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**TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS AND
COUNCIL COLLABORATION: RHETORIC AND REALITY**

**Being a thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of PhD**

School of Management

By

Robert Dalziel BSc MSc

March 2009

“Power, however it has evolved,
whatever its origins, will not be
given up without a struggle”

Shulamith Firestone

Declaration

The work in this thesis is the original work of the author except where specific reference is made to other authors or sources. It has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other degree.

Robert Dalziel

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Jill Mordaunt, Julie Charlesworth, and Chris Cornforth, for all their tremendous support that helped me to complete this thesis. I would not have been able to tell my story without their invaluable advice and unstinting perseverance during the long process of drafting and re-drafting chapters. I also want to thank my parents William and Margaret Dalziel for their support especially during the time that I was living at home and working on the thesis. A big thank you too to Nurdilek Hacialioglu, the Open University PhD student who became my friend, my fiancé, and, on 19 May 2007, my beloved wife, for the time she spent reading and commenting on draft chapters.

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Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to fill a gap in knowledge about collaboration and the possibilities that exist for the achievement of collaborative advantage by examining in detail the way that institutional pressure and power impacts on tenants and residents association (TARA) and council collaboration. Three levels of analysis are used to examine relations between institutional forces and power at the macro-level (including legislation, traditions and customs) and their affect on the political environment within which organizations are located and collaborate at the meso-level and individuals in organizations act at the micro-level. The thesis uses ideas and concepts that are part of institutional theory and theory on power to show what affect the national political environment has had on mandated TARA and council collaboration.

The focus is on how effectively existing theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage deals with institutions, the ways in which they can impact on relations between collaborating organizations and the role of mandated collaboration when there are large inequalities of power between collaborating organizations with very different cultures and values. The research design comprised a longitudinal single case study to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration. I adopted an ethnographic and grounded research approach to obtain people's views and perspectives on collaboration for later coding and categorization that led to the emergence of various ideas, concepts and relations. My new concept that helps to explain how organizations can be involved in a process where they are disadvantaged in collaboration is introduced and developed.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Active Communities Unit (Home Office)
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CRESR	Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research – Sheffield Hallam University
DETR	Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EGM	Extraordinary General Meeting
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HIP	Housing Investment Programme
HISP	Housing Investment and Service Plan
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LSVST	Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer
MP	Member of Parliament
NATR	National Association of Tenants and Residents
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NTO	National Tenants Organisations
NTRF	National Tenants and Residents Federation

ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PSBR	Public Spending and Borrowing Requirement
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
START	Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together
TARA	Tenants and Residents Association
TAROE	Tenants and Residents Organisations England
TMO	Tenant Management Organisation
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service
WEMB	Wisewood Estate Management Board

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CHAPTER ONE

A Supposed New Era of Enlightenment

Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) and council collaboration to decide priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods was encouraged by policies introduced by the New Labour government, elected in 1997. It is an explicit assumption in much of the New Labour rhetoric on collaboration and the literature on collaboration it is a 'good thing'. This thesis challenges this assumption. In my role as a borough councillor in Corby, from May 1995 to May 2003, I saw how TARAs (that represent the interests of tenants living in council owned housing and residents who have purchased their homes from the council) and activists were sometimes unable to represent effectively the views and concerns of tenants or residents living in a community or neighbourhood.¹ TARAs and activists were frequently constrained by collaboration that focused on getting them to organise and operate in ways prescribed and approved by central government or the council.

The aim of the thesis is to fill a gap in knowledge about collaboration and the possibilities that exist for the achievement of collaborative advantage by examining in detail the way that institutional pressure and power impacts on collaborating organizations. More specifically, an issue exists concerning the subtle, often hidden, as well as obvious, ways that institutional activities and actions will help to shape collaboration and its outputs and outcomes. It is argued that much theory on collaboration and more specifically Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory on collaborative advantage fails to take adequate account of how the wider

¹ Here tenants are people who live in rented council-owned housing and residents are people who live in houses purchased from the council, are leaseholders, or own privately built houses.

institutional context impacts on collaboration.

First, there are the existing institutional rules and regulations that encourage or make obligatory certain types of collaboration or collaborative behaviour. Second, what often remains neglected or overlooked in much of the literature on collaboration is how institutionalized customs and procedures can develop that subtly influence or determine whose values are viewed as important in collaboration and how collaborative agendas are set. The institutional environment will also help to determine what organizations emerge, and facilitate or constrain their development and the way that they challenge or legitimise institutional activities and actions.

The New Labour government was keen to introduce policies and initiatives that would help to increase citizen involvement in different partnerships to tackle crime, employment, health, education, and regeneration problems (Foley and Martin, 2000). The *Labour Party Manifesto*, published in 1997, had proclaimed:

New Labour believes in a society where we do not simply pursue our own individual aims but where we hold many aims in common and work together to achieve them.

An important strand of New Labour policy on partnership working and collaboration was the promotion of Active Citizenship (Raco and Flint, 2001). The New Labour government felt that for society to work well it was necessary to involve a greater number of active, critical, and engaged citizens in discussions and decisions that would affect them or the place where they lived (Woodward, 2004). One would expect an organization such as a tenants and residents association (TARA), which represents the interests of people at the local level, to

be involved in different partnerships and collaborations to improve neighbourhoods and local services (see appendix 1 for a more detailed exposition of the New Labour philosophy). Nevertheless, how are TARAs and activists actually involved in these partnerships and collaborations and what are they able to achieve through partnership working and collaboration?

This thesis examines and analyses TARA and council collaboration after the introduction of the Best Value regime in 1999 and the Tenant Participation Compact in 2000, which are described in later parts of this chapter. The main research question is set out below.

Main research question

How have New Labour housing, Best Value, and Tenant Participation Compact policies changed the political environment and TARA and council collaboration?

TARAs and tenants were more involved in different council-convened housing and neighbourhood consultations and decision-making to agree priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods and local services. However, the thesis will question how collaboration developed in a situation where it is mandatory, there can be large inequalities of power between the organizations involved, and the organizations have very different cultures and values. In the case of TARA and council collaboration, the council is a formal and bureaucratic organization with different lines of accountability for a wide range of functions and services whereas the TARA tends to be a relatively small and more informal single-issue organization. Moreover, little is known about the way these organizations have been working

together to deal with housing and neighbourhood problems since the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact.

The remainder of this chapter examines the effects of different housing and tenant participation policies on relations between central government, councils, and tenants. This includes Conservative housing and tenant participation policies in the 1980s and early 1990s, and New Labour housing and tenant participation policies in the late 1990s. The point is to gauge how these policies have helped to create an institutional and political context that enables or constrains different types of collaborative activity and action. Later sections of the chapter provide a detailed analysis of the New Labour government's approach to collaboration. Some of the problems associated with collaboration examined include the rhetoric and reality of collaborative practice, the complexity of collaborative relations, conflict over collaborative purpose and resources, and the way that different rules of engagement will impact on different stakeholders. At the end of the chapter an outline of the thesis is set out.

1.1 Central government and tenants

How have New Labour housing and tenant participation policies helped to improve (or not) high levels of historical tenant and landlord mistrust? To answer this question it is helpful to know something about the history of central government housing policies and the impact of wider external forces on relations between central government, councils, and tenants in order to understand the development of contemporary TARA and council collaboration. Records of tenant protest exist, which detail the actions of disreputable private landlords, the impact of poor housing conditions on people's quality of life, and the problems caused by high

rents (relative to household incomes) as far back as the latter part of the nineteenth century (see Cole and Furbey, 1994). It is likely that a history of frequently conflictual and mutually mistrusting relations between private landlords and their tenants will sometimes continue to impact adversely on contemporary central government, council and tenant relations.

In the early part of the twentieth century, central government took action to control rents and deal with housing shortages to prevent an escalation of tenant unrest and protest. In 1915, a Liberal and Conservative coalition government introduced the Rent and Mortgage Restrictions Act, which placed limits on the rents that private landlords could charge their tenants. Then, in 1919, the same coalition government introduced the Addison Act, which provided the first subsidies for council-house building. The first National Tenants Federation began operating in the early 1920s, which represented the views of a growing number of neighbourhood-based tenants' groups. A cross-party political consensus was reached after 1945 that meant the ground could be prepared for the massive expansion of council-house building to replace war-damaged and existing poor-quality homes (Malpass and Murie, 1987). The number of council houses built increased each year up until the late 1950's but ultimately the central government vision for council housing set out in 1945 was not sustainable. In particular, after Crossman's experiments in the 1960's, with new types of housing design and building materials, the state was left with a surplus of housing that was of variable quality and expensive to maintain (see Crossman 1976). By the end of the 1970s the building of council housing had almost stopped.

Tenants groups and associations

The first autonomous tenants' groups that emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century represented people living mainly in private rented accommodation. Many groups formed to protest against poor housing conditions and the high rents relative to household incomes that landlords often charged. They often worked closely with the wider labour and trades union movements to campaign on housing issues and call for the municipal provision of housing for rent. After 1918, when there was an increase in council-house building, new tenants associations formed to represent people living in council-owned housing. In the 1920s, the first citywide tenants' federations were formed and a National Tenants Federation was set up to lobby councils for more tenant involvement in housing matters that affected them or the area in which they lived. After the end of the Second World War, in 1945, new council estates were built to replace slum housing and deal with housing shortages. Many tenants associations emerged to represent the tenants living on these new estates.

In 1948 the National Association of Tenants and Residents (NATR) was established. This association represented tenants living in council-owned housing and residents living in private rented accommodation or a freehold property. Meanwhile, the tenants' associations set up to represent the tenants living on new council estates formed for a variety of reasons. Associations often provided a focus for the provision of recreational and social welfare activities but tenants still banded together to put pressure on the council over housing problems (Cairncross *et al.*, 1992). In the late 1970s, the body called National Tenants Organisations (NTO) formed and in the late 1980s, the National Tenants and Residents Federation (NTRF) was set up. In the 1980s, many tenants associations were

renamed tenants and residents associations in recognition of the fact that many of their members owned their own homes or were leaseholders living in council owned flats. In 1998, NTO and NTRF merged to form Tenants and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE). This new organization developed links with the trade-union-backed organization Defend Council Housing that protested against the New Labour government's decision to retain Conservative legislation that allowed councils to sell off or transfer council owned housing to registered social landlords.

The contemporary TARA can vary in size, and the geographical area that it covers can range from a single tower block or few streets up to a large estate that consists of many hundreds of houses and flats. A TARA is often a relatively informal organization that is heavily involved in the provision of different social and welfare activities, such as arranging dances and trips to the seaside, drop in sessions to help people with benefits problems, and fetes and jumble sales to raise funds. However, a TARA is also, at different times, likely to be involved in campaigning on housing issues, sometimes in very forceful or dramatic ways. TARA membership usually comprises all of the council tenants living in an area and house owners who want to be members. However, since the introduction of the Housing Act (1985) council tenants have a statutory right to be consulted on housing matters that affect them or the area in which they live (ODPM 2005).

A tenants' movement had emerged and developed in an environment where conflictual relations often existed between central government and tenants struggling to obtain improved housing conditions and fair rises in rents. The Hidden History of the British Tenants Movement website shows how this more organized tenants' movement helped to consolidate feelings of antipathy towards

unscrupulous private landlords and enabled a coordinated campaign for access to well-built council housing to be undertaken.² However, the question that arises concerns the extent to which tenants' difficult relations with private landlords and struggles to obtain improved housing conditions caused some of them to be suspicious of central government and its plans for council owned housing.

The next sub-section considers how Conservative housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies and a history of often difficult tenant and landlord relations impacted on TARA and council relations.

Conservative housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies in the 1980s and 1990s

In 1979, voters elected a Conservative Government led by Margaret Thatcher. This sub-section examines the housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies introduced by Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s. The different policies covered are listed in Table 1.

² Leeds Tenants Federation (2006) 'The Hidden History of Tenants', *Leeds Tenants Federation web pages* [online], <http://www.tenantshistory.org.uk/> (accessed 17 December 2008).

Table 1: Conservative housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies

Housing and neighbourhood regeneration		
1980	Housing Act	The introduction of right to buy means tenants can purchase their council houses
1985	Estate Action Programme	Support to tackle problems in deprived and disadvantaged neighbourhoods
		The introduction of the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)
1988	Local Government Act	The introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT)
1992	Local Government Act	Defined activities under CCT are extended to cover professional services (that include housing management and maintenance)
		Councils are allowed to sell off or transfer housing stock to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
1994	Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)	SRB brought together a number of regeneration programmes from across different central government departments to work in partnership

The Conservatives, under Margaret Thatcher, introduced the Housing Act (1980), which gave tenants living in council-owned housing the right to buy their homes at heavily discounted prices.³ The government's figures for social housing sales show that since the introduction of this legislation, nearly three million council-owned houses have transferred out of council ownership up to 2006 leaving just under three million remaining (Crown Copyright 2008d). In many areas, tenants who could afford to buy purchased the most desirable council houses in an area leaving councils with much housing stock that was in a bad state of repair or needed modernizing. Meanwhile, fewer council houses available for rent meant longer waiting lists. Many TARAs were campaigning to raise awareness of these waiting-list problems among politicians and others interested in housing matters. They were also lobbying central government to get it to back the building of new council-owned housing for rent by those people unable to buy a property of their

³ Tenants who had lived in their homes for more than three years were eligible for a 33% discount on the market value of the property and tenants renting flats were eligible to receive a 44% discount. Tenants who had lived in their homes for more than 20 years received a 50% discount rising by 1% each year to a maximum of 70%.

own (Leeds Tenants Federation 2006). In some instances future TARA and council collaboration would need to find effective ways to deal with tenant concerns about the future of council owned housing caused by central government housing policies that meant they felt isolated and vulnerable.

In 1985, the Conservatives introduced the Estate Action programme. This programme was the main vehicle of central government support made available to tackle infrastructure problems in deprived or disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The programme was wide ranging and designed to help councils tackle physical problems in an area to improve social, economic, and environmental well-being. Central government also wanted councils to find innovative ways to improve housing management, promote the diversification of housing tenure, and obtain private sector investment to repair and modernize run-down housing. Meanwhile, the Housing (Right to Manage) Regulations 1994 allowed a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) to take over the running of certain housing services in an area.⁴ Tenants elect their own tenant-led management committee and take on responsibility for managing their homes and housing services (The National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations 2008).

A Conservative government introduced the Local Government Act (1988) that included Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), forcing councils to put various public supply or works contracts (including refuse collection, the cleaning of buildings, and grounds maintenance) out to open tender. Different external organizations that had an interest in and were qualified to provide such services

⁴ A TMO receives an annual allowance from the council and takes over the running of housing services (such as collecting rents and service charges and organizing repairs and maintenance) from the council. Tenants do not have to do these tasks themselves – they can employ staff; use seconded council housing staff; or employ a managing agent. Council and the TMO responsibilities are negotiated and set out in a management agreement.

could submit a bid to provide them in response to advertised contracts. The Secretary of State was able to intervene to serve written notice on councils that did not comply with the Act and ultimately remove their power to undertake particular functions or services. A Conservative government also introduced the Local Government Act (1992), which extended the range of council functions and services that had to go out to open tender to include the provision of various professional services (including the management and maintenance of council-owned housing). At the same time, councils could sell off or transfer council-owned housing to a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord (RSL) with the agreement of a majority of tenants.⁵

Meanwhile, it was also possible to raise the finance needed to support housing and neighbourhood regeneration activities through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement. Conservatives had introduced PFI because it was a way to raise private sector investment, through partnerships between public and private organizations, to regenerate neighbourhoods and provide public services. A council, for example, could sign a contract with a private organization and, during the specified contract period, that organization would provide a service currently provided by the council. In turn, it might be possible for a council to secure private sector investment to improve or modernise run-down council housing in return for performance-related payments for meeting agreed standards of service provision. The significant point here in terms of tenant involvement in housing matters is the varying extent to which tenants would be able to influence the policies and actions

⁵ Registered Social Landlord (RSL) is a term introduced in the Housing Act (1996) to describe an independent, not-for-profit, local housing company, trust, cooperative, or association that is registered with the Housing Corporation (a central government backed regulatory agency). The RSL has more freedom than the council does to use rental and asset based income to improve housing stock or finance debt whilst it can retain any surpluses and use them to fund different social housing projects. In the case of Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVST), all council-owned housing in an area is transferred to an RSL in a single transaction. Transfers are funded by the private sector but government subsidies may be made available to help a council to reduce or eliminate pre-existing housing revenue account debt.

of a private sector organization investing in the maintenance or modernisation of council-owned housing.

The last significant programme of regeneration activity introduced by a Conservative government, before the election of New Labour in 1997, was the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) work that began in 1994. The SRB initiative combined a number of central government programmes for regeneration to try to simplify assistance for regeneration activities carried out by local regeneration partnerships. SRB partnerships brought councils, tenants, and other relevant stakeholders together to find ways to improve housing and local services in deprived or disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The Conservatives put more emphasis on the value of councils working with tenants and their representative associations to obtain local ownership of decisions changing housing or neighbourhood management practice.

In the 1990s, there was much TARA protest against the selling off or transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs despite the different partnership activities, involving tenants, undertaken to regenerate run-down neighbourhoods. The driving force for much of the tenant protest was fears about security of tenure in the future and the affordability of rent rises if the council sold off or transferred their homes to an RSL (Leeds Tenants Federation 2006). In terms of TARA and council collaboration, the context within which it was located and operated became more complex with the involvement of a wide range of organizations interested in the provision of different housing and other local services at the neighbourhood level. It was necessary for tenants to deal not only with the council but with private businesses and RSLs as well. In many instances, TARAs and activists could no longer simply turn to elected representatives and ask them to account for their

housing and neighbourhood policies because other organizations were involved in providing housing and neighbourhood services. In chapters five through seven examples will be provided of the tension that existed between activists and the council in Sheffield over who should have control over housing matters and services and how they should work with TARAs and tenants in collaboration to achieve different housing and neighbourhood regeneration objectives.

The next sub-section shows how New Labour developed their own distinctive approaches to housing and neighbourhood regeneration, and built on the housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies of previous Conservative governments.

New Labour housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies in the 1990s and 2000s

A continuing theme apparent across different governments seems to be the belief that council-owned housing provides accommodation for individuals and families who are unable to buy a home of their own rather than something that is inherently desirable. Renting a council house is, at best, a step up to owning property and, at worst, a stigmatised 'safety net' (Baldock, 1982). Whose values are dominant in deciding the purpose and future of council-owned housing? In addition, to what extent do tenants have a real choice over what happens in TARA and council collaboration to decide the future of council-owned housing and their rights as tenants?

The market has been an important influence on New Labour thinking about housing and neighbourhood regeneration. Nevertheless, New Labour in government has adapted, in its own way, to an existing neo-liberal political

landscape to address the issues of free market orientation and social justice (Mouffe, 2005). Consequently, New Labour in government has continued to support Conservative housing policies that allow tenants to purchase their council houses and councils to transfer council-owned housing to RSLs. However, New Labour has eschewed the dogmatic drive, adopted by earlier Conservative governments, to privatise as many public services as possible. Instead, New Labour has adopted a more pragmatic approach that does not simply focus on competition and obtaining services at the lowest possible cost, but includes opportunities to consider carefully the quality and effectiveness of services provided at the local level. However, the introduction of new methods of regulation and audit, examined in detail in later sections of this chapter, has helped to ensure the maintenance of certain service standards at the local level. A number of important New Labour housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: New Labour: housing and regeneration policies

New Labour and partnerships		
1998	Active Communities Unit (ACU)	Set up in the Home Office to promote activities to encourage people to become more involved in voluntary activities
1998	New Deal for Communities (NDC)	Regeneration and increasing community capacity
1998	Health Action Zones (HAZs)	Stakeholders with an interest in public health working together to improve people's health and well-being
1998	Education Action Zones (EAZs)	Stakeholders with an interest in education working together to improve educational achievement
1998	Voluntary Sector Compact	Partnership-working between central government and voluntary and community sector organizations
1999	Local Government Act	Introduction of the Best Value regime
2000	Under the Local Government Act 1999	Introduction of the Tenant Participation Compact
2000	Housing Green Paper 'Quality and Choice: A decent home for all	Introduction of the Decent Homes Standard Introduction of the arms length management organisation (ALMO)
2000	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)	Regeneration and enabling people to do things themselves
2001	White Paper Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services	Introduction of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and different stakeholders working together to improve provision and delivery of services at the local level

The New Labour government decided on three preferred options for raising the extra investment needed to repair and modernize council-owned housing. The outcomes of TARA and council consultations and collaboration to find solutions to housing problems needed to be acceptable to central government and fit with its preferred options for the future management of council-owned housing. The three preferred options were stock transfer, a PFI arrangement, or the setting up of an arms length management organisation (ALMO). The ALMO option was introduced in the Housing Green Paper (2000) 'Quality and Choice: A decent home for all' in response to tenant concerns about stock transfer and PFI. The ALMO is a not-for-profit company set up and owned by the council to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. Central government consent for an ALMO depends on evidence of in-depth consultations with tenants and their majority support for the proposal. An ALMO board comprises one-third tenants, one-third council representatives, and one-third independent representatives. The ALMO takes on responsibility for housing repairs and improvements, rent collection and dealing with rent arrears, and the management of lettings. The council retains responsibility for the development of housing strategy, the administration of housing benefits, and policy on rents. Central government provides extra resources towards the costs of achieving its Decent Homes Standard to councils that set up ALMOs (Housing Green Paper 2000).⁶

When New Labour was re-elected in 2001, it increased its commitment to the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs. Ironically, central government had previously identified transfer and modernization costs of £4.2 billion, spread over a

⁶ The New Labour government adopted a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target in 2000 to bring all social housing up to a decent standard by 2010. The standard applies to council- and registered-social-landlord-owned properties alike. All social housing should be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (see Delivering the Decent Homes Standard: social landlords' options and progress, House of Commons Research Paper 03/65).

thirty-year period, for transferring a million council homes, in five years, to RSLs. It was estimated these costs were £1.3 billion more than the £2.9 billion cost of councils retaining ownership of their housing stock and using public funds to modernize it (Birch, 2003).⁷ However, stock transfers remained attractive to central government because they represented an opportunity to avoid future housing repair and modernization costs that would otherwise fall on the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR). This is an important point when the Treasury was attempting to control state spending on public services.

There was still a strong central government desire to encourage councils and tenants to work together to find alternative ways to raise the finances needed to repair and modernize council-owned housing. The aim was to continue to support the separation of housing management and strategy functions and encourage councils to become more involved in identifying different housing needs and finding ways to meet them rather than dealing with day-to-day housing management issues. The trades-union-backed campaigning coalition called Defend Council Housing that was trying to stop the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs pointed out:

The 'New Labour' manifesto, published in 2001, contained a commitment to transfer some 200,000 council houses a year out of the public sector.⁸

⁷ The cost to the public purse of a transfer of council-owned housing to another landlord can arise for three main reasons: housing association borrowing costs are higher than those for councils, housing association rents are higher, which costs more in housing benefit, and there are transaction costs associated with progressing the transfer arrangements.

⁸ An extract taken from a Defend Council Housing briefing document for Members of Parliament, published in September 2003. In 1998, the trades union backed coalition called Defend Council Housing was set up by tenants' groups to try to stop the selling off or transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs.

Meanwhile, TARA and council collaboration would need to include discussions about how to obtain the extra resources needed to complete housing repairs and modernization works and meet the Decent Homes Standard by the 2010 deadline set by central government. In such circumstances, how have central government preferred housing management options facilitated the implementation of its plans for council-owned housing or enabled tenants to influence decisions about the future management of council-owned housing? Tenants may have been steered in a particular direction by central government and councils, or encouraged to come up with their own innovative solutions to housing problems. To what extent has TARA and council collaboration helped to legitimise the activities and actions of central government and councils, or empowered tenants through giving them more control over important resources and decision-making processes? To answer these questions it is necessary to understand the extent of any shift of power away from central government and councils to TARAs, and the effects of an increase in TARA regulation through new housing, Best Value and tenant participation policies.

The next sub-section focuses on New Labour and partnerships to understand how TARA and council collaboration was occurring in a context where central government continued to support the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs and was promoting the separation of housing management and strategy functions at the local level.

New Labour and partnerships

The New Labour government signalled its commitment to community involvement in partnerships to improve neighbourhoods when it formed the Active Communities Unit (ACU) in the Home Office in 1998. This unit promoted activities to get individuals to become more involved in voluntary activity that helped to tackle social problems and exclusion at the local level. Indeed, partnership and collaborative working has been encouraged across a broad range of public policy areas, including health, education, community safety and the environment (Bevir and O'Brien, 2001; Skelcher, 2004). The New Labour approach to partnership and collaborative working has encouraged (and often compelled) councils to work with different constituencies and involve different stakeholders in decision-making processes when agreeing priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods and service provision at the local level. Various public, private, voluntary, and community sector organizations are more involved in collaborative work at the local level, including TARAs.

Much collaboration at the local level is concerned with countering the less desirable effects of unfettered free market forces or preventing the breakdown of community ties (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). Such collaborations include the New Deal for Communities (NDC), Health Action Zones (HAZs), Education Action Zones (EAZs), and Voluntary Sector Compact, all introduced in 1998. The Local Government Act (1999) led to the creation of the Best Value regime and the introduction of the Tenant Participation Compact under the same Act in 2000. In addition, the first Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) partnerships were set up in 2000 and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) comprised of public, private, voluntary and community sector organizations working together to improve the

provision of services at the local level were introduced in 2001.

To what extent have these and other partnerships and collaborations helped to produce favourable outcomes in terms of the empowerment of communities, and TARA and tenant involvement in decision-making on matters affecting them or the area in which they live? The New Labour government's promotion of collaboration at the local level is, in part, a pragmatic response to the fact that no organization on its own is likely to be able to deal effectively with a range of complex social problems. The central government emphasis shifted towards capacity building in communities, and enabling people to help themselves.⁹

The aim was to encourage different stakeholders to produce some sort of vision for an area that promoted inclusion and the collective ownership of ideas by public and private organizations and citizens (Newman, 2001).¹⁰

In some circumstances, partnership or collaborative working might also help to counteract problems associated with the fragmentation of service delivery at the local level caused by an expansion of the number of organizations involved in public service provision (Greenwood *et al.*, 2002). To what extent though have TARAs and tenants been involved in different types of partnership and

⁹See: www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=617

¹⁰ The New Deal for Communities (NDC) initiative and Health Action Zones (HAZs) were set up in areas where there was an urgent need to address different social and public health problems. The aim was to create proactive partnerships that comprised all of the key stakeholders who could contribute to the regeneration or well-being of an area and the local population (including the council and relevant public, private, voluntary, and community sector organizations). The Education Action Zones (EAZs) comprised two or three secondary schools working with the Local Education Authority (LEA), parents, businesses and community representatives to improve educational standards in disadvantaged areas. The Voluntary Sector Compact was introduced to promote partnership working between central government, public agencies, and voluntary and community sector organizations in England. In 2000, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) initiative was introduced to provide funds for regeneration and involve local people in the process of improving run down neighbourhoods and local services. In addition, the White Paper *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services* was introduced in 2000, which encouraged councils to develop partnerships that comprised a broad range of public, private, voluntary, and community organizations working together to improve the provision and delivery of services at the local level.

collaborative working to solve neighbourhood problems? For example, existing research suggests that voluntary and community sector influence has been mainly over service delivery rather than policy matters (Taylor, 1997).

- What can TARA and council collaboration achieve in a new political landscape full of burgeoning partnerships and collaborations at the local level?
- How is TARA and council collaboration able to connect with or contribute to other types of partnerships and collaborations operating in an area?
- What are the different stakeholder tensions and concerns that might arise during the day-to-day operation of partnerships and collaborations at the neighbourhood level?

These are all pertinent and interesting issues explored in more depth during in the current research and reported in chapters five through seven. Mandated TARA and council collaboration may be problematic where there is a long history of frequently turbulent tenant and landlord relations in a neighbourhood or area and there are large inequalities of power that exist between the council and TARAs.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to examine the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact in more detail because they have had a particularly pronounced impact on contemporary TARA and council relations and collaboration.

The Best Value regime

The New Labour government's Local Government Act (1999) introduced the Best Value regime, which replaced the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) regime introduced under the Conservatives.¹¹ Under CCT, the aim had been to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local services but there was often an emphasis on cost at the expense of quality. The involvement of community-based organizations in the CCT process was usually minimal or non-existent. On the other hand, Best Value authorities that include councils, national parks, and police and fire services are obliged to work with relevant stakeholders, including local taxpayers, service users, and the wider community on their plans for services and the setting of performance targets. Under Best Value, councils are not obliged to outsource services to suppliers who can provide them at the lowest cost (Massey and Pyper, 2005) but must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness (DETR 1998).

Almost all council functions and services are subject to Best Value review including housing, education, and social services. The emphasis is on partnership working and the use of the four 'C's' (consult, compare, challenge and compete) that comprised the key elements of the Best Value review of services and their delivery at the local level. However, Best Value review does not simply consist of a focus on competition as the prime objective. Competition with other potential service providers might be one way to secure more efficient and effective service provision. However, a council also needs to compare its performance in securing or delivering services with the performance of other councils and organizations

¹¹The Conservative Local Government Acts 1988 and 1992 introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) for different defined council services. The New Labour Local Government Act 1999 introduced the Best Value regime.

providing similar services, and challenge the reasons for providing particular services. The introduction of the Best Value regime created new opportunities for TARA involvement in consultations and collaborations to decide priorities to improve neighbourhoods and local services. However, central government retained much power over councils through the Audit Commission Best Value inspection process. Best Value inspectors were given statutory authority to conduct investigations to assess council performance and award star ratings based on no stars (poor) to three stars (excellent) for performance in delivering different local services. Central government can intervene where there is a significant level of Best Value failure. Ultimately, the Secretary of State can direct a council to take prescribed action to improve a service or remove the service concerned from the council's control altogether.

The Tenant Participation Compact, introduced under the Best Value legislation and implemented at the local level in 2000, has resulted in the creation of separate and specific negotiations between tenants and councils to decide how different stakeholders will contribute to the maintenance or improvement of a neighbourhood and local services. The next sub-section comprises a detailed explanation of the operation of the compact at the local level and its impact on TARA and council collaboration.

The Tenant Participation Compact

The National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts (DETR, 1999) contains six core standards. The standards describe how compact discussions involving the council and TARAs should include discussions on:

- housing services (including rent collection, housing repairs, and tenancy issues)
- information (on issues like tenant participation, council support for tenants groups, and housing management)
- monitoring and measuring performance (in delivering housing services, compiling compacts, and encouraging tenant participation)
- tenants' groups (and their needs)
- support for tenant participation (in the form of council funds and other types of assistance)
- council and tenants meetings (how they are conducted, for example)

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR 1999) pointed out the compact should be an agreement between the council and tenants that sets out:

How tenants can get involved collectively in local decisions on housing matters which affect them; what councils and tenants want to achieve locally through compacts, such as better ways of working together, improving local services or a better quality of life; and how the compact will be implemented and checked to make sure it is working properly.

(p.1)

The framework document also contains a number of organizational standards that TARAs are expected to achieve before they are eligible to take part in TARA and council collaboration and council-convened meetings held to discuss neighbourhood management issues and the provision of local services. TARAs should have:

- a written constitution
- equal opportunities and race equality policies
- regular elections
- clear financial records
- regular minuted meetings (including an annual general meeting – AGM)
- a minimum tenant quorum before decisions are taken
- a level of active membership agreed by the council and tenants
- procedures to ensure information is available for tenants who are encouraged to participate
- open membership
- regular written communications with members
- some means of showing how they have met their objectives.

The compact did not set out to prevent the development of informal tenants' groups and alternative types of involvement where tenants had decided that they did not want to join a council-recognized tenants' group. However, central government and council devised standards for tenants' groups, and a requirement to meet the standards in order to be eligible to receive a share of council-controlled funds and assistance may mean tenants' groups are sometimes under considerable pressure to conform to avoid marginalization and ensure their survival. This raises the question - how are TARAs that refuse or are unable to meet central government and council organization standards treated and involved (or not) in TARA and council collaboration?

Institutional (central government) policies and forces may cause councils to take action that forces TARAs to organize and operate in particular ways to obtain access to important council-controlled resources and assistance. More specifically, mandated collaboration, to solve neighbourhood problems, may serve to perpetuate existing inequalities of power in society (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). Whose values, for example, are dominant in the thinking that underpins the Decent Homes Standard, the Best Value regime, and the Tenant Participation Compact? What sorts of power do the Audit Commission, the Housing Inspectorate, and TARAs have, and how are they able to influence decisions about the development of housing policies and strategies?

The next section focuses on some of the assumptions that exist concerning the purpose of collaboration, the problems that might arise when collaboration is mandated, and the implications for TARA involvement in Best Value and compact deliberations and decision-making processes.

1.2 Problems with collaboration

The political environment within which a collaboration is located and must operate (and over which collaborating organizations have limited control) will impact on the opportunities that exist to achieve different sorts of collaborative outputs and outcomes. At the local level, collaboration can be one way to encourage co-operation among different organizations and community groups, and the achievement of mutually desired neighbourhood or service improvement objectives. It may be difficult, however, to achieve desired collaborative outputs or outcomes in communities in which there is little history of trust and co-operation between different organizations and individuals (Lasker *et al.*, 2001). At the same

time, the inequalities of power that exist between organizations and individuals might limit who is involved in partnership or collaborative activities, whose views are considered valid (or not), and who has influence over decisions made. Collaboration can also easily be overdone with nothing of substance accomplished (Hansen and Nohria, 2004). Ultimately, the value of TARA and council collaboration will vary according to different organizations' needs to obtain legitimacy through collaborative enterprise, a share of the central government funds set aside to support collaborative working, and perceptions about what it is possible to achieve through collaboration.

Partnerships and collaborative working are key policy instruments in the implementation of specific centrally initiated programmes of action (Skelcher, 2004). Fundamentally, different public policy approaches (funding arrangements, programme objectives, and performance measurement regimes) will enable or constrain different types of TARA and council collaboration. It is useful to consider how the complexity of the national and local policy context, within which collaborations at the local level are located, impacts on TARA and council relations, and the potential for stakeholder agreement or argument over the purpose of collaboration and its management.

The political environment

This thesis investigates the development of TARA and council relations and collaboration in a specific historically contextualised central and local government institutional environment. In particular, the focus is on how institutions can endure in ways that transcend the organizations and individuals involved in their creation. A simplified representation of the institutional context within which TARA and

council collaboration often occurs (involving central government, the council, some type of area-wide umbrella TARA, neighbourhood-based TARAs and marginalised or excluded TARAs) is set out in Figure 1.

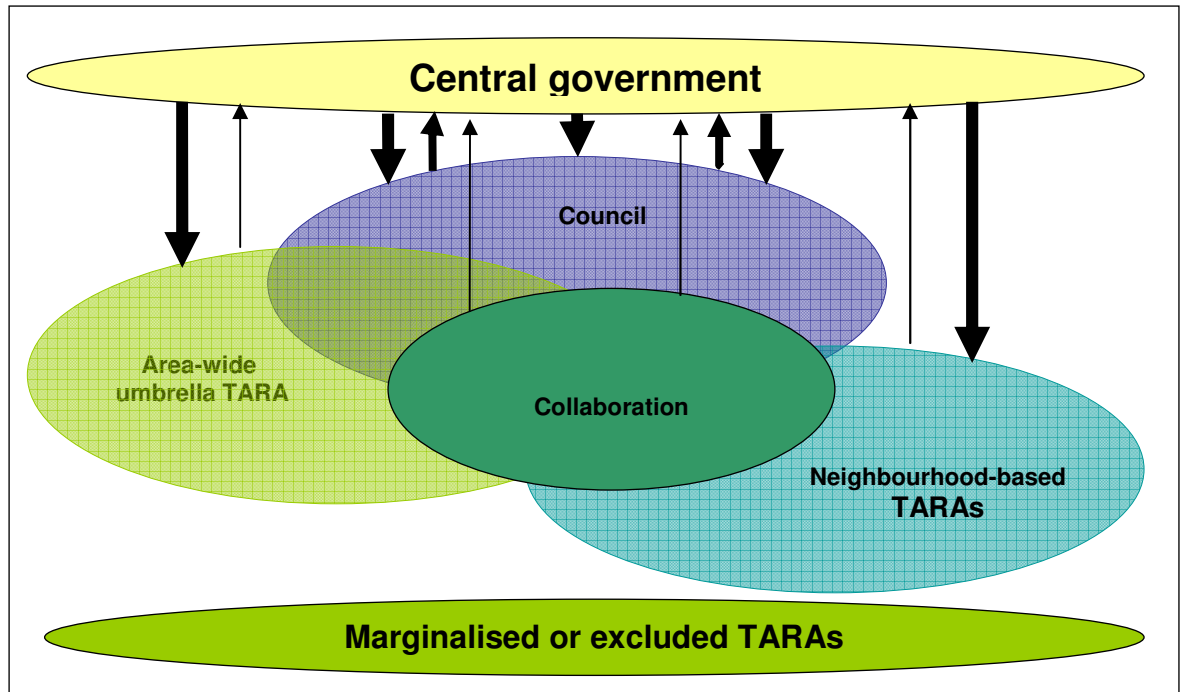


Figure 1: The political context and collaboration

The institutional context is a hierarchical arrangement with central government in a strong position to impose rules and ways of working on the council, TARAs and collaboration (indicated by the thicker arrows). In turn, the council and TARAs sometimes have influence over central government policymaking but are not able to demand central government acts or works in certain ways. It is likely the council will often have a closer relationship with any area-wide umbrella TARA that exists than it does with any individual neighbourhood-based TARA. Representatives from the council, the area wide umbrella TARA, and neighbourhood-based TARAs may be involved in TARA and council collaboration. However, the national and local political environment might also help to cause the marginalization or exclusion of some TARAs and activists from TARA and council collaboration.

The New Labour government has encouraged council engagement with communities and citizens to harness community resources and collaboration to help to solve complex social problems. However, an increase in the complexity of the policy-making environment might mean new forms of exclusion, as well as new opportunities to influence decision-making, emerge at the neighbourhood level (Taylor, 2003). The balance between TARA incorporation and empowerment will depend on the way that central government pressures (legislative and regulatory) on councils and council pressures (funding criteria and recognition requirements) on TARAs influence or determine the way that councils and TARAs work together to achieve central government or their own organizational housing-management and neighbourhood-regeneration objectives.

The next sub-section considers how the focus on TARA and council collaboration and the management of council-owned housing has changed since New Labour introduced the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact.

Rhetoric and reality

In the modern context, there is a widespread belief that collaboration is a 'good thing' (Kanter, 1994). The Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), not long after the election of the first New Labour government in 1997, said that it wanted more citizen involvement in discussions and decision-making to establish plans for neighbourhood regeneration and service improvements (DETR, 1998). The New Labour government suggested there was clear evidence that good quality tenant involvement in housing and neighbourhood matters delivers better, more effective and efficient services. In 1999, Hilary Armstrong, the Minister for Local Government and Housing, said, in the foreword to

the National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts, that:

The new 'best value' regime is all about making continuous improvements in the cost and quality of council services. Key to this is looking at new ways of involving local communities in their plans and programmes and in no service is this more important than housing [...] Compacts will bring about real and lasting changes in the relationship between council landlords and tenants. They will bring tenants into the heart of decision-making affecting their homes and their communities.

In addition, under the terms of the Local Government Act (2000) every council has the power to do anything (within statutory and legal boundaries) that it viewed as helping to promote the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of an area. This can include more involvement of relevant organizations and individuals in partnership-working and coordinated collaborative activity to achieve improvement objectives.

Since the election of the first New Labour government, in 1997, partnership and collaborative working have become the organizational strategies most strongly espoused by central government for a wide range of policy initiatives (Wilkinson and Craig, 2002). Partnership and collaborative working are key components of the third way politics developed by Anthony Giddens and adopted by New Labour that focus on trying to deal effectively with the inefficiencies of bureaucracy and the inequity of some market solutions to social problems (Giddens, 2000). However, New Labour also values partnership or collaborative working for its own sake and not simply as a pragmatic response to the everyday challenges of local governance, which was the view of previous Conservative Governments (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004).

Under New Labour, new opportunities have emerged for alternative service delivery directions within the public sector (Wainwright, 2004). Nevertheless, partnership policies are sometimes ambiguous because central government can use its power and control over important resources to determine the attributes of partnership working and obtain organizational conformity at the expense of organizational autonomy (Tiesdell and Allmendinger, 2001). A tension exists between the level of central government involvement in the development of the rules of collaborative engagement, the emphasis placed on 'forcing' collaboration between public, private and voluntary sector organizations (Diamond, 2006), and a desire to devolve more decision-making to the local level (Bailey, 2003).

It is not clear where TARAs fit into the 'new localism' that can be characterised as a strategy aimed at devolving power and resources away from central government to councils, communities and citizens within an agreed framework of national minimum service standards and strategic policy priorities. The problem is one of governance and the balance that exists between a central government focus on the effective implementation of national policies locally and respect for the autonomy of voluntary and community-based organizations and the unique contribution that they can make to a partnership or collaborative venture at the local level.

The next sub-section elaborates on how the 'rules of engagement' that shape the development of a collaborative venture are decided. It shows how the 'rules of engagement' in turn help to influence or determine the focus of collaborative dialogue and what it is possible to achieve through collaboration.

The rules of engagement

The National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts (1999) contains a section on standards for tenants' groups, which says:

These standards try to make sure that tenants' groups have a mandate to get involved by meeting reasonable criteria for formal recognition by the council. Councils should negotiate and agree these criteria with tenants first. The criteria should not place too great a burden on tenants' groups, particularly small groups or those set up for mainly social reasons

(p. 21)

However, it is likely the way that councils interpret the national guidance for compacts and decide to enforce (or not) the requirement that tenants' groups meet certain framework standards will vary (see page 24). For example, the extent to which a council uses the national TARA standards and criteria for recognition to put pressure on TARAs to adopt ways of working that fit with its bureaucratic systems and procedures might vary considerably. A council might simply want to tick the appropriate boxes regarding tenant involvement and concentrate on the work that needs to be done to implement central government housing and neighbourhood improvement policies effectively at the local level.

