role of leadership

The development of leadership in RCOs was identified by hact, statutory partners and RCOs themselves as a key element in the empowerment process and one refugee community development worker noted that *"Those who are serious about their aims and objectives survive. We are trying to build leadership" (Z4T).* However, it was significant that RCOs had a different concept of leadership to the traditional one being one of serving the community as opposed to leading it. The connection between strong leadership together with an increased capacity to engage was translated into the confidence to engage critically (step 1G) and translates as RCOs exercising agency (step 1H). When asked whether they felt equal partners, a leading RCO said: *'now we are because we've got the tools to stand up and put our views across – we feel we can disagree' (XoII:A4).*

This role is identified within the tenants' movement as that of 'critical friend'. In other words it is a relationship between housing consumer and provider that is based on sufficient trust to create honest feedback, whereby out-of-hours, community specific intelligence is used to reframe questions, problems and solutions for a more effective service. The critical faculty of these participants was supported in the Partnership and this particular RCO was considered a good practice model of engagement by the housing partner that could be used with other RCOs in the partnership area. There were many examples of RCOs exercising agency. One leading RCO supported embryonic RCOs and brought them to the table to increase RCO representation, evidence of the dynamic continuum along which several writers suggest that community empowerment accumulates (Jackson *et al.,* 1989; Labonte 1994; Rissel 1994; Laverack 2001; Anderson 1996). The same RCO waged and won quite a struggle to get the issue of destitution onto the agenda, previously only addressing refugees with leave to remain. RCOs in another Partnership area made it clear that participation was only possible when their basic needs to function were addressed. A Newcomer Resource Centre emerged that went on to build links with the local Pathfinder and enable strategic influence at the same time as achieving operational aims. The benefits of working towards operational and strategic aims simultaneously were noted by Anderson (1996) in her staged study of community participation within a project timescale. The community research programme was a good example of structure engendering agency. The involvement and outcome for community researchers meant that they were able to focus on RCOs' aspirations. In one partnership community researchers investigated what RCOs were looking for out of the Forum;

in another they explored how partnership working could be improved and in a third they examined the levels of awareness of support services for mental health provision for refugees and promote the link between mental health and housing needs (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008).   A factor in the empowerment process at this step (1G, Figure 9.2) relies therefore on the RCO being able to exercise meaningful influence and being able to legitimately challenge the existing agenda.

Findings demonstrated that community leaders are vital in helping to change attitudes and have considerable symbolic status when leading interface between newcomer and host communities. Part of changing ideological attitude is the ability to counter myths. The leadership of the women's organisation did this by discussion and interaction around cultural and ethnic differences associated with topics such as marriage and gender roles. This interaction between women of different ethnic backgrounds was a clear example of people being empowered and involved by through their identity. The case study demonstrated how women were then able to reach common issues of importance such as aspects of women's health like the menopause, gender-based barriers to participation that are easier to discuss and identify in a women's-only group.

 The importance of place and space within a locality was found to be crucial in providing a profile for leadership and an opportunity to engage. Collaboration from neighbourhood level outwards did not lead to a lessening of proximity of leaders to their communities (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002) but strengthened links and infrastructure. Focus on well-being at neighbourhood level meant meaningful input

and advocacy at strategic level particularly in policy making arenas like ward committees and participation in setting PCT priorities. Structure alone was insufficient to drive forward process but the ethos of leadership evident within RCOs particularly those delivering services was very different to the ethos of statutory organisations. There appeared to be a different ethos driving the RCO sector fostering converse values and an alternative working culture typified by one RCO leader who commented that he was regularly and willingly contacted in the middle of the night to deal with clients at crisis point.

Leadership from within the partnerships was also important to the bottom-up approach to changing policy (Marsh, 1998) in driving forward agendas around empowerment and reflected political will at local implementation level. One outstanding example of this approach led to an RCO taking management control of emergency accommodation. This could be interpreted as moving to the top rung of citizen power in Arnstein's (1969) model of community participation (step 1F). The model in figure 9:1 proposes that degrees of control reflect the same stage in the empowerment process as being able to critically engage (1G) because they offer a choice to the RCO and imply a mutually respectful relationship between RCOs and other partners. This relationship is often referred to as 'critical friend' and relies on considerable mutual trust. The role of 'critical friend' entails honest feedback, recognition of the necessity for out-of-hours and experiential intelligence to reframe questions, problems and solutions for a more effective service.   This level of mutual collaboration is the antithesis of the oppression (Taylor, 2003) that comes

with the lack of recognition of the necessity for community participation in local problem resolution.

Throughout the Project RCO leaders showed a willingness to share resource and office space. A final context that affected the ability of RCOs for continued engagement and affects the intention of policy-making to go beyond the 'symbolic' as Marsh describes (1998, also see Chapter 2) is the availability of resource. Response to the change in funding policy from single group to collaborative/shared resource has been the emergence of multi-identity resource centres. This is also an attempt to overcome the marginalisation that Shaw (2008) observes that communities can be constructed as 'other'. This competition for resources is well-documented within the study and characterised by the comment of one worker that: "t*here's a 'your gain is our loss' attitude if the cake does not increase in size"* (2Xr3). Ironically the experience of one resource centre that is 'home' to several RCOs on the basis of shared resource was that at least one funder identified a problem in Trustees granting funding applications that come from the same address. Reconfiguring organisational structures of RCOs in response to changes in the funding regime does not necessarily achieve the desired result.

Process

Participation as Process

There is a wealth of literature describing the good practice elements of community development that underpins community empowerment. Shaw (2008) describes the central task as one that provides scrutiny of existing structures and practices to discover a "*more equal, supportive and sustainable alternative – 'the world as it could be'* (2008:34). Anderson (1996) view of good practice is one where day-to-day practicalities are tackled at the same time as strategic change. Varley and Curtin cite the value of continuity of organisationally developed community actors to encourage the role of 'critical friend' in collaborative engagement. Within Accommodate RCOs joined with different levels of organisational maturity, so that hact and others had to the process therefore entails the development of organisational maturity to contribute to confidence and the accumulation of social power.