At the same time, the compilation of the compact must occur alongside the Best Value review of different local services and the work undertaken to meet the Decent Homes Standard and other central government priorities for neighbourhood improvement. Ultimately, the Audit Commission and the Housing Inspectorate are involved in the assessment of compacts, which are a key component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) targets introduced in 2002 and national tenant-involvement objectives. Councils are under

pressure to show that they are involving tenants in Best Value, Decent Homes Standard, and compact review and evaluation work. Some councils may choose to focus on implementing formulaic TARA- and tenant-engagement policies, that are not sensitive to difference and diversity, to try to satisfy central government inspectors and obtain favourable Best Value inspection outcomes: those that will ensure they are eligible to receive a share of the extra central government resources made available for housing repairs and modernization.¹²

The danger is that the development of tenant participation compacts, national standards for tenants' groups, and councils' TARA-recognition policies involves a considerable amount of extra bureaucratic work. Much of this extra work is undertaken to satisfy central government and its inspectors that appropriate council action is being taken to meet Best Value, Decent Homes Standard, and other national housing and neighbourhood improvement objectives. As Whittle (2001) says:

[There are a] proliferation of forums, working groups, task groups, consultative committees, focus groups, panels and communication mechanisms now associated with tenant participation.

(p. 6)

How might this proliferation of different formal consultative and collaborative initiatives help to create or eliminate opportunities for power-sharing and informal or loosely organized types of deliberation and decision-making at the neighbourhood level? Richardson and Hills (2000), for example, interviewed residents and academics to obtain their views on formally constituted

¹²The essence of a CPA framework is that it draws on a range of information such as performance indicators, assessments of corporate capacity, audit and inspection reports, and stakeholder opinions to reach a single judgement about the performance of a local body. Its strength is its results in a clear public rating on a local body's performance, at: www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa

neighbourhood-renewal partnerships, and concluded, *“There was an underlying concern with the difficulties of shifting existing power balances in favour of communities”* (p. 2). Meanwhile, Taylor (1997) has suggested key decisions affecting communities and neighbourhoods continue to be made within both formal and informal networks that many voluntary and community-based organizations do not have access to. A potential problem that might exist concerning TARA and council collaboration is the extent to which TARAs are differentially involved in the implementation of central government housing and service development policies at the local level, or formulating and challenging those policies.

An increased central government emphasis on partnerships and collaboration has created a political context in which new opportunities for different types of collaboration exist. What needs to be understood is the extent to which different types of collaboration are skewed towards stakeholders reaching a consensus on issues of recognizing and dealing effectively with conflict. Also, how different opportunities for collaboration result in new forms of TARA and activist inclusion or exclusion in housing consultations, depending on how well they fit with prevailing developments in a dominant language of collaboration.

This chapter has provided details about the history of housing and tenant participation policies and their impact on TARA and council relations. It has also set out the main research question that arose after examining the wider history and context of New Labour’s Best Value and tenant participation policies and reflecting on their impact on TARA and council collaboration.

Chapter two sets out the three-part theoretical framework used to examine and analyse collaboration at the macro-level of the institution, the meso-level of the organization, and the micro-level of the individual and their actions. It draws on institutional theory, theory on collaboration, and theory on power to explain different organizations' and individuals' experiences of collaboration, collaborative events, and collaborative outputs or outcomes. First, institutional theory is used to examine and analyse macro-level relations between institutions and collaborating organizations. Second, theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage is a source of ideas and insights that help to improve understanding of some aspects of TARA and council collaboration and, more generally, the meso-level relations that exist between collaborating organizations. Third, theory on power is used to examine and analyse collaborative interactions at the meso-level between organizations and at the micro-level between individuals. The aim is to improve understanding of TARA and council collaboration and enhance theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage so that it is better able to explain what happens in a situation where there is mandated collaboration involving organizations with very different cultures and values and where large inequalities of power exist between those organizations.

Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology employed to obtain data on TARA and council collaboration, explores the longitudinal single case study that was undertaken, and provides a detailed rationale for choosing this approach. Sheffield was chosen as the case study location because it had a long history of tenant and landlord activity, there were many active TARAs in the city, and problematic relations existed between an umbrella TARA called Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together (START), the city council, and some other prominent TARAs and activists. The chapter also focuses on the role of the lone

researcher, with limited time and resources to spend in the field, and their use of the case study to collect rich data on complex interactions involving organizations and individuals in real life situations. A description is provided of the ethnographic techniques and grounded research approach that influenced the way that the research was conducted. The research methods that comprised semi-structured interviews, observations of meetings and events, a questionnaire survey, and secondary data (minutes, pamphlets, and papers) used to collect data on individuals' experiences of collaboration.

Chapter four provides background information on Sheffield, the city council, and its relations with START and neighbourhood-based TARAs. Sheffield's long and complex industrial and labour movement history is examined and its effects on contemporary tenant and landlord relations are assessed. The different roles of the TARA activist, councillor and council officer in collaboration and their efforts to deal with different neighbourhood problems are analysed.

Chapter five starts with a description of the situation in Sheffield as I found it in the summer of 2002. Then the chapter examines and analyses the role of START and the tensions and conflict that existed between the council and TARAs over the line START took on the future of council-owned housing. Institutional theory is used to help explain show how central government policies and activities shaped the national and local political context within which TARA and council collaboration is located. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) theory of organizational 'isomorphism' is a central theory used to explain how organizations can become more like each other as they adapt to cope with environmental pressures. Sometimes organizations becoming more like each other can help to ensure that they maintain a strong position in a marketplace or service sector through joint working and combining

skills and resources. Alternatively, organizations becoming more like each other can lead to a loss of organizational diversity and innovation. TARA resistance and protest against unpopular central government housing and tenant participation policies is also considered.

Chapter six examines and analyses three key events that occurred in Sheffield in the latter part of 2002. These events show how a spiral of increasingly problematic conflict and mistrust developed between the council and START. Theory on collaboration, including Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage, is used to analyse the way organizations are involved in determining whether collaboration will be successful or not. The ability of the theory of collaborative advantage to explain the way that institutions shape the wider environment and circumstances within which organizations emerge, develop, and sometimes collaborate is also considered. The aim is to help explain how institutional forces can influence what organizations emerge and are able to participate in partnerships and collaborations at the local level.

Chapter seven examines and analyses the worsening relations between the council and START up until the point when the council decided to stop funding START. A combination of ideas and concepts drawn from institutional theory and theory on power help to show how altered central government policy priorities changed the council's views on housing problems and its relations with START and TARAs. Lukes (1974) theory on power provides a framework for understanding how power can operate in observable and unobservable ways to shape agendas and decision-making processes. Central government introduced legislation that shaped council actions to deal with housing problems, which impacted on TARA and council relations and collaboration. At the same time, the

way that central government culture and actions helped to create a language of collaboration can guide council decisions about the type of collaboration that is desirable is considered. This thesis provides evidence for a new concept called disempowering involvement that helps to explain how some TARAs and activists (and councillors and council officers) were paradoxically disadvantaged through more involvement in collaboration at the local level.

Chapter eight provides a detailed account of the research findings and insights that suggest ways that existing theory on collaboration needs to be developed. More specifically, institutional theory and theory on power help to show how a series of related TARA and council activities and actions helped to create an ever more fraught and difficult collaborative environment. Some TARAs and activists were severely constrained by new central government devised rules and regulations that shaped collaboration at the local level. The problems that can arise with collaboration and result in damaged stakeholder relations are highlighted and a new way of conceptualising collaboration is developed that helps to explain the process that leads to damaged stakeholder relations.

CHAPTER TWO

Institutions and Organizations

Considerable rhetoric and debate surrounds the concept of collaboration, which leads to much confusion for academics and practitioners when both positive and negative outcomes of organisations collaborating are highlighted. Much of the central government and 'good practice' literature on partnership and collaborative working at the local level to manage and improve housing and neighbourhoods is prescriptive. It lacks a strong theoretical basis on the role of institutions and power in the development of collaborative relations (DETR 1998, DETR 1999, Housing Act 1980, Local Government Act 1988, Local Government Act 1992, Local Government Act 1999). Riseborough (1998), elaborating on tenant involvement in housing discussions and decision-making processes, says:

The first and most common way of conceiving of tenant involvement in the 'good practice' literature is as a mutual partnership which is assumed to bring benefits for both tenants and landlord.

(p. 222)

Such 'good practice' literature on partnership and collaborative working does not provide a well-developed explanation of how partnership working and collaboration occurs within a wider institutional environment. In this wider institutional environment, a dominant institutionalised culture, set of core values, and ways of working can endure across time, helping to define particular fields or areas of activity, and shaping the actions of organizations and individuals operating in a field.

This thesis uses an approach to examine collaboration at the local level that consists of three interrelated levels of analysis:

1. At the *macro-level*, institutions, including central government, can encourage or compel organizations to work together in certain ways in order to provide public services. For example, central government can make collaboration a condition of applying for funding or a requirement to achieve favourable audit or Best Value reports.
2. At the *meso-level*, different organizations may work together to achieve organizational and collaborative objectives, and sometimes to satisfy the demands of institutions that they depend on for funds or other types of support. For example, central government may develop policies or funding regimes that influence or determine how organizations will co-operate or collaborate to achieve their own and central government imposed collaborative objectives.
3. At the *micro-level*, the actions of individuals in organizations involved in collaborative ventures will vary in response to institutional pressures, and organizational processes and procedures, perhaps exerting control over agendas or exacerbating power differentials.

The three levels of analysis constitute a way to examine relations between institutional forces and power at the macro-level (including legislation, traditions, and customs) and their affect on the political environment within which organizations are located and collaborate at the meso level and individuals in organizations act at the micro-level.

Different theorists have analysed collaboration from the macro, meso, and micro perspectives, and this chapter explores key institutional theory and theory on power debates in-depth, highlighting the ones that seem appropriate for understanding collaboration at the local level. This chapter, therefore, considers two theoretical questions in particular. First, how effectively does existing theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage deal with institutions and the ways in which they impact on relations between collaborating organizations? Second, how well does existing theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage deal with mandated collaboration where there are large inequalities of power between collaborating organizations with very different cultures and values? In doing so, the key theoretical and conceptual bases for my research questions are developed. The aim is to enhance existing theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage through an in-depth examination and analysis of the way that institutions and power impact on the political environment in which collaborations are located, and the actions of organizations and individuals.

The chapter begins with an outline of some perspectives on collaboration followed by an examination of existing theory on collaboration and the work of Huxham and Vangen and their theory of collaborative advantage. A number of points in the literature are highlighted that provide insights into collaboration at the local level. The chapter then moves on to examine and analyse institutional theory and theory on power to see how they can help to improve understanding of collaboration. At the end of the chapter, a working model or theoretical framework for understanding TARA and council collaboration is set out, which includes some illustrative examples that show how the framework helped to inform empirical research work.

2.1 Perspectives on collaboration

The motivation to collaborate can stem from interdependencies that exist between organizations (Gray, 1985; Logsdon, 1991) and the form that collaboration takes can range from:

Wide networks through loose alliances and tight federations to the creation of novel organizational entities, sometimes separate from the partner organizations, sometimes vested in one partner.

(Cropper, 1996, p. 82)

For example, organizations with an interest in neighbourhood regeneration or the delivery of local services might form different types of alliances or coalitions and combine different skills, knowledge, and funds to achieve different types of mutually desired regeneration or service development objectives. However, successful collaboration will depend on autonomous organizations developing shared structures, rules, and norms for decision-making and action (Wood and Gray, 1991). Organizations need to have structures in place that help to improve understanding of each other's views and facilitate the development of inter-organizational relations that will help them to achieve mutually desired objectives. Norms and rules that help to ensure collaboration is fair and equitable are also important. Successful collaboration depends on organizations developing a language based on norms and rules promoting inter-organizational communications and cooperation that help to reduce the scope for misunderstandings and the breakdown of deliberations (Hardy *et al.*, 2003).

Ideas on what makes collaboration a rewarding enterprise

A broad literature exists on what makes collaboration a useful or rewarding enterprise for organizations. The literature provides examples of the mechanisms and resources that can help to facilitate successful collaboration and includes:

- work on collaboration and success factors (Bruce *et al.*, 1995; Mattessich and Monsey, 1992)
- collaborative stages and the incremental development of collaborative relations and objectives (Austin, 2000; Kanter, 1994)
- collaborative competencies (organizations' willingness and capacity to work together) and productive collaboration (Foley and Mundschenk, 1997; Simonin, 1997)
- collaborative tools (Eisenstadt *et al.*, 2003; Nidamarthi, 2001)
- checklists (Borden and Perkins, 1999; Osborne *et al.*, 2002).

These mechanisms and resources include effective foundation building and planning, understanding each other's culture, values, views and aspirations, sharing power and building a shared vision, and obtaining access to needed funds, information, and expertise. The use of these mechanisms and resources during the development of collaboration at the local level will help to determine the extent to which it is equitable, sustainable, and able to effectively recognize and address different stakeholder concerns.

Organizations will collaborate for different reasons. For example, they may want to obtain power and control over the environment within which they are located and have to operate (Astley, 1984) or want to learn from each other and search for solutions to problems that extend beyond their own limited vision of what is

possible (Gray and Wood, 1991). A tension might arise between central government and aspects of its policies that give it more control over a political environment, organizations at the local level that want more control over the same environment, organizations capacity to learn from each other, and doing things in genuinely different ways to achieve national and local objectives. Collaborating organizations can find out what each other's views are on issues and try to agree shared priorities for action to manage conflict over resources and policy matters (Fredericksen, 1996) and develop innovative solutions to problems (Hardy et al., 2005) to achieve more together than they can working alone (Kanter, 1994; Roberts, 2000). The issue is the extent to which collaboration at the local level is about organizations doing these things as opposed to manoeuvring to obtain advantage over each other in collaboration sometimes to satisfy demands from other external bodies that they operate in certain ways and do certain things.

Business organizations tend to establish collaborations built on strong interdependencies (Burton, 1994) and a desire to increase their market competitiveness through arrangements to share knowledge, resources, and risk (Kanter, 1994; Konsynski and McFarlan, 1990). At the same time, opportunities for strategic collaboration with some of its competitors can help a business gain competitive advantage over other similar businesses in a field (Dyer and Ouchi, 1993; Dyer, 1998). This means that, by combining skills and resources, collaborating organizations are in a better position than other organizations in a field to gain a lead in developing new products and services. Collaborations involving voluntary and community-based organizations may be set up for some of the same reasons as collaborations between businesses but voluntary and community-based organizations do not compete with each other to maximize profits for owners or shareholders. The non-profit making status of these

organizations combined with a frequently strong desire to balance individual interests with those of the community as a whole will have particular implications for collaboration, capacity building, and the empowerment of organizations and individuals at the local level. Voluntary and community-based organizations will often want to ascertain how their involvement in a collaborative enterprise can facilitate the effective inclusion of different stakeholder voices. Voluntary and community-based organizations are often involved in representing the views of marginalised or excluded community groups and citizens in collaboration (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). Many voluntary and community-based organizations are also involved in collaboration for some explicit social purpose. For example, the empowerment of communities through shared ownership of decisions (Hardy *et al.*, 2003) and action taken to deal with complex social problems (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). The focus is on democracy and equality in collaboration as well as the provision of different services at the national or local level.

The political environment within which collaborations are located and operate will impact on their shape and the extent of opportunities to focus on democracy and equality issues as well as the achievement of collaborative objectives. The political environment will also affect how collaborating organizations work together. For example, the political environment will help to determine the levels of trust that exist between different collaborating organizations (Melville and Blank, 1991) and how effectively organizations are able to combine resources and skills to solve complex problems (Imperial, 2005). The possibilities for achieving community empowerment will also change in different political environments. The opportunities will vary for empowerment meaning groups and individuals at the local or neighbourhood level have more power and control over important

resources and decision-making processes that impact on their lives and the places where they live. Empowerment will depend on the influence that organizations and individuals have over the environment within which they are located as well as collaborative structures and decision-making processes (Fawcett *et al.*, 1995). In the case of collaboration at the local or neighbourhood level, central government has considerable ability to influence or determine the environment within which it is located, through legislation and guidance that sets out what it should consist of and what it should achieve.

The next sub-section focuses on two possible characteristics of collaboration. The first is instrumental and is about achieving some practical outcome, such as improved local services, and the second is ideological and is about collaboration that challenges established policies or ways of working.

Instrumental and ideological collaboration

Huxham (1996) has produced a framework consisting of eight dimensions, each describing elements of collaboration that can complement or conflict with each other. She has drawn on the work of a number of authors to construct a framework that provides an interconnected set of contrasts or dimensions of collaboration used to improve understanding of the purpose of different collaborations (see Figure 2).

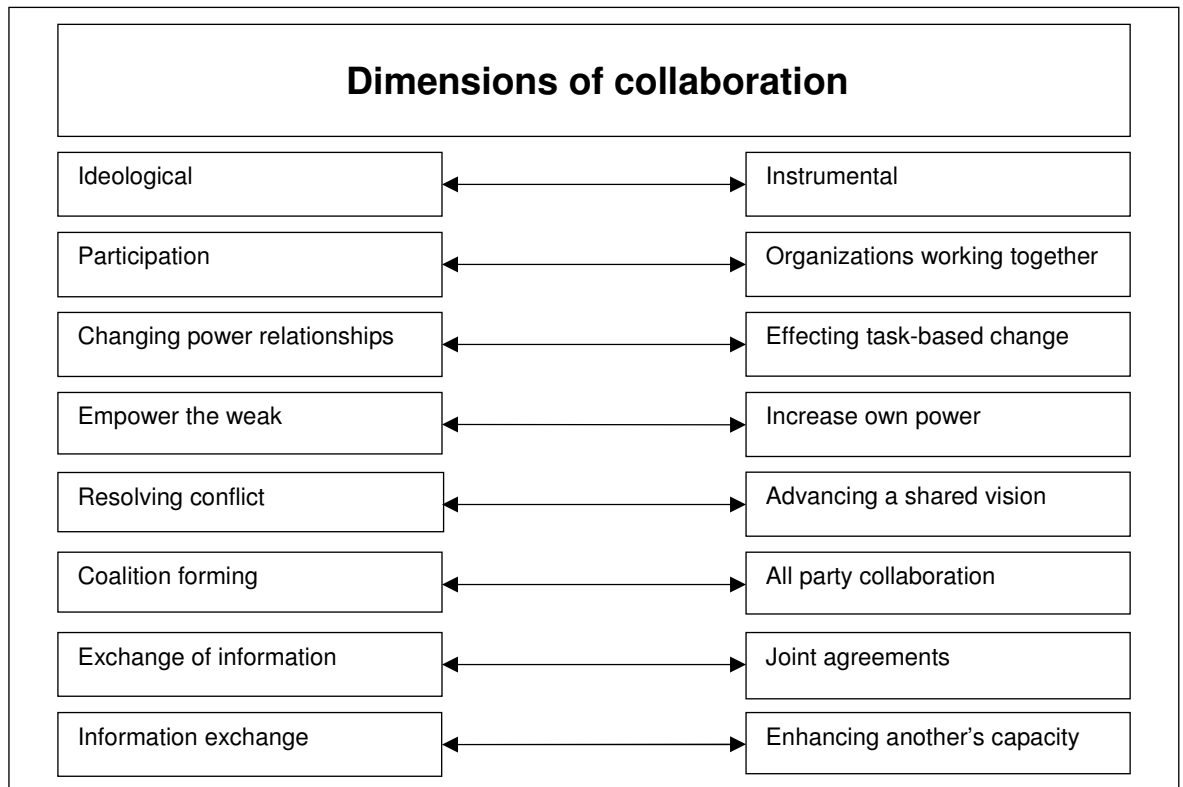


Figure 2: Dimensions of collaboration (adapted from Huxham, 1996)

Much collaboration is likely to be mainly instrumental and concerned with achieving practical outputs or outcomes. Collaboration may comprise one group of stakeholders mainly involved in implementing the policies or plans of another group of stakeholders. Alternatively, stakeholders are involved in working together to decide their own collaborative plans and objectives.

Some [collaborations] have very broad aims. For example, in some locations, the major agencies produce a joint social and economic development strategy for the area with the aim of providing direction for individual and other, less broad, collaborative initiatives. Others will be more specifically focused on a particular policy area such as education, health or crime. Yet others will be narrowly focused on a particular project, for example the upgrading of physical facilities such as roads or civic buildings.

(Huxham, 2000, p. 340)

Whatever form collaboration takes, there is an instrumental aspect to effecting task-based change and the achievement of some type of practical outcome and an ideological aspect to changing values and power relationships. In different situations, collaboration can empower weaker organizations and help them to achieve their own objectives, or increase a more powerful organization's power to achieve its own objectives. Collaboration can also comprise the exchange of information for mutual benefit and the sharing of power to enhance the organizational capacity of weaker organizations and help them to achieve their own and collaborative objectives.

For some people [...] collaborations also carry ideological connotations associated with participation and empowerment [...] the main concern is an ideological belief that stakeholders should be involved. In the extreme this means empowering such stakeholders to take a central, rather than peripheral, role in the collaboration, including having direct authority for spending its budgets.

(Huxham, 2000, p. 340)

However, the accumulation or transfer of organizational power is not necessarily a zero-sum game (where one stakeholder's gain or loss results from the losses or gains of other stakeholders). For example, stakeholders may find a way to resolve conflict in collaboration that comprises reaching a consensus on issues without the requirement for a shift of power between them. On the other hand, a group of stakeholders may decide to form a coalition to bypass or undermine particular collaborative discussions and decision-making procedures.

The dimension of collaboration that distinguishes between its instrumental and ideological elements is particularly useful when examining and analysing relations between collaborating organizations. In the case of collaboration at the local or neighbourhood level, it is a dimension that can be used to help to determine how collaboration has impacted on community-based organizations ability to get their neighbourhood management or improvement priorities onto relevant agendas. Other dimensions of collaboration are also likely to be useful in the examination and analysis of collaboration at the local or neighbourhood level. They include the way that conflict is recognised and dealt with, the distribution of important resources, and the extent to which collaboration increases an organization's own power at the expense of empowering other organizations.

At the same time, examining and analysing the institutional environment within which collaboration is located and how opportunities for different types of collaboration emerge will help to show how collaborative advantage can be achieved or not.

Collaborative advantage and inertia

Huxham (1991) began to develop ideas about the structure and mechanics of collaboration when working with public organizations and their employees to develop strategies for collaborative working at the local level. She was interested in organizations' capacity to collaborate to help ensure the efficient and effective use of resources to tackle complex problems. By combining skills and resources, organizations can create a 'synergy' or collective way of working that helps them to avoid some of the pitfalls of excessive individualism. The pitfalls of working in isolation can include a reduced capacity for organizational learning and the

inefficient development of products or provision of services (Huxham, 1993c).

Huxham (1993) also suggests that 'synergy' between organizations facilitates the achievement of the collaborative advantage that she has described. This 'synergy' comprises two or more organizations working together to create a greater effect than might be expected if the organizations worked separately. It is likely the ability to create 'synergy' will depend on the skills that the convenors or managers of the collaboration possess, their understanding of stakeholder motivations for collaborating, and the identification and appropriate use of resources (Lasker *et al.*, 2001). In turn, collaborative advantage will occur when:

Something unusually creative is produced – perhaps an objective is met – that no organization could have produced on its own and when each organization, through the collaboration, is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone.

(Huxham, 1993b, p. 603)

Organizations need to develop shared ways of communicating and operating that make the collaborative relationship work to stand a chance of achieving collaborative advantage (Kanter, 1994). In addition, organizations need to agree clear aims and goals (Huxham and Vangen, 1996) that fit with the purpose of the collaboration (Eden and Huxham, 2001) and address the concerns of individual organizations as well as collaborative agenda items (Huxham, 2003).

The theory of collaborative advantage focuses on phenomena that occur at the organizational level. They include communications between organizations and the conduct of meetings (Huxham and Vangen, 2000b), who is involved in collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a) and how they assist (or not) in the

building of relationships (Huxham, 1993b). Different facilitators of collaboration have been identified that deal with how organizations work together (Huxham, 1993b). They focus on organizations creating a shared sense of mission and strategy, the possession of shared values and beliefs, the equitable distribution of power and control over resources, agreement over who to involve, high levels of stakeholder interdependence, a belief in the value of collaboration, stocks of mutual trust, and an awareness of each other's goals (see Figure 3).

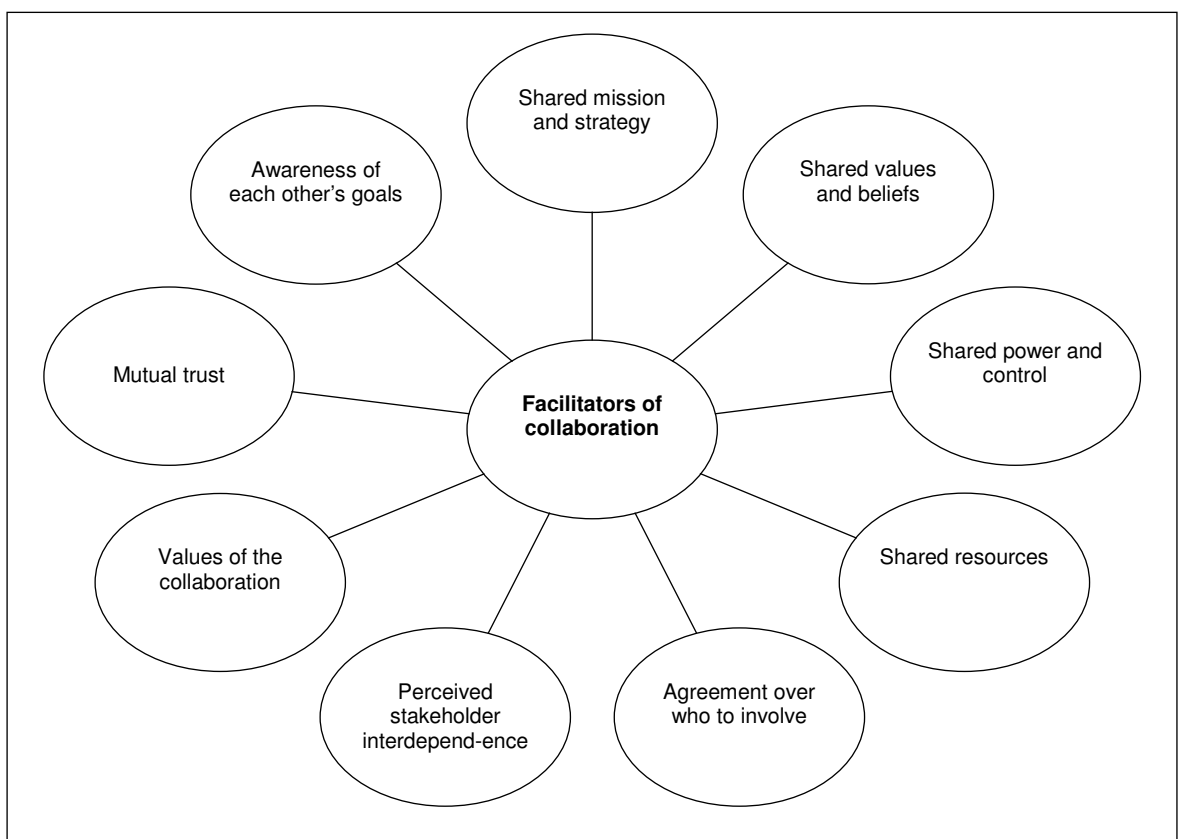


Figure 3: Facilitators of collaborative advantage (Huxham, 1993b)

Sometimes the focus of Huxham and Vangen's argument shifts to individuals in collaboration who can help to make it a success. There are individuals who cannot easily be replaced without severe disruption to the collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a). For example, because they champion or nurture collaborative relationships and collaborative working (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). The same or

other individuals may steer or sometimes control collaboration, and be able to make judgements about the extent to which issues are of relevance or not to a collaborative agenda and the achievement of collaborative objectives (Vangen and Huxham, 2003).

A focus on the organizations and individuals involved in collaboration and the way that different phenomena and events at the organizational level can contribute to the achievement of collaborative advantage may provide useful information about the formation of collaborative relations. In particular, such a focus might help to show how different organizational cultures and values or the distribution of power and control over important resources among organizations impacts on collaboration and the production of collaborative outputs or outcomes. In situations where large public and small community-based organizations come together, an understanding of their different contributions to the collaboration will most likely produce many useful insights.

Huxham and Vangen (2004) also developed the concept of collaborative inertia to help explain unexpected poor collaborative performance. Collaborative inertia exists when:

The output from a collaborative arrangement is negligible, the rate of output is extremely slow, or stories of pain and hard grind are integral to successes achieved.

(p. 191)

They identified various factors that can induce the onset of collaborative inertia (see Figure 4). There may be much procrastination over the purpose of collaboration because of the diversity of organizational and individual concerns and aspirations that the collaboration has to deal with. Difficulties with

communications can arise because of differences in organizational cultures and values or the languages that different organizations and individuals use. Organizations with very different ways of working may struggle to develop modes of joined-up working. The management of power inequalities and the building of trust will sometimes be a protracted and problematic business. Keeping organizations on board and accountable whilst valuing their autonomy and contribution can be a difficult balancing act. Moreover, dealing with the complicated logistics of working with other organizations and individuals may create difficulties for organizations and individuals.

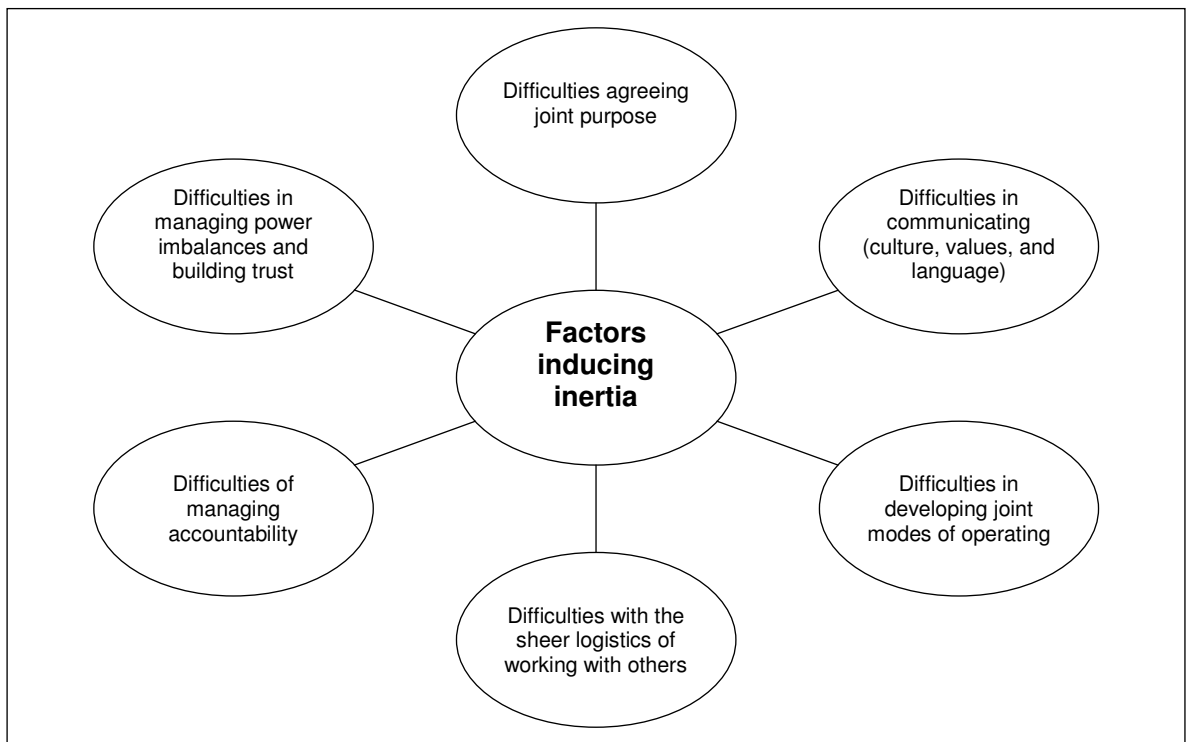


Figure 4: Factors inducing collaborative inertia (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a)

Organizations may not have the collaborative capacity (structures, funds, people, time, and commitment) needed for collaboration (Huxham, 1993a) or differences in the power that they possess (Huxham, 1996) and mistrust between them (Vangen and Huxham, 2003) undermine attempts to collaborate. It will be difficult without

the appropriate sorts of organizational capacity to obtain the levels of commitment, communication, and respect for each other's values and views needed to develop sustainable collaborative relations and achieve mutually desired collaborative objectives. Mistrust in collaboration is likely to increase and frustrate attempts to build genuinely collaborative relations if a more powerful organization is able to behave in ways that help it to gain some unfair advantage such as preventing less powerful organizations from getting their ideas onto relevant agendas. Chapter one (section 1.1) outlined the history of often difficult tenant and private landlord relations that existed in many cities and towns in England, which caused mistrust between tenants and their new council landlords. In addition, TARAs are usually relatively small and informal organizations run on a tight budget by volunteers working in very different ways to the professionals and other experts employed by large and powerful organizations like the local council. Many small single-issue organizations in the voluntary and community sectors will have particular concerns about the prospect of losing control over their affairs if they are obliged or decide to work collaboratively with a broad range of other organizations (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). Moreover, such voluntary and community sector organizations may experience institutional pressure that encourages or compels them to fit with the ways of working of more powerful organizations like the council at the local level or be unable to get their priorities onto relevant agendas if they are unfamiliar with official procedures and practices.

Once again, collaborative inertia like collaborative advantage is mainly concerned with phenomena and events at the organizational level. Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest it is a concept that can help improve understanding of how organizations with different cultures, values, and power can or cannot work together. The public and community-based organizations that work together may

be more prone to experience the effects of collaborative inertia. In particular, because they have very different organizational cultures and values, and large inequalities of power exist between them, collaboration is particularly complex and problematic. The effective management of organizational tensions and conflict over the purpose of collaboration, power and resources, ways of working, and decisions about aims and objectives will be more difficult to achieve in potentially very turbulent circumstances.

Organizations will consider the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration. Some will perceive collaboration to be a valuable means of achieving organizational objectives in changing or uncertain operating environments (Huxham, 1996). There are benefits to be gained from the sharing of knowledge and expertise, the exchange of information and ideas, and the transfer of 'best practice' between organizations. They include improved organizational capacity to cope with changing citizen or consumer demands and the development of superior products and services (Hansen and Nohria, 2006). However, an organization may take unilateral action to strengthen their power base or relative position in the collaboration (Lank, 2006). Sometimes organizations will experience a loss of control over their affairs, a loss of flexibility to take decisions, and increased costs associated with extra bureaucracy and meetings (Huxham and MacDonald, 1992).

The two concepts of collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia can help to explain collaborative phenomena and events at the organizational level. What they do not do well is explain how collaboration is located in and affected by a wider institutional and political environment.

What's lacking with the theory of collaborative advantage

Huxham and Vangen (2000b, 2003, 2005) recognize the environment within which collaboration is located can impact on decisions about its purpose and how it is managed. They suggest that central government policies and funding regimes often influence or shape collaboration at the local level (Huxham, 2000) and relations between collaborating public, voluntary, and community-based organizations (Huxham and Vangen, 2000b). In addition, central government will sometimes push hard for the achievement of particular collaborative outputs or outcomes at the local level because the demands of the electoral system require quick and unambiguous indications of action on issues (Vangen and Huxham, 2003).

However, Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage only briefly touches on the role of institutions in influencing or determining the shape of political environments and collaborations. Furthermore, they do not examine in detail the role of institutions and power in determining the opportunities that exist for organizations to participate in different types of instrumental or ideological collaboration. The effects of established traditions and institutional values and beliefs on the activities of collaborating organizations are not well developed. Something is also missing in terms of understanding how institutions might try to obtain control over what gets onto collaborative agendas and promote a type of deliberation that shapes collaborative activity in certain ways at the local level.

The book *Managing to Collaborate: The theory and practice of collaborative advantage* by Huxham and Vangen was published in 2005. Sydow (2006, p. 606), in a review of this book, says he would have liked the findings to be "*Anchored in a*

more thorough, formal and explicit theory of organizational and inter-organizational practice (such as Giddens's structuration theory, to which the authors refer on several occasions)". This is an important comment that links directly to the point made early on in this chapter that Huxham and Vangen's work fails to effectively deal with the issue of institutions and collaboration. In particular, institutions are created by organizations and individuals, but can take on a separateness that allows them to endure across time and independently influence or determine the way that organizations are set up and operate.

The nature of the structured relationships that exist between institutions, organizations, and individuals is something that Huxham and Vangen do not dwell on. Often, the literature on the subject portrays positive views of collaboration, including Huxham and Vangen's work on collaborative advantage. A rational, management-oriented, view of collaboration underpins views on collaboration (Doyle, 2004). There is a tendency to ignore or underplay the role of institutions and the contested nature of power and decision-making in discussions about partnerships or collaboration (Diamond, 2006).

The literature on collaboration and partnership-working is *"Overwhelmingly concerned with solving the problems that partnership throws up in order to maximize the benefits of partnership"* (MacDonald and Chrisp, 2005, p. 315). Indeed, much of the central government rhetoric on collaboration described in chapter one (section 1.2) suggests that if TARAs comply with national organization standards and sign up to council recognition policies they will obtain extra funds and official support, and be able to effectively deal with various housing and neighbourhood problems. However, the rhetoric does not adequately deal with the power that institutions gain from the way that institutionalised values, beliefs, and

ways of working impact on the activities and actions of organizations at the local level. A better understanding of the way that opportunities for instrumental and ideological collaboration emerge and organizations make use of them should help to explain how central government, council and community-based organization relationships are structured and how collaboration works at the local level.

The next section uses institutional theory and theory on power to examine and analyse macro-level institutional pressures and their effect on organizations at the meso-level and individuals at the micro-level. The focus is on how institutions can create or limit opportunities for collaboration (especially of the ideological kind) and opportunities for organizations to achieve collaborative advantage and avoid the onset of collaborative inertia.

2.2 Institutions and power

It is necessary to know something about the circumstances under which collaboration is established (Wood and Gray, 1991) and the environment within which it is located because it influences how stakeholders work together (Gray, 1996; Reilly, 2001). Institutional environments embed social processes (Selsky, 2005) and social action is not context free but constrained and shaped by the location in which it occurs (Selznick, 1948). Any particular situated organization or individual will confront a diversity of social forms that exist quite independently of whatever they may do since they stretch away across time–space according to their institutional embeddedness (Giddens, 1985; Zucker, 1977). The institutional embeddedness of social forms will depend on the extent to which ‘taken-for-granted’ values and ideas about what is ‘normal’ or appropriate underpin people’s behaviour.

Institutions are associated with particular social systems and orders that transcend the activities and actions of organizations and individuals. Individuals are simultaneously involved in different relationships that they reproduce and produce anew (Giddens, 1979) and affected by institutions that are able to directly influence their views and actions (Giddens, 1983). As indicated in chapter one (section 1.1) the New Labour government's Best Value regime and Tenant Participation Compact are top-down imposed initiatives. The basic power of institutions is their ability to cause organizations and individuals to behave in certain predictable ways (Parsons, 1951). The Best Value and compact legislation changed the institutional and political environment within which TARA and council collaboration is located and must operate.

A focus on institutional pressures and 'organizational isomorphism' helps to show how institutions affect organizations and individuals. It also adds a much-needed perspective on the political struggles for organizational power and survival that is missing from the theory of collaborative advantage.

Institutional pressure and 'organizational isomorphism'

The term 'isomorphism' describes a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions.¹³ DiMaggio and Powell (1983) developed their theory of 'organizational isomorphism' to help to explain how institutional pressures on organizations can cause them to behave in certain similar ways.

¹³The term 'isomorphism' was first used in chemistry to describe the formation of identical crystalline structures.

Once disparate organizations in the same line of business are structured into an actual field ([...] by competition, the state, or the professions), powerful forces emerge that lead them to become more similar to one another.

(p. 148)

The institutionalization of organizations that change and become more like each other may be the product of a particular environment and set of pressures or social processes that promote a certain type of widespread response to environmental demands (Jepperson, 1991). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three types of institutional pressure affecting organizations that can cause 'organizational isomorphism'. First, there is the coercive pressure to act in certain ways exerted on an organization by an institution or organization on which it is dependent. Second, there is the mimetic pressure to act in certain ways exerted on an organization that causes it to imitate other organizations perceived to have been successful in obtaining the legitimacy or resources they need to function effectively. Third, there is the normative pressure to act in certain ways exerted on an organization by professionals and influential others who have an interest in its affairs.

Central government is able to exert coercive pressure on public and community-based organizations through legislation, regulations and decisions about rewards or penalties for acting in particular ways. The impact of this type of pressure on public and community-based organizations will vary. Sometimes coercive pressure, in the form of standard operating procedures and performance management regimes imposed by central government, will have a direct impact on organizations and the way that they operate (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Bowerman, 2002; Tiesdale and Allmendinger, 2001). However, coercive pressure

can also comprise different perceived institutional or funding body demands that cause organizations that depend on the institution or funding body for support to change and become more like each other. For example, central government may use the power that it possesses to mandate collaboration or ensure it has control over important resources, and can compel different organizations to work together. Often organizations will know a powerful institution or authority has access to coercive measures that it can use to obtain an organization's support for its actions (Wood and Gray, 1991). Sometimes, central government pressure will promote the development of actual or apparent organizational support for traditional types of hierarchically structured public-sector partnerships (Davies, 2004). Such partnerships or collaborations may be set up quickly to satisfy central government demands for increased stakeholder involvement in various matters. The downside is an inadequate amount of time is devoted to organizations learning about each other, building relations, and developing genuinely new and innovative ways of working together. For some partners, the main value of the partnership is its existence rather than the work that it does (MacDonald and Chrisp, 2005).