Furthermore the process of organisational development has been regarded as an accumulative process that leads to political engagement and participation in wider structures and contexts. One of the building blocks in organisational development has been the growth of what we might call 'experiential capital'. The social capital that is generated by groups getting together on the basis of common experience such as the women's association to tackle gender-based barriers to engagement. The development as an organisation helped them to mobilise outside resource.

Resource mobilisation as process

Where communities have been encouraged to identify 'bottom-up' needs themselves (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008) mobilisation of resources becomes an integral part of the process. Material resource was also shared and resource to access further resource i.e. training in writing funding applications was addressed within the Project. This type of community development practice, pursued by hact and others, has led to the development of agency in RCOs themselves. Figure 9:3 illustrates the accumulative process that leads from the input of hact as outside agent to the development of RCOs as critically engaged inside the "social action process" (Wallerstein, 1992:198) . This process implies that the 'credibility gap' between RCOs' competence and actual RCOs' abilities (Chapter 6) can be overcome at local level by political will that starts with formal recognition.

Figure 9.1, moreover implies that material resource alone cannot sustain the process (3A) but requires the development of network capacity (1E) viewed as resource mobilisation. The support model overall needs to be targeted as one project worker's experience suggested at micro-level where foundations can be laid to ensure the *"sustainability of RCOs* (that) *is most important in helping them to get a voice"* (2y2:Obs3).

Influencing the policy process

As commentators stress, the process of empowering at practical day-to-day level needs to be supplemented by the process of policy change at strategic level to achieve community empowerment in the long-term (Anderson, 1996). Hact's

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position at meso-level (see Chapter 7) to influence fiscal and policy networks was important to the community empowerment process as a whole. In order to wield influence at fiscal and policy network level, hact secured the trust of both sectors at macro and micro level (Figure 9:8). Hact's independence and values were crucial to maintaining focus throughout the Project process and in taking the risks that other funders were less likely to engage with.

Figure 9.8: Network systems and transformative change
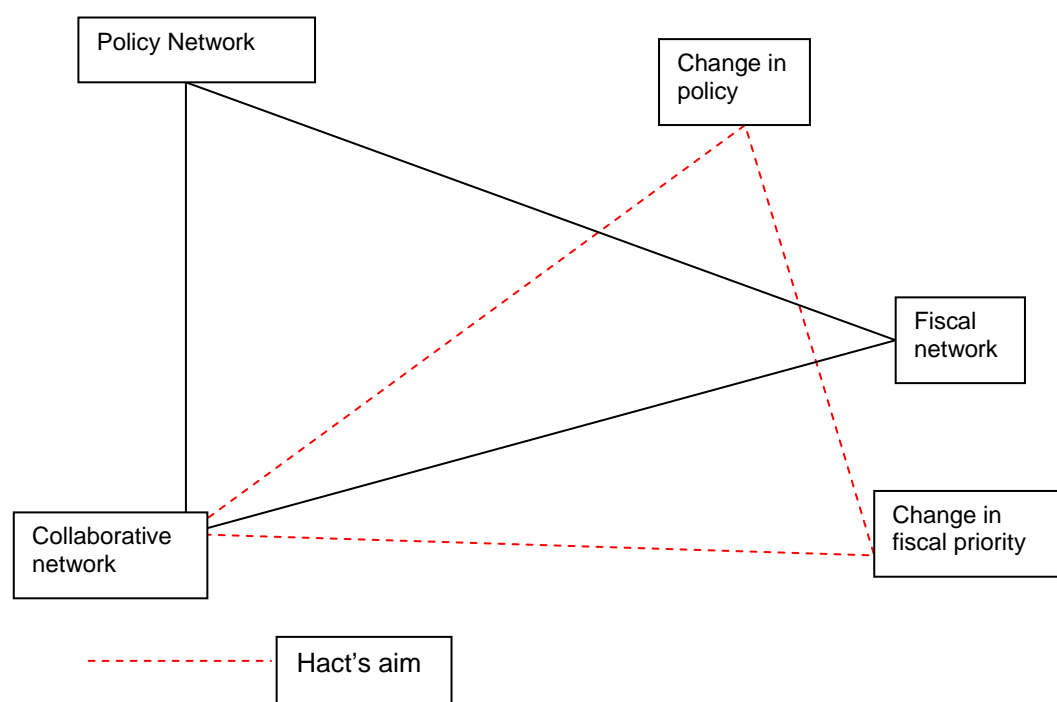
Source: Author's illustration based on Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2007

Hact's view was based on policy being the product of negotiation and compromise between different interest groups, including RCOs as outsiders, with different

values and priorities rather than the product of a competition between groups from inside the policy community. This approach had much in common with Marsh's bottom up model of policy (1998:10) which he describes as a *"fundamentally different view of the policy process"*. Hact was able to capitalise on its role as 'outside agent' as well as its networks of influence over both national and grassroots levels simultaneously. This approach ensured that emerging issues were able to reach the agenda and redirect outcomes. The debate regarding community empowerment as process or outcome is overtaken in this analysis as outcomes in the form of continuation strategy have evolved again into process as the learning has transferred into further hact projects involving RCOs. In this way empowerment as outcome has happened after the project has finished and builds on the changing ideology to transform institutional structures[51], embedding the networkedness that has been created within *Accommodate* (Chapter 7)*.* This process is well captured by the network management theorists' (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004) metaphor of a series of interactive games in which the outcomes of one game affect the starting conditions for the next and through which both structure and agency are progressively transformed.

Conclusion

A transformative view of community empowerment dictates the nature of participation and community development. It adopts an empowering and participatory approach to recognition, capacity building and resource mobilisation from the bottom-up (Freire, 2006, original 1970). Because the participation domain in *Accommodate* was controlled within a longer timeframe this approach ensured

RCOs were brought into the process before it officially 'began'. Participation and communication characterised by this approach to Project structure meant that community empowerment relied on this empowering style of participation influencing all other domains. The value system of hact as agent in the role of network manager secured a stable focus on policy change throughout the Project process.

It is vital to recognise the need for structure and strategy within process. Structure within *Accommodate* provided an arena where RCOs as outsider interest groups could engage and negotiate. The strategy of hact as implicit network manager supported RCOs to do so. By working from the bottom-up hact were able to steer operational initiative towards strategic policy change and this appeared to happen without the loss of links between community leaders and members at neighbourhood level. In fact the reverse was evident. The more organisations reached out strategically to other partners, the more they developed organisational structures to represent and address the interests of clients and members. Physical place and social space were essential resources for new RCOs and common problem led to common solution rather than division. The visibility that came with place and space helped to counter negative attitudes and myths about newcomer groups and enabled them to reach out to the wider community. Leadership, both of RCOs and Partnership Projects emerged as necessary components to develop control over problem resolution as well as the mutual trust required for the role of 'critical friend' to be a useful influence.

It is clear that the distinction often made between community empowerment as process and community empowerment as outcome is a construct for measurement rather than a meaningful definition. Community empowerment was at the heart of delivering all intended purposes so it was vital that RCOs were kept on board. Mullins and Jones (2009) concluded that goals could be defined three-fold; those that were satisficing, multi-goal achievement and decision-enrichment. However, it was noted that a distinction needed to be made between joint goals i.e. everyone signing up to the same achievements and multiple goals where there was something in it for everyone. Hact's steerage affecting outcomes endorses the importance of policy being the product of negotiation and compromise rather than inside inter-group competition.

Just as domains of community empowerment process are interdependent and interrelated so are the outcomes. The process appeared to be more an accumulative loop than a linear progression and one which continued after the Project has finished.   It was evident that transformation of ideology and changing attitudes started at neighbourhood level. With a change in ideology comes change in institutions and resource distribution. The *Accommodate* Project was a snapshot of an on-going process that aims for the 'world as it should be' (Shaw, 2008) and in the words of one RCO participant, a time when *"one day the tail must wag the dog"* (Y6T).

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Appendix A: Phase II Partnerships – Summary

Birmingham

This Partnership includes Birmingham City Council, local Housing Associations and the voluntary sector and is led by a Housing Association with experience of working in the BME sector. They hope to improve refugee access to housing advice services as well as empower RCOs.

Bolton

This partnership is relatively small, consisting of an ALMO, strong RCO and Housing Association Partnership, which aim to research the scope and needs of the growing local Somali community. It employs a researcher from within the Somali community who is also the Project Worker. They hope to transfer learning from the research to change policy, affect service delivery and to share it with other refugee communities. They also anticipate integrating the Somali community in the 'positive climate for integration in Bolton'.[1]

Bradford

This broad statutory and voluntary sector Partnership, led by a BME Housing Association, sets out to make strategic improvements at the point when settled status is granted but NASS housing and support is withdrawn.

Leeds

The Partnership is led by a grassroots community housing project involving Leeds ALMO, local schools, Social Services and individual refugees and disaffected pupils as trainees. Their main aim is in securing, renovating and allocating properties for rent. In order to secure its future this Partnership is hoping to establish a new trading company as a community enterprise.

Sheffield

Led by an RCO that is an established Somali Mental Health Project, this Partnership began by meeting both as a core and extended grouping. It seeks to involve local organisations in supporting refugees with mental health issues in sustainable tenancies. In addition, it hopes to raise awareness and mainstream services to engage new RCOs.

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[1] Mullins, D and Goodson, L. [2005:5] *Accommodate: Refugee Housing Partnerships First Evaluation Report*: CURS

Appendix B: Draft Research Design (August 2005)

At this stage the research would expect to include the following elements:

A comprehensive literature review related to inter-organisational partnerships, previously established BME communities' as well as newcomers' resettlement experiences.

A mapping exercise in conjunction with the five partnerships to discover mechanisms used to promote integration; what other local or external factors may influence these measures.

Staged observations and one-to-one interviews might be employed to establish the process and components in each partnership in order to identify common or contrasting elements. This stage of research would inform whether to:

Employ a comparative study of the partnerships' lead role i.e. one lead by an RCO like *** with one led by a BME Housing Association like ***
Pursue an in-depth case study within one partnership over a period of time to identify more general aspects of successful partnership working or
Explore a geographical case study of integration to map what can be learned from the settled BME communities in the area and to examine how the local partnership interfaces with these communities as well as with newcomers.

In order to consider the impact that partnerships are having on beneficiaries over a protracted period of time using a qualitative method that may be termed 'serial tracking'. In essence what this stage of research would be looking for is a picture of how effectively housing options and opportunities for integration are taking place for asylum seekers and refugees at each stage of progression in their status i.e.:

- newly arrived
- temporary leave to remain
- leave to remain post 28 days notice
- permanent leave to remain
- extended leave to remain over a protracted but finite period (could be a number of years)

Obviously there could be problems of continuity over such an extended time scale so I would seek to 'serialise' several people at different stages to build a picture of their experiences and track their development by using perhaps 6 people of different ages, gender and ethnicity at each stage. Initial focus groups might be the tool used to tease out the essential needs and priorities as a measure against which to track and to establish relationships in order to pursue protracted research aims. Interviews and diaries could be some of the means of data collection. I am aware that there is little research done on what I have chosen to call a 'serial tracking' basis in this field, but I am sure that ethical issues and issues of objectivity could be managed if a climate of honesty and trust was created between researcher and participant.