The risk is mandated collaboration helps to maintain a particular type of 'principal-agent' relationship between central government and organizations at the local level (Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). At the same time, different central government departments and agencies can use their dominant position and control over the flow of resources (funds and authority) in a network to influence the shape of inter-organizational relations at the local level (Benson, 1975; Hudson *et al.*, 1999). An institution's funding regimes can make organizational conformity to certain ideas and ways of working obligatory in situations where organizations depend on receiving funds from the institution to function effectively or survive (Bowerman,

2002). Consequently, it is not possible to comprehend fully how collaborating organizations work together in the absence of detailed knowledge about the way institutions and power are involved in shaping the environment within which collaborating organizations are located.

The next sub-section provides an account of some of the criticisms of institutional theory, as a means to examine and analyse organizational interactions and the role of agency in the creation and change of institutions as well as challenging established institutional values and rules.

A critique of institutional theory

Some commentators suggest institutional theory has had trouble in dealing with political conflict as sources of change rather than just stability (Peters *et al.*, 2005). The risk is the use of institutional theory to explain collaborative phenomena will miss the unique contribution that organizations and individuals might make to changing institutions. The charge sometimes levelled against institutional theory is that it is too inflexible and not able to explain adequately the complexity of contemporary political environments. Institutions need to respond to legitimate pressures that develop in the wider environment in situations where there are democratic deliberations and decision-making. Indeed, institutions, organizations, and individuals are involved in an ongoing process of interaction that produces change and even replacement of existing institutions (Peters, 2000). For example, TARAs and activists will respond to pressures coming from central government and adapt to meet its demands or challenge them. However, some proactive individuals may seek to change institutionalised rules to enhance their interests (Beckert, 1999).

It may be possible to assess the extent to which people consciously choose to comply with or ignore institutional rules and regulations and how they are involved in changing institutions, which requires conscious decision-making (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). Consequently, the complex mix of institutional and agency forces at work in the relationship between central government, councils, and tenants' and residents' organizations should not be underestimated. A duality of structure exists because social practice has both a structural and an agency component. The structural environment constrains individual behaviour but also makes it possible (Giddens, 1976). At the same time, it is possible in some circumstances to have an increasing amount of activity and action amongst organizations and individuals that is not in line with established institutional rules or regulations. A weakness in some of the extant institutional theory is its lack of integrated mechanisms that show how cognitive capacity and emotional responses are involved in changing normative and regulative systems (Jennings and Greenwood, 2003).

Sometimes a bias towards forming a 'structuralist' argument exists that seeks to develop some type of generalizable knowledge at the expense of understanding the uniqueness of individual organizations (Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997). An aim of the thesis was to relate the findings from research to the way that institutions can shape the environment within which collaborations are located and understand the potential for different collaborative activities and actions at the organizational level using aspects of institutional theory. At the same time, theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage also provided ideas and concepts used to examine and explain collaborative phenomena at the organizational level. Institutions, organizations, and individuals are involved in mutual relationships that they equally produce and reproduce (Giddens, 1979). The point is to use institutional theory to explore the institution, its changing and enduring

characteristics, and connectedness to and separateness from organizations and individuals. In turn, investigating the involvement of institutions in the creation of contemporary national and local political opportunity structures might help to show what it is possible to achieve through collaboration, and why there will sometimes be failures to achieve desired outputs or outcomes in some circumstances.

Sometimes manipulations of stakeholder resource dependencies can afford organizations a degree of autonomy to exercise strategic choice in the forging of a 'negotiated environment' (Astley, 1984). Even the relatively small community-based organization has some power of its own through the knowledge it has of an area and its legitimacy as a community-based organization representing the views of people living in an area. A community-based organization might be able to use this type of power in negotiations with other more powerful organizations to obtain some particular benefit for itself through collaboration. Alternatively, a community-based organization might be able to join with other similar or sympathetic organizations to increase the power that it has in a collaborative venture. A single organization can make contact with other coalitions of organizations and power-holding individuals that support its cause, and have control over the development of programme or project rules and ways of working (Pred, 1983). There may also be scope for organizations to seize or develop opportunities to enter into relations with influential allies to challenge established ideas and innovate at the margins of extant structural arrangements (Tarrow, 1994).

Furthermore, the ability of individuals to develop interpretations of situations allows for individual differences in activity and action as situations can be interpreted differently (Sending, 2002). For example, different neighbourhood activists and the people that they represent will have similar and different housing grievances and

concerns, and different interpretations of the effectiveness or not of central government and council policies devised to deal with them. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise and understand the history of collective tenant action against poor housing conditions and unscrupulous landlords. In particular, how purposive, goal-oriented elements of collective action are reflected in various inter-organizational alliances and coalition networks (Diani and Bison, 2004). At the same time, single-issue organizations and entrepreneurs can create and manipulate grievances and concerns (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Scope exists to develop the conceptual potential in neo-institutional theory for recognizing that actors do not limit themselves to reacting to exogenous events in institutional fields, but proactively produce possibilities for collective action to shape those fields (Hensmans, 2003).

The next sub-section provides a detailed account of some of the different types of power that can underpin institutional activities and actions. The aim is to understand how those activities and actions might empower (or not) different organizations and individuals.

Power and collaboration

Sometimes powerful institutions are able to mobilize the bias and prejudices in a system in ways that help to shape the activities and actions of organizations and individuals (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). In recent years, different central government departments have put much effort into promoting the common sense idea that partnership-working and collaboration is generally a 'good thing'. In particular, central government has been promoting certain types of instrumental collaboration that fit with established ideas concerning the value of self-help and

collective action to change the way that council-owned housing is managed and improve local services (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The problem that arises concerns who has gained or lost power as policymakers have become more obsessed with partnership-working (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998, p. 331). Little is known about the extent to which Best Value and Tenant Participation Compact partnerships have or have not empowered TARAs and helped them to effectively articulate their own priorities for action to improve an area and local services. It is possible to observe the use of institutional power by studying an institution's actions or the development of its rules. These activities help shape the environment in which organizations and individuals operate. Individual and organizational adherence to various well-established traditions, customs, and norms (for example, the value attached to types of knowledge or acceptable behaviour) also give institutions a more subtle power.

However, it seems somewhat artificial and unsatisfactory to think about power only in elitist or pluralist terms. Instead, it is possible to think about the existence of an elite group or groups of institutions, organizations, and individuals in situations where there is also a substantial amount of shared power. In such situations, it is plausible to think about the different dimensions of power that might help to ensure issues enter or are kept off different agendas, cause or prevent conflict, and underpin decision-making or non-decision-making processes.

A three-dimensional view

Foucault (1978) suggests the modern state is not something that has developed above individuals and without regard to them, rather it is a sophisticated structure designed to facilitate their eventual integration. He claims that in the modern

context the issue of 'governmentality' concerns the way that the state can maintain control and order through the institutionalised promulgation of certain views and ideas. A powerful group of institutions are involved in the creation of a sophisticated state structure designed to facilitate the integration of organizations and individuals into a particular type of society. This state structure comprises a dominant culture and set of core values that influence and shape organizations' and individuals' activities and actions. At the same time, the exercise of state power occurs in observable and unobservable ways. These different manifestations of power help to influence or determine how people view or imagine things, and the way that their interests and concerns are recognised (or not).

Lukes (1974) devised a three-dimensional view of power. First, institutions in particular and sometimes organizations or individuals can succeed in preventing potential issues from entering into the political arena (p. 21). Second, this shaping of the political arena sometimes occurs in the absence of observable conflict. However, latent conflict can remain that comprises a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude (p. 22). Third, an assumption exists that suggests that if people have no grievances then they have no interests that the use of power can harm. Nevertheless, a process of non decision-making may occur in situations where people do not have grievances because their views and preferences conform to established practice and they cannot imagine any alternative to the situation they are in (p. 24). Organizations and individuals are able to make decisions but only in an institutional context where powerful pressures emerge and shape their thinking and activities in ways that mean they do not always align with their real interests or preferred choices. What type of institutionalized processes shape the views of

organizations and individuals (including those involved in collaboration)? Lukes says:

Is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it or because they see it as natural and unchangeable or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? (Lukes, 1974, p. 24)

It is also possible to exercise power through dominant forms of knowledge. Such knowledge permeates the development of social relationships and underpins the socializing effects of the everyday social encounters that individuals experience (Foucault, 1982). How do dominant forms of knowledge impact on opportunities for instrumental and ideological collaboration, and the way that public and community-based organizations are involved in collaboration? This question will be addressed in chapters five through seven.

The next sub-section considers the interconnectedness of institutions, power, and collaboration. It also examines the implications of mandated collaboration for public and community-based organizations that are compelled to work together and are trying to find ways to solve housing and neighbourhood problems.

Power and governance

Institutions are involved in creating the national political opportunity structures that determine the value and purpose of different organizations (Harrison and Reeve, 2002). Meanwhile, legislation and regulation stimulates or suppresses different

types of collective activity at the neighbourhood level (Jenkins, 1995). An in-depth understanding of the institutional environment and the role of political opportunity structures is missing from theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage. More particularly, the way that legislation and 'moulding' systems in the form of regulations and guidance help to shape organizations' and individuals' behaviour (March and Olsen, 1998).

On the one hand, institutions will find ways to accommodate popular demands and make compromises to maintain general support for their policies (Gramsci, 1971). On the other hand, power becomes embedded within the contextual 'rules-of-the-game' that both enable and constrain organizational action (Clegg, 1975), the different negotiations undertaken to decide on which problems to tackle (Lawrence *et al.*, 1999), and how conflict in collaboration is recognized and dealt with (Axelrod, 1997). In turn, institutions will sometimes reinterpret the 'rules-of-the-game' to try to ensure that they maintain their power and control over important policymaking agendas (Saunders, 1979). Institutions are often involved in the development of a particular language that promotes and protects core institutional values and beliefs (Ng, 2001). A well developed political or technical language can help to shape people's views and actions. Ultimately, collaboration and empowerment are not neutral terms because the meanings assigned to them are, in part, a product of the exercise of power that structures a particular discourse or language (Atkinson, 1999). The meanings assigned to different collaborative phenomena will reflect the wider discursive context that enables or constrains the development of different types of thinking and collaboration. Stakeholders need to occupy some legitimate position within the larger discursive arena and only a limited number of subject positions are perceived as meaningful and legitimate (Hardy *et al.*, 2005).

Different institutional pressures will impact on organizations and the way that they are structured and function. There will be varying levels of competition or collaboration between organizations (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Best Value, introduced in 1999, was one example of a performance management regime that included a range of performance indicators and league tables. Sometimes they have promoted competition between councils (for extra central government assistance and scarce resources) and sometimes they have promoted collaboration between councils and other relevant organizations (to tackle complex social problems and improve services). Ultimately, central government is able to reward or punish councils depending on Best Value inspection outcomes. Councils need to ensure services provided at the local level are competitive. They also need to work with different stakeholders to ensure those services are appropriate and delivered effectively.

Sometimes public sector organizations will need to respond to contradictory or competing demands coming from external sources that either facilitate or hamper attempts to get involved in innovative collaborative activities (Diamond, 2006). Under one set of circumstances, organizations and individuals may make choices that are very different from the choices that they would make under another set of circumstances (Immergut, 1998). However, if the objective is to gain the trust of local communities then the circumstances need to provide space for difference and diversity within partnerships to ensure local problems and priorities are addressed (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004).

The review of the literature on collaboration, institutions, and power provided the ideas and concepts used to construct a theoretical framework. This framework emphasises the interconnectedness of institutions and power at the macro-level,

organizational activities and actions at the meso-level, and the activities and actions of individuals at the micro-level. The aim is to help with the development of theory on collaborative advantage through a more in-depth consideration of the way that institutions and power can shape the political and social environment within which collaboration is located and must operate.

2.3 Theoretical framework and research questions

Little is known about the way that central government mandated collaboration and its housing, Best Value, and tenant participation policies have changed TARA and council relations. It is also unclear what opportunities exist for the types of instrumental and ideological collaboration described by Huxham (1996). Examples of this include the type of instrumental collaboration that leads to improved neighbourhood management and local services, and the type of ideological collaboration that allows TARAs to challenge and change dominant or established values and ways of working (see Figure 5).

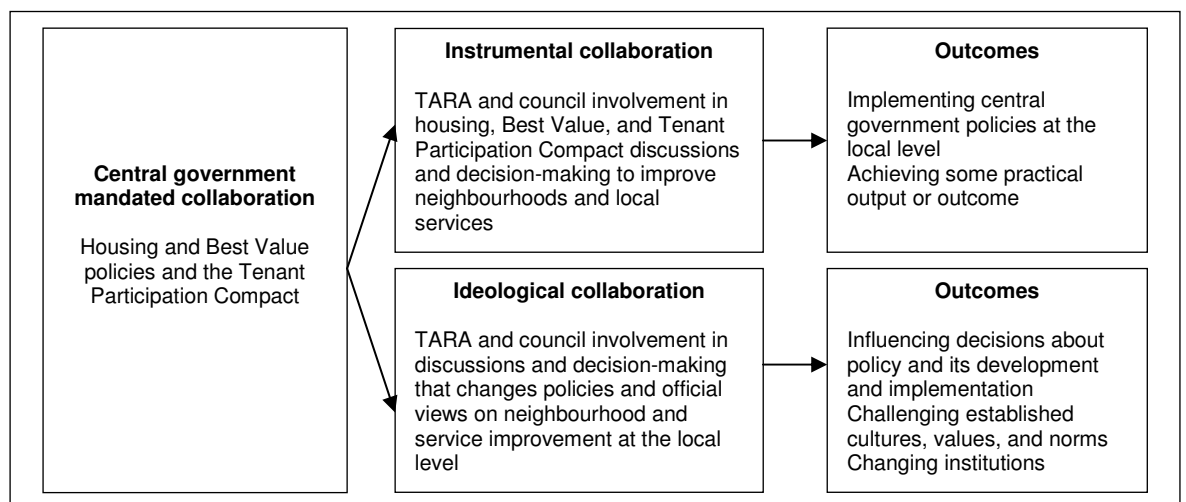


Figure 5: Mandated collaboration: possible opportunities and outcomes

At the macro-level of analysis, the focus is on institutions and power, 'organizational isomorphism' (organizations becoming more like each other), and the institutionalization of TARAs. The key concept from DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) theory on 'organizational isomorphism', used to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration, is the coercive pressure coming from institutions and organizations that can cause other organizations in a field to become more like each other (see the start of section 2.2). At the meso-level of analysis, the focus is on organizations and different types of collaboration, and at the micro-level of analysis, the focus is on the activities and actions of individuals in collaborating organizations. The key concepts from theory on collaboration used to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration are Huxham's (1996) views on instrumental and ideological collaboration and Huxham and Vangen's (2005) exposition of collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia (see section 2.1). The key concepts from theory on power used to examine and analyse institutional activities and actions, TARA and council collaboration, and the role of individuals in collaborating organizations are drawn from Lukes (1974) and include his thoughts on control over agendas, the avoidance of conflict, and non-decision-making (see section 2.2).

The main research question, that was set out in the introduction to chapter one, emerged from an interest in the relationship that exists between policymaking and policy-implementation processes and collaborations involving organizations at the local level. It is:

How have New Labour housing, Best Value, and Tenant Participation Compact policies changed the political environment and TARA and council collaboration?

A number of sub-questions emerge from a consideration of how institutional theory and theory on power can help to explain developments in TARA and council collaboration and collaborative outputs and outcomes at the local level. The sub questions are:

- cultures, values and beliefs (whose are dominant and why)
- power (how has it shifted away or not from central government and councils to TARAs)
- control over important resources (including funds, information, and expertise)
- the extent of top-down and bottom-up influence over collaboration
- opportunities for different types of collaboration (and the legitimizing of central government and council actions, or the empowerment of TARAs that have more control over their own and their area's destiny)
- stakeholder tensions and conflict (over power, resources, and the purpose of collaboration)
- collaboration and the inclusion or exclusion of different TARAs and activists.

As this creates potentially too broad an approach to take to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration, the main research question is enlarged with the development of some overarching sub-questions that address it and the sub questions that emerged from the discussion of theory outlined in this chapter. The first set of overarching sub-questions emerged from the literature on power and a gap in knowledge regarding the way different dimensions of power that operate at the institutional level impact on collaboration at the local level.

First overarching set of sub-questions

To what extent is TARA independence and integrity affected by the power and control that they have over important resources in collaboration and its purpose?

To what extent is TARA empowerment in collaboration dependent on the ability that they have to influence agenda-setting and decision-making processes?

The first question deals with TARA control over important resources in collaboration and stakeholder tensions and conflict (over power, resources, and the purpose of collaboration), The second question deals with the extent of top-down and bottom-up influence over agenda-setting and decision-making processes. Both questions deal with the issue of cultures, values and beliefs (whose are dominant and why) and power (how has it shifted away or not from central government and councils to TARAs).

The second overarching set of sub-questions emerged from the literature on institutional theory and a gap in knowledge regarding central government and its role in facilitating or constraining opportunities for different types of collaboration at the local level.

Second overarching set of sub-questions

Has mandated TARA and council collaboration affected opportunities for activists to be involved in instrumental collaboration to improve neighbourhoods and services?

Has mandated TARA and council collaboration affected opportunities for activists to be involved in ideological collaboration that enables them to challenge national housing policies?

Both questions deal with opportunities for different types of collaboration (and the legitimizing of central government and council actions, or the empowerment of TARAs that have more control over their own and their area's destiny) and collaboration and the inclusion or exclusion of different TARAs and activists.

This chapter has set out the theory on collaboration, institutions, and power that comprise the theoretical framework used in the examination and analysis of TARA and council relations and collaboration. The aim is to use theory on institutions and power to show how the institutional and political environment within which collaboration is located will impact on who can collaborate, how they collaborate, and decisions about the purpose and goals of collaboration. The focus is on situations where a history of often tense and difficult relations exists between public and community-based organizations that are obliged to collaborate but have very different cultures and types of power. Little is known about how TARA and council collaboration has developed since the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact. The research findings obtained through meeting and getting to know tenants activists, councillors, and council

officers in one locality involved in collaboration analysed in chapters five through seven show how the theory of collaborative advantage can be developed using aspects of theory on institutions and theory on power. The result is a theory of collaborative advantage that is better able to explain how different organizations emerge and develop (or not) and are able to participate (or not) in collaboration.

Chapter three sets out in detail the research methodology and methods used to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration in a case study area, and address the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

The Research Design

This chapter explains the reasons for adopting a qualitative research strategy and choosing a research design which following Bryman (2004) is a longitudinal single case study to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield. The chapter begins with an outline of the research orientation adopted, and the researcher's values and experiences that influenced the formulation of the main research question. Next, my reasons for choosing to undertake a case study in Sheffield to examine TARA and council collaboration are set out, and a modified grounded research approach and the role of the reflexive researcher are described. Then concerns about construct validity (the extent to which the research methods used provide data that helps to explain collaboration) and external validity or generalizability (the extent to which findings or effects can be applied to other organizations and people in other places at other times) are considered. Later sections of the chapter focus on research methods and data analysis. The final section of the chapter deals with ethical issues.

3.1 The research orientation

I became interested in TARA and council collaboration when I was a borough councillor in Corby, which is a small former steel-making town in Northamptonshire. I was born and brought up in Corby in Northamptonshire. Corby is a small town with a population of approximately 50,000 and up until the early 1980s; steel making was the main industry in the town (National Census 2001). My experience of the reality of TARA and council collaboration was quite different from the views expressed in much of the central government literature on

collaboration at the local level (see chapter 1, section 1.1). TARA and council collaboration was much more complex and messy and involved more conflict over power, resources, and its purpose than was conveyed in much of the central government rhetoric on collaboration.

In 1999, the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact (explained in chapter 1, at the end of section 1.1) changed the environment within which TARAs and councils were located. TARAs were more involved in different housing and neighbourhood consultations, as well as decision-making processes, but there were also new tensions and difficulties. For example, I had observed various debates and disputes over the purpose of different central government rules and regulations governing the Best Value review process, and the compilation of the new Tenant Participation Compacts.

My values and life experiences have influenced my views on the role of the researcher and the researched. They also influenced the development of my main research question on TARA and council collaboration, and the decision to use a type of ethnography that drew on ideas included in grounded theory to examine and analyse collaborative activities and actions.

Researcher values and experiences

My grandfather was a steelworker for more than fifty years and a staunch Labour Party supporter. I joined the Labour Party at the age of eighteen and was a borough councillor for eight years from 1995 to 2003. I attended many TARA meetings and met many activists and other tenants during my time as a councillor. In 2003, I resigned from the Labour Party in protest over the war in Iraq. I had

been a party member for twenty-two years.

Researchers come to the research situation with their own experiences of life (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). My concern about the welfare of communities and community-based organizations, and experiences of TARA and council collaboration caused me to think about the extent to which there was TARA-incorporation into council systems or TARA-empowerment through collaboration. To what extent was there TARA-incorporation to help implement national housing and neighbourhood management policies at the local level, or a transfer of power that enabled a TARA to effectively challenge and influence such policies? My interest in finding out how Best Value and tenant participation legislation had impacted on TARA and council relations and collaboration is reflected in the main research question and sub questions set out in chapters one and two. The overarching sub-questions emerged after a review of the different literatures on institutions and power, and the implications for TARA and council collaboration.

A case study provided data on TARA and council collaboration in complex and constantly changing real life situations. The intention was to examine and analyse the data, and use it to explain how central government policies impacted on, or were perceived as impacting on, the opportunities that existed for different types of TARA and council collaboration (see chapter 2, section 2.1). In particular, the intention was to explore the opportunities for instrumental collaboration to improve an area and local services and the ideological collaboration that entails challenging established values and ways of working.

The case study

The decision to undertake a single case study was, in part, a pragmatic one. I had limited time to spend in the field collecting data and then analysing it. In addition, I had limited finances to cover the travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs that would be incurred undertaking a number of case studies in different parts of England. The single case study also provided an opportunity to collect rich data on collaboration within the timescales set for the completion of a PhD. It would have been very time consuming to conduct a whole series of meetings and negotiations with council and TARA gatekeepers in different places in order to set up multiple case studies and obtain access to a range of activists, councillors, and council officers.

In the summer of 2002, I had meetings with the directors of a housing association in Birmingham, and a housing and tenant participation consultancy based in Wolverhampton. The charitable housing association called Optima Community Association came into being in June 1999 after a majority of tenants living on five inner city estates in Birmingham voted for a transfer of council-owned housing. The company called Partners in Change started operating in 1988 and provides consultancy services in housing, children's services, neighbourhoods, and engaging communities. In particular, the company provides research, evaluation, and policy advice on housing management and development matters, and the promotion of resident involvement and empowerment.¹⁴ The two directors provided information about their organizations involvement in work with tenants and identified potential case study opportunities. I eventually chose to undertake a case study in Sheffield after considering specific information provided by Partners in Change who had been working with TARAs in the city.

¹⁴ Partners in Change, at: www.partners-in-change.co.uk/index.php?cmd=page&cat=1

Sheffield is important in terms of understanding the impact of central government policies on TARA and council collaboration. The city had a history of often difficult tenant and landlord relations, tension between the council and an umbrella organization called START representing a majority of the city's TARAs, and conflict over the future of council-owned housing. In late summer 2002, I had initial telephone conversations with START and council representatives, and requested meetings with key individuals at their offices or some other convenient location to discuss, in detail, my interest in TARA and council collaboration, and my proposed research. I had meetings with the council's tenant participation manager at Sheffield town hall and a START board member at its offices in shop premises in the city centre, to talk about my research and the possibility of studying TARA and council collaboration in the city (see appendices 2,3,4 and 5). These discussions highlighted tensions between the council and activists over the autonomy of START and TARAs, and pressure to implement unpopular national housing and neighbourhood improvement policies at the local level. Meanwhile, a coalition of TARAs called Unity, opposed to the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs and challenging the legitimacy of START, had folded in 2001. Sheffield City Council and START decided to endorse the research, which improved my chances of obtaining useful data on TARA and council collaboration.

At the same time, it is possible to have an interest in the detail of a single case and produce findings or concepts used to confirm or modify existing theory (Barzelay, 1993; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lijphart, 1971). This is particularly likely in situations where the researcher is able to explore a wide range of phenomena such as the different benefits and tensions associated with collaboration at the local level. Stake (1994) has described the 'intrinsic' case study (where the case itself is of interest) and the 'instrumental' case study (where case study research improves understanding of

some phenomenon or phenomena). A single case study provided much data on little researched TARA and council collaboration in a real life situation. The focus was on how TARA and council collaboration was working in Sheffield after the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenants Participation Compact in 1999 (see main research question set out in the introduction to chapter one). At the same time, the aim was to address the overarching sub questions that emerged from a consideration of how institutional theory and theory on power might help to explain collaborative phenomena (see chapter 2, section 2.3). These phenomena included how organizations and individuals responded to institutional pressures to act in certain ways and how differences in stakeholder power mattered or not in influencing or determining how collaboration developed at the local level. In Sheffield, it was possible to consider how central government was involved in shaping collaboration and examine the extent to which genuine collaboration and the achievement of collaborative advantage is possible when large differences in power exist between the organizations involved. In brief collaborative advantage is concerned with organizations achieving something through collaboration that they would not have been able to achieve working on their own (see chapter 2, section 2.1).

Choosing somewhere where there are likely to be many surprising as well as ordinary examples of various phenomena can be very edifying (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the case of TARA and council collaboration it might help to make more explicit some of the tensions and difficulties associated with setting up and managing collaborative relations between organizations with very different cultures and values and where large differences in power exist between them. Sheffield had many similar housing problems to a number of other cities and towns in England. They included a backlog of housing repairs to deal with, and a lack of available

funds to undertake necessary repairs and modernization work. In some parts of the city a large number of tenants had purchased their homes from the council. There had also been much regeneration activity under different European and central government funded schemes to refurbish or demolish council-owned housing in different parts of the city. However, there was also much tenant activity in the city and the council reported there were eighty-four TARAs, representing approximately 87% of tenants, operating in 2001 (Sheffield City Council 2001). Furthermore, a majority of tenants were opposed to the idea of selling off or transferring council-owned housing to RSLs and there had been much protest against what they perceived to be the privatisation of social housing. The situation in Sheffield was dynamic and volatile with the potential for much continuing conflict over the purpose and management of TARA and council collaboration to deal with housing matters and improve local services (see chapter 4, section 4.3).

TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield was 'messy' because it consisted of relations between organizations with very different cultures, values, and ways of operating. A 'messy' research situation is often best suited to a case study approach to data collection and analysis, in situations where it is difficult to identify all of the different factors that might impact on activities and events (Robson, 1993). TARAs and councils operate in a fragmented housing environment where central government and other organizations (housing associations, development companies, and building firms) have an interest in housing matters and are involved in trying to influence decisions about the future of council-owned housing. When I received ethical approval for the case study from Sheffield City Council, START, and my supervisors, a commitment was made to provide feedback on research findings in the form of a summary report. A number of short one- or two-day visits to the city, over a period of nine months between the autumn of 2002

and late summer 2003, facilitated the arrangement and conduct of interviews (with TARA activists, councillors, council officers, and others with an interest in housing and neighbourhood matters). I was also able to attend various START and council meetings and events.

The choice of individuals to interview reflected a desire to talk with high-profile TARA activists, councillors, and council officers involved in influencing the shape and development of TARA and council collaboration. Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 361) say, *“Interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to understand our fellow human beings.”* I attended different meetings and events where housing or neighbourhood matters were being discussed. Sometimes a meeting or event clashed with other important interview or data collection and analysis work. Nevertheless, I was able to attend twelve important meetings or events and visit the offices of START and different TARAs.

The next sub-section sets out the reasons for choosing an ethnographic research approach to collect and analyse case study data on TARA and council collaboration. It shows how I was influenced by ideas and concepts developed in the grounded theory approach to research.

Ethnography and grounded theory

I adopted a qualitative, ethnographic research approach because the intention was to obtain people’s different perspectives on collaboration, and then understand the role of the institution and power in influencing or determining how organizations and individuals work together to achieve organizational and collaborative objectives (see Denzin, 1997; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Van Maanen,

1988). I was not interested in trying to discover statistically reliable relationships between different items of data or generalizable laws that would predict precisely the behaviour of organizations and individuals in a given collaborative context. Researchers often devote much time to research that seeks to discover universal explanations for phenomena in social settings (Gephart, 2004). My aim was to collect data using interviews, a questionnaire survey, observations, and secondary data in a real life situation to obtain insights into individuals' perceptions and interpretations of collaborative phenomena.

It may not be easy (or even possible) to obtain insights on complex or 'messy' phenomena using quantitative research methods that provide a simple snapshot of activities and events or produce de-contextualised statistical descriptions of different phenomena. An alternative is to focus on individuals and find out more about how they interpret their surroundings (Suddaby, 2006), understand the environment within which they are located, and create their own realities (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). In turn, it may be possible to enhance or develop theory by considering the contrast between everyday realities (what is actually going on) and people's interpretations of those everyday realities (Suddaby, 2006). Theory on collaboration might be improved by examining the role of institutions in policy formulation and ensuring it is implemented effectively at the local level and how local stakeholders interpret and respond to different institutional demands to organize and work in certain ways. Sometimes a higher level of abstraction (higher than the data itself) can be identified (Martin and Turner, 1986).

Although I did not adopt wholesale a grounded theory approach (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967) I did use certain key aspects of it to develop a systematic set of data collection and analysis procedures. Nevertheless, my use of institutional

theory and theory on power in the development of overarching research sub-questions went against the pure grounded theory principle of entering the field without strong adherence to any specific theory or theories. However, the use of data coding and categorization procedures similar to those associated with the grounded theory approach helped to ensure there was a rigorous process of data collection and analysis. In particular, the process of data analysis was made more rigorous through the careful comparison of data and the search for similarities and differences that underpinned the identification of emergent patterns and concepts. The aim was to investigate TARA activist, councillor, and council officer experiences and constructions of collaboration to establish links between extant theory on collaborative advantage, the grounded data collected, and the ideas and concepts that emerged when the data was analysed.

It is possible to use qualitative and quantitative research methods separately or in an integrated way to answer particular research questions (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Robson, 1993). I did not want to simply abandon the use of quantitative techniques but felt a qualitative approach that involved reflecting on people's interpretations of events to explain collaborative phenomena would be the most insightful way to address my research questions. However, a small quantitative aspect of the research comprised sorting different items of data into data categories and families as well as the minimal use of the Atlas/ti computer software package for qualitative data analysis, to produce basic data code and category frequency counts. Overall, the quantitative aspects of the data analysis were rudimentary because the intention was to obtain people's views on collaboration and analyse them to understand their interpretation of events rather than compile frequency counts of particular activities and actions or look for statistically valid correlations in data. The use of Atlas/ti was limited because it was

not useful in terms of helping to unravel the deeper relationships and meanings in the data collected on collaboration. It did not provide the type of tools that would facilitate the in-depth analysis of people's views on collaboration and how they formed and changed.

I adopted the principles of the reflexive researcher to try to avoid undue bias in data collection and analysis that might arise because of my sympathies for the TARA and its work.

The reflexive researcher

I had some sympathy for TARA action to protect tenants' rights and ensure there was a future for council-owned housing. However, the reflexive researcher must carefully consider the researcher role and researcher impact on the research situation and the researched. The researcher should think about how the values and assumptions that they bring to the research situation will impact on data collection and analysis (Bell, 1998). It is not possible to conduct unbiased research (see Phillips and Pugh, 2001) and *"Qualitative data analysis can be viewed as a personal activity that is elusive and difficult to document"* (Coffey, 1999, p. 137).

The reflexive researcher keeps a research journal and attempts to understand how different understandings of the researcher, the research, and the researched emerge as the research progresses (Riley *et al.*, 2003). They must set out their interests and motives for wanting to undertake a particular piece of research. The aim is to use interpretative and imaginative aspects of their research to explain phenomena and make explicit their own feelings about the research. Meanwhile, the researcher can use different theoretical and intellectual strategies to challenge their own assumptions concerning research methodology and methods (Marcus,

1994). In particular, the quality of qualitative research can be improved if the researcher thinks about their role, values, beliefs and biases, and how they impact on data collection and analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

I kept a detailed research journal, updated on a daily basis, between October 2001 and June 2005. The journal includes a description of the work done to find a suitable case study location and get access to key gatekeepers in the tenants and residents movement, and the city council in Sheffield and other relevant organizations. As the research progressed, I kept a journal on the time spent arranging and completing interviews and attending meetings and events, views on the development and management of the research, and different experiences, successes and failures. These notes helped me to think about and sometimes change aspects of the research process. I decided, for example, to interrupt less often during interview sessions, make better use of probing questions to seek clarification on issues, and take special care to avoid using academic or technical language that people might misconstrue or not understand.

I tried to be open and honest about how my values, beliefs, and life experiences influenced my views on TARA and council relations and collaboration. My sympathy for the TARA and its work sometimes made it difficult to understand the actions of the council or council officers. It was necessary to address a tendency to view the TARA as obviously 'oppressed' and the council as the obvious 'oppressor'. The diligent noting down of my thoughts and feelings in a research journal helped me to think about the council's position and its need to comply with central government policies at the local level. I also considered how TARA activist, councillor, and council officer views of me as an outsider coming to Sheffield from a university to study TARA and council collaboration might impact on the data

collection process.

My journal notes also helped in discussions with my supervisors and reflection on the progress of my research, researcher bias, and ethical issues. These discussions were useful during data analysis and the writing-up of research findings (see Figure 6).

Monday 18 August 2003

Again a large part of the day spent making notes for thesis - many chapters!

I have been thinking about how important it will be to be completely explicit about my background, history, life experiences, and where I am coming from in terms of my politics, my views, and opinions on life and issues, my biases and sympathies when it comes to the roles of community groups, the actions of government and its agencies, and the role and work of activists, councillors and council officers.

Frequent, in depth and frank reflection is essential. I will need to acknowledge my position as a researcher, limit the unwarranted ~~or~~ intrusion of my thoughts and views on the research that could compromise its value whilst explaining and 'celebrating' the sense in which my background, views and opinions inevitably form a part of the research and need not be seen in a negative light but can be a positive capture of interpretation, the social construction of reality, diversity, different perspectives on events. All of this backed up by careful reference to the data and its contents.

Figure 6: Research journal extract

The next sub-section focuses on the validity and generalizability of the research findings.

Validity and generalizability

An ethnographic research approach and the collection of grounded data increased the ecological validity of the research because there were many opportunities to get to know people and experience events in real life situations. The ecological validity of research is improved where it reflects the configuration and temporal arrangement of elements in a context (Campbell, 1986). Ecological validity is high where it is possible to gain a high level of access to the knowledge and meanings of those involved in particular activities (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Moreover, Norman (1970) suggests it is possible to generalise from a few or even a single case study if the data collected captures the interactions and characteristics of the phenomena under examination, because there are frequently likely to be similar findings that will arise in other similar situations at different times.

The activist, councillor, and council officer behaviours observed and recorded reflect what was actually happening in real life situations in Sheffield. Improving the ecological validity of research (carrying out investigations in real life rather than artificial situations) can also improve the external validity of the research. On my regular trips to Sheffield I was able to establish a rapport with key individuals, attend different meetings and events, and join in TARA activities (including a coach trip to the Houses of Parliament to protest against the privatisation of council-owned housing). The findings obtained from in-depth research undertaken in real life situations can improve understanding of organizations' and individuals' activities and action and help to explain similar actions and activities in other real

life situations. The external validity of research findings refers to the extent to which elements of the research might apply in other similar situations that will arise at different times in different places. The research on TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield produced findings that help to explain collaborative phenomena in the city and help to show how institutions and power might influence or determine other organizations' and individuals' actions and activities. In particular, the research findings highlight some of the tensions and conflict that can arise over control over important resources and agenda setting in collaboration that involves large and more formalized public sector organizations and small and less formalized voluntary or community-based organizations.

The modern language of validity and generalizability appeared first in the field of quantitative social science research (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Often pressure is exerted on the qualitative researcher (from quantitative researchers) to disclose facts about themselves and their research that indicate a commitment to 'objective' methods that will supposedly improve the validity of their research (Seale, 1999). In turn, these objective methods will help to improve the generalizability of research findings and their utility in terms of the extent to which they measure reality, produce statistical prognoses, and confirm or contradict existing research findings. However, my interest was in theoretical not statistical generalisations. Such theoretical generalisations obtained from the identification of patterns or concepts in my research data would help to explain collaborative phenomena and contribute to the development of the existing theory of collaborative advantage.

Qualitative research can be quite complex because *“There is the difficulty of dealing with the considerable amount of data which is generated during the course of research and the problem of the generalizability of the findings”* (Hussey and

Hussey, 1997, p. 71). Data triangulation comprised the use of multiple methods (interview, questionnaire survey, observation, and secondary data collection) to compile a comprehensive account of collaborative phenomena and individuals' experiences of collaboration. This form of data triangulation was enhanced by the collection of different types of data at different times (Stake, 1995) and the checking of information obtained from one source with information obtained from other sources (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The large amount of different types of data collected were compared and contrasted, and slowly relations and patterns began to emerge. The thoroughness of the process of comparing and contrasting different types of data is a valuable part of the qualitative research process in complex real life situations (Diesing, 1972; Stake, 1995) because it helps to reveal not only commonplace but more subtle and easily overlooked relationships and patterns in the data. The research findings helped to make explicit different people's perspectives on reality rather than reality itself (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and their validity was established through a process of checking, questioning, and theorizing rather than trying to establish a rule-based correspondence between findings and the 'real world' (Kvale, 1989).

A focus on transparency or honesty about how data was collected and analysed helped to ensure research planning procedures and decisions affecting how research findings were interpreted could be easily scrutinized. This transparency helped to improve the trustworthiness of the research or judgements about how well findings capture what was actually happening in collaboration in Sheffield. At the same time, the triangulation or comparing of research data obtained from different sources and reporting back information on observations to those observed to obtain their comments on emerging views and ideas (respondent validation) helped to confirm or refute different individuals' accounts of

collaborative events. These are all alternative ways of assessing the validity of qualitative research (see Bryman 2004). A grounded theory approach also facilitated a process of data categorization through the comparison of data items and a search for items that did not fit with emerging ideas or concepts and might mean thoughts or theories needed to be modified.

The research methods comprised semi-structured interviews, observation of meetings and events, a questionnaire survey, and the collection of secondary data (minutes, papers, and documents). The aim was to obtain a wide range of views and experiences of collaboration from TARA activists, councillors, council officers, and other relevant individuals with an interest in housing or tenant participation matters.

3.2 The research methods

Early preparatory work helped me gain an appreciation of Sheffield, and TARA and council relations in the city. I began by collecting archive and contemporary material on the council and TARAs (various minutes, newspaper cuttings, and papers) obtained from web-based searches and visits to Sheffield City Council, the offices of START, and Sheffield Central Library. I was also able to establish contacts with some key individuals in the City Council and the tenants and residents movement that helped me gain access to other potential interviewees and various meetings and events. These individuals became the lynchpins in an embryonic network of contacts and through a snowballing process, where an interviewee provides contact details for other potential interviewees, my network of contacts gradually expanded.

Nine themes that influenced the design of my semi-structured interview schedule emerged during pilot investigations of TARA and council relations and collaboration. The themes were the product of a combination of my thoughts on TARA and council collaboration; ideas that arose during my reading of various theories on institutions, power, and collaboration texts; and issues that emerged during preliminary conversations with activists, councillors, and council officers. The emerging themes were on the political opportunity structure, strategies to influence, history and context, power and authority, control over resources, the purpose of collaboration, instrumental collaboration, ideological collaboration, and governance issues (see Table 3 and appendix 6).

Table 3: Semi-structured interview schedule themes and the focus of questions

Emerging themes	The focus of interview questions
Political opportunity structure	The political environment and opportunities for participation in different types of collaboration
Strategies to influence	The different strategies that organizations and individuals use to try to influence other organizations and individuals
History and context	The history of tenant and landlord relations and the impact of very different TARA and council cultures and values on relationships
Power and authority	The different types of power and authority that institutions, organizations, and individuals have and use in collaboration
Control over resources	The control that institutions, organizations and individuals have over different resources, their allocation, and use; different resource dependencies; and the control or management of collaboration
Purpose of collaboration	The aims and objectives of collaboration, the contribution of different stakeholders, agenda setting, the conduct of meetings, and how conflict is recognized and dealt with
Instrumental collaboration	The collaborative opportunities that exist to manage or improve housing, neighbourhoods, and local services
Ideological collaboration	The collaborative opportunities that exist to challenge particular policies, values, and established ways of working
Governance	The traditions, customs, norms and rules that influence or determine the form that collaboration takes (political, social and bureaucratic systems; institutions, organizations and formal and informal structures and processes; the best value regime and the tenant participation compact; and the different roles of TARA activists, councillors and council officers in collaboration)

Understanding history and context involves finding out how the wider political and social environment within which tenants and landlords are located has impacted on tenant and landlord relations. Changing political opportunity structures will have helped to create or eliminate different types of tenant and landlord conflict over poor housing conditions, or partnership and collaborative working to improve housing and people's quality of life. How much power and authority different organizations and individuals have in collaboration will depend, in part, on three important things. First is the control that organizations and individuals have over important resources (funds, information, and expertise). Second is the status and position of organizations and individuals in a system or network of relations. Third is the effect of various dominant or established relationship rules, norms, and customs on people's thinking about what it is possible to achieve through collaboration.

The themes that emerged during pilot interview sessions provided ideas about how a semi-structured interview schedule (see appendix 7) that helped ensure discussions with relevant individuals were focused on pertinent housing matters. In addition, a small number of TARA representatives returned a short questionnaire survey sent out to TARAs affiliated to START. The information that these representatives provided about their experiences of collaboration provided useful additional material, used in the cross-checking of other experiences of collaboration obtained from a wider range of activists, councillors, and council officers.

The questionnaire survey

The START office sent out a questionnaire survey (only START board members had access to a confidential list of affiliated TARA contact details) to 350 activists in different TARAs across the city (see appendix 8).¹⁵ The purpose of the survey was to obtain additional views on TARA and council relations and collaboration from a wider sample of TARA activists than could be achieved through interviews alone in the time available to complete the fieldwork part of the research. The START board examined the questionnaire and objected to one question that asked activists to indicate whether their TARA had affiliated to START and, if it had not, to explain why.¹⁶ Some board members felt this question might elicit a critical response from some activists regarding START and its work that would not be helpful at a time when it was trying to build organizational capacity and its reputation. The questionnaires sent out had the offending question blacked out. However, the question was still legible on some questionnaires and some activists answered it. Other activists complained about the appearance of a blacked out question on the questionnaire.

A postage-paid envelope, addressed to the Open University Business School in Milton Keynes, was included with each questionnaire, which was designed to take approximately twenty minutes to complete. Forty-nine activists (TARA committee members) returned a completed or partially completed questionnaire (equal to a return rate of 14%). They comprised twenty female and twenty-one male respondents (and eight respondents who did not disclose their sex – see Table 4).

¹⁵ When the questionnaire survey was sent out to TARA representatives, the council estimated there were approximately seventy-five TARAs operating in Sheffield and approximately 50% of TARAs were affiliated to START.

¹⁶ I attended a meeting on 28 July 2003 with START board members to discuss the questionnaire survey that would be sent to TARA representatives and the problem with a question on TARA affiliation to START.

Table 4: The questionnaire survey (N=350)

Questionnaire returns	No	%
Female	20	40.8
Male	21	42.8
Undisclosed	8	16.4
Total	49	100

It is difficult, without further research, to comment on the relatively low response rate to the questionnaire. However, it may, in part, have been because activists were fatigued by the number of council and other surveys they were receiving or uncertain about the purpose of the survey at a time when START was in dispute with the council over its role and funding. The low response rate meant it was necessary to interpret with caution the findings obtained from the questionnaire survey data. For example, only disgruntled activists may have completed and returned the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the data obtained provided useful information about TARA and activist relations with the council, and conflict over START and its role.

Researchers need to decide how they are going to collect research data and what data they are going to collect (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). I used the semi-structured interview to collect the majority of my data on TARA and council collaboration. I decided to undertake a number of interviews partly because it meant I was able to meet face-to-face with activists, councillors, and council officers, and establish a rapport with interviewees that helped me to obtain information on collaboration. It was also possible to observe the disposition and behaviour of interviewees, which provided additional evidence regarding their experiences of collaboration.

The semi-structured interview

I developed a semi-structured interview schedule with questions designed to obtain data comprised of different people's views and experiences of collaboration (see appendix 3). However, it is often useful to impose as little structure as possible on the interview situation where predetermined responses are not sought (Saville-Troike, 2003). I used the interview schedule as an aide-memoire to stimulate interviewer and interviewee discussions rather than an inflexible set of questions asked in strict order and designed to facilitate an interrogative style of questioning. Nevertheless, I felt it was necessary to have sufficient structure (with occasional prompting or probing questions) to keep discussions focused on TARA and council collaboration, without preventing interviewees from telling their own stories, as far as possible.

I completed forty-two interview sessions with forty-seven interviewees (twenty-nine men and eighteen women). A few interview sessions involved more than one interviewee (see Table 5). I changed most interviewee names (except where the information provided by an individual already existed in published form in the public domain) to help to maintain a degree of anonymity at the wider level. However, it would be possible for some individuals at the local level and other diligent persons carrying out their own research to establish the real names of interviewees. The risk of damage to individuals if their real identities were discovered was reduced by the timescales involved in producing the final report on research findings which meant many interviewees had changed their jobs on the council or roles in the tenants and residents movement.

Table 5: Interviewees

Interviewees	M	F	Tot
TARA activists	14	9	23
Council officers	6	4	10
Councillors	4	4	8
Consultants	1	1	2
Academics	2	0	2
Civil servants	1	0	1
Tenant Participation Advisory Service	1	0	1
Total	29	18	47

The TARA activists interviewed were mainly past or present START board members (see Table 6).

Table 6: TARA activists interviewed

TARA Activists		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Patricia	START board member and chair of Jordanthorpe TARA	9 January 2003
Edmond	START vice chair and chair of Basegreen and District TARA	5 May 2003
Wendy	Treasurer of Batemoor TARA	6 May 2003
Delia	Chair of START (from March 2003 onwards) and chair of Batemoor TARA	6 May 2003
George	Company secretary, Wisewood Estate Management Board	23 May 2003
William	START board member and chair of Westfield TARA	4 June 2003
Colin	START board member and Hackenthorpe TARA	4 June 2003
Danny	START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA	5 June 2003
Norman	START board member, chair of Shiregreen TARA, and Shiregreen TMO steering group member	19 June 2003
Stewart and Arthur	Stewart – START board member and Gleadless Valley TARA; Arthur – chair of Gleadless Valley TARA	19 June 2003
Paul and Claire	Paul – START board member, chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, and Shirecliffe TARA member; Claire – North Sheffield Action Group and Shirecliffe TARA	20 June 2003
Gillian	Past START board member and chair of Leverton TA	11 July 2003
Ellie and Frank	Ellie – past START board member and past chair of Westfield Halfway TARA; Frank – Westfield halfway TARA	11 July 2003
Gerald	Past START board member and chair of Arbourthorne and District TARA	25 July 2003
Helen and David	Helen – START board member and chair of Firshill TARA; David – secretary Firshill TARA	25 July 2003
Jonathon, Martha and Kitty	Jonathon, chair of START (from December 2002 to march 2003) and chair of Hackenthorpe TARA; Martha and Kitty – Hackenthorpe TARA	3 June 2003
Michael	START board member and Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association	5 August 2003
Florence	Past START board member and chair of Longley Hall Farm TARA	5 August 2003

They included most of the key players in the tenants and residents movement in Sheffield. For example, Jonathon was the activist-elected chair of START at its AGM held in December 2002. He was also the chair of the Hackenthorpe TARA and had been a prominent activist involved in setting up the TARA coalition called Unity that had opposed what the group perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing. Delia was the chair of Batemoor TARA and became the chair of START in 2003 after Jonathon's resignation. Edmond was the vice chair of START and chair of the Basegreen and District TARA. Paul was a START board member and a member of Shirecliffe TARA. He was also the chair of the North Sheffield Action Group that was campaigning to stop the demolition of council-owned housing in the north of the city.¹⁷

I interviewed a number of leading councillors, who were mainly members of the controlling Labour group on the Council (see Table 7).

Table 7: Councillors interviewed

Councillors		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Tom	Liberal Democrat – deputy leader of the opposition and shadow spokesperson for housing	10 April 2003
Arnold	Labour – past cabinet member for housing and direct services	3 March 2003
Victor	Labour – cabinet member for health and social services	9 April 2003
Roger	Labour – cabinet member for neighbourhoods	9 May 2003
Christine	Labour – cabinet advisor on finance and performance	8 May 2003
Marjorie	Labour – cabinet advisor on neighbourhood regeneration	6 May 2003
Naomi	Labour – cabinet member for education	6 May 2003
Rosalind	Labour – leader of the majority party	4 August 2003

¹⁷ The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines an activist as someone who works hard undertaking practical tasks to achieve social or political change (see: <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/activist>). The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines activism as the use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change (see: http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/activism?view=uk). For the purposes of this study activists comprised a small number of citizens heavily involved in TARA and collaborative activities. These activists were the main players in terms of representing the views of tenants and residents and most were or had been START board members. They had special relations with councillors and council officers interested in housing and neighbourhood matters and participated in consultations and campaigns to influence decision making processes. Indeed, citizens can be engaged in discussions and involved in direct action (Young I M 2001) exercising power but interested in helping others with goals and interests of their own (Levine P and Nierras R M 2007).

For example, Rosalind was the leader of the council's controlling Labour group. Roger was the Labour councillor and cabinet member responsible for the neighbourhoods' portfolio that included housing matters and replaced the old housing committee. Marjorie was a Labour councillor and the cabinet advisor on neighbourhood regeneration, and Tom was the Liberal Democrat deputy leader of the opposition and shadow spokesperson on housing.

I interviewed a number of council officers with responsibility for housing and tenant participation matters (see Table 8).

Table 8: Council officers interviewed

Council officers		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Alison	Tenant participation officer	18 July 2002
Simon	Head of housing – operations	4 March 2003
Caroline	Tenant participation manager	20 January 2003
Philip	Senior housing officer, tenant liaison, Southey Green area housing office	3 March 2003
Diane	Acting area manager, Burngreave area	23 May 2003
Dominic	Senior housing officer, tenant liaison, Burngreave area	20 June 2003
Robin	Senior housing officer, anti-social behaviour and tenancy management, Crystal Peaks area housing office	17 July 2003
Robert	Housing manager, Manor, Castle and Woodthorpe Area	17 July 2003
Edward	Housing manager, Central area	18 July 2003
Linda	Executive director, neighbourhoods	04 August 2003

For example, Linda was the council's executive director of neighbourhoods, with responsibility for strategic housing matters and Simon was the head of housing (operations) responsible for day-to-day housing management matters. Caroline was the council's tenant participation manager and Alison, the council's tenant participation officer, worked with START and TARAs to enhance council and

tenant relations.

I interviewed a range of other people with an interest in housing and neighbourhood matters. For example, James Gorringe was a senior civil servant with the Tenant Participation Branch at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Ian Cole is Professor of Housing Studies and Director of the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. Phil Morgan is the chief executive of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), a central government funded national tenant participation organization working to promote tenant empowerment (see Table 9).

Table 9: Other interviewees*

Others		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Barry	Partners in Change – community consultant	16 December 2002
Professor Ian Cole*	Sheffield Hallam University	7 February 2003
James Gorringe*	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, tenant participation branch	13 November 2003
Rob Furbey*	Sheffield Hallam University	17 December 2002
Denise	Aldbourn Associates – associate consultant	4 November 2003
Phil Morgan*	Chief executive, Tenant Participation Advisory Service	7 August 2003

TARA activist interviewees provided a rich and extensive account of the development of tenants and residents movement organizations and their relations with the council. A smaller number of interviewees were key councillors, council officers, and other people with an interest in housing and neighbourhood matters. Some of these interviewees were also important players in the development or

* Interviewees real names

implementation of housing and tenant participation policies.

The reality experienced by people is often quite different for different people (Stake, 1995). For example, it is likely TARA activists, councillors, and council officers will have some similar but also some very different views on collaboration. In turn, people's similar or different interpretations of activities and events can be used to understand the processes by which they come to describe or explain the world in which they live (Gergen and Gergen, 2003) and help to determine what is going on in a particular situation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The descriptions that START board members provided of their experiences of collaboration would help to show how consensus or conflict over housing policies could develop within and between TARAs as well as between TARAs and the council. At the same time, the extent to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time will, in part, depend on the vicissitudes of different social processes, including rhetoric, communications, negotiations, and conflict (Gergen and Gergen, 2003).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 261) say, "*What the subject says depends upon various ideas about the interviewer and the interview context at more or less unconscious levels.*" Interview sessions took place in locations and at times convenient for interviewees. I arranged to meet interviewees in their own homes, at their workplaces, and in various pubs, cafes and public spaces. Sometimes it took many weeks or even months to arrange an interview session. Usually an interview session would take approximately one hour to complete. However, a small number of interview sessions took less than thirty minutes or up to two hours to complete. A small, portable, dictation machine was used to tape interview sessions. The dictation machine had no protruding microphone and was positioned as unobtrusively as possible on a convenient table or flat surface

between the interviewee and myself. Nobody refused permission to tape an interview session. However, on some occasions, there were problems with background noise (including customers in a café and the use of a pneumatic drill in the street) that made the taping of an interview difficult.

I was a researcher and a stranger from a university only able to establish rudimentary relationships with interviewees. Nevertheless, I believe smart but casual attire, a friendly and relaxed disposition, ice-breaking comments about my background, and avoiding the use of overly academic or technical language helped me to build rapport with interviewees.¹⁸ I tried, as far as possible, to let interviewees tell their own story about collaboration and used the interview schedule to steer them in a particular direction if the conversation drifted too far into an area not relevant to the research. Occasionally, I expressed my own views on collaboration during an interview session (often inadvertently) and interviewees said their views on collaboration were similar or different to mine. My interviewing skills improved over time as more interviews were completed. I learned to listen more to what interviewees had to say, interrupt less often, and make fewer references to my own views on collaboration that might result in skewed interviewee responses to questions.

Most interview sessions were straightforward and progressed without any significant problems. At the end of the interview session, an interviewee or interviewees could comment further on particular issues or the research. I thanked interviewees for their help and the contribution that they had made to the research then switched the dictation machine off. Some interviewees continued to talk about

¹⁸ I comment extensively on my efforts to make interviewees feel comfortable and relaxed in my research journal.

TARA and council collaboration with the dictation machine switched off. I later made notes on what they had said in my research journal. These journal notes helped to improve knowledge of TARA and council collaboration but they do not appear as quotes anywhere in this thesis. Unexpected incidents included forgetting to switch on the dictation machine, selecting the wrong recording settings, and placing the machine too far away from the interviewee or interviewees to record properly.¹⁹ On a few occasions, early on in the research, an interviewee did not turn up at an arranged interview location because they had forgotten about the date and time of the interview session. Contacting interviewees close to the time of their interview session to remind them about it became a routine part of day-to-day research activity.

It was not possible to arrange interviews with two key individuals. The first chair of START said, during a short telephone conversation, that she felt too upset by recent events surrounding her exit from the organization to talk about TARA and council collaboration. This statement was significant because she had been accused of working too closely with senior Liberal Democrat councillors who had wanted to transfer all council-owned housing to an RSL rather than representing the interests of all tenants in Sheffield. The office manager at START also said that she did not want to be interviewed. She was in a vulnerable position because her terms of employment were insecure and she was trying to adjust to working with a new START chair and board. Information gleaned from various minutes, papers, newspaper cuttings, and conversations with different activists, councillors, and council officers helped to fill in some of the gaps in knowledge about these individuals and their work.

¹⁹ My research journal contains detailed accounts of instances where there were problems with interview sessions and interviewees.

The observation of TARA activist, councillor, and council officer behaviour at different meetings and events was the next most important source of research data on TARA and council collaboration after the semi-structured interview.

Observation of interactions

I observed many hours of activist, councillor, and council officer interactions and behaviour (see Table 10).

Table 10: Meetings and events attended

Meeting or event	Purpose	Date
South Yorkshire Pathfinder: Housing Development and Management Strategy	Dealing with housing problems in areas of weak demand	Autumn 2002
Sheffield City Council: City Wide Forum	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Housing Development Programme	28 January 2003
Defend Council Housing, national lobby of Parliament	Prevent the selling off or transfer of council-owned housing to other landlords	29 January 2003
START Board	General Business	6 February 2003
Sheffield City Council, Cabinet	General Business	9 April 2003
Sheffield City Council: Service Standards (Housing and Direct Services and Development, Environment, and Leisure) scrutiny board	General Business	10 April 2003
Sheffield City Council: City Wide Forum	START's problems, planned Extraordinary General Meeting, and articles and memoranda of incorporation	8 May 2003
START Extraordinary General Meeting	Constitution and articles and memoranda of incorporation	22 May 2003
Sheffield City Council: managers	Sheffield First Partnership and the Sheffield City Strategy 2002-2005	23 May 2003
START inauguration	First meeting of a revitalized START	22 July 2003
Sheffield City Council: City Wide Forum	Neighbourhood commissions and the future of council-owned housing	24 July 2003
START Board	The 'Arms Length Management Organisation' (ALMO)	1 October 2003
Sheffield City Council: Special City Wide Forum	Neighbourhood commissions and the future of council housing	8 October 2003
START and TARA offices	Informal conversations	Various

I attended START board meetings – including an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) convened to decide the organization's future –, council cabinet and scrutiny committee meetings, and

council-convened citywide forum meetings (where TARA representatives and council officers gathered to discuss various housing and neighbourhood matters). It is important to be flexible and able to change plans when new and interesting opportunities arise (Saville-Troike, 2003). I received an invitation with two days' notice, for example, to travel on a coach with activists to a national lobby of Parliament, organised by Defend Council Housing to protest against housing stock transfers to RSLs, and meet the Labour MPs for Sheffield Clive Betts and Richard Caborn. There were also instances when it was not possible to attend a particular meeting or event. My intention, for example, to attend a particular START AGM had to be cancelled a day before it was due to take place because the START board decided attendance would be by invitation only and my name was not on the list of invitees.

I made copious notes in a small notebook that described the individuals who attended meetings, where they sat, and how they behaved. The council's cabinet and scrutiny committee meetings, for example, often took place in ornately decorated rooms in the imposing Victorian city hall. At these meetings, people would sit around large, well-polished, wooden tables with a chairperson at one end. Council officers would often gather in small groups and were inclined to behave in ways that reflected their particular professional status and training. They frequently spent much time trying to ensure individuals complied with council policies and procedures governing the conduct of businesslike meetings. START and TARA meetings, in comparison to council meetings, were usually much less formal affairs.

The next sub-section focuses on the secondary data (minutes, papers, reports, and newspaper cuttings) that provided a useful source of historical and background information on tenant and landlord relations and collaboration in addition to interview and observation data.

Secondary data

I used secondary data obtained from various minutes, papers, reports, and newspaper cuttings to help build up a detailed picture of Sheffield, its long and prestigious industrial heritage, the people who live in the city, and tenant and landlord relations. Much web-based searching and a number of visits to the offices of the council and START, and the central library in Sheffield facilitated the collection of secondary data. I trawled through old council minutes, newspaper cuttings, and other archive material. In addition, there were also various documents on housing and tenant participation matters obtained from academics, TPAS, and other organizations with an interest in housing and tenant participation matters. It took much time and patience to sort through all of the secondary data collected and identify the interesting and most relevant material. Some of this material was used in chapter four, which provides a detailed contextualised description of Sheffield, and tenant and landlord relations in the city.

The next section describes the analysis. It entailed the systematic coding and categorization of data to discover patterns and concepts that would help to explain collaborative phenomena and perhaps contribute to the development of a modified theory of collaborative advantage.

3.3 The data analysis

It is possible to produce “*A theoretical account that facilitates a discussion of the general features of the topic under study and is firmly based or grounded in the data collected*” (Martin and Turner, 1986, p. 142). I wanted to examine and analyse the research data collected on START and council relations and collaboration, and make some of the complex detail concerning the process of collaboration more explicit. The first stage of the data analysis was the transcription of the taped interview sessions with activists, councillors, council officers, and relevant others.

Transcription of interviews

The data analysis started with the transcription of forty-two taped interview sessions. Transcription was a way to get intimately involved with the detail of what different people were saying about START and council relations, and TARA and council collaboration. I used a transcribing machine to listen to taped interview sessions and word processing software to transform them into text files stored on a computer. Each taped interview session took between six and eight hours to transcribe. In total, it took around 300 hours to transcribe all of the taped interview sessions.

I was constantly involved in arranging or conducting interview sessions and attending meetings and events while transcribing completed interviews and thinking about what interviewees were saying about housing issues and collaboration. Sometimes it was difficult to transcribe parts of taped interview sessions because there had been problems with the dictation machine (not being set up correctly) or there had been too much background noise (in pubs, cafes,

and other public spaces). It was often necessary to rewind and replay sections of tape many times over to understand what an interviewee was saying. Occasionally a section of tape would have to be passed over and marked with question marks in the word-processed text.

The next part of the data analysis involved data coding which was the start of an iterative process of data sorting to reveal patterns and concepts in the data.

Data coding and categories

The manual coding of data comprised the annotation of printed interview transcripts, observation, questionnaire survey, and secondary data as well as research journal entries using different coloured highlighter pens (see figure 7).

1

There is a tenants levy of 10pence per week on rents which is collected by the council and distributed quarterly to tenants associations.

drive to get associations up & running

Initially there was a great push to get tenants associations up and running and not enough attention was paid to accountability and how funds were used.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Sheffield is divided into different areas each with an area housing committee which meets bi-monthly. Tenant association nominees sit on these committees with councillors.

Following the recent local government elections Sheffield has returned to Labour control from the Liberals. The chair's of all the area housing committees are now Labour councillors and they have significant power to control the agenda and flow of committee meetings.

POWER CONTROL
chair's of Area committees
(ruling party members)

But in area E (and others) the council's area housing committee meeting is considered by tenants representatives to be their meeting. Cllr Peter MacLoughlin was a tenant activist and now chair's the area housing committee in area E. He was also instrumental in drawing up a tenants association recognition document.

Tenants representatives meet with area managers (council officers) to decide the agenda for a meeting.

tenants reps meet with area managers to decide agenda for area housing committee meetings.

11 area housing committees

There are 11 areas in total in Sheffield (although areas B and C are amalgamating).

(10 when areas B & C amalgamate)

There are 85 tenants associations in total (they vary considerably in geographical size, levels of organization and activity).

85 TARA's in total?

1 Arbourthorne

An inner city area with approximately 3,500 homes covering a large geographical area. There is a financially powerful tenants association which has had little impact on the community. There is at the present time no chair. Power lies with Jim Cowan a previous chair and now the treasurer. There is a definite distinction between lower and upper Arbourthorne. The tenants association is reluctant to sign up to the council's recognition policy. There are issues among people living in the area about power and control. There has been intimidation and threats.

financially powerful TARA that has had little impact on community.

issues about POWER & CONTROL

TARA is reluctant to sign up to the council's recognition policy.

2 Stocksbridge

Jim Smith is chair of the tenants association and his wife is the treasurer. The area includes approximately 950 homes. The tenants association is largely a one man band. There was recently an inquorate AGM (less than 12 people attended). A

intimidation & threats.

TARA is largely a one-man band.

Figure 7: A section of coded and annotated transcript

I was comfortable with manual coding and it helped me to get very close to the research data. Interview transcript and other types of data were coded (given a relevant title or description) and a pair of scissors used to cut them into separate labelled pieces of data, which were grouped together into a number of data categories containing items of data with the same or a similar code (see Figure 8).

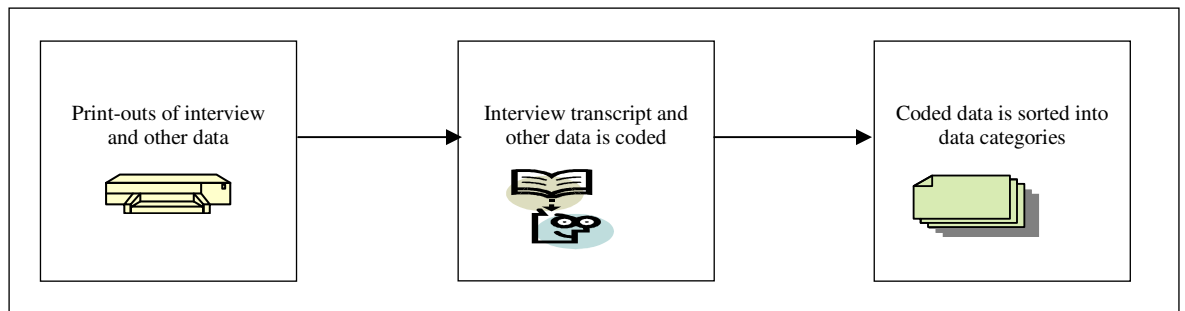


Figure 8: Identifying data codes and categories

The arrangement and re-arrangement (comparing and contrasting) of coded items of data into data categories facilitated the identification of tentative links between the different items of data.²⁰ Ideas and concepts that are components of institutional theory and theory on power influenced my thoughts about emerging data categories. Some items of data with the same code appear in more than one data category. For example, codes on transparency and accountability appear in a number of data categories whilst codes on the introduction an implementation tend to be concentrated in the data category on the tenant participation compact. I eventually identified twenty-four data categories in total. The data categories cover a range of themes that include power and influence, control over important resources, the impact of legislation on collaboration, negotiations and strategy, values and beliefs, conformity and conflict, and the issue of TARA institutionalization. These data categories are set out in more detail in the next

²⁰ My research journal contains notes on the process of thinking about research data and the coding and categorisation of data.

section on data families.

I experimented with computer-assisted qualitative data analysis using ATLAS/ti software that allows the researcher to electronically code and manipulate text in documents. However, computer programmes used to analyse qualitative data can distance the researcher from their data (Barry, 1998) and encourage the oversimplified or mechanistic analysis of data (Coffey, 1999). The software created a separation from the raw text that was discomforting for me. It was only used to produce some rudimentary tables that show the frequency counts for certain words and phrases (see appendix 9).

Sometimes there is an overemphasis on the coding of data at the expense of both interpretation (Suddaby, 2006) and the adoption of a flexible approach that helps to ensure against missing interesting or surprising relationships in the data (Locke, 1996). Insights into START and council relations, and TARA and council collaboration increased in number as the different data categories took shape.²¹ However, I tried not to get too embroiled in coding at the expense of reflecting on the research data, and emerging patterns and concepts. In turn, I adopted an approach to data analysis that involved reflecting on the researcher role and researcher bias in the interpretation of research findings (see page 79).

The next part of the data analysis involved comparing and contrasting data categories and then combining related data categories to form a smaller number of data families.

²¹ My research journal contains notes on my reflections on the research and relations between different data categories.

Data families

Different data categories were compared and contrasted to ascertain how they were similar or different from each other, and then grouped into a smaller number of data families (see Figure 9).

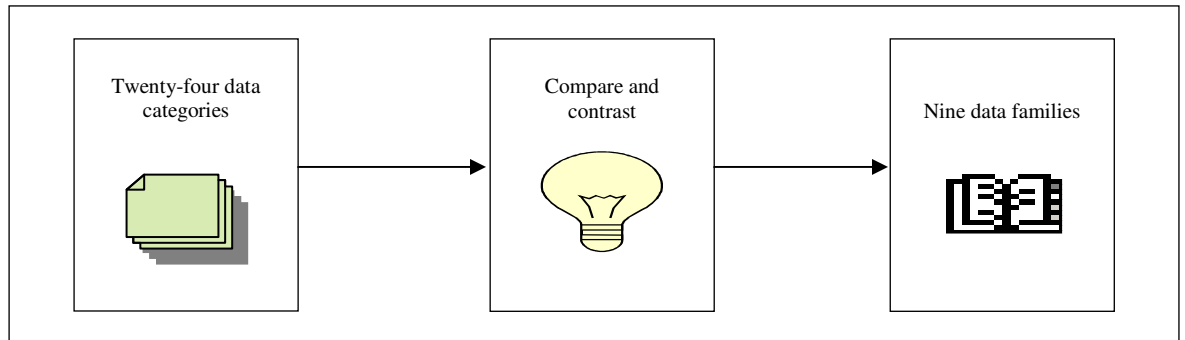


Figure 9: Identifying data families

The qualitative researcher does not have a problem with a lack of data, rather how to distinguish between or manipulate it (Wolcott, 1990). I began to fit the pieces of the data puzzle together by relating categories and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions (see figure 10).

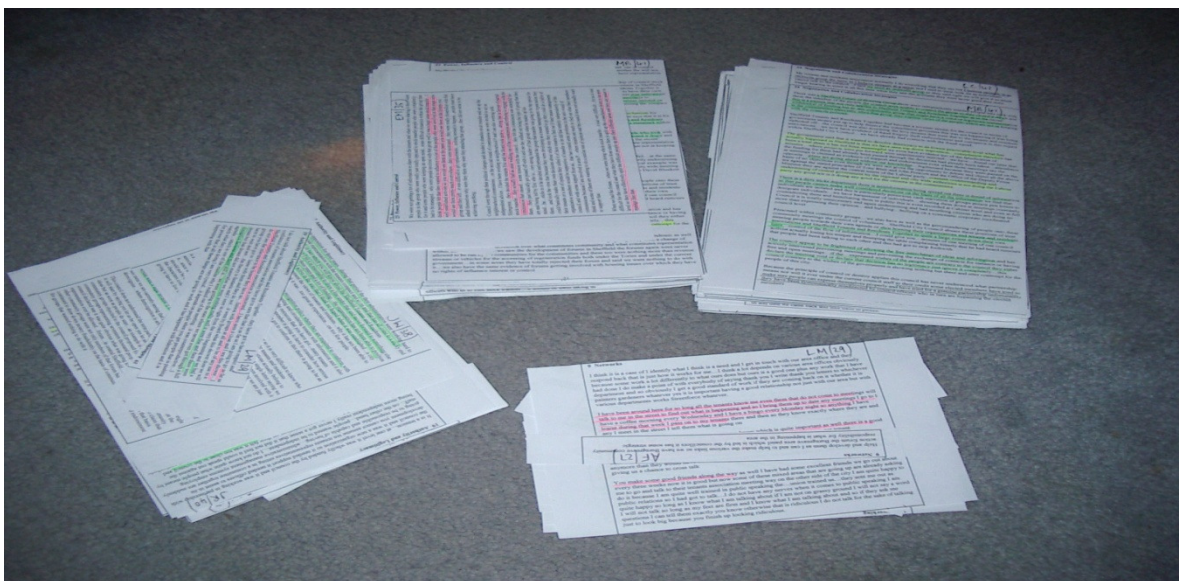


Figure 10: Coded sections of transcripts sorted into a data family and associated categories.

The four data categories in figure 10 are: power, influence and control; authority and legitimacy; negotiation and collaborative strategies; and networking that comprise the data family on power and negotiation.

The comparing and contrasting of data categories to discover data families was similar to the process of 'axial coding' described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Strauss and Corbin (1990). I identified nine data families with no data category allocated to more than one data family. The different data categories and families are set out in Figure 9.

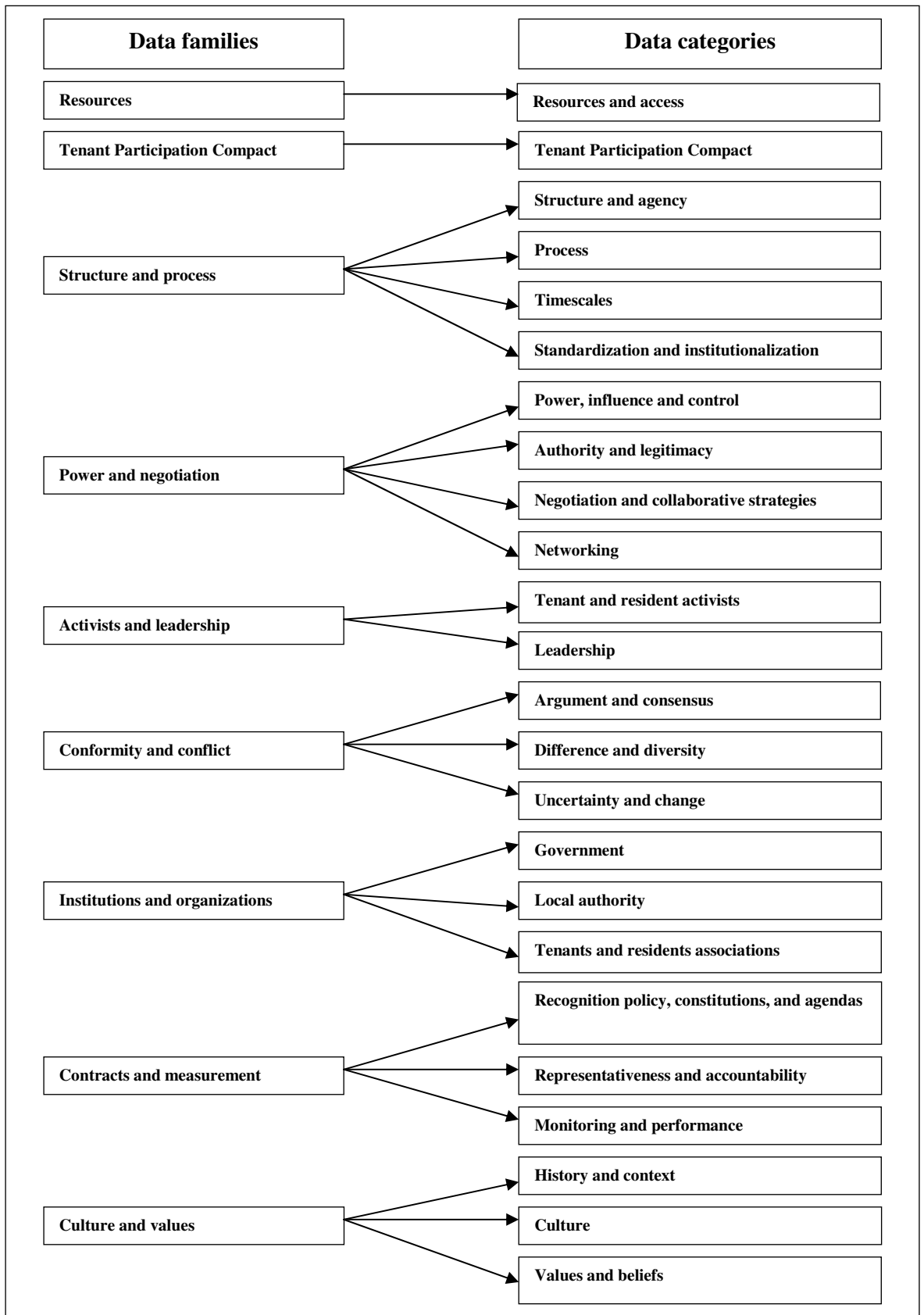


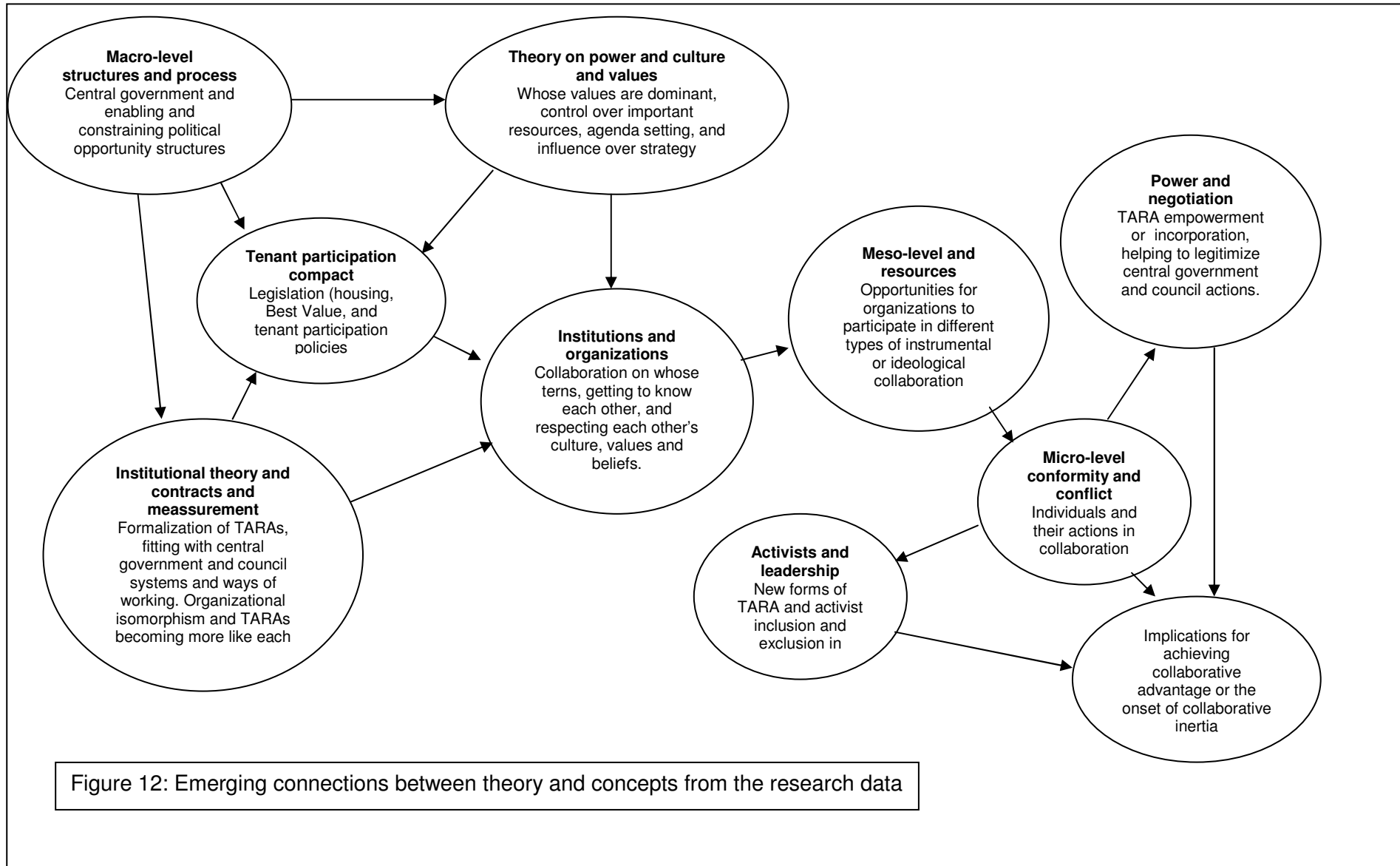
Figure 11: Data families and associated data categories

The different data families and the focus of the themes that they cover are listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Data families and the focus of the themes they cover

Data families and themes
Resources (who has control over important funds, information, and expertise)
The Tenant Participation Compact (its purpose and implementation)
Structure and process (collaborative arrangements and how collaboration is managed)
Power and negotiations (who has power and how it impacts on deliberations in collaboration)
TARA activists and leadership (the role of the activist in representing tenants)
Conformity and conflict (the pressure to conform and dealing with conflict)
Institutions and organizations (the role of institutions and TARA autonomy or incorporation)
Contracts and measurement (rules and regulations and the monitoring and evaluation of performance)
Culture and values (different institutional and organizational cultures and values and on collaboration at the local level)

An element of discovery is involved in data analysis as the researcher moves from the definition of data categories to thinking about patterns in the data (Martin and Turner, 1986) and tries to explain why things are the way that they are or appear to be (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The in-depth identification of relationships, patterns, and concepts involved the linking of ideas that emerged from the data analysis with institutional theory and theory on power (see figure 12).



My research findings and their implications for collaboration underpin the analysis of TARA and council collaboration provided in chapters five through seven.

Various ethical issues that the qualitative researcher has to contend with appear at various points in this chapter. The next section considers some of the more important ethical issues in more detail.

3.4 Ethical Issues

The role of the researcher should be an ethical and honest choice that fits with their feelings about research (Stake, 1995). I wanted to carry out research that helped to answer my research questions and respected the people involved in or affected by the research and its findings. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 288) say:

We must consider the rightness or wrongness of our actions as qualitative researchers in relation to the people whose lives we are studying, to our colleagues, and to those who sponsor our work.

Preliminary discussions with key gatekeepers included details about the purpose of the research and agreements about arrangements concerning the conduction of interviews and the reporting of research findings. There are risks involved in research for participants since they may be divulging sensitive information about themselves and others, and ultimately have little control over how that information is used (Stake, 1995). Shortly after the key gatekeepers had endorsed the research, the first potential interviewees were contacted, informed about the purpose of the research, and asked whether they were willing to be interviewed. They were told interview tapes would remain confidential and the property of the researcher. The interview tapes and transcripts would not be passed on to any

third party without the permission of the interviewee. It was possible to preserve a degree of anonymity because I stressed the quotations used in any report of the research findings would not be attributed to actual individuals (all the names used would be pseudonyms). However, individuals with an awareness of the research setting who read a report of the research findings might be able to identify some of the individuals from the quotations used.

It is likely that research conducted carefully and thoughtfully using a reasonable set of standards that help to prevent sloppy data collection and analysis will improve the integrity and quality of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The adoption of an ethnographic and grounded research approach that comprised systematic procedures for the collection and analysis of data helped to ensure a robust process of data collection and analysis. In addition, I was sensitive to people's feelings and took care to avoid breaches of confidentiality that might seriously damage trusting relations. The fact that key TARA activists, councillors, and council officers knew about my research helped to counter the problem of deception associated with some forms of research involving observation of people and activities.

However, there can be stakeholder tensions and conflicts that are deep rooted and more complex than is often apparent to the researcher working in a location for short periods. Some sensitive issues needed to be handled with care, including the unexpected crisis that developed within START and in its relations with the city council, which resulted in its eventual demise. Being researched can create anxiety and individuals may be harmed in situations where they have made disparaging remarks about powerful others (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Such anxiety and potential for harm to individuals increases in a crisis where there

is much anger and lots of recriminatory behaviour. I avoided taking sides on issues although this was sometimes difficult and I sometimes failed to remain entirely neutral. I also thought carefully about what interview material to include in the thesis to try to ensure individuals were not harmed.

The case study location was not anonymised because of the perceived difficulties involved in writing about it in a way that would preserve its identity. Anyone with a basic knowledge of Sheffield's history or geography was bound to recognise the descriptions of different events and places in the thesis. I also thought a powerful rendition of the research process and findings would depend, in part, on people reading the thesis and understanding Sheffield, its history, and the people who live there. Ultimately, it is important not to create bad feelings amongst stakeholders, which would mean future research in an area is jeopardised. Research that is found objectionable by the people studied may cause them to refuse access to researchers in the future (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). I tried to build rapport with individuals, respect their values and beliefs, and allow them to comment on the research, its purpose, and findings.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how I became interested in TARA and council collaboration and the impact of the New Labour government's Best Value and Tenant Participation Compact policies on TARA and council relations. In particular, it was my experiences of TARA and council relations during the time that I was a borough councillor, and how they differed from the rhetoric on collaboration coming from central government, that underpinned my desire to undertake research to study TARA and council collaboration in a real life situation. I decided to focus on investigating collaboration in a single case study location. This

decision reflected the limited time that was available to spend in the field collecting data and a desire to collect rich data on collaboration in a real life situation. Sheffield provided an opportunity to research relations between START, an umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs, and the city council. I was able to obtain data on TARA and council collaboration at a difficult time not long after Labour had taken back control of the council from the Liberal Democrats and abandoned plans for the Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer of all council owned housing to a Registered Social Landlord (see chapter 1, section 1.1). Meanwhile, there was tension and conflict over the role of START and its future within the organization itself, and within and between different TARAs.