Appendix C: Stage 1: Evolving researcher persona

Role	Method	Date	Occasion	Respondent
CTM	Semi-structured interview	07.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	RCO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	07.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	VO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	07.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	RCO (commissioned) representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	08.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	VO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	13.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	HA representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	23.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	HA representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	16.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	HA (BME) representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	17.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	RCO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	17.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	VO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	20.12.04	Failed Phase I feedback	VO representative
CTM	Semi-structured interview	03.02.05	Failed Phase I feedback	Service provider (FE)
CTM	Semi-structured interview	04.02.05	Failed Phase I feedback	RCO (commissioned) representative
CTM	Participant Observation	24.11.05	National Workshop	Project-wide
RS	Guided conversation	29.11.05	Partnership visit	Project worker
CTM	PO	05.12.05	Partnership visit	P'ship-wide
RS	Guided conversation	06.12.05	Partnership visit	Project Worker
WF	PO	07.12.05	PWs' Away Day	Project-wide
CTM	PO	23.01.06	Partnership Meeting	P'ship-wide
RS	Semi-structured interview	14.02.06	RCO Office	RCO representative
RS	Semi-structured interview	21.02.06	Hact Offices	RCO representative
WP	PO	28.02.06	Refugee Forum meeting	P'ship-wide
RS	Semi-structured interview	06.03.06	RCO Office	RCO representative
RS	Guided conversation	06.03.06	Project-wide activity	External consultant
CTM	PO	09.03.06	Partnership visit	P'ship-wide
RS	Guided conversation	09.03.06	Partnership visit	Project Worker
RS	Guided conversation	20.03.06	Partnership base	Project worker
WP	PO	06.04.06	Stakeholders' workshop	Beyond Project
WP	PO	12.04.06	MRCO workshop	Beyond Project
RS	Semi-structured interview	24.04.06	Partnership visit	P'ship-wide
CTM	PO	26.04.06	P'ship event	P'ship-wide
CTM	PO	02.05.06	National Workshop	Project-wide
WP	PO	09.05.06	P'ship event	P'ship-wide
WF	PO	10.05.06	PW's Away Day	Project-wide
CTM	PO	12.05.06	P'ship Event	P'ship-wide
CTM	PO	15.05.06	P'ship Event	P'ship-wide
CTM	PO	16.05.06	P'ship Event	P'ship-wide

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CTM	Semi-structured Interview	24.05.06	Failed Phase II feedback	VO representative
CTM	Semi-structured Interview	24.05.06	Failed Phase II feedback	HA representative
CTM	Semi-structured Interview	01.06.06	Failed Phase II feedback	VO representative
CTM	PO	06.06.06	P'ship Event	P'ship-wide
RS	Guided conversation	06.06.06	Partnership visit	Project Worker
CTM	PO (Evaluation Team)	07.06.06	Partnership visit	P'ship-wide
WP	PO (Shadowing Project Worker)	08.06.06	Partnership visit	P'ship-wide
RS	Guided conversation	15.06.06	Regional Office	Beyond Project
WF	PO	30.06.06	National Conference	Beyond Project
CTM	PO	23.06.06	P'ship Base	P'ship-wide

KEY

CTM: CURS Team Member

RS: Research Student

WP: Workshop Participant

WF: Workshop facilitator

Appendix D: Stage 1: Systematic data analysis using a grounded approach

Sub-Theme A: a role in resettlement (Stage 1: one of five sub-themes)

interaction - communication routes:

'There is an enormous fault line between the host population's attitude to integration and the refugees themselves' (G7)
Dimension? The width of the gap?

directional flow[2]:
two-way (FPI:2)
lack of communication 'there is a lack of mutual understanding in the homeless section' (FPI:7, FP1:14)
lack of understanding by policy makers
'not understanding how community works' (FPI:7)
'terminology meaningless – 'community cohesion is meaningless on the ground' (G7)
inter-ethnic 'lack of understanding between cultures' (FP9)
between women (gender) (NW1)
between age-groups (youth) (NW1)
between professions ' I find myself quite easily lean towards more educated people' (G2)
barriers – language, culture (FPI:14)
'the need to explain stock transfer etc in different languages and to hold public meetings to include different community organisations' (Bi3)

place and occasion for interaction[3]:
pre-dispersal hostel (FPI:2)
school gates – is class an issue here? (G5)
ESOL classes – particularly women (CS16)
College courses (CS22)
Within the Tenants Movement (FPII:11)

Consequences - Perceptions and misconceptions[4]:
Recognition of refugees' own resources (FPI:12)
Willingness of communities to take part (FPI:15)
Unwillingness of refugees to take part e.g. Bosnians (FPI:24)
Mis-information leading to exploitation, lack of health checks (CS 21)
Tensions between newcomers especially youth (CS 31)
Urban mythology – newcomers are sexual predators (G7)
Economic jealousy (G7)
Isolation 'living in a virtual reality of one's own country' (G5)
About housing levels (FPI:5)

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[2] Time: Is it also an issue here – Over time? Cf stages of settlement, integration, assimilation etc – Intergenerational??
[3] Access: Where does integration take place? Very few opportunities for interaction? How significant is the withdrawal of the pre-status right to work? How important is the role of RCOs?
[4] Is there a link here with identity and mobility? 'to integrate is to allow a sense of separateness and identity' (G7)

Refugee mistrust in authority (FPII:3)
'They think CBL is a fix, they think it's all a fraud' (G7)
perception that refugees are getting preferential allocation (FP1:5)
assumptions about host communities intolerance 'people on council estates' (FP1:12)
the NASS dispersal process – lack of co-ordination with LA' (FPI:6,5,12,4,16,18)
the knock on effects of Local Connection – housing conditions, school places (Bi3)

Awareness raising actions/interactions:

Cultural norms:
'little things like picking up children without knowing the child or the parent' (FPII:3)
ESOL could be used to educate people about the British system' (Bi3)
Mistrust in authority 'refugees go through such a harsh time and do not understand our system' (FPII:3)
Different concepts of democracy e.g. African tribal customs (G7)