I used an ethnographic and grounded theory approach to study START and council relations and collaboration close up in a real life situation. I was able to contact key stakeholders on my visits to Sheffield and get them to elaborate on their feelings about START and experiences of collaboration. The use of semi-structured interviews and the observation of meetings and activities enabled me to obtain information on the views and feelings of a range of key activists, councillors, council officers, and others with an interest in housing and tenant participation matters. Then, during the process of data coding and categorisation, different patterns and concepts began to emerge. At the same time, being a reflexive researcher and keeping a detailed research journal proved invaluable in terms of thinking about the progress of the research and modifying my research approach in light of experience and lessons learned.

Chapter four sets out the context of the research by providing information about the city of Sheffield, the city council, and START and local TARAs. Chapters five through seven set out the research findings and analysis, and the implications for

theory on collaboration. Chapters five through seven present the analysis and findings of the research. Chapter five examines and analyses the role of START in representing TARAs in Sheffield and collaboration. Chapter six examines and analyses the extent to which there was TARA incorporation (to fit with council systems and ways of working) or empowerment (with influence over strategic as well as day-to-day housing management matters) in collaboration. Chapter seven examines and analyses the onset and development of disorder and crisis in START and council relations.

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event
1967 (Autumn)	Rent strikes in Sheffield with tenants protesting against increased rents that they viewed to be unfair
1980 (October)	The Housing Act 1980 and the introduction of right to buy legislation
1997 (May)	The New Labour government is elected
1999	Report published on the state of the tenants' movement in Sheffield by council-contracted housing and tenant participation consultants
May	The tenants and residents association (TARA) coalition called Unity is formed
June	The Liberal Democrats take control of Sheffield City Council and propose a Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVST) of all council-owned housing to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL)
July	The National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts is published
	The Local Government Act 1999 and the introduction of the Best Value regime
2000 (May)	Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together (START) is recognised by the council as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs
July	The Local Government Act 2000 and the introduction of arrangements with respect to council executives, including elected mayors
July	TARA activists challenge a report on the state of housing in Sheffield produced by council-contracted housing consultants
October	A report appears in the <i>Socialist Worker</i> about the North Sheffield Action Group and its protests against the demolition of council-owned housing in the north of Sheffield
November	The Best Value inspection outcomes for Sheffield City Council's housing maintenance service is published
October	The chair of Unity reaffirms a commitment to fight the privatisation of council-owned housing
2001 (July)	A TARA recognition policy is a component of the revised citywide Tenant and Resident Participation Compact for Sheffield
Autumn	The TARA coalition Unity disbanded
2002 (May)	Labour takes back control of Sheffield City Council

CHAPTER FOUR

History and Context Matters

This chapter demonstrates the importance of history and context when seeking to understand the contemporary activities and actions of organizations and individuals. In the case of TARA and council collaboration this means understanding how activists knowledge of past tenant protest and collective action to obtain improved housing conditions has shaped their views on collaboration in the 2000s. In chapter one, in the introduction, the main research question was:

How have New Labour housing, Best Value, and Tenant Participation Compact policies changed the local political environment and TARA and council collaboration?

In chapter three, (section 3.1), the reasons for choosing Sheffield as the case study location in which to study the effects of these policies on TARA and council collaboration were set out. Briefly: in Sheffield, TARA and council collaboration seemed to be different, in lots of ways, to the collaboration described in the central government rhetoric on collaborative working. The political situation in the city in the early 2000s was tense. Labour had taken back control of the council at the local elections held in May 2002 and had abandoned the previous Liberal Democrat administration's plans for LSVST. However this chapter shows that there was still much tenant and council conflict over the future of council-owned housing. Activists that were aware of the history of often difficult tenant and landlord relations in the city had different views on the role of any umbrella organization that might be recognised by the council as representing a majority of the city's TARAs at a citywide level. The principal factors that made Sheffield an important place in which to study TARA and council collaboration were:

- a long history of frequently difficult tenant and landlord relations
- a well-established and dynamic tenants and residents movement
- a long tradition of municipal service provision
- a large amount of council-owned housing remaining in the city
- the emergence of different groups claiming to represent the views of tenants at a citywide level
- the council's controversial TARA funding and recognition policies.

An examination of tenant and landlord relations and mistrust that existed in Sheffield will help to make explicit the tension and conflict over housing futures that has helped to shape tenant views on contemporary housing and tenant participation policies. The evidence of contemporary tension and conflict over housing futures was obtained during the fieldwork part of my research in 2002 and 2003. The different views of activists, councillors, and council officers obtained and their implications for collaboration are examined and analysed in the remaining chapters. Initial pilot work that comprised visits to Sheffield and discussions with the council's tenant participation officers highlighted a number of other contextual factors that also made Sheffield an interesting place in which to study TARA and council collaboration. They included:

- the ongoing tenant mistrust of the council after the abandonment of plans for a Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVST)
- tenant protest against regeneration works that involved the demolition of council-owned housing
- tension in relations between START and the council over the future of council owned housing

- activists angry at the council's treatment of Unity and the circumstances surrounding its eventual demise

It is possible to have an interest in the detail of a single case and produce findings or concepts used to confirm or modify existing theory (Barzelay, 1993; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lijphart, 1971). Collecting data on TARA and council collaboration in a case study location where a crisis in START and council relations was developing proved to be invaluable. It meant there was heightened conflict over institutional and organizational power, values and beliefs that provided special insights into the complexity of the context within which TARA and council collaboration is located. Sheffield was an important place from a theoretical point of view because:

- TARA and council collaboration was frequently conflictual
- There were issues over TARA inclusion or exclusion in collaboration
- There were large inequalities of power between the council and TARAs
- The council and TARAs had very different cultures and values
- There was TARA and council conflict over the council's implementation of a TARA-recognition policy and its control over the use of important resources including a tenants' levy
- There was much political manoeuvring to find a solution to the city's housing problems

The aim was to elaborate on and refine theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage using ideas and concepts developed by institutional theory and theory on power. The case study goes on to show how institutional activities and actions can have an independent affect on collaborative activities and actions at the local level. Theory on collaborative advantage focuses on phenomena at the organizational level, but institutional rules and regulations can influence the way

that organizations emerge or develop, and the extent to which they are able to get involved in collaboration in the first place. More specifically, some aspects of an institution can take on an enduring quality and a separateness that can help to ensure a particular set of core values and beliefs about collaboration prevail. In turn, such a situation will have implications regarding the possible benefits and drawbacks of collaboration for organizations and the existence of different forms of stakeholder inclusion or exclusion.

Chapter five starts with a description of the situation in Sheffield as I found it in the summer of 2002. Then the chapter examines and analyses the role of START and activists' concerns about its relations with the council. Aspects of institutional theory help to show how central government policies and actions shaped the environment within which TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield was located. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) theory of 'organizational isomorphism' is the main institutional theory used to explain how organizations in a field can become more like each other as they adapt to cope with pressures in their environment. At the same time, stakeholders in collaboration can resist institutional pressure for conformity to institutional rules and regulations governing the purpose of collaboration. In Sheffield, there was TARA and activist protest against unpopular central government housing policies but central government was able to steer a course on housing strategy that helped to ensure it achieved its core policy objectives.

4.1 Sheffield and housing experiences

Sheffield is a large industrial city founded on steelmaking and metal manufacture. In 2001, it had an estimated population of 513,233 individuals.²² The city has a long history of tenant protest and collective action against poor housing conditions and unscrupulous landlords. In the early part of the twentieth century, a well-organized tenants movement in the city aligned itself with a wider Labour and trades union movement network to campaign for improved housing conditions and the construction of council-owned housing for rent. From the end of the First World War, in 1918, up until the early 1970s the city council was able to increase levels of municipal service provision, which included the building of council-owned housing.

The New Labour government was elected in 1997 and its Local Government Act (1999) introduced the Best Value regime. Under the same Act, the Tenant Participation Compact was introduced in 2000. Meanwhile, in Sheffield, the Liberal Democrats gained control of the council from Labour at local elections held in May 1999, only to lose it back to Labour at the next round of local elections held in May 2002. The two administrations adopted various similar and different approaches to try to solve the city's complex housing problems. At the time the research was carried out there were approximately 63,000 council-owned houses in the city (down from a peak of



Picture 1: Sheffield and steelmaking
(Photo: R. Dalziel)

²² See: Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Census Statistics for 2001, at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/

around 93,000 properties in the early 1970s) and approximately 26.5% of households were renting from the council (compared to a national figure of 13.2%).²³ There had also been a loss of council-owned housing which was the result of right to buy purchases after 1980 and demolition works carried out under different regeneration programmes (see chapter 1, section 1.1).

What people are told about past events by older family members and individuals in the community, as well as their own day-to-day experiences of living in a particular community or neighbourhood, will help to shape their views on issues and feelings about people that they meet. A corollary to this view is the extent to which tenants' memories of difficult tenant and landlord relations continue to bind them together and are a driver for collective action to protect council-owned housing from privatisation in the 2000s. Moreover, there is the question of how historical events and precedents have impacted on the development of the conditions needed for successful collaboration. These conditions include strong stakeholder ties, trust in each other, the creation of shared aims and objectives, inclusiveness, and open communications (Hood *et al.*, 1993; Kanter, 1994; Lasker *et al.*, 2001; Hardy *et al.*, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; and Osborne *et al.*, 2002).

The next sub-section examines the significance of people's joy at being able to move into new council houses with modern facilities, including inside bathrooms and toilets, and continuing tenant protest against high rents relative to household incomes in Sheffield in the 1960s.

²³ See: Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Census Statistics for 2001, at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/

'The luxury of a bathroom' and rent strikes in the 1960s

Many tenants in Sheffield had been involved in protests against poor housing conditions and demonstrated a strong commitment to good quality public housing in the 1960s (Baldock, 1971, 1982). Memories of past tenants' struggles live on today in Sheffield because tenants have knowledge of others' bad housing experiences. For example, an activist recalled the problems she and her family had experienced trying to find private rented accommodation in the 1930s. In a report that appeared in the *Sheffield Star* newspaper, on 30 May 2000, she described the benefits of having access to a new council house in the 1960s and "*The luxury of having two bedrooms, a kitchen, and best of all a bathroom*". Meanwhile, Danny, the secretary of Foxhill TARA, because of the memories that he had of his parents' experiences of living in slum conditions and moving into a council house in the 1960s, expressed a strong feeling of attachment to council housing. When interviewed he said:

My parents lived in a council house, which they shared with my grandmother. [They] grew up in what was basically a slum [that has] since been demolished [...] [eventually] they moved into a council house and were bloody glad of it.

There had been a massive expansion of council-house building after the end of the Second World War in 1945 but there was still much tenant protest, against high council rents relative to household incomes, for example. In Sheffield, there were rent strikes organized by tenants protesting against increased rents as late as 1967–8. Tenants, with the help of candidates that supported their cause, even managed to unseat an incumbent Labour-controlled council at local elections in the city (although none of the tenant-sponsored candidates were actually elected)(see Baldock, 1982). Professor Ian Cole, a Sheffield-based academic with

an interest in council housing, says:

*Tenants were influential in changing control over the council [...] for the first time in sixty years or something. That set in train a degree of suspicion between the [...] local Labour party and tenants' groups, and people have long memories.*²⁴

Baldock (1971) found tensions within the tenants movement, and tensions in relations between the council and the tenants movement in Sheffield that had been observable some thirty years earlier. He highlighted issues concerning tenant activists and their different interests, the views and interests of tenants in general, and the attitudes and approaches to relations adopted by councillors and officers despite the emergence of supposedly less hierarchical local government structures and new tenant participation initiatives. In the 2000s, to what extent were the same tenant and landlord issues still relevant? What happened to START and council relations, and TARA and council collaboration after the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact described in chapter 1 (section 1.1)? These questions are addressed in later chapters.

The next sub-section focuses on Sheffield in the 1980s and the impact of steel manufacturing plant closures and right to buy legislation that allowed tenants to purchase their homes from the council.

²⁴ Professor Ian Cole, specialist in housing studies and Director of the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR), Sheffield Hallam University.

Steel works closures and right to buy legislation in the early 1980s

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government introduced right to buy legislation in 1980, which gave tenants the right to purchase their homes from the council (see chapter 1, section 1.1). In Sheffield, many tenants who could afford to purchase their homes from the council did so under the right to buy legislation (as did tenants in many other cities and towns in the United Kingdom). By 2001, the number of houses purchased from the council by tenants or demolished as part of different urban regeneration programmes totalled around 30,000 in Sheffield (Sheffield City Council 2001). Often the more desirable council houses were purchased in an area, leaving an increased concentration of houses in need of substantial repairs or modernization.

Meanwhile, there were numerous steel and other metal-manufacturing industry sell-offs and closures throughout the 1980s (the Conservatives eventually privatized British Steel, a publicly owned company, in 1988). Steel and other metal manufacturing industry consolidations led to high levels of unemployment and much deprivation in different parts of the United Kingdom, including Sheffield. A significant number of tenants in the city that were unemployed or on low incomes were left living in houses that they could not afford to purchase from the council.

Stock transfer and the TARA coalition called Unity in the late 1990s

On 1 May 1999, control of Sheffield City Council passed from Labour to the Liberal Democrats. The Liberal Democrats considered the problem of rundown council-owned housing and decided to plan for Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVST) to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). An RSL is a not-for-profit housing association that has more freedom than the council does to raise extra finances for

housing repairs and maintenance from banks and other investors (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The New Labour government had placed a duty of Best Value on councils to deliver services to clear standards of cost and quality by the most economic, efficient, and effective means available (see chapter 1, section 1.1). LSVST was one way to help solve a substantial part of the city's housing problems but there was a considerable amount of tenant opposition to it. A TARA coalition called Unity was set up in 1999 to try to stop what some tenants perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats contracted a firm of housing and tenant participation consultants, called Partners in Change, to undertake a review of the tenants movement in the city. There was evidence of activists concerns about the role of any umbrella organization that might be set up to represent the views of TARAs at a citywide level. Edmond, START's vice chair, George, a home owner and company secretary of the Wisewood Estate Management Board (WEMB) and Paul, START board member and chair of the North Sheffield Action Group respectively said:

In Sheffield we used to have a Federation, a Tenants Federation, which was very strong, very independent, and it grew in the eighties.

You are talking about setting up an organization that can go into that negotiation [council] chamber and have the power, the influence, the knowledge, the authority to be able to say I am sorry I am afraid you are wrong there [...] that is the way to build its [the umbrella organization's] independence [...] as a separate force not beholden to the local authority.

My experience of working with other groups [...] like community groups [...] has been fine [...] but you find the closer that you get, the closer that the groups are to the council, the more the council pulls the strings.

A group of prominent activists felt the reason for bringing the consultants in was to manipulate tenant views and actions to ensure there was an umbrella organization operating that would do what the council wanted. The consultants concluded there should be some type of umbrella organization representing TARAs at a citywide level. A majority of the fifty-seven TARAs that the consultants had contacted felt it was important to have an umbrella organization representing their interests. Such an umbrella organization should be involved in negotiations with the council to decide on the formulation of strategic housing policy impacting on all TARAs and tenants in the city (Partners in Change 1999).²⁵ Norman, the chair of Shiregreen TARA, when he was commenting on the council's reaction to the setting up of Unity, said:

[An activist] and his colleagues [...] tried to set an independent tenants movement up and it got very dirty. They tried to set Unity up and [...] they [the council] went hammer and tongs against it and it got very dirty [...] It was a stronger movement [...] and the ones at the top were a lot stronger [...] not scared to say we want this, the tenants want that.

Unity established relations with the national campaigning organization Defend Council Housing, which was trying to stop the selling off and transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs. However, Unity's determination to stop the transfer of council-owned housing to an RSL and its forthright campaigning style did not fit with central government plans for the separation of housing strategy and

²⁵ Fifty-seven TARAs were approached for views on housing and tenants' movement matters out of a total of eighty-four TARAs.

management functions at the local level, or the council's views on TARA and council collaboration to improve neighbourhoods. At the same time, it is likely councillors and council officers in Sheffield were reluctant to think about retaining the status quo when there were large housing debts and a backlog of repairs to deal with. The council needed to obtain extra monies for housing repairs and would have had difficulty working with Unity because it was only prepared to consider ways to help solve the city's housing problems that fitted with the three central government approved options for the management of council-owned housing in the future.

START, housing consultants, and Best Value in the 2000s

Sheffield City Council contracted a firm of housing consultants to review the state of housing in the city but some high-profile activists feared there was simply a central government and council plan to find evidence to support the case for LSVST. Jonathon, START chair and former member of Unity, Dan another START board member, and David the secretary of Firshill TARA said:

You have got the people that did this study, [...] Chapman Hendy that did this study on selling the houses off, now they were something to do with government, they are a government body.

I realised that one of the things the council was doing, in cahoots with the government in actual fact, [...] they both seemed to be trying to abolish council housing, to get rid of it, to give another word privatise it.

We met with government inspectors from Whitehall and the Treasury, in October 2001, [...] and they did a survey and the head civil servant sat down there and he said 'you have no chance at all of getting one star never mind two stars for Sheffield [city council's housing management service] the only option you have is to go for full stock transfer.

The council's relations with START also began to become problematic not long after the council officially recognised it as the umbrella organization representing TARAs at a citywide level in 2000. Some influential activists felt START had had unfair help from the council to gain the TARA support it needed to be officially recognised, and was helping to obtain tenant support for LSVST. Paul START board member and chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, and Michael another START board member said:

[The] council more or less took over START and they were pulling the strings [...] they set the agenda and all this began strangely enough, not strangely really, [...] when the first hints of privatisation of council properties were on the horizon [...] from Maggie Thatcher's era carried on [...] enthusiastically by Tony Blair.

START has turned out to be a council controlled mechanism for imposing the central government agenda for stock transfer even though the government says that it is for the people to decide in the long term [what happens to council owned housing] we are not given the options.

The development of trust between central government and organizations at the local level will depend in part on the effect of historical events on people's views and opinions, and the openness (or not) of the contemporary institutional environment. In particular, this openness involves the way that different national

and local political opportunity structures are constructed. This will have implications for the creation or elimination of opportunities for inclusive dialogue, the serious consideration of different views and opinions on matters, and people's ability to challenge or change established cultures, values, and ways of working. New Labour housing, Best Value, and tenant participation policies changed the configuration of opportunities for TARA and council collaboration. However, in some parts of Sheffield, a history of tenant and landlord relations that were often confrontational and volatile had caused a considerable amount of mistrust of each other's values and activities. For example, there were activists who were wary of collaboration and there was wide variation in the likelihood that there would be TARA and council agreement on shared housing, and neighbourhood improvement aims and objectives.

On the 8 February 2000, the chair of Unity had told a *Sheffield Star* newspaper reporter that she represented the views of more than 20,000 tenants opposed to LSVST. She reaffirmed a Unity commitment to stop what it perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing in Sheffield. Unity "*would not support the transfer of homes or rubber stamp any council decision to do this and it was formally declaring war on the council.*" Another activist on the 30 May 2000 told a *Sheffield Star* newspaper reporter that council officers "*Did not seem willing to add tenants' views to the council's plans [for council-owned housing]*". Meanwhile, activists challenged the role of Chapman Hendy, the firm of housing consultants contracted by the council to review the state of housing in the city. Some activists felt that the council and the consultants (who were no longer working in the city during the fieldwork part of this thesis) had focused on the need to work to a central government agenda and had not represented the interests of all TARAs and tenants. These activists challenged the consultants' recommendations

concerning the future management of council-owned housing. The *Sheffield Star* newspaper reported on activists' mistrust of the consultants saying:

Consultants called in to advise on the future of the city's 66,000 council homes have been accused of 'scare mongering' by tenants' leaders. Representatives are angry at the way a report, sent to all tenants, suggests rents would have to go up to £84.00 a week by 2001 to pay for repairs and modernization if they voted to keep the council as their landlord (7 July 2000).

Jonathon, the chair of Hackenthorpe TARA, who had been a key member of Unity, criticised the way that the council had used the consultants to review the state of housing in the city. In particular, there was an issue concerning the way that a decision had been made about whether it would be possible or wise for tenants to keep the council as their landlord. When interviewed he said, "*We have had that many different consultants in and they are all government bodies*".

Also in 2000, TARAs and tenants who were members or supporters of the North Sheffield Action Group were protesting against council plans to demolish their homes. Some activists held roof-top demonstrations whilst others, at one stage, forcibly occupied the floor of the council chamber to voice their concerns about plans to demolish council-owned housing in the north of the city. Claire, one of the activists involved in this campaigning activity, said:

I was stood there and I was telling them all [the councillors] they were all behaving like silly children, they all want their heads cracking together and things like that. [The] Lord Mayor stopped the proceedings for about twenty minutes [...] [the] city solicitor [...] was trying to get me to go out and I said 'No way. It is our council house, I am stopping here, I am going to tell you what I think about you'.

I did not ascertain exactly who it was that formed START or when it emerged. However, in 2000, the council recognized START as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs. It did this when START obtained the backing of 50% plus one of the TARAs in Sheffield and by October 2001 it had obtained the support and affiliation of 57% of TARAs according to the council (Sheffield City Council 2001). The START board included a group of activists, under the leadership of its first chair Jean Gleadall, who took a pragmatic approach to building relations with the council. START moved into council-provided offices, let at a low rent, and received annual funding of approximately £100,000 from the council to cover operating costs. She was also willing to consider a range of housing management options including LSVST. START employed an office manager and the full board comprised twenty-two members (two from each of the city's eleven housing areas). In addition, up to three TARA representatives from each affiliated TARA (depending on its size) were eligible to participate in the election of START officers at the START AGM. At any given time around 150 tenants might be eligible to participate in the election of START officers according to the number of affiliated TARAs that had elected their full complement of representatives eligible to take part in the election process (START Standing Orders 2003). A tenant participation officer, on secondment from the council, worked half time with START, helping with management and administration tasks.

Sheffield City Council needed to solve the city's housing problems. A stock condition survey of council-owned housing in Sheffield estimated a repairs backlog of £473 million and 11,000 un-modernised pre-war homes, which at the current rate of investment would take twenty-three years to improve (Sheffield City Council 2001). If START helped the council to implement Best Value and tenant participation policies effectively at the local level, the chances of finding ways to

solve the city's housing problems in ways that were acceptable to central government might be improved. Under the Best Value regime, an assessment of the performance of council services takes place against central government defined Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). Inspection reports, published by the Audit Commission, give each council a star rating based on its performance that can range from zero stars, for poor performance, to three stars, for excellent performance (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The Audit Commission works in partnership with, but operates independently from, a number of central government departments (ODPM 2006). Sheffield City Council needed to obtain at least two stars for its housing management and estates services Best Value review inspection, to be eligible to bid for extra central government monies set aside for housing repairs and modernisation, and submit an ALMO application.

There are three central government approved options for the future management of council-owned housing. First, some type of PFI arrangement (that brings in investment from the private sector). Second, stock transfer, with the agreement of a majority of tenants, to an RSL (which obtains investment from banks and building societies related to its assets as well as rental income, and can receive central government grants made available for new social housing). Third, the creation of an ALMO that enables the council to retain ownership of its housing stock and devolve management functions to a board (of tenants, councillors, and other independent representatives) (see chapter 1, section 1.1).

Some influential activists felt the council was too involved in START affairs and there were low levels of trust amongst a significant number of tenants over START and council relations. Two activists – Danny, a START board member and the secretary of Foxhill TARA, and Florence, a former START board member and the

chair of Longley Hall Farm TARA – recounted, respectively, relations between the first chair of START and some Liberal Democrat politicians in 2000.

[The] chair of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together was far too damned close to the [...] councillor who was the [Liberal Democrat] housing bod [representative].

She [the chair of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] would agree [...] things with the councillors and when we had our meetings at the Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together offices [...] he [the Liberal Democrat cabinet member for housing] [...] was sat in that back office [...]. We were having our meeting, of course it can be heard.

There were also activists concerned about top-down central government influence over START and TARA affairs obtained through the prescribed work that needed to be done to compile citywide and local tenant participation compacts. Central government's National Framework for the Tenant Participation Compact set out how councils and TARAs should work together to produce a compact (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The compact would show how different stakeholders would contribute to improving an area and local services (ODPM 1999). However, Paul, a START board member, Shirecliffe TARA member, and the chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, said:

The government always trumpets, and the council, [that] it is all bottom-up this process [the compilation of compacts]. Not in any way whatsoever is it bottom-up it is top-down made to look like bottom-up.

The context within which TARA and council collaboration was taking place became more complex after the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact. The New Labour government wanted councils to

involve more tenants in discussions and decision-making on matters affecting them or the area in which they lived. In July 2001, Sheffield City Council introduced a TARA-recognition policy, which contained various organization standards that TARAs were required to meet and imposed a formal system of organization and work on previously informal and unincorporated TARAs (see chapter 1, section 1.2). The recognition policy helped the council to deal with the uncertainty involved in having to build closer relations with START and TARAs. It also helped the council to coordinate action to complete important housing service Best Value reviews, produce a citywide tenant participation compact, and meet central government's Decent Homes Standard. Victor, a Labour councillor and cabinet member for health and social services, suggested the council's TARA-recognition policy simply contained some basic organizational standards:

We [the council] have a recognition policy [...] and it basically lays down a whole series of [...] milestones, if you like, that people [tenants and residents associations] have to do during the year in terms of so many meetings, notification of meetings, setting an agenda [...] keeping proper accounts.

To be recognized, a TARA must have a viable membership, formal constitution (setting out its committee structures, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and how financial accountability will work), equal opportunities policy, and communications strategy (see chapter 1, section 1.2). It also needs to be financially sound and not affiliated to any political party or organization.

However, the TARA-recognition policy was a source of considerable tension between the council and TARAs, as was the council's controversial collection and distribution of tenants' levy monies on behalf of TARAs. Frank, a former member of Halfway TARA, says:

Everything that they [the council] want to do it is much simpler if you have got twenty different organizations, and you want them to do something, it is a lot easier for you, a lot less of a task, if you get them all to do the same thing [...] If you can get them to do that you are fulfilling the government's objective and you are still in control.

Essentially, the tenants' levy is a small sum of money added to the rents of participating tenants (homeowners can opt into the scheme and pay a lump sum directly to their local TARA), to support the work of TARAs in Sheffield. A TARA had to sign up to the TARA-recognition policy in order to be eligible to receive a share of council and tenants' levy monies, which was disputed by some TARAs. Meanwhile, in the autumn of 2001, Unity that claimed to have a membership of twenty-eight TARAs disbanded (Sheffield City Council 2001). It had not been recognised by the council and had managed to gain only limited access to politicians, information, and funds. After the demise of Unity, some tenants' housing concerns and grievances remained unaddressed, and its active members were still around, which meant there was much potential for conflict between them and the council over housing policy and the purpose of collaboration. In addition, a significant number of TARAs had not signed up to the recognition policy.

In the spring of 2002, an updated citywide compact was produced that showed how different stakeholders would contribute to improving housing and neighbourhoods in different parts of the city. The updated compact helped to satisfy Best Value inspectors that there was an effective umbrella organization representing TARA views at a citywide level. At the same time, it was acknowledged that many of the best council owned houses had been sold off after the introduction of right to buy legislation and the council had been left with a greater concentration of houses that needed substantial repairs and modernization

(Audit Commission 2003).

A single homogeneous group of tenants or activists with the same housing experiences and views on the future of council-owned housing did not exist in Sheffield. However, there had been strong tenant opposition to the Liberal-Democrat-controlled council's proposal to transfer council-owned housing to an RSL. Moreover, there was widespread tenant concern about the future of secure tenancies and rent levels under any new tenant and landlord arrangement that might arise. How different TARA and council differences of opinion on housing policy impacted on collaboration needs to be understood. It is also necessary to consider how disagreements over housing policy are located within a wider institutional and political context that will influence or determine how the council and TARAs work together (or not) on housing and neighbourhood matters.

In chapter five, the political and collaborative environment in Sheffield, as I found it in the summer of 2002, will be set out. The chapter will show how the key players identified in chapter three (section 3.2) and their relationships with each other in a particular institutional context help to explain why things were the way they were in Sheffield. More specifically, the chapter focuses on the effects of pressure on the council and TARAs coming from central government in the form of legislation, and expectations regarding the role of collaboration and collaborative outcomes at the local level. The aim is to understand how these pressures helped to shape the council's attempts to construct a type of TARA and council collaboration that would help it to solve its housing problems and meet central government's Decent Homes Standard by the 2010 deadline that had been set. The reaction of TARAs and activists to what they perceived to be top-down imposed types of collaboration and invitations to be involved in implementing unpopular housing policies is also

considered in detail.

The next section focuses on changed council structures and their impact on tenant and council relations, the consideration of housing matters by councillors and council officers, and TARA and council collaboration. Firstly, the loss of the old housing committee and how it altered tenants contact with councillors and council officers on a body solely dedicated to considering housing matters is explored. Secondly, the history of often conflictual tenant and landlord relations is examined to see how it affected tenants views on changed council structures and the implementation of the Best Value regime and the tenant participation compact.

4.2 The cabinet system and the future of council housing

In modern societies, formal organizational structures arise in highly institutionalized contexts. Organizations are often driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalised concepts of organizational work to increase their legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1991). Some of the issues that will arise in such situations will be about what power different organizations and individuals have, whose values and beliefs are important, and how different organizations and individuals are able (or not) to influence agendas and policymaking processes. Crucially, a changed institutional context might undermine the value placed on political representation at the neighbourhood level if there is reduced space in new structures for political debate (Davis and Geddes, 2000).

The Local Government Act (2000) forced councils to change their organizational structures and the way that they worked (unless they represented a population of less than 80,000 people). All councils except those serving a population of less than 80,000 had to adopt a system of government and governance at the local level that included a cabinet and either a leader, elected mayor or council manager.

Changed council structures

In May 2000, Sheffield City Council decided to have a leader and cabinet, with councillors electing the leader and the leader selecting seven councillors to serve in the cabinet (Sheffield City Council 2002). Each cabinet member is responsible for a different portfolio comprised of various cross-cutting council functions and policymaking processes (see Figure 13).

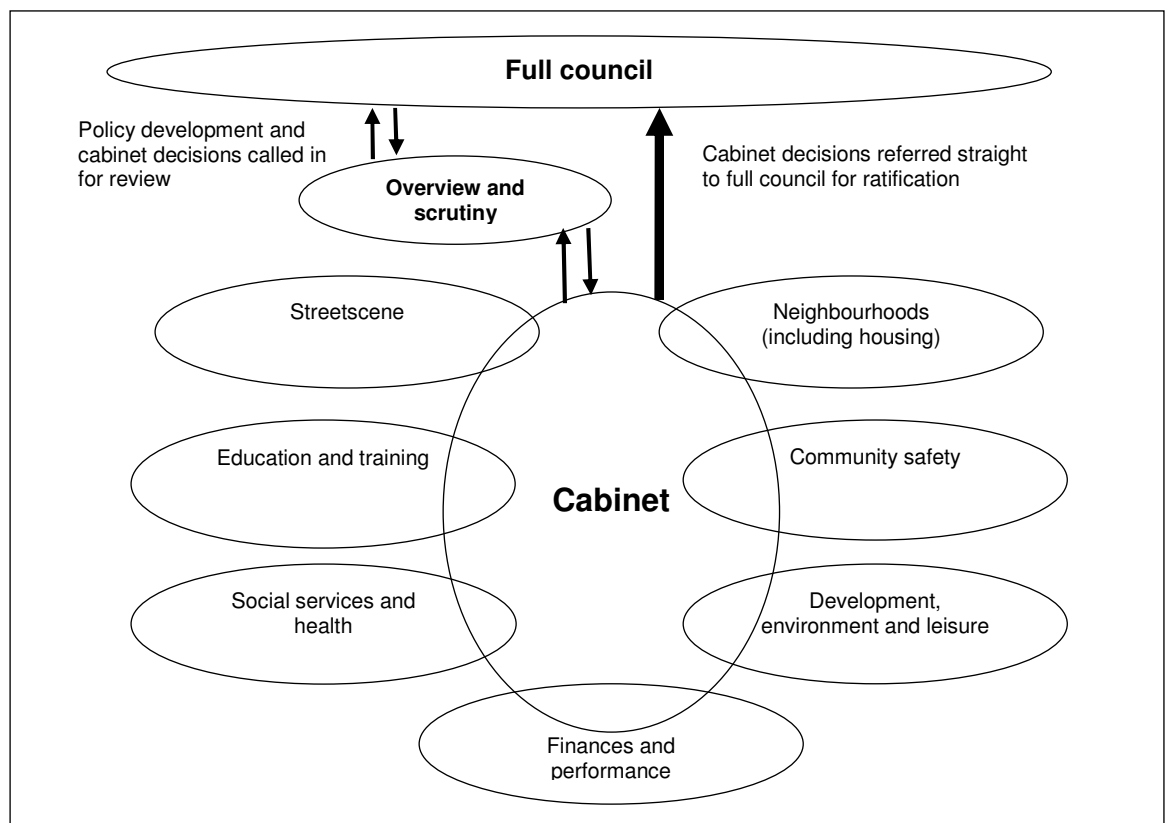


Figure 13: Sheffield City Council: the cabinet

The cabinet member portfolios are:

- finance and performance
- development, environment and leisure
- social services and health
- education and training
- neighbourhoods (including housing)
- streetscene (including pavements and grounds maintenance)
- and community safety

A cabinet decision will often go directly to a meeting of the full council (to which all councillors are invited) where a vote (show of hands) determines whether that decision is accepted or rejected as council policy (illustrated by the thicker arrow in Figure 10). However, the cabinet, in reaching a decision, can draw on the findings of overview and scrutiny committee investigations, and councillors or the scrutiny committee can call in cabinet decisions for review (illustrated by the thinner arrows in Figure 10). The council's overview and scrutiny committee consists of councillors from the different political parties on the council (the chair is usually an opposition party councillor). Central government guidance points out that the overview and scrutiny committee should adopt a non-partisan approach when conducting investigations (ODPM 2000). The overview and scrutiny committee can call on outside organizations and individuals to provide information about relevant policies or decisions that impact on people living in an area served by the council, or the delivery of local services. In the case of housing and neighbourhood matters, this could include TARA activists, tenants, relevant experts, and others with an interest in such matters (Local Government Act 2000).



Picture 2: Sheffield town hall
(Photo: R. Dalziel)

But, the traditional housing committee had been an important (although not perfect) direct channel of communication and influence for TARA activists that were in contact with the councillors and council officers that sat on or supported the work of the committee. James Gorringe, a civil servant at the Tenant Participation Branch, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Phil Morgan, chief executive at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and Tom, the Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader (of the opposition) and shadow spokesperson for housing in Sheffield, respectively said:

“It may be the case that some tenants activists and tenants and residents associations feel that they are less able to approach the council or work with it following the ending of the dedicated housing department [committee] and its replacement with a cabinet system”.

“We picked some tensions up from some [tenants and residents] federations, they in many cases had only just got someone on the housing committee”.

“The cabinet system is not good at individual working with individual tenants [and residents] associations [...]. We had a housing committee and then there were [...] housing sub-committees and then that fed out to fifteen housing area committees [...]. Some tenants [and residents] representatives sat on each of the housing sub-committees and well there was the housing advisory committee with one [tenants and residents] representative from each of the areas of the city with the chair of

[the council's] housing [committee]. So there was a lot of input from [tenants and residents association] housing representatives"

Activists could quickly identify the councillors and council officers involved with housing matters and lobby them to support or oppose particular housing policies or initiatives. The new cabinet arrangements reduced TARA and activist access to councillors and officers specializing solely in housing matters. Tenants' representatives had a right to attend and speak at meetings of the old housing committee, but could only attend and speak at cabinet meetings at the invitation of the chair (Sheffield City Council 2001a). This cut off important channels of communication. At the same time, the cabinet member for neighbourhoods has responsibility for a broad range of local services that include housing, demolition and regeneration projects, and one-stop-shop and neighbourhood office facilities. Less time is available for the cabinet member for neighbourhoods to spend on dealing with only housing matters.

In turn, by 2001, a number of partnership or collaborative regeneration projects had been or were operating at a regional or local level in Sheffield. The connections between these different projects, and how TARAs and tenants were involved in project planning and implementation activities, needs to be considered. In particular, the intention was to discover how the different organizations involved in collaboration were involved in determining the levels of top-down and bottom-up inputs into the development of housing strategy. It might then be possible to determine the way that housing strategy helps to inform decisions about the merits of policies such as tenants' right to buy their council homes from the council, stock transfer to RSLs, and the demolition of council-owned housing.

A plethora of partnerships

Paradoxically, a tension sometimes exists between the formation of meta-strategies at the institutional level to structure inter-organizational fields and relationships (Alexander, 1991) and the extent to which organizations and individuals are able to challenge orders and rules (Hirsch, 1997). There was much European and national government funded partnership working at the regional and city level to decide strategic neighbourhood improvement policies in Sheffield. However, the extent to which national, regional, and local action to improve neighbourhoods was jointly planned and implemented varied considerably.

For example, in Sheffield in 2001, there was a joint European Union and United Kingdom funded Urban Regeneration Programme operating (the city was designated an Objective 1 area, which is the highest category of European support, in 1999). This programme provided funds to support the development of businesses and social enterprise and the economic turnaround of deprived communities. Meanwhile, the South Yorkshire Housing Renewal Pathfinder initiative was dealing with housing market weaknesses in the South Yorkshire area, and there had been a Yorkshire forward planning exercise, which had produced the South Yorkshire Sub-Regional Action Plan and Regional Planning Guidance. The sub-regional action plan included a section on housing needs, markets and affordability, and the regional planning guidance provided a regional framework for the provision of local authority development plans for housing and other local services.

At the city level, different neighbourhood regeneration initiatives had been or were operating. They included the City Challenge Programme (1992) and the Single Regeneration Budget (1994) that the Conservatives had introduced and the New

Deal for Communities (1998) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (2000) that New Labour had introduced. At the same time, the Sheffield First Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had been set up that comprised the council and various organizations with an interest in neighbourhood and local service matters. The LSP partnership was involved in producing a Citywide Strategy to help coordinate action to create a shared long-term vision for the city and build a strong economy, successful neighbourhoods, and inclusive and healthy communities. The Citywide Tenant Participation Compact contained information on how tenants could get involved in consultations on housing services, and the way that different stakeholders would help to ensure housing service and neighbourhood improvement objectives would be met.

Council-convened Citywide Forum meetings that TARA representatives, councillors and officers attended provided an opportunity for discussions on housing and neighbourhood matters, and a chance to decide on priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods and local services. Some of the information the council obtained from Citywide Forum meetings was used to support the development of overarching Neighbourhood Planning Frameworks and Housing Investment Service Plans (HISPs). The overarching frameworks steered stakeholder activities towards finding ways to improve the living and working environment in an area through different land use, housing, transport, and leisure policies. At the same time, the council produced fifty-three separate HISPs describing housing management service plans and priorities for an area over a twelve-month period and ways to secure the investment needed for housing repairs and modernization (Sheffield City Council 2002a).

At the May elections, in 2002, Labour took back control of the council and had to

deal with the same complex mix of variously connected and unconnected national, regional, and local housing strategies and problems that the Liberal Democrats had needed to grapple with.

Strategy and tactics

The New Labour government may have genuinely wanted more tenants involved in housing matters and influencing management processes and budgets through collaboration. However, it is useful to understand the different intended and unintended outputs and outcomes delivered by the complex partnership-working arrangements at the national, regional, and local level that were dealing with housing problems. In addition, there is an issue concerning the implementation of the New Labour tenant participation policies described in chapter one (section 1.1) and the extent to which they enable TARAs to influence different relevant housing strategies. An expansion of PFI, RSL, and ALMO activities occurred at the neighbourhood level, and new ways to influence housing discussions and decision-making emerged after the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact. The impact of these developments on TARA and council collaboration, its capacity to influence different housing strategies, and TARA and activist inclusion and exclusion will be addressed in chapters five through seven.

Barnes *et al.*, (2002) have elaborated on how different institutional processes of exclusion can be environmental, discursive, and regulatory in nature. The environmental causes of exclusion can include institutional cultures and values that influence the design of collaborative structures and processes. In turn, these structures and processes will enable or constrain organizations' and individuals' involvement in housing discussions and decision-making to agree priorities for

action to improve local services. A discursive cause of exclusion may also consist of a dominant institutional language of collaboration that values some types of knowledge and experience over others, which means some organizations and individuals are disadvantaged in collaboration. Then there are the regulatory causes of exclusion that can include institutional rules and guidance that prescribe ways of working that some organizations and individuals are more able or willing to adopt than other organizations and individuals. A part of the New Labour political culture focuses on self-help through collaboration and the monitoring of collaborative activities using new forms of regulation and evaluation. This political culture will have helped to influence or determine councils' decisions about what organizations and individuals they want to engage with and how they want to engage with them. This is an important point because it means that collaboration might not be successful even when organizations meet many of the criteria needed to ensure that it is (see chapter 2, section 2.1).

Collaboration may not be successful because institutional pressures and constraints result in some organizations that should be involved being excluded early on or not even emerging in a particular political environment in the first place. Much theory on collaboration including the theory of collaborative advantage (Bruce *et al.*, 1995; Eisenstadt *et al.*, 2003; Foley and Mundschenk, 1997; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Mattessich and Monsey, 1992; Nidamarthi *et al.*, 2001; and Simonin, 1997) fails to adequately address the issue of institutional involvement in the creation of particular political opportunity structures. More specifically, theory of collaborative advantage fails to deal adequately with the circumstances within which organizations are able to emerge and develop (or not) at the expense of potential organizations that are not able to emerge at all.

Some of the essential components for the operation of a successful collaboration include having a broad-based membership, clear purpose, shared vision, open communications, and the buy-in of partners (Reilly, 2001). How will the history of tenant and landlord relations in Sheffield, and different central government housing and tenant participation policies combine to determine the success (or not) of TARA and council collaboration in the city? In particular, there is the way that these things affect the chances of collaboration at the local level producing the levels of inter-organizational co-operation needed to achieve the collaborative advantage that Huxham and Vangen (2005) have described. Here, collaborating organizations are able to achieve organizational objectives that they could not have achieved working on their own, as well as collaborative objectives. For the council and TARAs trying to work together in Sheffield, central government appeared, in different ways, to have both enabled and constrained the development of the environmental conditions needed to ensure collaboration is sustainable, as discussed in section 4.1.

There may also be a mobilization of arguments so that some issues are effectively organized into debates and some issues are effectively organized out of debates (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). The New Labour government's focus on promoting just three approved options for the management of council-owned housing meant there were likely to be only limited opportunities for the council to consider other housing management options put forward by TARAs and activists (see chapter 1, section 1.1). In May 2002, Sheffield's newly elected Labour-controlled council needed to obtain at least two stars (where no stars is poor and three stars is excellent performance) following the Best Value inspection of its housing management services (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The council needed this inspection outcome to be eligible to obtain extra central government monies for

housing repairs and modernisation works, and submit an ALMO bid. The council could not easily consider the merits of housing management options for council-owned housing, other than the three preferred by central government. A failure to satisfy central government that there was appropriate and approved progress towards solving the city's housing problems might result in reduced access to needed funds, and even central government intervention to take control of housing functions and services.

It is not simply through laws that central government can achieve its aims, but a process of 'governmentality' or more general tactics of government (Foucault, 1978). These more general tactics can include obtaining organizations' and individuals' support for government actions through recourse to core values, customs, and beliefs about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. A New Labour language of collaboration founded on a perception of particular types of trusting and mutually beneficial relationships emerged after it was elected in 1997 (Clarence and Painter, 1998). However, it was perfectly possible for this new language of collaboration to become a rather authoritarian project that imposes a given model of community on organizations and individuals (Calder, 2004). For example, the new Labour language of collaboration might serve to maintain a number of existing biases in the way that different types of knowledge and experience are viewed and valued in collaboration.

It might be possible to obtain TARA and activist support for housing and tenant participation policies based on their involvement in central government approved forms of collaboration. This approved collaboration would enable a TARA to obtain access to important central government and council controlled resources that it might need to operate effectively. Nevertheless, the TARA might be involved in collaboration and decision-making processes, but lack the power and control over

agenda-setting and decision-making processes needed to ensure it is 'genuinely' empowered. By this, I mean the TARA is given the power to influence high-level housing strategy and policymaking, as well as comment on day-to-day housing and neighbourhood management matters if that is what it wants.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored tenant and landlord relations from the 1960s to 2002 in Sheffield (before the fieldwork part of the research for this thesis was carried out in 2002 and 2003). The issues that emerge demonstrate how historical and institutional factors help to shape the relationships and expectations of the stakeholders involved in TARA and council collaboration. In Sheffield, a long history of frequently difficult tenant and landlord relations meant there were activists who had knowledge or experience of difficulties finding decent living accommodation before council-owned housing was widely available. Even after much council-house building, at the end of the Second World War, there were still many housing problems. These problems included dealing with the rent strikes in 1967, the loss of council-owned housing following the introduction of right to buy legislation in 1980, the turmoil caused by the demolition of council housing, and finding ways to get tenants to consider the option of stock transfer to an RSL.

Activists' awareness of past struggles to obtain access to better quality housing influenced their views on the role of contemporary TARA and council collaboration. There was what Bhaskar (1983, p.83) has called '*a binding of the present by the massive presence of the past*'. On the one hand, there was pressure coming from a group of influential activists with a strong attachment to council-owned housing. On the other hand, there was pressure coming from councillors and council

officers who needed to find ways to solve the city's housing problems and satisfy Best Value inspectors that appropriate action was being taken to address those problems. Much mistrust of central government and its commitment to council-owned housing existed amongst activists who were struggling to influence housing policy through consultations on the future of council-owned housing. This culminated in the emergence of different groups claiming to represent the views of tenants at a citywide level.

To what extent did the New Labour government's housing and tenant participation policies, and Sheffield City Council's actions to implement those policies help to remedy or exacerbate extant tenant concerns about the future of council-owned housing and different housing problems? The Local Government Act (1999) introduced the Best Value regime. In 2000, under provisions contained within the Act, the Tenant Participation Compact was introduced. After the introduction of the Local Government Act (2000), councils changed the way that they were structured to comply with the requirement to adopt and set up new executive arrangements. In Sheffield, traditional committees were replaced with a cabinet and leader model. However, the abandonment of the traditional housing committee resulted in a loss of tenant-representative access to councillors and council officers who were part of a committee dealing solely with housing matters. At the same time, the council's controversial TARA-recognition policy and control over the tenants' levy increased tension between the council and TARAs over the control of important resources. This tension was exacerbated by activists' and tenants' mistrust of housing consultants contracted by the council to review the state of the city's housing. The TARA coalition called Unity emerged to fight what it perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing, but was not recognised by the council. Tenants had previously told consultants, contracted by the council to review the

tenants movement in the city, that any umbrella organization set up to represent the views of TARAs at a citywide level would need to be independent from the council. The council's subsequent recognition of START as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs was controversial. Some activists felt the council wanted to work with a compliant umbrella organization that would help it to implement national housing policies effectively at the local level. In turn, opportunities for tenants to challenge government housing policy or develop their own ideas on housing and neighbourhood management were limited.

On the one hand, it is possible to observe the effects of pressure on councils and TARAs coming from central government to implement national housing and regeneration policies effectively at the local level. On the other hand, it is possible to observe the effects of pressure on central government and councils coming from TARAs and tenants. A number of influential activists, who knew about the historical struggles to obtain access to council-owned housing, wanted adequate opportunities to develop their own ideas and ways of working together to satisfy community needs through collaboration. There may be an institutionalization of organizations that occurs when there is a movement from voluntary association as a form of civic action to voluntary organizations as institutional forms (Tonkiss and Passey, 1999). In chapters five through seven, institutional theory and theory on power provide ideas and insights that help to explain how central government policies, and a particular history of tenant and landlord relations in an area, impacted on contemporary TARA and council collaboration. The aim was to see whether there was any TARA institutionalization and, if so, to what extent it was problematic (or not). What evidence is there of TARA institutionalization that is problematic in terms of the contribution that TARAs make in different deliberations, and the outcomes of TARA and council collaboration? How do TARAs operate as,

first, independent organizations making a unique contribution to collaboration or, second, re-designed organizations that fit with central government and council-prescribed ways of working?

CHRONOLOGY

Sheffield in the summer of 2002

At the May local elections Labour became the majority party presiding over a hung council.

Liberal Democrat plans for the Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVST) of all council-owned housing to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) were abandoned.

The council needed to obtain favourable housing management and estate services Best Value inspection outcomes to be eligible for a share of extra central government monies made available for housing repairs and modernisation works.

Many tenants remained mistrustful of the council and some suggested a fourth option for the management of council-owned housing (in addition to the three central government approved options).

The fallout from the demise of Unity remained problematic with some important TARA and tenant housing concerns and grievances not addressed effectively, and activists who had been aligned with Unity still present.

Tension and conflict existed between some TARAs and activists, and the council over the way that the council recognised START as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs.

Tension and conflict existed amongst TARAs and activists over the role of START, and the council officer seconded to work with START on a part-time basis, as well as its relations with the council.

START's dependence on the council for funds and office space was problematic.

The council was concerned about START, a falling TARA membership, and a failure to agree on a constitution and business plan.

Changed council structures had impacted on TARA and council relations with the loss of the old housing committee that dealt solely with housing matters.

TARA and council conflict existed over the council's TARA-recognition policy, its purpose, and its implementation. A significant minority of TARAs had not signed up to the policy.

TARA and council conflict existed over the council's control over important resources, including the tenants' levy (a small sum of money collected with the rents of participating tenants to support TARA activities).

CHAPTER FIVE

The Role of START

This chapter uses ideas and concepts that are part of the institutional theory on organizational 'isomorphism' developed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) to examine and analyse TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield. First, the intention is to ascertain the extent to which New Labour policies have created a particular type of mandated collaboration. Second, the findings from this investigation will help to show what affect the national political environment has had on the type of TARA that has been able to get involved in mandated collaboration. Third, the task is to establish how central government has enabled or constrained the development of opportunities for TARA-involvement in different types of collaboration to improve neighbourhoods, or challenge dominant strategies and values. The focus is on addressing the second overarching set of research sub-questions identified in chapter two (section 2.3). The sub-question is:

How has mandated collaboration affected opportunities for instrumental collaboration to improve neighbourhoods and services or ideological collaboration which results in challenges to central government thinking and policies?

The chapter shows how a dominant central government language of collaboration helped to shape START and council relations, opportunities for involvement in different types of collaboration, and activists' capacity to influence relevant agendas and decision-making processes at the local level. The involvement of START in the implementation of key components of national housing policy (including the separation of housing strategy and management functions, and solving housing debt and maintenance problems) is also considered in detail.

Then TARA and activist resistance to what they perceived to be the council's inappropriate involvement in START affairs is explored.

The chapter starts with a description of the situation as I found it in Sheffield at the outset of the fieldwork part of the research for this thesis in the late summer of 2002. Comments made in early conversations with a director of the firm of housing and tenant participation consultants called Partners in Change help to inform this description. The comments ranged across issues that included the work that the consultants had conducted with tenants in the city, the role of the first chair of START, and the remit of the council's tenant participation officer (seconded to work with START on a part-time basis). In addition, various newspaper cuttings, reports, and minutes collected on visits to the central library, city hall, and START's offices in Sheffield provided information about the council and its relations with the tenants and residents movement in the city. The aim was to explore the political environment within which TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield was located. More specifically, the chapter focuses on some key tenant and landlord issues:

- what happened to START and council relations after Labour took back control of the council from the Liberal Democrats in May 2002 and abandoned the idea of LSVST
- how the council's drive to get TARAs to sign up to its TARA-recognition policy impacted on TARA and council relations
- what impact the council's need to obtain good housing management and estate services Best Value inspection outcomes had on its relations with START, and TARA and council collaboration.

An in-depth examination of these issues provides insights that help to explain the beginning of a breakdown in START and council relations:

- They show how pressure on the council coming from central government to find approved solutions to housing problems shaped council actions in collaboration.
- They provide examples of TARA and activist resistance to what they perceived to be top-down imposed collaboration and the privatisation of council-owned housing.
- They help to clarify the role of START, the purpose of collaboration, and who has power and control over important resources and agendas.

Often a single or small number of quotes from one or more individuals constitute the evidence used to explain or justify a particular view on START or collaboration. These people's views are central to the evidence because they were the key players involved in TARA and council discussions and collaboration in Sheffield. They comprised a small number of people with power or influence gained through representing tenants or their position on the council.

5.1 The situation in Sheffield in the summer of 2002

Labour had taken back control of Sheffield City Council, from the Liberal Democrats, at the May 2002 local elections. There had been widespread tenant opposition to the Liberal Democrats' plans for LSVST and this had helped Labour to win the elections. However, the new Labour-controlled council needed to find new ways to solve the city's housing problems when it kept its election promise and abandoned the plans for LSVST. The council still needed to deal with a

serious housing debt problem (see chapter 4, section 4.1) and meet the central government devised Decent Homes Standard by the 2010 deadline that had been set (see chapter 1, section 1.1). Meanwhile, the council did not have access to sufficient finances of its own to carry out needed housing repairs and modernisation works.

At the same time, some activists felt it important that the council had not adequately addressed tenant grievances and concerns after Unity had folded. First, tenants were worried about the possibility of increased rents and changed conditions of tenure if there was a transfer of council-owned housing to an RSL. Second, tenants were uncertain about what would happen if they lost the ability to hold local councillors directly accountable for housing management and maintenance matters (see chapter 4, section 4.1). Meanwhile, much tension and conflict existed between activists on the START board and between START board and other TARA activists over the role of START, its relations with the council, and the activities and actions of the tenant participation officer seconded by the council to work with START on a part time basis.

Tension and conflict over policy

In 2000, Sheffield City Council had set up a new cabinet system of government at the local level (see chapter 4, section 4.2). It comprised a leader, elected by sitting councillors, responsible for selecting seven councillors to serve in the cabinet (each in charge of a portfolio, which includes different cross-cutting council functions and policymaking processes). Key individuals in the council, and the tenants and residents movement with an interest in housing matters were involved in a political and collaborative environment that had changed markedly since the introduction of these new local government structures:

- At the political party level, the powerful leader of the Labour-controlled council was working closely with her colleague who was the cabinet member for neighbourhoods (and responsible, amongst other things, for housing matters).
- The council had created a number of new service directorates and senior management positions. From a housing perspective, the two most important managers were the new executive director of neighbourhoods (with overall responsibility for housing policy and management matters) and head of housing operations (responsible for the day-to-day functioning of housing services).
- The first chair of START and the chair of Hackenthorpe TARA (a former high-profile member of Unity who was emerging as a strong challenger for the position of START chair) were key players in the tenants and residents movement.

Other key activists included the vice chair of START, the chair of Westfield TARA, the secretary of Foxhill TARA, and the chair of the North Sheffield Action Group (that was campaigning to stop the demolition of council-owned housing in the north of the city) (see chapter 3, section 3.2).

In 1999, the housing and tenant participation consultants called Partners in Change had estimated there were eighty-four TARAs (varying in size from those representing the tenants in a single tower block to others representing an area comprised of more than 3000 households) operating in the city. These TARAs were involved in different activities (ranging from the organization of social events

and outings to the coordination of campaigning and protest activity on housing matters). They were also subject to different degrees of formalization (but usually as a minimum had an elected chair and secretary and held regular meetings). Some TARAs that were concerned about the council's TARA-recognition policy had not signed up to it: they could not (because of a lack of evidence of appropriate committee or meeting structures) or would not (because tenants opposed the council's control over tenants' levy monies and the stipulation that TARAs should have no more than £3,000 in the bank) (see chapter 4, section 4.2).

It was a council requirement that at least 50% of the city's TARAs plus one had to be members of START before it could be officially recognised. START had achieved this target in May 2000, but there were still a number of TARAs that had not affiliated to START. By late summer 2002, TARA membership of START had begun to fall, and some senior councillors and officers were becoming increasingly concerned about START, its internal problems, and the fact that it probably no longer represented a majority of the city's TARAs. Linda, the council's executive director for neighbourhoods, said:

Instead of all the fighting and the ins and outs of who sits where on what and the rest of it, what the structure is, if [START] and the tenants movement could be more focused on saying what are the improvements it wants to see and holding the service to account to deliver to that I think that would be a big step change really.

START had also failed to agree on a constitution and business plan and some prominent activists were involved in a campaign to challenge the authority of the first chair of START (who declined to be interviewed saying she was too upset by the wrangling to talk about her work with the organization). She had adopted a

pragmatic line on the issue of stock transfer and had been willing to consider its possible benefits. However, her past relations with Liberal Democrat councillors and the continuing involvement of the council in START affairs remained controversial matters for some influential TARAs and activists. One group of board members were supporting the first chair of START while another group of board members opposed her pragmatic approach.

The council wanted to get tenants in different parts of the city to adopt central government approved housing management options that would help to solve the city's housing debt and repair problems (see chapter 4, section 4.1). The Best Value inspection of the council's housing management and estates services and the first citywide tenant participation compact had both recently been completed. The council was keen to obtain Best Value inspection outcomes that would mean it was eligible to receive extra central government monies made available for housing repairs and submit an application to set up an ALMO in the city. Rosalind, the leader of the Labour-controlled council, said:

If they [tenants] vote for an arms length management organisation the structure that we are going to take forward will always have a tenants' majority on the Board ... No, it will not have a tenants' majority but neither of the other two constituencies, councillors or private sector, will be able to outvote the tenants. I think that is it, so they will actually have a lot of power, so I do not know what the power is that they say they have not got.

Meanwhile, the council's tenant participation officers (a manager and her assistant) were working with START and TARAs to build trust in the council and collaborative working. However, some tension existed between the tenant participation officers and some of the council's housing managers caused by their

different approaches to engagement with START and TARAs, and understanding of TARA culture and values, which is examined in more detail in chapter six (section 6.1).

The next sub-section examines the openness (or not) of national and local political opportunity structures, and the different opportunities and challenges that can exist in terms of TARA and council collaboration. In particular, the sub-section shows how START became involved in new types of housing and neighbourhood discussions and decision-making processes after the introduction of the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact. The aim is to begin to explain why tenant and landlord relations and collaboration developed in the way that they did in Sheffield with the emergence of the TARA coalition Unity and the umbrella organization START.

Involvement and connectedness

New opportunities had emerged for TARA and tenant involvement in housing and neighbourhood matters when the New Labour government introduced the Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact. Using Dorsey *et al.*'s (1994) notion of a spectrum of interaction it seemed this involvement could comprise different things at different times. The provision of information, consultations, question and answer sessions, attempts to reach a consensus on issues, problem-solving, and longer-term engagement in policymaking processes. There were new ways that TARAs and tenants could receive information or be consulted through the Best Value review process and work done to compile compacts. They might also help to define issues and test ideas that would mean they were engaged in discussions and decision-making over the longer term to find solutions to complex housing and other neighbourhood problems. However, Rosalind, the leader of the

council, said:

With the tenants and residents you have got very high expectations of them contributing as equal partners, it is a bit of an unreal sort of thing and yet it is very patronising to say, well, they are not equal partners because actually the council members and officers have got ... years of experience and qualifications between them ... the tenants and residents have got the interests of their communities at heart ... what is overhanging debt ... housing finance is complex at the best of times, so why would people expect to be ... an equal partner, it is a bit unrealistic.

START and TARA representatives attended council-convened Citywide Forum meetings held each month. At these meetings, councillors and council officers provided information and feedback on housing and neighbourhood matters. The council and tenant representatives were also involved in discussions and decision-making to determine what action to take to solve housing and neighbourhood problems. The councillors representing an area raised neighbourhood matters at their respective Area Panel meetings (the city was divided into twelve areas) and at Area Housing meetings (that TARA representatives attended) (see Figure 14).

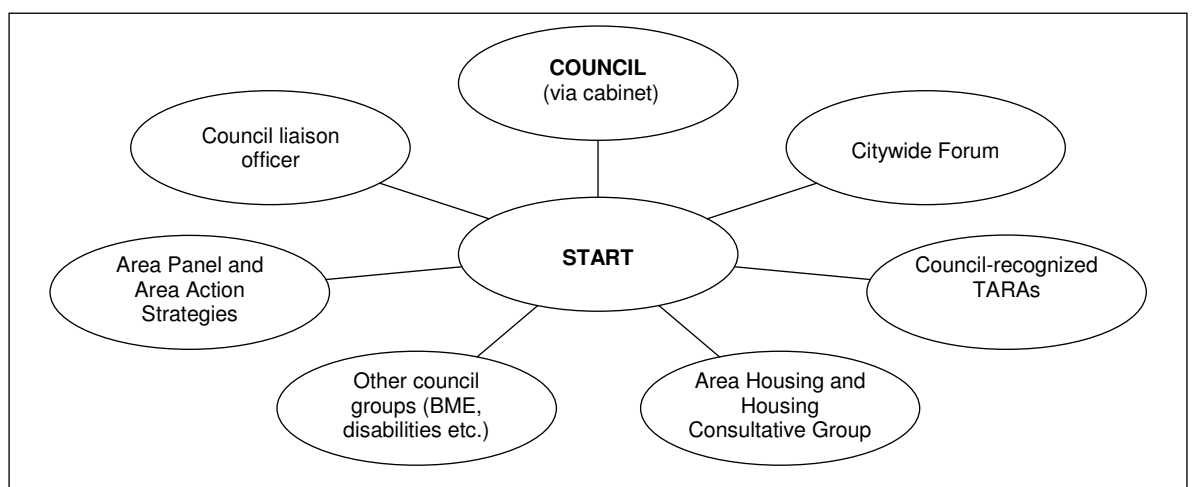


Figure 14: START: its connections with organizations and groups (simplified)

At Area Housing meetings, tenant representatives were nominated to attend meetings of the council's Housing Consultative Group, which was tasked with monitoring the performance of housing services across the city. The chairperson at these consultative group meetings was a TARA representative. At Area Panel meetings, local people were also involved in discussions to decide Area Action Strategies (priorities for action to improve an area) and influence the development of Housing Investment and Service Plans (HISPs) (fifty-three documents covering all the different parts of the city) (Sheffield City Council, 2001a). The council, through Area Panels, used the HISPs to produce Neighbourhood Planning Frameworks that set out actions to be undertaken to achieve different housing and neighbourhood improvement objectives (Sheffield City Council, 2002b).

START and TARA representatives also attended a range of other council-convened meetings. For example, there was the Best Value Review Working Group, the Future of Council Housing Group, the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group, the Black and Minority Ethnic Consultative Group, and the Housing Disability Consultative Group (Sheffield City Council, 2003). Meanwhile, different neighbourhood regeneration activities, including those that were a component of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) or Sheffield First Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) collaborative activities, brought together organizations and individuals who had an interest in housing and neighbourhood improvement matters. Roy Furbey, at the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research (CRESR), Sheffield Hallam University, said:

We [organizations and individuals at the local level] have got enough coming our way, we just cannot handle all of this ... there is such a fragment going on everywhere and there are so many priorities and so many agendas and reflected in such a fragmented range of organizations and partnerships and partnerships of partnerships that there is not, perhaps, the clarity ... there is too many things going on.

It is the precise role of institutions in shaping the views and actions of the organizers or convenors of collaborations that is underplayed in much of the theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage. Decisions have to be made about who will be involved in collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a) and how it will address the concerns of organizations and individuals as well as a collaborative agenda (Huxham, 2003). However, the social forms that organizations and individuals confront can exist quite independently of whatever they might do because they possess their own profound institutional embeddedness (Giddens, 1985). That is, dominant or taken-for-granted aspects of culture and inter-organizational relations exist that are not easily changed or disturbed by the day-to-day activities and actions of organizations and individuals. For example, this could include the way that aspects of the role of START and its relations with Sheffield City Council were shaped by dominant institutionalised ways of working and beliefs about the value of consensus and the purpose or desirability of conflict in collaboration. In addition, how institutionally embedded social forms impact on the convenors of collaboration is not adequately dealt with by theory on collaborative advantage. They include the structures and processes determining who has power and control over important resources, thinking about appropriate or inappropriate behaviour, levels of organizational authority and legitimacy, and conceptualizations of representative and participatory democracy. These things will impact on the types of national and local funding regimes that

exist, the action that organizations and individuals can take to solve problems, the way that different types of knowledge and experience are valued or not, and debates about partnership-working and the role of campaigning or protest activity. Moreover, much tension and conflict exists over the role and status of the councillor and the credibility of community representatives and their contribution to a partnership or collaborative venture. A question that arises concerns how these things impact on the views of the convenors of collaboration, the debate that occurs to define the purpose of collaboration, and the way decisions are made about who to involve (or not).

The next section examines and analyses the impact of central government Best Value and tenant participation policies on Sheffield City Council's relations with START, and views on TARA and council collaboration. It shows how various factors at the local level helped to create a unique environment within which collaboration was located, while various national pressures helped to shape council activities and actions designed to ensure central government policies were implemented effectively at the local level.

5.2 Central government policy implementation and tenant participation at the local level

Chapter two (section 2.2) provided a detailed description of the different environmental pressures on organizations (as described by DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) that can cause them to become more like each other. There are three pressures on organizations, which make them act in certain ways:

- first, the coercive pressure exerted by an organization or organizations on which it is dependent
- second, the mimetic pressure causing it to imitate other organizations perceived to have been successful in obtaining the legitimacy or resources they need to function effectively
- third, the normative pressure exerted by professionals or others who have an interest in its affairs.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 150) say the coercive environmental pressure that underpins the process of 'organizational isomorphism' results from:

[both] formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function.

How was Sheffield City Council impacted upon by coercive central government pressure (formal and informal) on councils to implement Best Value and Tenant Participation Compact policies effectively at the local level? More specifically, the research was concerned with the way that these pressures impacted on the action the council took to build relations with START. What was the extent of any 'organizational isomorphism' resulting in TARAs becoming more like each other in order to comply with a council desire to work with a certain type of tenants' organization? For example, the council might be especially keen to work with a tenants' organization that would help it to effectively implement national housing policy and convince Best Value inspectors that TARA and council collaboration to improve neighbourhoods was working well. Was there TARA and activist

resistance to coercive pressure and the possibility of 'organizational isomorphism'? The aim is to assess the extent of TARA opposition to council pressure to sign up to its TARA-recognition policy and operate in ways that helped to improve the chances of getting access to extra central government funds made available for housing repairs and modernization.

Some types of environmental pressure can encourage the development of hierarchical relations in collaboration when a more powerful organization takes control to ensure its organizational objectives are achieved (Davies, 2004). The New Labour government wanted more devolution of control over the housing management functions of councils to tenant management organisations (TMOs), arms length management organisations (ALMOs), and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Indeed, in 2005, Keith Hill, the Minister for Housing, reiterated that, *"At the estate and neighbourhood levels, local approaches to housing management in which tenants play a key role can help to sustain local communities and turn around deprived neighbourhoods"* (ODPM, 2005). Meanwhile, ODPM guidance on stock transfer, ALMO, and PFI options to obtain investment monies for housing stipulates that tenants should be involved and empowered through the detailed development and implementation of the chosen option (ODPM, 2003). However, councils also needed to take action to ensure all of the housing in their area would meet central government's Decent Homes Standard by the 2010 deadline. Sheffield City Council needed to carry out extensive housing repair and modernization works or face the prospect that central government, at best, would withdraw funding and, at worst, would intervene and take control of housing functions and services (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The council was motivated to want to manage collaboration to satisfy central government and its Best Value inspectors that it was taking appropriate action to

deal with housing problems in the city and meet the Decent Homes Standard.

The next sub-section shows how the institutional environment and different local factors shaped START and council relations, activists' views on the role of START, and the council's reasons for wanting to work more closely with TARAs.

'Forming START out of necessity'

At a national level, a history exists of direct central government activity and action to manage social housing provision and even council estate social structures. The massive expansion of council-house building after the end of the Second World War improved many people's living conditions. At the same time, people living on the new council estates were encouraged to take part in different central government devised or approved community activities. As Ravetz (2001, p. 145) says:

From the model village and garden-city traditions came the tennis courts and bowling greens that were such a ubiquitous feature of estate plans, even if they failed to materialise, while the galas and crowning of 'queens' derived from 'Merrie England' and Arts & Crafts. How such elements were received by tenants depended on how far they identified with the tastes and values they represented.

From the late 1970s through 2000s, there was a reduction in the extent of direct central government control over the types of social housing and neighbourhood services provided in an area. Instead, central government gave tenants new rights to be involved in housing and neighbourhood discussions and decision-making processes. However, central government was able to retain a substantial degree of control over the development of social housing policy and its implementation through Best Value and Tenant Participation Compact regulations and

performance-monitoring systems (see chapter 1, section 1.1). The Best Value regime has created new opportunities for TARA involvement in consultations to decide priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods. However, Best Value inspectors are able to award star ratings based on no stars (poor) to three stars (excellent) for performance in delivering services, and central government can intervene and take control of underperforming services. The Tenant Participation Compact was not introduced to prevent the development of different types of tenant activity. Nevertheless, central government and council devised standards for tenants' groups might cause TARAs to operate in certain prescribed ways to meet the standards, and implement national housing and tenant participation policies at the local level.

A shift had occurred in the way that central government went about formulating housing policy and promoting its implementation at the local level. It seemed to be a shift towards an approach to government and 'governmentality' described by Foucault (1978). In this view, government is not simply about state politics because it can include various institutionalised control mechanisms used to shape citizens' views and get them to help with the implementation of national policies at the local level. Central government's introduction of mandated TARA and council collaboration increased tenant involvement in housing matters, and constituted a new form of social control over ways of thinking about housing problems, aided by various rewards or sanctions for different types of performance in solving those problems. The manipulation of community representation often occurs in situations where their power to influence political decision-making is actually quite limited (Raco and Flint, 2001). For example, central government is in a strong position to shape collaboration through the institutional maintenance of policy and funding structures designed to facilitate organizations' and individuals' integration into a

particular type of society (see chapter 2, section 2.2). The Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact provided opportunities for START to be more involved in relevant housing discussions and policymaking. However, in examining such initiatives it is possible to say that “[w]hile they may represent a new form of governing, ‘at a distance’, they can also be seen as perpetuating state power through new forms of technical and managerial control” (Taylor, 1997, p. 18). START was allowed to develop and become involved in a particular type of pragmatic and consensus-seeking collaboration. It was a type of collaboration that enabled START to obtain organizational legitimacy in the eyes of a council that needed to satisfy central government and its Best Value inspectors that it was taking appropriate steps to deal with the city’s housing problems.

Central government policymaking helped to determine the focus of housing deliberations and decision-making in Sheffield. START was the umbrella organization recognised by the council as representing a majority of the city’s TARAs, but its dependence on the council for funds and other types of assistance was problematic (see chapter 4, section 4.1). It was mentioned, in chapter two (section 2.2), that more powerful stakeholders with control over important resources can become dominant, even overbearing, players:

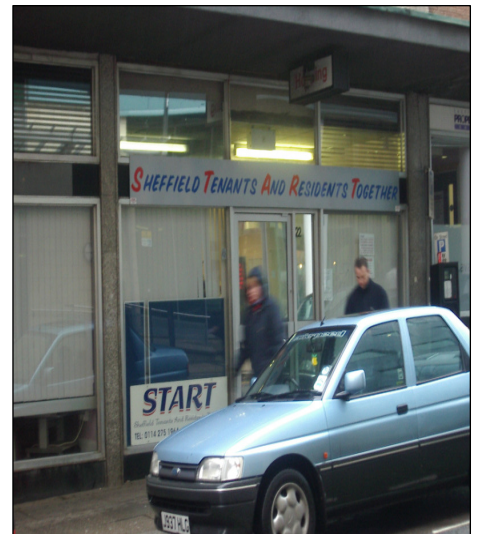
[in situations where] alternative resources are either not readily available or require effort to locate, that the stronger party to the transaction can coerce the weaker party to adopt its practices in order to accommodate the stronger party’s needs.

(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 154)

The city council had needed to think about the type of umbrella organization, representing TARA views, that it wanted to work with. Robert, a housing manager in the Manor Castle and Woodthorpe area of Sheffield, said:

There was genuine commitment there [at city hall] ... [amongst the housing and] other departments in the city council to have an umbrella organization, particularly as we were moving into the big picture of the future of council housing where [...] stock transfer was on the table.

There was much central government pressure on councils to involve more tenants in discussions and decision-making to solve their housing problems (see chapter 1, section 1.1). This situation and the extent to which the first chair of START had been under council pressure to adopt a pragmatic approach in housing discussions and agree to consider LSVST in the face of much tenant opposition had troubled some prominent activists. Sheffield City Council had stood to benefit from working with an umbrella organization that would help to persuade tenants to support central government approved options for the management of council-owned housing in the future. Robin, a housing officer at the Crystal Peaks Housing Office, suggested it was a case of:



Picture 3: START office
(Photo: R. Dalziel)

forming Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together out of necessity, you are having Best Value and other things that have come in and I think that you have got the personnel involved in there [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] who they [the council] could control to a point.

Indeed, the council was involved in what, for some of its departments and officers, was a perfectly rational policy of relationship-building with START and TARAs that helped to ensure it was not disadvantaged in its dealings with central government.

The council's housing department was not likely to be motivated to be involved in supporting tenants' and residents' organizations that were too radical or did not understand the difficulties that it faced trying to determine how council-owned housing would be managed in the future. Instead, the council was more likely to be motivated to support an umbrella tenants' and residents' organization that it felt it understood and could easily work with. Caroline, the council's tenant participation manager, says:

What tends to happen is that we [the council] try and create mirrors of ourselves, if you like, with the tenants' groups [...] and set up [...] groups that tend to mirror how we as a council work in terms of the bureaucracy surrounding, and also the procedures surrounding, it [partnership-working].

From the outset, a problem for START was the different types of pressure on it to obtain the legitimacy in the eyes of the council that it needed to operate effectively, and the TARA support it needed to be viewed as a credible umbrella organization. TARAs and activists that, for historical reasons, were very mistrustful of the council and its reasons for wanting to work with an umbrella organization were bound to be difficult to win over (see chapter 4, section 4.1). William, a START board member and the chair of Westfield TARA, pointed out that the chair of Unity had feared the council would control START:

[The leader of Unity] [...] she was a fearsomely powerful character and she actually challenged the existence of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, the umbrella group, because she felt [...] that Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together was going to be a council-led group.

Organizational structures arise in highly institutionalised contexts, and, to increase their legitimacy, organizations often have to incorporate practices and procedures defined by prevailing institutionalised views on the organization and its role (Meyer and Rowan, 1991). An organization will often develop structures and ways of working that help to ensure that it is able to obtain the support of other organizations in an institutionalised field that it depends on for resources or its survival. In Sheffield, there had been council pressure on START and TARAs to work in ways that fitted with the council's bureaucratic processes and its need to satisfy central government that it was involving more tenants in Best Value review and compact compilation work. However, a dominant logic for organizing in an organizational field can cause 'organizational isomorphism' where organizations in that field change and become more like each other (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). START and TARAs were obliged to take particular action to comply with the council's TARA-recognition policy, and gain access to needed council and tenants' levy monies (see chapter 4, section 4.1).

The next sub-section examines and analyses the effects of what some prominent activists felt was the council's unfair support for START. It was support that meant START was able to obtain the TARA membership it needed to gain official recognition as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs.

START: 'The council was helping them'

The involvement process is unlikely to succeed in building trust amongst community partners in situations where central government devised or approved involvement frameworks and incentives fail to promote or sustain relationships between people in communities and public sector organizations (Maddock, 2002).

The New Labour government, in its own modernisation policies, seemed to want to ensure more tenants are involved in relevant partnerships and collaborations to determine what action to take to provide efficient and effective housing and neighbourhood services at the local level. The problem in Sheffield was the city council's particular interpretation of central government involvement guidelines, the nature of its support for START before it was officially recognized, and the circumstances surrounding the introduction of its TARA-recognition policy. These matters impacted adversely on the way that some influential activists viewed START and its role in negotiations with the council.

On 29 July 1999 a report appeared in the *Sheffield Star* newspaper on the work of the housing and tenant participation consultants, Partners in Change, contracted by the council and START to review the state of the tenants and residents movement in Sheffield, and the finding that there was much TARA and activist conflict over the role of START and its relations with the council (see chapter 4, section 4.1). On 11 May 2000, an activist had told a *Sheffield Star* newspaper reporter there was, "*Too much involvement by Sheffield council in what should be essentially a tenants' movement*". Edmond, the vice chair of START and the chair of Basegreen and District TARA, said activists remembered the way that the council had helped START.

The council said we will recognize the first movement that gets 50% plus one membership [of TARAs] [...] Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together [...] the council was helping them.

It was the perceived unfairness in the way that the council had recognised START that caused some activists to feel it had been set up to be a council tool. Michael, another START board member and a member of Greenhill Bradway Tenants and

Community Association, felt that the council wanted an umbrella organization that it could manipulate and control.

Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, it was an acrimonious beginning as community groups were not given the opportunity to have their own say and there were also personal and political agendas [...] [The] true intentions of the council were made known early on in their attempts to gain control of committees, to gerrymander decision-making groups.

It was reported in the *Sheffield Star* newspaper on 29 July 1999 that TARA representatives had previously rejected the idea that the council should make a direct financial contribution to support the work of any umbrella organization at a meeting held in the city. Paul, a START board member, chair of the North Sheffield Action Group (that was campaigning to prevent the demolition of council-owned housing), and Shirecliffe TARA member, said:

The council decided that they would finance Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together [...]. For me alarm bells would have started ringing straight away because it is obvious there is a conflict of interest.

In 2002, a group of influential TARAs and activists (some of whom had supported Unity) remained mistrustful of the council and its motivations for wanting to work with START and TARAs. In chapter two (section 2.2) an aspect of institutional theory was examined that suggests organizations become more like each other in situations where:

Highly structured organizational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture, and output.

(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.147)

Sheffield City Council was constrained by an overarching central government policy framework for housing and tenant participation, and definition or structuring of the housing futures landscape. The council attempted to deal with uncertainty about the way to progress housing matters through the standardisation of aspects of its relations with START and TARAs, and getting these organizations to organize in similar ways and do similar things to try to solve the city's housing problems.

A process existed that enabled central government to maintain much control over the broad development of housing strategy and policy. The process included the centralisation of certain aspects of the regulation and monitoring of TARA and council activities and actions in collaboration. This happened at the same time as tenants were given some new rights to be involved in housing and neighbourhood matters.

'Decentralizing and centralizing tendencies'

Community-based organizations are prone to become agents of the state through participation in partnerships or collaboration where they simply help to implement national policies at the local level (Cooper and Hawtin, 1997). In Sheffield, START had been working with the council to consider the future of council-owned housing in the city. However, tenants could only easily consider the advantages and disadvantages of three central government approved housing management

options, which constrained discussions on council-owned housing. The decentralization of some types of power and control over resources or decision-making processes can occur at the same time as the centralization of other types of power and control over the same resources and decision-making processes (Earles, 2002). For example, some influential activists were resentful of what they perceived to be unnecessary central government interference in TARA affairs despite having new opportunities to be involved in housing and neighbourhood matters. In addition, the history of frequently difficult tenant and landlord relations described in chapter four (section 4.1) meant these activists, including some START board members, were very mistrustful of central government and its housing policies.

Ian Cole, professor of housing studies and director of the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research (CRESR) Sheffield Hallam University, when he was talking about the New Labour government's approach to housing policy, said:

There is centralizing and decentralizing [...]. There is no conspiracy, [...] I don't think it is a kind of very clever plan, [...] but in terms of the need to keep control, while sort of not wanting to keep control, it is kind of [...] schizophrenic.

However, Naomi, a Labour councillor and cabinet member for education, felt central government was saying to tenants, *"You will have control over neighbourhoods, but only on the terms that we have set"*. START was in an awkward position trying to represent TARAs opposed to the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs or the setting up of ALMOs, and work with a council that it depended on for funds and office space. Naomi went on to say:

You are working to the agenda of a national government [...], there are limits to what you can do locally [...] and that is the reality. It is not always possible to do what you want because we do not work in a decentralized culture, we work in a centralized culture.

The ties that exist between individuals are often context specific (Coleman, 1990). That is, the trust that exists between different individuals will often depend on their knowledge of each other's actions in the past. In Sheffield, some activists' bad past housing and partnership-working experiences meant they were mistrustful of the council and its reasons for wanting to work more closely with START and TARAs. A considerable amount of time is often needed to build the levels of trust that will encourage people to work together to develop their thinking on issues (Gray and Wood, 1991) and agree shared collaborative objectives (Fredericksen, 1996). Unfortunately, as Barry who worked for Partners in Change suggested:

The timetable is set and the criteria [...] for involvement or engagement or evaluating the outputs [of involvement or engagement] [...] they don't recognize any of the anomalies that might exist in terms of the way a community operates or even [...] the needs and aspirations of those communities.

Philip, a senior housing officer responsible for tenant liaison matters at the Southey Green Area Housing Office, suggested a priority for the council was ensuring START and TARAs were aware of the political systems that they would need to recognize to work with the council. He said: *"We all have to work within systems and we [the council] are just helping them [START and TARAs] know what the systems are and how they can work with us"*. The extent to which the council needed to understand START and TARA culture and values was less obvious. Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrat deputy leader of the opposition, and shadow

spokesperson for housing, recognized there was a problem with central government housing policies. In particular, there are those policies that encourage councils to find solutions to housing problems acceptable to central government at the expense of providing adequate time for meaningful community involvement in problem solving activities. He said:

We [the council] have to work with government [...]. We will change our officer structures and have officers who are prepared to work with the government. [But] government should be allowing local authorities to choose the way to develop and should be allowing communities to develop at their own pace.

Institutions can shape the wider political environment through the power and control that they have over the distribution and use of important resources in different organizational networks (Benson, 1975). Roger, a Labour councillor and cabinet member for housing and direct services, felt collaboration comprised the council and communities working together to improve an area and recognizing there are boundaries within which the council and communities have to work. He said, *“I would bend over backwards to assist if a robust plan or idea came out of a community to enhance their area. They have got my support so long as it is within the constraints that we are tied to”*. Sheffield City Council was fully aware of the way that the different central government approved options for the management of council-owned housing in the future would help to determine the amount of money that was available for housing repairs and modernization works. The way that resources are distributed in an organizational network will help to determine the boundaries within which it is possible to create the space to do different things (Bertilsson, 1984). Linda, the council’s executive director for neighbourhoods, remarked:

We [the council] are about saying well these are the only options that we have [...]. As a tenant body you might want to go and campaign nationally to get a change, you may want to join with us politically [to try to get a change] ... but equally we cannot just ignore that this is a national agenda and we have to deliver on it.