Scale:
Locality (assumptions on the ground)
Media coverage – scale – local/national TV?
Wider society – neighbourhood, region
Within the press – national and local (FP1:5, 12,14)

Inclusion approach (future conditions/structure):

RCOs strategic outlook:
holistic (FP1:9,14) (Bi1,3, Br2, L1, Bi3, Bo0, Sh6,7T, L3,4T, Br10T,11, FPII:2, Br10T)
'employment is a very important part of integration. When you don't work you feel like you don't have power, you are not important. A job gives someone pride…..you feel free' (Bi3)
'housing is fundamental to health and integration – "local connections have got to start somewhere"' (SH6T)
Local Connection – knock on effect - housing conditions, school places etc (Bi3)
Need for bridge building between communities and community support' (FPII:2)
Need for political will and national agenda (FPI:29)
The ability to work (FPI:29)

Place based:
' when I take my children to school, those who are parents with me will be friends' (Br6)
'mutually agreed segregation creeps into places where communities live close together' (Sh6T)
'working in clusters is easier for community cohesion' (Bi7T)
'huge benefit in bringing the community dimension into schools. A lot of hard-nut kids work with refugees and discover they are people with feelings' (L3T)
'200 properties concentrated in ***** 'merge into the background quite well and services are available there' (BR10T)
(I) moved cities because of personal need for community support' (Bi3)
Home Swap would help dispersal procedures to facilitate settlement' (G5)
'the tension between dispersal as a deterrent and dispersal as an integration element' (G5)
settlement grouping 'in pockets' (FPI:4)
'good mix all over the Borough' (Bo3T)

Time factor:
(Integration) 'should start on Day One' (ECRE Campaign) (G5)
time factor conscious (policy) – 28 days (FPI:14)
(integration) 'over generations' (SH4)

Positive Communication:
Challenge to misconceptions (FPI:16)
Should be local and imaginative' (FPI:21)
'there's got to be a good neighbour way rather than an RCO way' (G7)
'the need for culture change within organisations to incorporate refugee perspectives' (Br8, NW2)
not many people (refugees) apply for jobs in housing because nobody has involved them!' (Br6)
**** has one Vietnamese advice worker for all the NHOs' (Bi7T)

Sharing resources:
Re-use of West Indian Community Centre for African groups (Br11)
Study opportunities (FPI:13)
Office space (L1)
Allotments (FPI:20)
Activities e.g. homework clubs, group meals (Br2)
Community centres (NW1)

indicators – positive consequences:
stability – 90% of newcomers chose to stay in *** (Bo3T)
refugees using local slang and dialect (L1)
mutual respect and time spent together (L1)
Political engagement on neighbourhood panels (Bo0) – see representation
Home ownership and employment (Sh4)
Types of jobs e.g. in housing (Br6)
Young Somalis intending to stand in **** (Bi7T)
Self-perceptions – 'Somalis are Boltonians too!' (Bo3T)
Involvement in local forums e.g. Tenants Associations' (Br11)

Overall Tracking:
Where does the integration process take place? Context?
What role do RCOs play in the integration process?
Does inclusion exist on two planes? – the neighbourhood and from within the dominant ideology?
Is integration linked with Quality of Life, Identity, Mobility and Confidence?
Does social engineering work as part of an inclusion strategy?
There is apparent contradiction between refugees wanting to be involved in a mixed community and needing support from their own community – find out why?
What policy mechanism could operationally encompass integration? Local Area Agreements?
How far does housing policy affect integration?
What can be learned from the BME Housing Associations about integration?
What is the link between integration, confidence and effective partnership working?

Appendix E: Paradigms to assist in building theoretical models

Preliminary analysis suggests that there are three main properties that make up the concept of RCO confidence; their *credibility rating*, their skills and opportunities to *network* and their *collateral* (i.e. knowledge and expertise, access to training, levels of capacity, resources and funding, recognition by other agencies). Perceptions about credibility appear to have two dimensions, an external dimension where prospective partners 'risk assess' working with RCOs and an internal dimension where RCOs perceive their own ability to participate. These dimensions can be evidenced both positively and negatively. For example while one statutory partner may think an RCO '*had the nature, was constituted and we felt they comfortably represented that community group*' (Bo3T) another RCO with many years experience found '*the Local Authority shy of working with them*' (FPI:17). Concepts of recognition, perception, confidence and representation emerged from the outset. These ideas provoked the following questions:

Perceptions and recognition – despite performance, are RCOs seen as a 'risk'?

Recognition and confidence – how does this develop?

Confidence and effective partnership working/networking – when and where is this most empowering? (category 3)