The differences in the attitudes of the council and tenants associations towards housing policy that Baldock (1971) uncovered in Sheffield in the 1970s reflected the effects of different central government and council activities and actions. Tension and conflict emerged between the council and tenants associations that left a legacy of mistrust that is still observable in the 2000s. A history of often difficult TARA and council relations has helped to cause mistrust of each other's values and beliefs, differences over the the best way to deal with housing problems, and disputes concerning the purpose of TARA and council collaboration. From 2000 onwards, the focus of TARA and council collaboration was very much on pragmatic deliberations to solve housing problems, without much time devoted to dealing with the effects of past events on contemporary tenant and landlord relations.

The next section considers TARA and activist resistance to unpopular central government housing policies, the council's recognition policy, and the tendency towards 'organizational isomorphism'. In other words the institutionalization of TARAs through them becoming more like each other to comply with central government Best Value and tenant participation regulations and rules and a process of collaboration designed to get them to fit with the council's bureaucratic systems.

5.3 Resistance to ‘organizational isomorphism’

A dominant language can help an institution to maintain its core values (Ng, 2001) and promote some types of knowledge at the expense of others (Barnes *et al.*, 2002). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a powerful New Labour language of collaboration emerged that encouraged councils to adopt new standards and criteria to evaluate collaborative activities and outputs (see chapter 1, section 1.1). Councils and tenants were encouraged to collaborate and find new ways to obtain the investment needed to repair and modernize council-owned housing. In addition, central government was promoting the separation of housing strategy and management functions. Councils needed to focus on finding ways to meet housing needs rather than the day-to-day management of housing stock. The emphasis was on different stakeholders with an interest in housing matters developing shared goals and reaching a consensus on what to do to solve housing and neighbourhood problems.

At the same time, coercive central government pressure on councils to find acceptable ways to solve their housing problems increased their awareness of how different council activities and actions to solve those problems would be gauged by central government to be appropriate or not. A council could help to prevent the prospect of central government withholding access to funds made available for housing repairs and modernization works or intervention to take control of housing services by getting TARAs to operate in ways that facilitated the implementation of national housing policies effectively at the local level. Professor Ian Cole said:

Community partners are more often than not being invited into something where key decisions have already been taken. There is a question of them being enlisted rather than engaged very often.

On the other hand, Sheffield's TARAs could avoid the prospect of council sanctions or marginalization by signing up to the council's TARA-recognition policy and helping with Best Value review and Tenant Participation Compact compilation work. An organization can help to ensure its own survival when it satisfies the demands of other organizations on whose support it depends (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Nevertheless, there was TARA and activist resistance and protest against unpopular central government housing policies and the council's TARA funding and recognition arrangements.

'The council has got a damned cheek'

People seem to accumulate within themselves a history and sense of their position and status in the world in relation to others, and are aware of the function of their



Picture 4: Shiregreen TARA office
(Photo: R. Dalziel)

own actions in relation to the social order at large (Shotter, 1983). It is possible for people to reflect on how past events have impacted on their lives and their relations with different organizations and individuals. They can consider how past events will influence their response to the activities and actions of different organizations and individuals.

Tenants from across Sheffield with knowledge or experience of poor housing conditions and aware of their own housing needs in comparison to others had rejected the findings of consultants that showed council-owned housing was unsustainable in

the longer term (see chapter 4, section 4.1).

The interpretation of situations allows for individual differences in action, as different individuals can interpret situations differently (Sending, 2002). Different individuals and groups of people can form their own views on what is happening around them. For example, a group of influential activists in Sheffield were deeply resentful of the council's TARA-recognition policy and its control over the collection of the tenants' levy and other funds distributed to START and TARAs to support their activities. Dominic, a senior housing officer responsible for tenant liaison in the Burngreave area of the city, suggested the council needed to know what was happening to tenants' levy monies:

They [tenants and residents associations] are financed through the tenants' levy and so there is concern that they see that accounts are kept in order and that they have had them independently and properly audited.

However, some activists interpreted the council's calls for more TARA accountability for the way that they spent monies as unnecessary interference in their affairs and an attempt to control the way that they operated. Michael, a START board member and a member of Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association, commented on the council's funding of START and TARAs and said:

[It is about] steering people towards their [the council's] own agenda or shoe-horning [...] tenants and residents associations and Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, to quite a large extent, down their own lines.

The council's TARA-recognition policy and its control over funds given to TARAs to support their activities was a source of much bad feeling between activists and the council. This bad feeling added to the already high levels of mistrust that existed between these activists and the council (see chapter 4, section 4.1).

Danny, a START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA, said:

The council has got a damned cheek in putting limits on what tenants and residents associations are allowed to do with their money. In laying down to the tenants and residents associations rules which they have to conform to, otherwise they will not be recognized and will not get the tenants' levy.

Meanwhile, Frank, a former member of Westfield and Halfway TARA, pointed out:

Sheffield council is saying [...] that the tenants' levy money is paid to the council, it is the council's money and then they give it to the tenants and residents associations. They claim it is their money but that is stupid.

People's activities and actions are temporally embedded in a process of social engagement that is informed by past events but also oriented toward the future and a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). There may be opportunities for people to overcome the effects of bad past experiences through their own and collective activities that allow them to achieve personal and group objectives.. Different stakeholders also exist with whom organizations may strike favourable bargains and thereby start to exert more influence on the environment within which they are located (Astley, 1984). Some of Sheffield's TARAs and activists had contacts with other TARAs in different parts of the United Kingdom, the umbrella body Tenants and Residents Organisations England (TAROE), the campaigning organization Defend Council Housing, trades unions, and politicians sympathetic to their cause. They used these contacts to

obtain advice and support for action to challenge central government housing and neighbourhood-regeneration policies.

The TARA coalition called Unity had been opposed to any transfer or selling-off of council-owned housing and was formed because a group of TARAs (Unity claimed there had been twenty-eight in total) had felt START was simply helping the council to promote an unpopular proposal for LSVST. A number of influential activists had remained mistrustful of the council after Unity folded and felt it was overly involved in START business. Some TARAs had supported a fourth housing management option. This option would have allowed the council to retain ownership of its housing stock, while tenants would have set up their own negotiations with the council to decide what extra power or control they wanted over housing and neighbourhood matters in the area where they lived. However, tenants had failed to get this fourth option onto relevant council agendas for discussion.

Some changes in government housing policy, like the introduction of the ALMO, also occurred partly in response to tenant opposition to stock transfer. However, there was no major shift in the direction of the central government housing policy about separating housing strategy and management functions at the local level. Moreover, there was the effect of the coercive central government pressure on councils to achieve national housing improvement objectives that shaped the council's views on the future of council-owned housing. In turn, those views caused the council to introduce a TARA-recognition policy and increase its control over the funding of START and TARAs.

The next sub-section examines Sheffield City Council's implementation of its TARA-recognition policy, TARA opposition to it, and how it was impacting on TARA and council relations in 2002. The TARA-recognition policy was based on central government devised recognition criteria. The criteria covered constitutions, equal opportunities, elections, financial records, the conduct of meetings, membership and communications with tenants, and means of showing how objectives were being met.

'We cannot sit by and let things pass'

The actions of professionals or powerful individuals can create a normative force for change (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This force comprises certain individuals attempting to gain control over and formalize relations between themselves and others, as well as organizations in a field. Powerful central government civil servants and council staff in Sheffield set out the different criteria that START and TARAs needed to meet to be officially recognised. To some extent, housing officers and others in local government with an interest in housing matters needed to redefine the conditions and methods of their work, and obtain control over TARA and council collaboration to retain their powerful position in a network of organizations and relations.

Simon, the council's head of housing (operations), suggested the council's intention was to have a TARA-recognition policy that helped to ensure they were independent but also representative and democratic organizations:

Although we [the council] want them [tenants and residents associations] to be independent and do their own things, we cannot sit by and let things pass [...] we have a role as a regulator.

Activists in forty-nine TARAs (out of eighty-four in total) returned my questionnaire, which showed that thirty-eight of them had signed up to the council's TARA-recognition policy (see chapter 3, section 3.2). These TARAs had established organizational structures and procedures that complied with National Framework for the Participation Compact guidance. They were eligible to receive a share of council and tenants' levy monies, and could take part in housing and compact discussions and decision-making processes.

However, the actions of professionals and other powerful individuals can sometimes produce unintended or unanticipated outcomes. For example, in Sheffield the attitude of some council officers to the implementation of the council's TARA-recognition policy caused it to become a *de facto* de-recognition policy. James Gorringe, a senior civil servant with responsibility for tenant participation policy, when he was interviewed, stressed, "*There can be a downside where local authorities have adopted formal de-recognition policies [...] when it comes to involving tenants and residents associations*". The Chief Executive of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) felt that it was councils that had not been overly concerned with the development and implementation of TARA-recognition policies that had done better when it came to creating a more transparent and trusting culture of collaboration.²⁶ He said:

Some local authorities, they have genuinely regarded the modernization programme as [...] an opening-up process and have that culture and have been completely open [...] They are the ones that have not got hung up on issues around recognition.

²⁶ Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), a government funded but independent organization set up to advise and assist tenants' organizations.

Robin, the housing officer at the Crystal Peaks Housing Office, suggested the TARA-recognition policy was a source of considerable tension between the council and TARAs. He said, “[It is] a big sticking point because you are expecting people to act almost like a company”. The recognition policy was a top-down council-imposed set of rules and regulations that applied to all TARAs regardless of their particular characteristics and aspirations. Jonathon, the START board member who was the chair of Hackenthorpe TARA and had been a prominent member of Unity, suggested the development of the recognition policy could have been a more inclusive process and the START board management group had too much influence over decisions made on behalf of the wider tenants and residents movement:²⁷

It [the recognition policy] is something that was done by Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together and done by the management board, done by a couple of people within Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together.

Sally, the acting chair of the Martin and Oxford Street Tower Blocks Tenants Association, in an answer to a questionnaire survey question said:

My grievance is that it [the recognition policy] was agreed and accepted by Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together and the council. Not every tenants and residents association was a member [of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] at the time so they were not fully consulted on the contents until a later date, too late to voice an opinion.

²⁷ START Board management group, a sub-group of the full START board comprised of the chair and a few other board members.

Despite a majority of the questionnaire respondents indicating that their TARA had signed up to the council's recognition policy, it seemed there were still a significant minority of TARAs that had not signed up to it. Rosalind, the leader of the council, recognized there was a problem concerning TARA opposition to the recognition policy. She said:

Many tenants and residents associations are in breach of this [recognition] policy [...]. The housing managers are going to have to consider how serious are we about this because if they are saying everybody has got to conform to this, there is going to be an awful lot of eggs broken on the omelette trail.

Ultimately, the council feared the consequences of failing to deliver on the implementation of central government housing policy at the local level. The recognition policy sometimes threatened TARA autonomy because it forced them to operate in ways that were not always relevant or useful. The comments made by some activists suggest the council's approach to TARA recognition and funding showed an inadequate understanding of TARA culture and values. Adrian, a member of the Hanover Tenants Association, said, *"We are not happy with the council's recognition policy; it shows a lack of understanding of how voluntary groups work"*. The smaller or more informal TARAs, for example, risked being overwhelmed by some of the more onerous requirements of the TARA-recognition policy.

Conclusion

The New Labour government seemed to genuinely want to increase TARA and tenant involvement in housing and neighbourhood matters. The government's new language of modernisation led to changed council structures, local politics, and new opportunities for TARA and council collaboration to improve neighbourhoods

and local services. However, this chapter has shown how START and TARAs in Sheffield were involved in collaboration that occurred within a particular type of national and local political environment in the 2000s. This environment had some adverse, as well as beneficial, impacts on TARA and council relations and collaboration.

In Sheffield, in the summer of 2002, the Labour-controlled council had abandoned LSVST but still had to face the problem of what to do about sub-standard council-owned housing. A long history of tenant mistrust of private landlords and, latterly, the council had exacerbated tenant concerns about the way that Unity had folded and the loss of the traditional housing committee. Some tenants, unhappy with the three central government approved options for the management of council-owned housing, had proposed a fourth option that was not taken seriously. The council discounted the fourth option and continued to focus on the work that needed to be done to ensure good housing management and estate services Best Value inspection outcomes. A TARA-recognition policy was introduced as a way to help the council build relations with START and TARAs, meet central government tenant participation objectives, and decide the future of council-owned housing. But aspects of the recognition policy (such as the amount of money that TARAs should keep in the bank) were perceived by activists to be about telling TARAs what to do. A significant number of TARAs had not signed up to the recognition policy and there was much conflict over the council's control over tenants' levy monies, and the way that the council had recognized and was funding START. At the same time, tension existed within START over its relations with council, TARA membership was falling, and the council was becoming concerned about how representative it was.

In Sheffield, there was evidence of the 'organizational isomorphism' described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). It consists of a process whereby organizations in a field become more like each other as they change to ensure that they have the legitimacy that is needed to successfully obtain resources or support from other organizations on which they depend. START and TARAs were doing some similar things (signing up to the council's TARA-recognition policy, for example) to obtain access to council-controlled resources. However, TARA and activist resistance was mounted against unpopular central government housing policies and the council's TARA-recognition policy which had started to cause the breakdown of relations between START and some TARAs, and the council.

The next chapter examines and analyses in more detail the development of START and council relations in Sheffield. Organizations and individuals are not able to interact in an environment of their own choosing (Selznick, 1948) and they need to create space for debate within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour set by the state and its institutions to avoid punitive sanctions and possible marginalisation (Bertilsson, 1984). Key points from this chapter will be developed in the next chapter to help explain how institutions have an independent influence on the political environment and collaborative activity at the local level. The key points are:

- How central government activities helped to determine what umbrella and other tenant organizations would be able to get involved in collaboration in first place.

- What impact a dominant central government language of collaboration had on opportunities for START and TARA involvement in different types of collaboration at the local level.
- What are the implications for TARA and council collaboration of TARA de-recognition.

The chapter will show how continuing conflict over the role of START, the funding of tenants and residents movement organizations, the TARA-recognition policy, and opportunities to be involved in different types of collaboration caused a spiral of deteriorating relations between START and some prominent TARAs and activists, and the council. Mistrust of the council was increasing amongst activists who were disadvantaged in collaboration that did not allow them to challenge effectively housing and tenant participation policies. Theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage is a source of useful ideas and concepts that help to explain how organizations' different capacities and capabilities will impact on their ability to work together. However, institutional theory is used to show how institutions that shape the environment within which organizations are located, influence or determine the shape of collaboration at the local level.

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event
2002 September	<p>Sheffield City Council's Best Value Review of Housing Management. The key findings of this review are published. The summary conclusion was that overall tenants were receiving a good service and that where improvements were needed then plans were in place to address them.</p> <p>However, there was still the problem of the fourth housing management option proposed by some TARAs and activists that would allow the council to retain ownership of its housing stock. Meanwhile, tenants would hold discussions with the council to decide what extra control they wanted over the management of their homes and the area in which they lived.</p>
September	<p>START appointed Partners in Change to provide advice on the constitution, policies and procedures.</p>
October	<p>The first chair of START says she felt let down by the Labour-controlled council and its decision not to ballot tenants to assess what level of support there was for LSVST.</p>
December	<p>START holds its AGM and some TARA activists allege that there was an improper ballot held to elect a new chair. Some TARAs and activists feel the council has too much control over START and TARA affairs</p>

CHAPTER SIX

Empowerment or Incorporation?

This chapter examines and analyses the development of relations between the Labour-controlled council in Sheffield, elected in May 2002, and START. It covers the period of time between the publication of the council's Housing Management Best Value review findings in September 2002 and the START Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in December 2002. This AGM marked a turning point for START in its uneasy relations with the council. At the meeting, a group of influential activists commented on the role of START, its involvement in the implementation of national housing policies at the local level, and how they felt it had been incorporated into council systems at the expense of representing the views of all TARAs and tenants. An important issue was the extent to which START was engaged or enlisted as a participant in collaboration. A member of this group of dissatisfied activists was elected the new chair of START.

The New Labour government's housing, Best Value, and Tenant Participation Compact policies had impacted on Sheffield City Council and helped to shape its actions to make TARAs more 'businesslike' and formal. It is the impact of these actions on the development of START and council relations, and TARA and council collaboration that are described and explained in this chapter. The discussion focuses on the continuing effects of the council's TARA-recognition policy, and control over tenants levy' and other funds on activists' feelings about collaboration. In particular, activists' views on the propensity of collaboration to enable or constrain the development of opportunities for different types of collaborative activity and action at the local level. Central government and council

pressure on TARAs to participate in certain types of collaboration is contrasted with TARA resistance to such pressure. The aim is to examine the extent to which START and TARAs were either simply helping to implement national housing and tenant participation policies, or empowered and able to challenge those policies.

Sheffield City Council's vision statement, set out in its corporate plan for 2002–2005, says there was a desire to “*Work in active partnership with the community to regenerate Sheffield and improve the quality of life for all its residents*” (Sheffield City Council 2002). The community included START and TARAs, but there was still a need to deal with the central government demand that the way that council-owned housing was managed had to change. The council's own Housing Management Best Value review findings were published in September 2002. The main conclusion was tenants were receiving a good service. However, tenants that had proposed a fourth housing management option for council-owned housing were disappointed when it seemed it was not seriously considered by the council. Some council officers felt it was not appropriate to discuss the proposal in detail at council-convened housing meetings because it was not a central government approved housing management option.

Differences in the organizational cultures and values of the council and TARAs are also examined to see how they impacted on different people's reactions to central government policies. More specifically, people's views on housing, Best Value, and tenant participation policies and thoughts on the purpose of collaboration and what should be done to solve housing problems at the local level. In October 2002, the first chair of START told a *Sheffield Star* newspaper reporter that she felt let down by the Labour-controlled council and its decision not to ballot tenants to assess what level of support there was for the Large Scale Voluntary Stock

Transfer (LSVST) of all council-owned housing to and RSL in a single transaction. At the same time, a number of influential activists were concerned about council pressure on START and TARAs to organize and operate in certain ways, which they felt was causing a serious diminution of START and TARA autonomy (see chapter 1, section 1.1).

At the START AGM, held in December 2002, some TARA activists alleged that an improper ballot had been held to elect a new chair. It was also suggested the Labour-controlled council did not want to intervene to sort out problems in START because such action might jeopardise its chances of obtaining favourable Audit Commission Housing Management and Estate Services Best Value Inspection outcomes. In the process of examining and analysing interorganizational relations and collaboration it is possible to use theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage to elicit ideas and concepts that help to explain the process of collaboration at the organizational level. However, issues regarding theory on collaborative advantage and its ability to explain the impact of institutional activities and actions on the environment within which collaboration occurs, and collaboration itself are also explored. Some of the weaknesses in the capacity of theory on collaborative advantage to relate what occurs at the organizational level with events that occur at the institutional level are highlighted.

The chapter starts with the argument over top-down and bottom-up approaches to TARA and tenant involvement in collaboration at the city and neighbourhood level. This is followed with an exposition of the way that a new council faced with old tenant and landlord tensions tried to reduce uncertainty by getting START and TARAs to sign up to the council's TARA-recognition policy. Then the discussion shifts to consider the way that the new council and START were working together,

different types of collaboration, and the extent of TARA empowerment.

6.1 ‘Just helping the government’

Caroline, the council’s tenant participation manager, recognized there was much tension in TARA and council relations in Sheffield. A good deal of this tension was caused by the council’s need to implement central government housing policies effectively at the local level, and address tenant concerns about the future of council-owned housing. She said:

We have got pressures within the council to meet deadlines and get things done but there is also awareness among tenant participation workers that we have got a duty to the tenants as well.

The reasons why different organizations might want to collaborate are varied (see chapter 2, section 2.1). They can include a desire to gain control over an environment, learn from each other, manage conflict over contentious issues, and develop innovative solutions to problems. However, Huxham and Vangen (2000b, p. 773) describe the “*Difficulties in negotiating joint purpose [...] [and] in managing the accountability of the collaborative venture to each of the partner organizations*”. Negotiations to determine how TARA and council collaboration would help to implement central government housing policies at the local level and address tenants’ housing concerns and grievances was difficult when progress on setting up collaborations had to be made quickly. The modernization of local government under New Labour had been happening at a very quick rate with little time for reflection (Maddock, 2002). Councils were obliged to implement the modernization agenda effectively and with alacrity at the local level. However, councils also need to establish an open and transparent collaboration supported

by all of the relevant stakeholders to improve their chances of working well (Chrislip and Larson, 1994). Getting a collaboration up and running quickly and ensuring that it is open and transparent is likely to be difficult to achieve. Sheffield City Council took action, in response to central government pressure, to quickly set up and formalize TARA and council collaboration. However, the council's actions sometimes made it more difficult to establish honest and inclusive relations with TARAs and activists. For example, problems arose concerning the council's actions to implement its TARA-recognition policy (and the issue of *de facto* TARA de-recognition), inappropriate demands placed on TARAs based on a poor understanding of TARA culture and values, and the provision of some types of support for START that undermined its independence.

Audit Commission Housing Management and Estate Services Best Value Inspectors considered how Sheffield City Council's consultative structures and involvement processes were enabling tenants to influence decisions about priorities for action to maintain or improve an area. The council was seeking to obtain a minimum award of a two-star rating for its housing management and estate services. It was this level of award that the council needed to obtain to be eligible to receive a share of extra central government monies made available for housing repairs and modernization works, and submit an ALMO bid (see chapter 1, section 1.1).

In September 2002, the council published the findings of its own Best Value Review of its Housing Management Service. The main finding was that, overall, tenants were receiving a good service. However, the review did highlight the need for greater consistency in service delivery across specific functions, such as tenancy support, rehousing and homelessness, and asylum seekers. An

implementation plan to address the recommendations of the review was in place with an expected completion date of April 2003 (Sheffield City Council 2002c).

However, there were prominent activists with negative views on the way that the council had recognised START, and the relations that existed between its first chair (who declined to be interviewed) and a Liberal-Democrat-controlled council. Danny, a START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA, and Florence, a former START board member and chair of Longley Hall Farm TARA, respectively said:

“[The] chair of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together was far too damned close to the [...] councillor who was the [Liberal Democrat] housing bod [representative].”

“She [START’s chair] would agree [...] things with the councillors and when we had our meetings at the Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together offices [...] [the Liberal Democrat cabinet member for housing] [...] was sat in that back office [...]. We were having our meeting, of course it can be heard.”

Such views continued to impact on the levels of trust that these and other prominent activists had in the new Labour-controlled council and its reasons for wanting to work with START and TARAs. Edmond, the vice chair of START, believed the Labour-controlled council, like the previous Liberal-Democrat-controlled council wanted to work with a compliant START to obtain favourable housing services Best Value inspection outcomes. He said:

It is not the way that Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together wants to move. It is the way that the council wants Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together to move and Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together has been perceived to be a tool for the council not a tool for the [TARA] membership.

The legacy of the past often plays a significant part in shaping people's present concerns and desires (Smith, 1998). In chapter four (section 4.1), the history of tenants' bad housing experiences and mistrust of their landlords was described. Tenants' interpretations of contemporary events are often based on a knowledge of past events and their own housing experiences, and this will help to determine their views on housing issues. Sometimes TARA activists' and council officers' negative expectations about each other's behaviour in collaboration impacted adversely on discussions and building trust in the collaborative process. In such circumstances, the way was left open for the onset of the collaborative inertia that Huxham and Vangen (2004, 2005) have described (see chapter 2, section 2.1). In such a situation the development of a collaborative venture is slower than might be expected and its productivity is severely reduced.

The ambivalence that often surrounds the trust that exists between organizations and individuals in community-based partnerships and the community at large serves to reveal the difficulties involved in the development of social capital in such circumstances (Purdue, 2001). Social capital comprises mutual understanding of each other's cultures and values, and respect for each other's views and different ways of working. Furthermore, social capital is about using this understanding and respect to increase civic engagement and the vitality of a community, where shared interests and objectives lead to collective action to tackle complex problems (Putnam, 1993). Unfortunately, some of the actions that

Sheffield City Council took to try to solve the city's housing problems, in response to central government pressure, damaged its chances of building up stocks of social capital based on stakeholders' understanding each other better through collaboration.

The next sub-section shows how the new Labour-controlled council, like the previous Liberal-Democrat-controlled council in Sheffield, needed to focus on implementing central government housing policies at the local level. A tendency towards top-down-imposed central government demands on the council to improve its housing stock sometimes turned into top-down-imposed council demands on TARAs and tenants to co-operate to implement national housing policies at the local level.

'Top-down made to look bottom-up'

The first chair of START felt let down by the Labour-controlled council and its decision, in October 2002, not to ballot tenants to assess what level of support there was for LSVST. On 31 October 2002 she told a *Sheffield Star* newspaper reporter:

We are totally confused. We do not know what the options are now for the future of council housing across Sheffield. The council needs to get its plans together and stick to them. Tenants feel they are in mid air. We are concerned for tenants and what they are going through. This confusion will not help them.

New Labour government ministers had reached an agreement with the Labour-controlled council in Sheffield to shelve plans for LSVST. But the council still needed to find a way to solve the city's housing problems and activists remained concerned about TARA autonomy and integrity under any new housing

management arrangements that might emerge (see Figure 15).

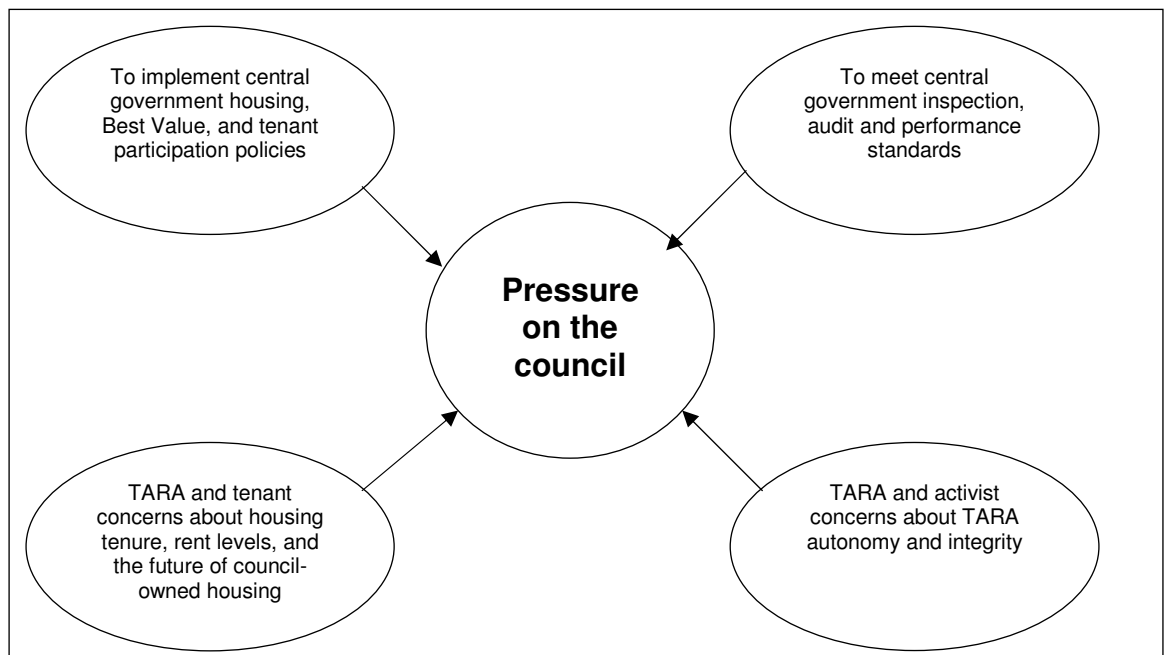


Figure 15: The external pressures affecting the council

Much of the central government literature on tenant participation promotes a consensual approach to collaboration that focuses on improving neighbourhoods and local services (see chapter 1, section 1.1). For example, under the Best Value regime, councils are obliged to work with different stakeholders to decide shared plans for the provision of local services, and the Tenant Participation Compact is supposed to include a strong focus on councils and tenants working together to achieve mutually desired neighbourhood-improvement objectives (DETR, 1999). In Sheffield, START and TARAs needed to sign up to the council's TARA-recognition policy, and become involved in Best Value review work and the compilation of compacts. They needed to do these things to obtain the organizational legitimacy, in the eyes of the council, that they needed to obtain access to council-controlled funds, including tenants' levy monies (see Figure 16).

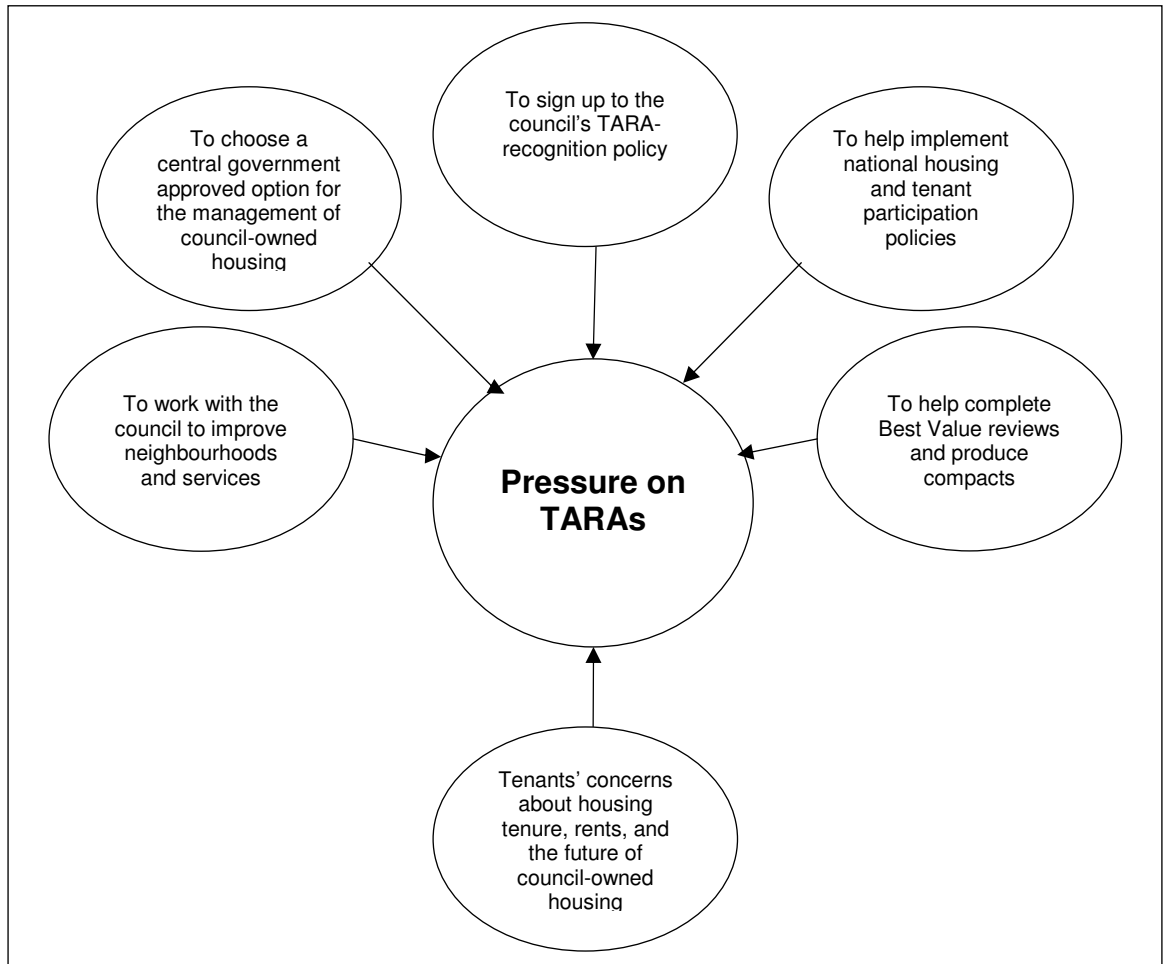


Figure 16: The external pressures affecting TARAs

However, START and TARAs were themselves under pressure coming from tenants concerned about what was going to happen to council-owned housing. There were activists who felt unhappy about the way that council consultations were being undertaken to obtain tenant views on housing policy. They believed consultations were often superficial and designed to satisfy central government and its Best Value inspectors. Unfortunately, activists' and tenants' past perceptions that they were being rail-roaded into accepting the benefits of stock transfer had only served to increase their mistrust of the council. Michael, a START board member and member of Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association, said:

The government said that it wanted to devolve democracy to its lowest practicable level. What has actually happened in Sheffield is that we have seen top-down imposition [...] consultation, therefore, has been a total sham. It has not been meaningful.

The overarching political context within which TARA and council collaboration was located was influencing or determining which tenant views and opinions were perceived to be more valid or acceptable to central government than others at the local level. For example, Paul, START board member and chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, viewed the process of producing tenant participation compacts to be about conforming to a central government approved template for council and TARA collaboration. He said:

The government always trumpets, and the council, [that] it is all bottom-up this process [the compilation of compacts]. Not in any way whatsoever is it bottom-up, it is top-down made to look like bottom-up.

It is not easy to ascertain the precise extent to which tenant benefit was a principal objective or a corollary of collaboration. From a council perspective, collaboration that produced useful housing and neighbourhood improvement outcomes was desirable. This could be the instrumental type of collaboration that Huxham (2000) says involves achieving some practical output or outcome (see chapter 2, section 2.1). For example, the collaboration that involves the production of a joint strategy or plan; more specific policy objectives in areas like crime reduction, education, and health; or the completion of a particular project to provide a facility or service. Theory on collaboration also shows how organizations can work together to achieve organizational objectives in uncertain environments (Gray and Wood, 1991; Huxham, 1996). They can combine knowledge, skills, and resources to deal more effectively with shared problems and decide on shared goals. Sheffield City

Council and START were involved in collaboration, in part, to introduce order into a fragmented housing services marketplace, and debates about the future management and maintenance of council-owned housing.

START benefited from the provision of council-owned office space at a low rent, approximately £100,000 of council funding each year, and ongoing support from a tenant participation officer, seconded to work with the organization. The council, unsurprisingly, expected START to contribute to the achievement of housing and local service improvement objectives that matched with central government plans for neighbourhoods. Caroline, the council's tenant participation manager, says:

I am sure [...] we [the council] are guilty of putting pressure on them, Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together. We fund Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together [...] and support them and in return [...] we do expect them to deliver on a number of areas, particularly, areas that are important to government.

However, START's dependence on the council for office space and funds meant its autonomy was quite severely curtailed. Consequently, the extent to which it was possible for START to obtain the trust of TARAs and tenants wary of the council was less certain than it might have been.

Theory on collaborative advantage does not provide a well developed explanation of the role of powerful institutions in influencing or determining what collaboration between organizations consists of at the local level. The way that the wider institutional environment, that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) elaborated on, can have a profound impact on organizations in a field and their relations with other organizations on whom they depend (see chapter 2, section 2.2). Sometimes an institutional environment can cause a process of homogenization or isomorphism

so that, “*Organizational characteristics are modified in the direction of increasing compatibility with environmental characteristics*” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 149). The achievement of collaborative advantage depends on organizations achieving things through collective-working that no single organization could have achieved working on their own (Huxham, 1993b; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). However, it is how powerful institutions are involved in shaping the overarching environment within which the strategic purpose of collaboration is decided and collaborative advantage is defined that needs to be better emphasised. Much of what Sheffield City Council and START were trying to achieve through collaboration seemed to be the product of top-down central government imposed demands on them to achieve national housing and neighbourhood improvement objectives through mandated forms of collaboration.

Having appropriate collaborative structures and processes (Huxham, 1993c) and organizations becoming engaged, learning about each other, and finding out how to collaborate (Kanter, 1994) are important if collaboration is to be successful. In Sheffield, some robust collaborative structures were in place, and START and TARAs were involved in much collaborative activity. However, broad-based involvement, a credible and open collaborative process, and building trust are also important conditions for successful collaboration (Chrislip and Larson, 1994). However, much disagreement existed between the council and activists over the purpose of collaboration and how it should be managed. Some prominent activists felt START was simply involved in responding to central government and council concerns about housing and neighbourhoods, rather than tenant concerns about housing and neighbourhoods. START was involved in much collaborative working, but central government prescribed organization and collaboration standards, the loss of the traditional housing committee, and fewer campaigning opportunities all

reduced the possibilities for the development of a genuinely bottom-up approach to policy formulation and problem-solving.

The next sub-section shows how the election of a Labour-controlled council in Sheffield did not reduce activist concerns about the purpose and management of collaboration.

A new council and old tensions

Sheffield's Labour-controlled council had abandoned Liberal Democrat plans for LSVST. However, START remained heavily involved in a range of council-convened housing consultations and working groups. For example, tenants' representatives from across the city continued to attend monthly meetings of the council convened Citywide Forum to obtain councillor and council officer feedback on housing and neighbourhood matters. Tenants' representatives also continued to attend Area Housing Meetings where some were nominated to attend meetings of the council's Housing Consultative Group, which was tasked with monitoring the performance of housing services across the city. The chairperson at these consultative group meetings was a TARA representative (see Figure 17).

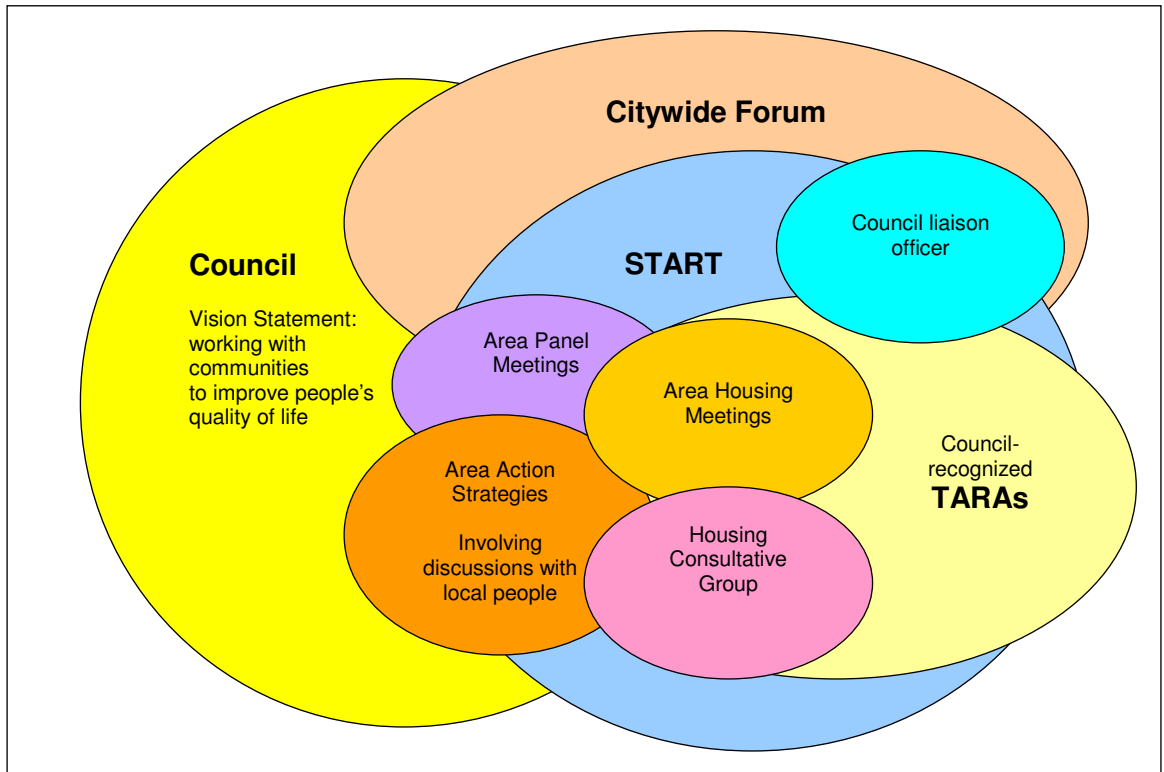


Figure 17: Council and START relations and involvement on different bodies (simplified)

The councillors for an area discussed housing and neighbourhood matters at relevant Area Panel meetings (there were twelve panels covering different parts of the city) and at Area Housing Meetings that TARA representatives also attended. At Area Panel meetings, local people are involved in discussions to decide Area Action Strategies and priorities for action to improve an area and influence the development of Housing Investment and Service Plans (HISPs) (a total of fifty-three plans covered all the different parts of the city) (Sheffield City Council 2001a). The council, through Area Panels, uses the HISPs to produce Neighbourhood Planning Frameworks that set out actions to be undertaken to achieve different housing and neighbourhood improvement objectives (Sheffield City Council 2002b). START and TARA representatives also continued to be involved in different neighbourhood regeneration activities that were a component of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) or Sheffield First Local Strategic

Partnership (LSP) initiative collaborations, as well as the council's Best Value Review Working Group, Future of Council Housing Group, Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group, Black and Minority Ethnic Consultative Group, and Housing Disability Consultative Group (Sheffield City Council 2003).

What was unclear was the extent to which START and TARA campaigning values and political activities fitted with new central government approved types of collaboration. When the housing and tenant participation consultants Partners in Change reviewed the state of the tenants and residents movement in Sheffield in

1999, they found that thirty-one of the fifty-seven TARAs they contacted said they were campaigning organizations. They considered themselves to be organizations that were involved in activities like raising petitions or lobbying the council on different neighbourhood-based issues.²⁸ For example, a number of TARAs were involved in a national lobby of Parliament against the privatization of council-owned housing in December 2002. It was uncertain where this type of tenant action



Picture 5: Tenants' lobbying Parliament (Photo: R. Dalziel)

fitted in a decision-making arena where the focus was on implementing national housing policies effectively at the local level. There seemed to be less space for campaigning activity in the new consultative and collaborative arrangements set up to improve neighbourhoods and decide the future of council-owned housing. A number of high-profile TARAs and activists were taking action to protest against

²⁸ The housing and tenant participation consultants called Partners in Change were contracted by the council in conjunction with START to review the tenants and residents movement in Sheffield (a report was published in 1999).

central government housing policies outside of official council-convened consultations. Robin, the housing officer interviewed at the council's Crystal Peaks Housing Office said:

There is nervousness [...] a lot of people feel that they have been used. This is going to take a long time to dispel [...] there is still this idea of, well, we can comply with the government by wheeling Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together out.