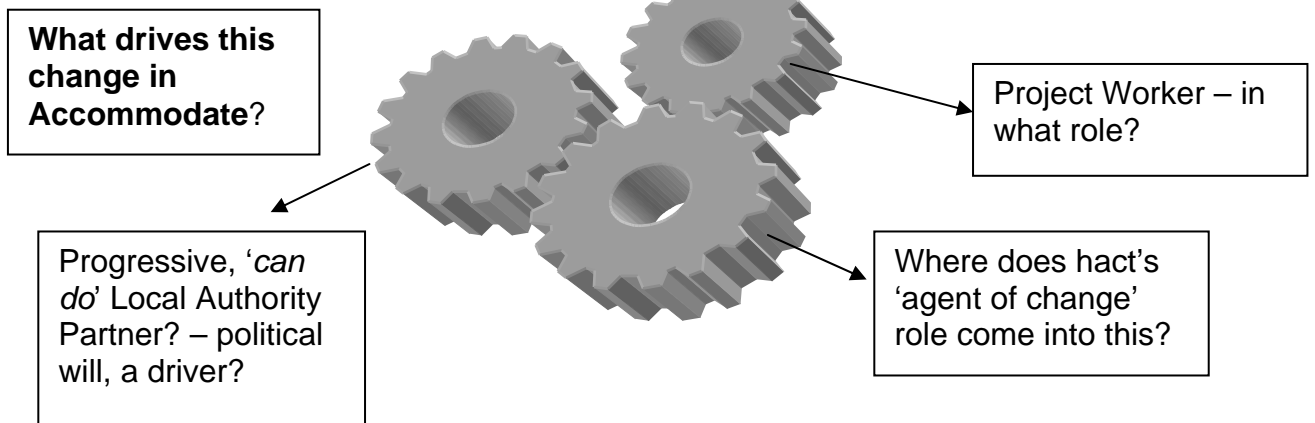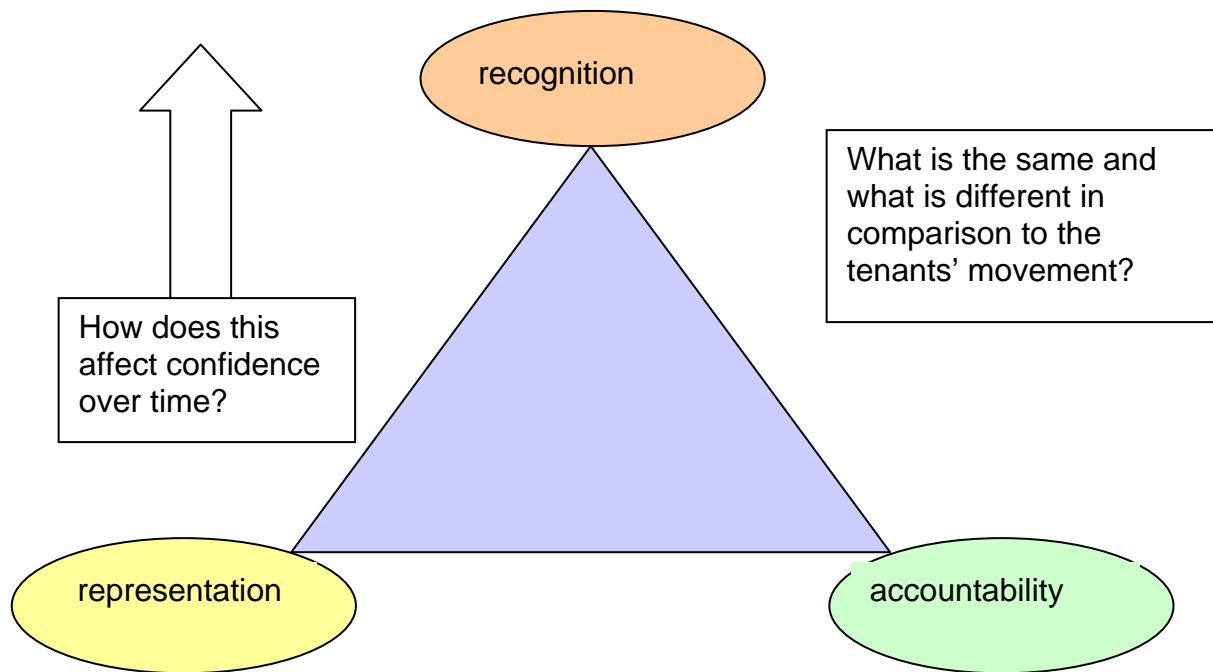Use of networks within networks to strengthen e.g. Forums, Federations (category 3)

Link with function, identity and visibility – are different RCO functions a significant factor in recognition? (category 10)

Comparisons with the tenants movement – networking, volunteering, commitment, accountability, representation, communication with members, control over budgets, decisions – need for 'capacity building' (definition?)

Recognition, accountability, representation and integration (category 7) – how do these relate?

Practical link with LA – should/could recognise and fund RCOs like Tenants' Associations? (category 6)

Link with political representation and integration – how does this work locally? (category 7)

recognition

What is the same and what is different in comparison to the tenants' movement?

How does this affect confidence over time?

representation

accountability

What drives this change in **Accommodate**?

Project Worker – in what role?

Progressive, '*can do*' Local Authority Partner? – political will, a driver?

Where does hact's 'agent of change' role come into this?

Appendix F: Stage 1: Links between themes

Theme 2: The outside role of hact – agent of change
Theme 3: Partnership rules of engagement

Emerging characteristic: Roles and players

Sub theme: RCOs' functions

Strategic role
lead role
Research and Design role (during bidding process)
Project Worker (RCO)
Impassioned volunteer (RCO)
Supporting role
Capacity building role
Denizen role (locally connected) (RCO)
Champion
Data collector (RCO)
Diplomat
Critical challenger (RCO)
Empire builder
Marginal observer
Scrutineer
Key statutory player
Day-to-day manager
Specialist client group representative
Arms-length networker (especially with RCOs)
Outsider and insider (outer and core group)
Initiator - Research and design (of proposal)
Officer – chair, secretary (interplay? Style? Rotating?)
Needs assessor

Recognition and duplication of RCOs' role:
How do RCOs perceive the roles played out?
Was there conflict? How did it affect their participation?
What role do they play and has it changed? Why?
What role do they think they should have played?
Would consequences have been different?

Appendix G: Stage 2: Interview and Observation Framework

Change and development
Partnership organisational culture differed; from 'relaxed/inclusive' to 'formal/use of jargon'
Role and personnel changed e.g. New partners 'need time to understand Project processes'
Levels of assertiveness developed: being able to 'say what is on their minds'
Getting the 'right people around the table' was a development
Linking to local authority strategies e.g. BME, New Communities
Noted high levels of commitment and passion of voluntary agencies inc. RCOs
Raised awareness of local Partnerships activities with other agencies in district

Contexts and challenges
Overcoming public misconceptions e.g. false aspirations about available accommodation
Assumption of exclusivity - that Project would only working with one refugee group
The increasing impact of destitution for refused asylum seekers
Moratorium on Home Office referrals
Negative media coverage
Resources: Loss of operating base, gaining new premises
Local authority support - unsure of support for local initiative
Demise of local industry e.g. steel and subsequent long-term unemployment
Areas of low demand subject to demolition creating supply shortages/increase in market value
Capitalising on vacant housing; leased for medium term self-help regeneration/allocation

Culture and Integration
Disengagement from UK asylum system (experience of corrupt regime in country of origin)
Project workers have different levels of influence with other partners
Lack of general understanding about housing supply, shortage and allocation
Wider RCO contact made between partnership and refugee forums
Increasing use of RCO based advice and signposting by local BME communities
Facilities made available to new community groups e.g. Lithuanian
Younger generation mixing together at resource centre
Links made with local neighbourhood and institutions
Refugee awareness training for housing staff
Project working as a community cohesion model
Socially engineered integration not necessarily sustainable

Accountability and representation
Use of Refugee Forums varied: enabled exchange of information, acted as consultation mechanism
for newly emerging communities, air views, build confidence, collective action
Support for RCO to make funding application and project bids – support with structure - increased
accountability and community-wide consultation
Belief in community leaders to represent community's best interests
Creation of GP model with one refugee community to roll out to other RSLs
Networking encouraged beyond Project partner organisations

Power and recognition
Increase in RCO presence at Partnership meetings
Cultural differences not recognised e.g. record keeping, not part of a 'written tradition'
Increased capacity of RCOs to participate
RCOs redirecting the agenda towards issues surrounding destitution
RCOs affecting national and local strategy e.g. CBL
RCOs being critical of procedure and process
Raising importance of linking services e.g. housing/mental health.
Joint working developing with other agencies e.g. PCT

Appendix H: Stage 1: Topic Guide[5] as a member of CURS Evaluation Team

Introduction

My name is Pat Jones and I work with the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham. We have been commissioned by Hact to evaluate *Accommodate* – their three year Partnership Project aimed at improving refugees' access to local housing and support services.

As you are probably aware the Project entails two Phases:
- Phase 1 – partnership preparation (defining aims, objectives, desired outcomes and action plans)
- Phase 2 – implementation stage (partnership translate their action plans into practical projects)

We understand that your organisation, together with other local partners, made an application for Phase 1 funding but were unsuccessful. As part of our Phase 1 evaluation we would like to talk to all unsuccessful projects to find out more about:
- The process of putting an application together;
- The impact this has had, if any, on developing further partnership working;
- If any actions have been taken forward outside of *Accommodate,* and;
- Your general views on partnership working and refugee integration.

The interview should take about 30-40 minutes. If there is anything you would like to tell us in confidence please raise this and we will ensure that this is respected.
Are you happy to go ahead with the interview now? My colleague Shirley has indicated that it is a good time to call?

Any questions?

Background (5-10 mins)

1. Can you describe the nature of the partnership?
   Probe: number and type of partners, overall aims – specific or generic, geographical area, target refugee communities.
2. When was the partnership established?
3. How was the partnership established?
   Probe: process used to bring partners together – existing links or new contacts/networks?

Key questions about the partnership (20 mins)

4. How was the bid developed? To what extend were different partners consulted on the bid?
   Probe: what role did the lead organisation take? What role did other partners take? Did roles differ? What level of commitment was there at a senior level to make the process participatory?
5. Did the partnership encounter any difficulties in putting together the bid together for *Accommodate*?

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[5] Devised with Dr Goodson, CURS Evaluation Team

Probe: capacity issues, co-operation from partners, timescales? Other?

6. What were/are the perceived strengths/weaknesses of partnership?
7. Have any lessons been learnt from being involved in the bid process?
    Probe: lessons/benefits for lead organisation, perceived lessons for other partners? Skills developed through being involved?
8. Any negative aspects of being involved?
    Probe: information provided? Way in which decision was reached?
9. Is any ongoing work likely to result from being involved in the bid process for Accommodate?
    Probe: current contact with partners? Any future plans to take the partnership forward? Are they planning on bidding for Phase II? Any other ways/potential in which the organisations may work together? (Ask for specific examples where possible)

General views on refugee housing/service provision (10 mins)

10. What do you consider to be the most important factors that contribute to successful partnership working?
11. What are the main barriers to providing housing and related services to refugee communities?
12. What would you say are the key issues relating to the integration of refugees?
13. Would you like to say anything else about the partnership? About Hact/ Accommodate?

[1] Since its Golden Jubilee and updated website 2010 'hact' has revised its acronym to 'HACT'

[2] This Collaborative Award in Science and Engineering studentship enabled study for a PhD and was jointly funded by ESRC and hact with supervisory and academic support from the University of Birmingham

[3] Investment Partnering was a new approach to the procurement of social housing adopted by the Government in 2004. It reduced the number of social housing providers directly funded by Government from over 400 to just over 70 nationally as part of an 'efficiency agenda' intended to focus resources on the 'best developers' (Zitron, 2004).

[4] An advertising scheme, facilitated under the Homelessness Act 2002, whereby those in priority need for social housing can bid for any home for which they are matched, replacing the traditional way of allocating done by local authority housing officers

[5] A term that is usually associated with qualitative research that is case-based rather than the 'etic' science of quantitative research based on probability and the study of large numbers

[6] I have adopted this definition as other researchers have done, rather than the alternative of 'asylum seeker', which has become an abusive and negative label within sections of the media (Temple *et al.*, 2005)

[7] Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention drafted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), together with the 1967 Protocol, form the basis of international law protecting refugees' rights not to be returned to a country in which they have reason to fear persecution as well as the rights to legal representation, education, work, public assistance, freedom of movement and to religion.

[8] The Gateway Project is operated by the UK Border Agency in partnership with the UNHCR. It offers a legal route for up to 750 refugees. Applications are assessed on individual merit.

[9] A mandate refugee is a person in a third country, who has been recognised as a refugee by, and given the protection of, the UNHCR. Such a person may also be recognised as a refugee and given asylum by a host country without this affecting their mandate refugee status.

[10] reproduced with kind permission of Diana Matar documentary photographer.

[11] 'vulnerability' is open to interpretation by housing providers within their allocations policy. Some make a distinction between the short-term vulnerable such as victims of domestic violence and the long-term vulnerable such as those tenants with learning difficulties, usually accommodated in supported housing

[12] Interpretations and special reasons may differ but a local authority accepts a duty to house those in need on the basis of local connection if a person/household has lived from choice in the area for 6 months out of the last 12 months; has close family who has lived in the area for 5 years or more or has stable employment in the area

[13] Both Amnesty International and Refugee Action have done recent research emphasising increased social exclusion. Refugee Action's Chief Executive, Sandy Buchan reports:

"There exists in Britain a new and growing excluded class of people who have no access to work or mainstream services….As a policy for dealing with refused asylum seekers, destitution is simply not working" (Refugee Action 07.11.06).

[14] Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies. The Supporting People programme offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence. http://spkweb.org.uk/ (accessed 26.10.09).

[15] National Lottery Funding since 2006 to infrastructure services supporting voluntary and community groups

[16] Approximately 12 per region and only those RCOs that are already constituted

[17] Including insider information about new migrants

[18] Cornerstone project in the Government's anti-poverty strategy bringing together service providers from health, social services and education to deliver family-supported services for families with children under five years old

[19] New Deal for Communities was a Government-led regeneration programme for some of the UK's most deprived neighbourhoods. Since 1998 local partnerships were agreed for particular local authority areas.

[20] Sayer (1992: 22-39) uses specific terms i.e. 'purpose' to describe the aim of the study and 'object' to describe the research topic in order to understand the relations between these and 'method'.

[21] Fieldwork began in Nov 2005 and was finally completed with an exit strategy in December 2009

[22] The *Accommodate* Project ran from 2004 – 2007 but the case studentship did not begin until 2005. I was able to continue with fieldwork because the partnerships either overran or transformed into other projects.

[23] I have retained Sayer's use of the word 'object' for what is also often confusingly termed the 'subject' of the research. My later preference is to use the word 'participant' to indicate the research relationship with partner members

[24] A term that is usually associated with qualitative research that is case-based rather than the 'etic' science of quantitative research based on probability and the study of large numbers

[25] Policy changed drastically during *Accommodate* when the Government directed regional consortia towards the needs of EU migrants – refugee people seeking asylum did not go away nor will do, in fact forced migration is likely to increase with global warming (see Chapter 2).

[26] working as a Resource Centre volunteer

[27] Or would-be partners… Some of these respondents are discussing partners in wider terms that the *Accommodate* Project

[28] Supporting People is a Government Project that was launched April, 2003 to support vulnerable people into independent living. It is run by local government and provided by the voluntary sector.

[29] The leaves and tip stems of a shrub grown in highland areas of Ethiopia and Yemen. Also spelt 'qat' and 'quat'

[30] For example, Manchester Refugee and Support Network is led and managed by RCOs

[31] One external funding co-coordinator cited evidence base research as the key element in securing successful bids (S3:40)

[32] One RCO leader told me that he was regularly and willingly contacted in the middle of the night to deal with clients at crisis point.

[33] this also reflects the invisible nature of informal networks because, despite its size, this RCO operates within a national network

[34] This might be because of recent disturbance or in areas of high turnover lacking stability or where demand for resources was higher than supply

[35] This RCO representative had worked temporarily for the Council's housing dept otherwise, as he said; he would not have even been able to make the observation! "How do you know what you don't know…?", he asked.

[36] A reference to Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer that relies on formal consultation and a voting procedure

[37] Mapping where and how integration takes place would make interesting further research as there seem to be limited opportunity for sustained interaction particularly for women who arrive under family reunion and those not in regular education or employment.

[38] Data references: (FP1:9,14, Xi1,3, Xr2, Z1, Xi3, Xo0, Y6,7T, Z3,4T, Xr10T,11, FPII:2, Xr10T)

[39] Reference to UKhomeswap.co.uk busiest council and Housing Association exchange service in the UK

[40] The European Council on Refugees and Exiles – an umbrella organisation composed of 69 refugee assisting member agencies that promotes a humane, dignified European asylum policy

[41] To some degree this was a response to the legislation about Single Group Funding but as the Government have since withdrawn on the matter, I have chosen not to include this issue in depth

[42] I would like to thank participants for their inspiration in selecting the case study to this end

[43] All excerpts from Annual Reviews reproduced with kind permission of Heather Petch, Director of hact since Jan 2000

[44] The success of this approach is reported in the 1981 Annual Review where "*£1,000,000 per year of 'Shelter' money into the voluntary housing movement paved the way for the 1974 Housing Act with its £600,000,000 per year of Government* money!"

[45] £5000 for each Phase 1 and £50,000 for each Phase 2 Partnerships

[46] I was invited to this Partnership's Forum meeting and found the chairing was done competently and with great sensitivity to encourage RCOs' participation

[47] In September 1997 a mechanism was established whereby those seeking asylum in any Dublin Convention country would be returned to that country if they tried to seek asylum elsewhere. Fingerprinting is commonly used to evidence this.

[48] Faith-led group set up to support and lobby on behalf of failed asylum seekers

[49] ASSIST estimated 1000 failed asylum seekers on the city's streets at this time (December, 2006)

[50] On May 1st, 2004 10 countries joined the EU. Of these, Malta and Cyprus had freedom of movement and rights to work. The 15 existing member states had the right to regulate access to their labour markets by the remaining 'Accession 8' or 'A8' (UK Border Agency, 2009)

[51] E.g. 'Opening Doors', 'Reach In' and 'Communities R Us' etc. See http://hact.org.uk/our-projects