What seemed at times to be a rather dogmatic council approach to the implementation of its TARA-recognition policy was also not helping to engender trust among TARAs and activists. The recognition policy continued to be perceived by many TARAs and activists to be a top-down council-imposed initiative that was insensitive to TARA culture and ways of working. Caroline, the council's tenant participation manager, was concerned about TARAs that could not meet the recognition criteria, but were doing good work in their respective areas:

We get the feeling that there is going to be an awful lot [of tenants and residents associations] that are just not going to comply [with the recognition policy] [...] But if you look at what they are doing in the community [...] they are doing a really good job.

There was a danger that in some instances the council's TARA-recognition policy would become a *de facto* de-recognition policy if TARAs that would not or could not sign up to it found they were denied access to important council-controlled resources. In addition, some potentially very vibrant and innovative TARAs might be denied access to council-convened housing and neighbourhood consultations and collaboration. James Gorringe a senior civil servant, with responsibility for tenant participation policy, stressed:

There can be a downside where local authorities have adopted what are in effect formal de-recognition policies [...] when it comes to involving tenants and residents associations.

Philip, the housing officer responsible for tenant liaison at the council's Southey Green Area Housing Office, said:

If, at the end of the day, a tenants and residents association is not doing anything with regards to the [...] recognition policy then the council can take the drastic step of withdrawing funding. So we will not actually give them anything and they would have to go it alone [...]. We would not recognize them; they could not come to any council meetings that we hold.

However, the Chief Executive of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) said:

Some local authorities, they have genuinely regarded the modernization programme as [...] an opening-up process and have that culture and have been completely open [...] They are the ones that have not got hung up on issues around recognition.

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The link between central government pressure on Sheffield City Council, the council's TARA-recognition policy, and what it was that TARAs needed to do to obtain access to council-controlled funds is important. It seemed the form that the link between these different phenomena and matters took would have long-term repercussions for the development of TARA and council relations and collaboration in the city.

²⁹ In its literature the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) is described as a central government funded but independent organization set up to advise and assist tenants' organizations.

Social movement organizations can be a metaphor for strategic actors operating in institutional fields (Hensmans, 2003), i.e., organizations and individuals that are able to influence and change the shape of institutional structures and ways of working. Different types of more open or closed political opportunity structures will help to create the opportunities or conditions that encourage organizations and individuals to become involved in consultations and collaboration, or more radical action that leads to changed policies or ways of working. However, in some circumstances, organizational change is a direct response to government mandate and even where the change appears superficial it may still alter power relations within and between organizations in significant ways (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Central government can, through legislation, alter national and local political opportunity structures through the mandated activities that organizations and individuals are involved in. Sometimes, changed political opportunity structures will limit the possibilities for strategic action at the local level (Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi, 1995), including the instrumental and ideological collaboration that Vangen and Huxham (2006) have described. The Best Value regime and the Tenant Participation Compact created new opportunities for TARA and council collaboration. They also established a series of new performance parameters linked to central government housing and neighbourhood improvement policy objectives.

Theory on collaboration does describe how collaborative alliances can help organizations to cope with the turbulence and complexity of an environment (Gray and Wood, 1991). It shows how stakeholders who view a problem in different ways can explore similarities and differences in their thinking to find solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. Yet again theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage does not provide an adequate analysis

of the institutional environment within which collaboration is located. In particular, the way that the institutional environment impacts on the distribution of power and resources among organizations, the type and purpose of collaborations that emerge at the local level, and how organizations and individuals are then able to influence the thinking and actions of institutions.

The next sub-section focuses on the extent to which START and TARAs were expected to fit with council systems and bureaucratic ways of working. It provides insights on a complex 'game' of TARA and council collaboration.

6.2 'Everything is easier if organizations all do the same thing'

Robert, a housing manager for the Manor, Castle and Woodthorpe areas in Sheffield, stressed START had a role in helping TARAs to understand their responsibilities as organizations. More specifically, the council expected START to be involved in persuading TARAs to sign up to the council's TARA-recognition policy:

I saw Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together as the ideal vehicle to support tenants and residents associations who were struggling in terms of the recognition policy, understanding the role, and understanding some of the responsibilities that go with being a tenants and residents association.

But some TARAs and activists perceived START to be promoting a top-down council-imposed TARA-recognition policy. START was supporting a recognition policy that meant the council was able to interfere in TARA affairs and take control of TARA finances. William, START board member and chair of Westfield TARA, felt the council's housing manager (operations) was committed to START, but wanted it to operate in ways that were acceptable to him.

I believe [the housing manager (operations)] is genuinely committed to having Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, I really do [...]. Well, I also think that he wants it to be in his image. He wants it to be the way that he envisaged it and that is not quite the way that we [activists] envisaged it.

The council's TARA-recognition policy sought, to some extent, to regularize TARA activities, and TARA and council collaboration. However, the policy sometimes seemed to attempt to achieve these objectives at the expense of gaining an in-depth understanding of TARA culture and values. At the same time, some reduction in the levels of difference and diversity that existed amongst TARAs might have meant there was a reduced likelihood of unique TARA contributions being made to collaboration. In addition, there may have been a diminution in TARA capacity to think about housing and neighbourhood problems in genuinely different ways. Frank, the former member of Halfway TARA, says:

Everything that they [the council] want to do, it is much simpler if you have got twenty different organizations, and you want them to do something, it is a lot easier for you, a lot less of a task, if you get them all to do the same thing [...]. If you can get them to do that, you are fulfilling the government's objectives and you are still in control.

Often tenants are mustered and used to help implement central government's housing and neighbourhood regeneration policies (Whittle, 2001). There are more tenant representatives on regeneration boards and committees, TMOs, and ALMOs than there used to be. However, the influence that these tenant representatives have over the development of housing strategy and the main thrust of housing policy remains unclear. In Sheffield, much tension and conflict existed between the council and a group of high-profile TARAs and activists that felt the council was attempting to incorporate START and TARAs into council systems and

ways of working. Indeed, it sometimes seemed the council predominantly wanted TARAs to understand what sorts of behaviour and activities central government and the council viewed as acceptable or unacceptable. However, where the “[s]ubstance of participation is dominated by bureaucratic rules and procedures, the sense that these are locations in which social change can be achieved may be lost” (Barnes *et al.*, 2005, p. 4). It is likely the chances of building trust and genuine community-based collaborations will be reduced if a council is overly concerned about implementing national policies at the local level, and spends too much time on getting TARAs to operate in certain ways rather than getting to know them better.

Drawing on Huxham’s (1996) work on collaboration, there seemed to be many more opportunities for instrumental rather than ideological collaboration (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Much opportunity existed for stakeholder involvement in instrumental collaboration that comprised striving to achieve some practical outcome with less opportunity for involvement in ideological collaboration that comprised challenging established policies or ways of working. The tension that exists between trust relations based on voluntarism, and linked to shared values and relations of confidence mediated by institutional and contractual forms (Tonkiss and Passey, 1999) is problematic. Some TARAs and activists in Sheffield seemed to be disadvantaged in collaboration that was based on signing up to a formal recognition policy, at the expense of different stakeholders getting to know each other and building trusting relations. In addition, some TARAs and high profile activists seemed to be disadvantaged in situations where collaboration did not provide adequate opportunities for them to campaign on housing issues and engage more in conflictual debate and deliberations.

The intention is to explore the extent to which START and TARAs were being enrolled into various council projects or empowered in ways that meant they were able to develop their own ideas on housing and neighbourhood management. There may not have been any grand central government plan to undermine the tenants' movement, but there was a messy situation in which organizations with very different cultures and values were collaborating and trying to achieve organizational and collaborative objectives.

Sheffield City Council is the more powerful stakeholder in TARA and council collaboration. Simon, the council's head of housing (operations), felt the council's relationship with the tenants movement was like "*The relationship between parents and their adolescent children*". The same council officer, when he was talking about START and its board, proclaimed:

In their own groups they [board members] are adopting one set of behaviours [then] they are expected to come to board meetings and pitch all their skills and experience and the rest of it onto the table and start collaborating and co-operating and those are not characteristics that they, most of them, would use in their own communities.

Much of what is considered acceptable or unacceptable behaviour by organizations and individuals is institutionalised in society. Behaviour that does not fit with prevailing rules, customs, and sensitivities is likely to be viewed as dysfunctional or even dangerous. Sometimes, TARAs and activists will behave outrageously, but a lack of knowledge of TARA culture and activist ways of working was sometimes causing behaviour to be misinterpreted or misconstrued.

For example, at one START board meeting a board member got up from his chair, after a period of heated deliberations, and announced that he was resigning his position before leaving the meeting. Council officers, who were present at the meeting, insisted on the holding of elections to fill a supposedly vacant position on the board. However, the person who had appeared to resign from his position on the board subsequently met up with his fellow board members at a local pub and resolved his differences with them over a drink. Nevertheless, the council officers insisted on elections going ahead, to the annoyance of START board members who implied this sort of member behaviour at meetings was not uncommon and usually signalled a period of temporary frustration with the conduct of board business.³⁰

William, START board member and chair of Westfield TARA, felt that it was not simply the case that an overbearing council was causing problems in TARA and council relations and collaboration. Rather, the council, or parts of it, had not managed to make a complete break with the past and more traditional ways of working with TARAs and tenants:

I don't think there is any malice here [...] [the council] have not grown out of [being] the paternalistic local authority of bygone years and [...] they genuinely think that what they are doing is the best way forward.

Other activists, including Paul, START board member and chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, and Lorraine, a member of Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association, were not so benevolent towards the council.³¹ They

³⁰ This illustration of START and council relations is based on the observation of START board member and council officer behaviour at a START board meeting held in Sheffield city hall, which was recorded in my fieldwork journal.

³¹ Lorraine was a questionnaire survey respondent

suggested the council was using collaboration to manipulate START and TARAs, and said respectively:

“They [the council] definitely do not want to give anyone a say, not even the tenants associations and not even Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together for that matter [...]. They are going to push [...] government policies through no matter what.”

“This council does not understand partnership only control. We [TARA representatives] have yet to go to a meeting where the outcome has not already been decided in keeping with some bigger plan that we do not get to know about until it is too late.”

It is possible to focus on the way that the different organizational cultures and languages of the stakeholders involved in collaboration can affect the sustainability of collaboration, and its outputs or outcomes (Barr and Huxham, 1996). What is missing from this type of analysis of the performance of collaboration is an in-depth examination of the role of institutional power and influence in shaping or determining a dominant language of collaboration which helps to define what organizations that want to collaborate should look like. START and TARA actions were sometimes misunderstood and even labelled mischievous or rebellious because a dominant central government language of collaboration tended to value a consensus-seeking approach at the expense of recognising and dealing with conflict in collaboration. James Gorringe, the senior civil servant interviewed, who had responsibility for the development of tenant participation policies, said:

Local authorities must think about how they plan for [the] delivery [of services] whilst tackling the tension created when organizations with different cultural bases are trying to work together. Sometimes they may be working in different directions on issues.

For example, Diamond (2002) has suggested it is important the language of collaboration is able to change to ensure professionals do not dominate in collaborative ventures involving voluntary and community-based organizations. Frequently, voluntary and community-based organizations need to have an in-depth understanding of the different organizations and professionals that they depend on for support and often their survival. These organizations and professionals do not need to ensure that they devote the same amount of time to understanding the voluntary and community-based organizations that they work with and support. In Sheffield, there were instances where a traditional and somewhat aloof language of collaboration associated with an old style of professional housing officer, sometimes counteracted the actions of tenant participation officers working hard to improve council knowledge and understanding of TARA culture and values. The council's tenant participation officers also wanted to change TARA and council relations so that the council had more understanding of TARA procedures and ways of working, rather than TARAs having to spend more and more time getting to know and understand council procedures and ways of working.

The next sub-section considers the extent to which START was able to get different TARA and tenant housing concerns and grievances onto relevant council agendas.

Was START a pragmatic or incorporated collaborator?

Robin, the senior housing officer at the Crystal Peaks Housing Office, suggested that there had been longer term effects on collaboration. These effects were associated with the relations that some Liberal Democrat councillors had with some START board members. He said:

[There were] tenants representatives whose vanity was appealed to and they felt that they were in positions of some power [...]. [The] Liberals [...] a lot of them pampered some of those people on the Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together Board.

Stewart, START board member and Gleadless Valley TARA member, said, *“Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, they just rubber stamped it, whatever the council put up they just rubber stamped it”*. Other activists, including Danny, START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA, and Stewart, at Gleadless Valley, had been mistrustful of START and its relations with the council from the outset. They said respectively:

“[There] was a General Meeting [...] [a] motion from the floor that Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together will oppose stock transfer, which was carried unanimously or if not unanimously at least nem con [...]. At some stage just after that the chair, being interviewed on television, said, Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, its position on this is neutral. Now we kicked up hell about that but nothing whatsoever was ever done.”

“The biggest part of the public was against stock transfer but Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together [...] were not even bothered about it [...]. They represented 63,000 tenants in Sheffield and they [...] never fought against it.”

These activists’ memories of START and its early relations with the council were still relatively fresh, and were helping to shape their contemporary views on the role of START and the purpose of TARA and council collaboration. All of these activists felt START remained too dependent on the council and was not able to represent all TARAs and tenants. Paul, START board member and chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, William, START board member and chair of Westfield TARA, and Michael, START board member and Greenhill Bradway Tenants and

Community Association member, respectively said:

“I know for a certain fact it is not Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together policy that is spread to the tenants and residents associations, it is Sheffield City Council’s policy.”

“[There is a] perception that [...] Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together [...] [is] a council organ and whether the reality is that [...] or not, the perception is that.”

“Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together itself has never been allowed to develop or make a difference and has always remained within council control.”

Different organizing strategies will vary in their effectiveness depending on how prevailing political opportunity structures either facilitate or hamper access to politicians and political systems (Stevenson and Greenberg, 2000). On the one hand, it will sometimes be expedient to approach politicians directly on issues. On the other hand, it will sometimes be worthwhile making contact with other organizations and individuals that are sympathetic to your cause, to seek their support in lobbying politicians on issues. START’s pragmatic approach and willingness to consider the possible benefits of different housing management options had, for a long time, helped it to maintain reasonably cordial relations with both Liberal-Democrat and Labour-controlled administrations in Sheffield. START was able to gain council recognition, get access to council-controlled resources, and participate in various housing and neighbourhood consultations and decision-making processes. However, the organizational autonomy that START lost reduced its capacity to represent all tenants and campaign on some housing issues. Paul, a START board member said *“Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, or whatever they want to call it, has got to be absolutely independent of*

the council”.

At the START AGM held in December 2002, a group of activists aligned with Jean the organization’s first chair alleged that an improper ballot had been held to elect a new chair. Jonathon, the new chair, was a START board member who had been involved in the setting up of Unity. He had the support of other START board members and activists who were unhappy with the way that the organization’s first chair was working with the council and felt that the council had too much control over START affairs.

Huxham and Vangen (2000b) point out that stakeholder perceptions of each other’s role and position in a collaboration can vary in significant ways. In the US, Bockmeyer (2000) examined the US Empowerment Zone initiative, set up to regenerate disadvantaged inner-city areas. She found evidence of a culture of mistrust between City Hall and the community, which caused problems for collaborative working. In Sheffield, considerable mistrust existed between a group of prominent TARAs and activists and the council (or at least some important parts of the council). This mistrust was caused by a combination of historical disappointments with housing consultations, disquiet over the circumstances surrounding the demise of Unity, and concerns about the way that START had emerged and then built relations with the council. In turn, TARA and activist mistrust of the council increased as a result of council actions taken to set up TARA and council collaboration that would satisfy central government demands for neighbourhood regeneration. The council’s involvement in the emergence and development of START, its somewhat inflexible TARA-recognition policy, and the extent of its control over the collection and distribution of tenants’ levy monies to TARAs were also controversial.

It seems there were sometimes somewhat fumbled central government attempts to empower TARAs that were interpreted in quite prescriptive and controlling ways by the council at the local level.

The council's role in TARA and council collaboration is complicated because it sits between central government and TARAs. It has to deal with top-down pressure coming from central government to implement national housing and tenant participation policies, and bottom-up pressure coming from TARAs and tenants to deal with their housing concerns and grievances. Some of Sheffield's activists had become disillusioned with collaboration. They felt they did not have enough power to determine their own vision for the future management of council-owned housing.

There were instances where there was insufficient freedom of choice for tenants at the local level to permit the development of genuine neighbourhood-based solutions to housing problems. For example, tenants' ability to decide their own vision for housing management in the future was constrained by the existence of only three central government approved housing management options. The housing and tenant participation specialist interviewed, employed by the consultancy called Partners in Change and working with tenants in Sheffield, said:

The challenge, [...] if this [New Labour] government is sincere, [...] is to actually [create] [...] a process that takes local people from a point of perhaps having little influence and power to shape decision-making, to being the lead in decision-making.

The council wanted to involve more tenants and residents in housing and neighbourhood improvement consultations and decision-making processes. Their backing for action to solve the city's housing problems was needed. Meanwhile, much bottom-up TARA and tenant pressure was put on the council to protect

tenants' rights and the future of council-owned housing. However, ultimately, there was no existing organization with sufficient power to challenge the roles and policies of central government and the council on behalf of tenants. The council was the dominant and most powerful stakeholder in TARA and council collaboration. Marjorie, a Labour councillor and cabinet advisor on neighbourhoods, said:

The [Labour] group [...] they have already gone to policy meetings, we have already had group debates on it [the policy] [...] we have already had officer discussions. So, we have already gone through a process where we feel that there may be some things that we have to do that we don't like but that is the way that we have to go. Now we have to implement it [the policy] and how we tweak it [...] that is where they [tenants and residents associations] play a major role.

The implication is that TARAs and tenants are involved in consultations and decision-making that can result in some change in the way the housing and neighbourhood policies of central government or the council are implemented. However, TARAs and tenants have limited power or influence over the formulation of those housing and neighbourhood policies. This helps to explain why it was difficult for Sheffield's TARAs and activists to get their own ideas about the future management of council-owned housing onto relevant council agendas. Simon, the council's head of housing (operations), says:

From my point of view, sitting in a lot of meetings that claim to be partnerships, you find [...] the biggest organization, the lead organization, or the council in most cases dominates [...]. It contributes this idea [...] you have already made your mind up anyway so what is the point [...]. Is it really [...] about asking them [tenants] what do you think or is it just really about telling them what we [the council] think.

TARA and activist expectations in Sheffield were raised regarding what it was possible to achieve through collaboration with the council. Sometimes, these expectations were dashed because there was insufficient honesty about the purpose and aims of the collaboration. The Labour leader of the council said:

In an effort to be democratic we are actually fudging things and making it more difficult for people and we all do it. We all say tenants' choice but when you are honest the choice is a bit limited.

Perhaps the council could have done more to tell TARAs about central government housing policy and the constraints it imposed on the possibilities for local action to protect council-owned housing. However, it could also have recognised the high levels of tenant support for the fourth housing management option, proposed by some TARAs and activists. The council could have lobbied central government more intensively on behalf of tenants to try to obtain approval for greater flexibility in interpreting and implementing national housing policies at the local level.

In May 2002, when Labour took back control of Sheffield City council from the Liberal Democrats, plans for LSVST were dropped, but the council still had to find a solution to the city's housing problems that was acceptable to central government. The council tended to promote instrumental collaboration to implement national housing policies at the expense of ensuring there were adequate opportunities for tenants to challenge these policies and generate genuine bottom-up solutions to housing problems. There were also some significant and unexpected council and TARA reactions to central government housing, Best Value and tenant participation policies that impacted adversely on TARA and council collaboration. For example, the council's response to the dilemma of having to deal with conflicting top-down central government and bottom-up tenant demands for action to solve housing

problems was an attempt to create more orderly relations with START and TARAs.

Conclusion

However, some of the council's actions to produce more orderly relations with START and TARAs increased tenant and activist mistrust of the council's interest in collaboration. A history of often conflictual and mistrustful tenant and landlord relations combined with large differences in power between the council and TARAs strengthened a TARA resolve to avoid being directed or controlled by the council. Most TARAs wanted to protect their organizational autonomy and freedom to campaign on housing issues in their own way. The way that START had been recognized by the council as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs, perceived by some activists as unfair, and the organization's continuing dependence on the council for funds and office space remained problematic. A group of activists that included individuals who had been aligned with the TARA coalition called Unity were aggrieved at the way that it had collapsed. These activists felt that the council continued to manipulate START to obtain its support for unpopular housing policies that would lead to the privatisation of council-owned housing.

The way that the council was implementing its TARA-recognition policy risked turning it into a *de facto* de-recognition policy if TARAs that could not or would not sign up to it were marginalised and denied access to council-controlled resources, and council-convened housing and neighbourhood consultations. TARAs and activists were often mistrustful of the council's reasons for enforcing the recognition policy because they felt that it was enabling the council to unnecessarily interfere in TARA affairs. In addition, the council's control over tenants' levy monies remained controversial because TARAs felt these monies rightfully belonged to them and

they should not have to meet council criteria to be eligible for a share of the monies collected.

There was not much space or opportunity for TARAs and activists to effectively challenge national housing and neighbourhood regeneration policy. Instead tenants were expected to reach agreement on which central government approved housing management option for council-owned housing they preferred. There was no evidence that a fourth housing management option, proposed by some TARAs and activists, had been considered in any detail by the council. A spiral of increasing mistrust and worsening relations was developing between the council and a group of TARAs and START board members striving to ensure START gained some extra autonomy from the council and was able to represent all tenants.

Chapter seven will examine and analyse the developing spiral of increasing mistrust and worsening relations between the council and some activists. The aim is to show how the mutual mistrust of each other's roles and views, together with a changing central government policy environment and altered political opportunity structures, assisted in the development of a crisis in START and council relations that culminated in the council withdrawing funding for START.

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event
2003 January	START GM called to consider Memoranda and Articles of Association drafted by Partners in Change with the board, which were not adopted.
	Sheffield City Council decides to stop funding START.
February	Sheffield City Council begins an investigation following allegations that funds have been improperly spent.
	Sheffield City Council sets up ten Neighbourhood Commissions to decide the future of council housing.
March	The findings of the Audit Commission Best Value Inspection of Sheffield's Housing Management and Estate Services are published and two stars are awarded.
	Sheffield City Council reminds START of the need to meet compliance issues by 30 June 2003 (subsequently extended to 31 July 2003).
May	START EGM: A new constitution, Memoranda, and Articles of Association are agreed.
May to July	Sheffield City Council takes charge of the administration of START finances.
September	START is de-recognized by Sheffield City Council.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Disorder and Crisis

In this chapter, institutional theory and theory on power provide insights that help to explain the spiral of worsening relations that developed between START and Sheffield City Council. The period of time covered begins in January 2003, when START considered adopting a new constitution, Memoranda, and Articles of Association (drafted with help from the housing and tenant participation consultants called Partners in Change) and ends with the council's formal de-recognition of START in September 2003. The chapter shows how some influential activists felt their efforts to rejuvenate START were undermined by council action taken to deal with START's problems. START had a new chair who wanted to establish new relations between START and the council. However, the large inequalities of power and control over important resources and decision-making processes that existed between START and the council remained problematic.

Additionally, START's ongoing dependence on the council for funds and low-cost office space meant its future was uncertain in a quickly changing national and local political environment: a political environment where new central government housing policies and priorities for neighbourhood improvement impacted on the council's views on the role of START, and the purpose of TARA and council collaboration. Meanwhile, when the council gained two stars for its Housing Management and Estate Services functions, after a Best Value inspection, there was no longer so much need for START to help to satisfy central government inspectors that tenant participation was working well in the city. However, there

were activists who continued to challenge the extent to which START was beholden to the council and not able to act on its own to develop thinking on housing policy or find ways to resolve neighbourhood problems. All of these issues and problems contributed to the development of worsening relations between the council and START. The council was able to put considerable pressure on START to operate in certain prescribed ways. In January 2003, the council suspended its funding of START because it was concerned about levels of conflictual activity at board meetings and the slow progress made on agreeing on a new constitution and Memoranda matters. In February 2003, the council set up ten Neighbourhood Commissions to decide the future of council-owned housing in Sheffield. Eventually, START decided to adopt a new constitution and different Memoranda-related items at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held in May 2003. However, in September 2003, the council decided to de-recognize START. This meant that there was no umbrella organization representing the views of member TARAs in discussions with the council at a city wide level. At the same time, activists ability to campaign on housing issues was reduced when they were dispersed among a number of TARAs around the city.

At the beginning of 2003, the START board seemed to be resolving some of its problems under a new chair. However, institutional theory illuminates the way that a changing national and local political environment impacted adversely on START and council relations. Central government views on the future of council-owned housing changed to accommodate a greater focus on small neighbourhood, rather than large area-based, solutions to housing problems. Meanwhile, in Sheffield, the city council's position on housing futures changed and there was a shift toward more neighbourhood-based housing consultations, which meant START was considered less important to the council. Theory on power helps to show how

decisions about the design of housing consultations and the formulation of collaborative agendas were made. In Sheffield, START and TARAs often seemed to be involved in collaboration that helped to legitimize council action taken to implement central government housing and neighbourhood improvement policies at the local level.

Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage focuses on phenomena at the organizational level and provides some useful information on the reasons why collaboration is successful or not. However, theory on collaborative advantage would benefit from an in-depth analysis of key assumptions that the authors make about the nature of collaboration (see chapter 2, section 2.1). First, they say that through combining skills and resources organizations can create synergy and collaboration that avoids some of the problems of working alone (that can include limited access to information, ideas, and a reduced capacity to innovate). What they do not address here is the way that the institutional environment helps shape stakeholder views on the skills and resources that are valued or not and how they are combined to achieve different objectives. Second, they suggest that organizations that create synergy are in a strong position to produce some type of collaborative advantage. However, institutional pressures might promote or cause the formation of certain types of favoured synergy and prescribed collaboration. Third, they point out the importance of agreeing clear aims or goals that fit with the purpose of collaboration. However, the role of institutions in determining what organizations emerge and thrive, and the shaping of values and beliefs is not well developed. Paradoxically, it seems new opportunities for TARA and council collaboration that emerged under Conservative and New Labour governments have sometimes made it more difficult for tenants to campaign or protest on some housing issues.

This chapter begins with an exposition of START's protracted deliberations to decide on a way forward in terms of its organizational structures and the problem of deteriorating relations with the council. Then the focus shifts to consider the council's response to allegations made by some START board members that START was not operating properly. A short time after these allegations were made, START failed to agree on a new constitution, Memoranda, and Articles of Association, and the council suspended its funding for START. The council's reasons for setting up ten Neighbourhood Commissions to decide the future of council-owned housing in different parts of the city are examined. At the same time, the council was putting pressure on START to meet certain organizational standards. The chapter ends with an analysis of activists' efforts to rejuvenate START and its eventual de-recognition by the council.

7.1 The trouble with START

In chapter six (section 6.1) the impact of central government pressure, and a long history of tenants' mistrust of their landlords, on contemporary activists' views on collaboration in Sheffield was highlighted. In particular, much tension existed between a group of START board members (including some who had been aligned with Unity) and the first chair of START, and her supporters, over her pragmatic relations with a Liberal-Democrat-controlled council. She had adopted such an approach, in part, to gain legitimacy for START, in the eyes of the council, which meant it was eligible to receive funding from the council to support its activities and attend council-convened housing meetings. However, activists who were mistrustful of START's first chair and her relations with a Liberal-Democrat-controlled council remained concerned about council control over important resources and interference in START affairs.

Meanwhile, some of the factors impacting on START and council relations included a changing national and local political environment, START's dependence on the council for funds and office space, and variation in the opportunities available for activists to participate in different types of collaboration. The New Labour government was showing renewed interest in smaller neighbourhood-based housing management projects in addition to LSVST. START needed to satisfy the council that it was helping to solve the city's housing problems in ways that satisfied central government to gain access to needed funds and accommodation, which meant it was not able to easily campaign on some housing issues. Some high-profile activists were dissatisfied because they could not get items onto relevant agendas that would enable them to discuss the way TARA and council collaboration was set up and worked. Instead, TARA and council collaboration focused mostly on matters such as ensuring the completion of housing repairs on time, keeping streets clean and tidy, and the progressing of discussions on housing management options approved by central government. In turn, how organizations are located in a particular national and local political environment will help to determine who has control over collaborative agendas and what is discussed or not in collaboration. START was located between the council and TARAs, and was set up to represent the city's TARAs in negotiations with the council. However, START lacked independence and was viewed to be a tool of the council by a vociferous group of activists. START was not even able to collect TARA levy funds from tenants and allocate them to TARAs to support their activities. In addition, the council had control over agenda-setting in collaboration to the extent that it would not easily allow consideration of alternatives to central government housing policy setting out how council housing should be managed in the future.

The next sub-section considers some START board members' complaints, made in 2002 to the council's cabinet member responsible for housing matters, about the way that START was operating, and how these complaints impacted relations between START board members. The focus is on the circumstances surrounding events that occurred just prior to and during the START General Meeting (GM) held in January 2003, and the tension that existed between activists who had been aligned with START's first chair and activists who were aligned with START's new chair.

'There was no help from the Labour council'

Jonathon, the new START chair elected in December 2002, had to deal with increased levels of concern amongst a growing number of TARAs and activists about START activities and how they were helping tenants (or not). A group of activists, that included Jonathon before he was the chair of START, had asked the New-Labour-controlled council's cabinet member responsible for housing matters to undertake an investigation into the way that START was operating in the spring of 2002. This group of activists was concerned about START's ability to represent the interests of all tenants, its independence and capacity to campaign on housing issues, the way that meetings were conducted, and how financial matters including the spending of monies were decided and reported. For example, Helen, a START board member and chair of Firshill TARA, said:

We [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] were not having Annual General Meetings, we were not having General Meetings, we were not having nothing. I said [...] the only time I see a financial statement [...] I have seen one and that was at the Annual General Meeting in November 2001 and that was not signed it was just a drafted document, no signature, auditor's signature, anything.

The activists that had approached the council to obtain help to address these matters felt it had not been helpful. Florence, a former START board member and chair of Longley Hall Farm TARA, commented on START's problems and said:

We [a group of activists] made an appointment [with the council's cabinet member for housing] [...]. He said, oh! I cannot do anything [...]. What we tried to do it was to no avail. We got no satisfaction and I honestly think that there was no help from the Labour council.

The cabinet member for housing failed to respond to activists' concerns about START in the proactive way that they had wanted. This proactive approach would have included action to force START to change its ways of working, and become more accountable to all board members and tenants for its actions and the spending of council and tenants' levy monies. Instead, the council continued to focus on obtaining START's help to complete housing Best Value review and tenant participation compact work. The council's cabinet member responsible for housing matters may also have been worried an investigation into START's affairs would have damaged its credibility and thus affected how Best Value inspectors, keen to establish the extent to which TARA and council relations were working well in Sheffield, viewed START. Meanwhile, many of the same activist concerns about the role of START that had been problematic when the Liberal Democrats were in control of the council (see chapter 4, section 4.1) remained problematic under the new Labour-controlled council. Somewhat ironically, considering the activist calls for council intervention to force START to change its ways of operating, there was still much activist concern about START's independence from the council and the threat of incorporation into bureaucratic and overly formal council systems.

I attended a START GM, held in January 2003, where a decision was made *not* to adopt a new constitution and Articles of Association. The decision reflected activists' concerns about what a move to a more formalised organizational set-up would mean for START in terms of a possible further or new type of loss of control over its affairs. In addition, there was still the thorny issue of how START would be funded in the future. George, a homeowner and company secretary of the Wisewood Estate Management Board (WEMB), suggested START must not be reliant on the council for monies to assist with its activities in the future. If START continued to depend on the council for funds, it would lack the independence and capacity it needed to develop its own ideas and work. He said:

Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together have said to the local authority we want money from you [...] money for a building [...] we want money to run our organization and employ officers [...]. Well that is not going to work.

Some prominent activists involved in START also felt that its dependence on the council for funds constrained its ability to campaign effectively on some housing issues (see chapter 5, section 5.2). These issues included campaigning against what these activists perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing and campaigning for the introduction of the fourth housing management option proposed by some TARAs. The so-called fourth option would have allowed the council to retain ownership of its housing stock while devolving management functions to a board consisting of tenants, councillors, and other community representatives. However, the council, because it had control over important resources, was in a strong position to manage its relations with START and get it to focus on considering only central government approved housing management options. This situation continued to be the cause of much tension among activists mistrustful of the council's reasons for wanting to work with START and TARAs.

Edmond, START vice chair and chair of Basegreen and District TARA, said:

You have got to say stop, look, this is where we want control over the process [...]. They are your [the council's] targets. We [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together and Tenants and Residents Associations] do not want a target unless we have set it ourselves.

In late January 2003, the council decided to suspend its funding for START. START and the council had already begun an investigation into the ballot arrangements that were in place to elect a new chair at the START AGM. The AGM had been held in December 2002 shortly before the council decided to suspend its funding for the organization. Roger, the Labour-controlled council's cabinet member for neighbourhoods, suggested it had quickly become obvious that there were problems caused, in part, by START's relations with the previous Liberal-Democrat-controlled council. He said:

Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together was created while we [Labour] were in opposition [...]. What we have quickly realised, having come back into control of the administration, was there were problems, there were divisions, and there was not unification and that did cause problems.

A report appeared in the *Sheffield Star* newspaper, on 24 January 2003, confirming the council's decision to suspend its funding for START, and the council and START's decision to undertake investigations into the ballot to elect a new START chair.

An organization representing Sheffield's 63,000 council house tenants is carrying out an inquiry into the running of a ballot at its Annual General Meeting. Sheffield Council suspended its grant to Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together and an internal inquiry is under way after complaints about the ballot from tenants' representatives.

Maybe Sheffield City Council could have done more at an early stage to help START build the organizational capacity needed to operate effectively, and help reduce the chances of administrative and communications problems arising later. For example the council may have been able to do more to help START obtain access to internal or external advice or training on financial and administrative management practice or the development of robust communications systems and networking activities. Meanwhile, START's lack of independence from the council meant some prominent activists perceived it to be a council tool used to try to gain tenant approval for LSVST. In chapter two, (section 2.2), the role of power in collaboration and decision-making processes was examined. For example, Foucault (1991) has elaborated on how power, in part, reflects whose views on issues are acknowledged and valued at the expense of other views that are ignored or suppressed. In turn, the political opportunity structures that exist will help to promote or prevent the consideration of different stakeholder views in collaboration and the development of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in different types of collaboration. However, Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage does not expand on the role of institutions and power in influencing or determining the type of political opportunity structures that will emerge and develop. Importantly, issues can be kept out of politics, as Lukes (1974, p. 24) says, "[t]hrough the operation of social forces and institutional practices."

A gap exists in understanding about different political opportunity structures will help to shape the way that groups and individuals participate in collaboration that helps to get potential issues into, or keep them out of, politics. In Sheffield, there seemed to be insufficient opportunities for activists (particularly those who had been aligned with Unity) to participate in the type of values- and institution-changing ideological collaboration described by Huxham and Vangen (2005). More ideological collaboration might have improved the council's ability to deal effectively with some of the tenants' housing concerns and grievances that were ignored or suppressed. For example, the council may have been better able to tackle tenants' concerns about their conditions of tenure, the future of affordable housing for rent, and the viability of housing management options that were not approved by central government. Ideological collaboration would consist of challenging central government culture and values, as well as beliefs about the value of council-owned housing and the way policies were formulated and implemented.

The next sub-section focuses on the council's decision to set up ten Neighbourhood Commissions to undertake consultations to decide the future of council-owned housing in different parts of Sheffield.

The Neighbourhood Commissions

In February 2003, Sheffield City Council began an investigation into START's finances and spending of funds after some activists claimed monies had been inappropriately spent on entertainment for some board members. Subsequently, START's autonomy was severely diminished by the council's decision to take control of its finances (a situation that lasted from May through July 2003). Danny, START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA, and William, START board

member and chair of Westfield TARA, respectively said:

"[The] council has now taken over the administration, as it chooses to put it, of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together finances for a short while. [The council has] put [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] on probation sort of thing [...], which is treating you as though you were in the playground basically."

"The council officers now sign the cheques for Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together, which I find horrendous. How can we say to our membership that we are independent of the council?"

The council also decided to set up ten Neighbourhood Commissions, to consider the future of council-owned housing in different parts of the city, in February 2003.

Linda, the council's executive director for neighbourhoods, said:

We [the council] have changed [...] to a process now which is back into neighbourhoods and local commissions and working with tenants locally to say what are the priorities [...]. We have moved away from a citywide solution [...] our focus is back onto neighbourhood-based tenant involvement [...] that is where we want the [...] discussion and the dialogue and involvement.

Nevertheless, there was still considerable TARA and activist mistrust of the council and its decision to devote more time to undertaking neighbourhood-based housing consultations with tenants. In addition, the combination of worsening relations between the council and START, and the council's decision to move away from negotiations with activists representing TARAs at a citywide level to more neighbourhood-based consultations with tenants, was the cause of some activist anxiety. Roger, the Labour councillor and cabinet member for neighbourhoods (that included responsibility for housing matters), had attended a

council-convened Citywide Forum meeting where council officers had outlined plans for the Neighbourhood Commissions and how they would be set up. He said:

Neighbourhood Commissions, [...] we [the council] were met with immense scepticism from the outset. There is a certain amount of guarantees that I have given to reassure people that this is an open and transparent partnership that we are going into [...]. Wherever it sits within the council's capabilities tenants will have ownership of the process.

Prominent activists, who had witnessed a gradual worsening of relations between the council and START, remained wary of councillor and council officer promises that the new Neighbourhood Commissions would be inclusive and wherever possible 'owned' by tenants. In particular, it seemed there was a very top-down oriented council approach underpinning the introduction of the commissions. The council and its representatives could potentially dominate in the new commissions being set up, which would further alienate many activists. For example, Colin, START board member and Hackenthorpe TARA member, remarked:

They [the council] simply told us this is what you are getting, this is how many Neighbourhood Commissions you are getting, this is who is on them [...] this is what they are going to do, this is how they are going to do it. They are going to be chaired by somebody from the council, by a councillor or one of the triumvirate that runs housing.

The role that activists would have in the new commissions was unclear. What was also uncertain was the extent to which the commissions would be able to represent the interests of all tenants or try to steer discussions in certain ways. The risk was commission consultations might consist mostly of the council

providing tenants with information about central government approved housing management options, and not spending enough time listening to tenants and taking their views and ideas seriously. Indeed, Anne, a member of Westminster TARA, felt the Neighbourhood Commissions were likely to be top-down council imposed and managed housing consultation structures.³² She said:

The council needs to recognise that when it is dealing with the community it is dealing with a community that has got its own way of doing things [...]. It is a two-way street and it should not always be the community that is forced into the mould that fits with the council's processes [...] it [the council] needs to bend a bit.

It seemed Sheffield City Council's decision to set up the Neighbourhood Commissions was, in part, a response to changes in the national political environment. First, central government was promoting the development of more small neighbourhood-based as well as large area-based solutions to housing problems in response to tenant protest against LSVST. Second, the council's priorities had changed once the Best Value review of housing management and estate services was completed. Third, the council's relations with START were becoming increasingly conflictual and difficult. The risk was the setting up of the Neighbourhood Commissions would mean there was less scope for a broad range of influential activists to be involved in discussions and decision-making on strategic housing matters affecting all tenants at a citywide level.

Activists would be split up and dispersed amongst different TARAs. In such a divide-and-rule situation, the small number of activists that the council perceived was intransigent and not willing to compromise on housing issues would be less

³² Anne was a questionnaire survey respondent.

able to organize at a citywide level and campaign against them. In Sheffield, some prominent activists felt the council was trying to implement unpopular central government housing policies at the local level by reducing the force of opposition to proposals in commission areas. However, there are times when it is important to *“[d]raw attention to common interests across differences, if the doctrine of divide and rule is not to deliver power into the hands of outsiders”* (Taylor, 2000, p. 254). Often, activists perceived to be difficult to work with by the council will be representing the interests of a large number of tenants, albeit in vociferous and sometimes outrageous ways. At the same time, conflict does not have to be viewed as something that is dysfunctional that should be avoided or suppressed. Conflict can be a way of confronting reality and creating new solutions to tough problems (Tjosvold, 1997).

The next sub-section considers the continuing and escalating difficulties in relations between the council and START. It focuses on the council's concern that START was not meeting certain organizational standards regarding the way that it conducted its affairs.

The need for compliance

In March 2003, the council reminded START that it needed to meet certain compliance issues regarding criteria set out in the council's TARA-recognition policy and in discussions about business planning by 30 June 2003 (later extended to 31 July 2003). The compliance issues included START reaching an agreement on a new constitution and Articles of Association. It seemed the council wanted START to meet these compliance criteria and be independent. However, because the council had invested a lot of resources in START, it also wanted it to operate in ways that would help to ensure it was accountable to it for its actions

and could contribute to improving neighbourhoods and local services. Simon, the council's head of housing (operations), expressed his disappointment in START and its performance, saying:

We [the council] have given them [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] a lot of time, money [and] staff resources to help them be independent of the council and contribute towards improving the [housing] service. Despite all that they continue to find it difficult to do that.

Meyer and Hyde (2004) studied neighbourhood associations in the US and found umbrella organizations could help to provide the structures needed for wider collaboration. However, the effectiveness of neighbourhood associations was dependent on their capacity to develop and maintain their organizational legitimacy. START was losing legitimacy in the eyes of some TARAs because the board was frequently involved in protracted and acrimonious disputes with the council over the role of START and the way that the council funded it, rather than representing tenants' interests. Nevertheless, the council appeared to be creating a situation where START would lose even more legitimacy in the eyes of some TARAs because it no longer seemed prepared to provide resources for the umbrella TARA that it openly criticised as a failing organization.

Sometimes individuals can find themselves drawn into an ever more dependent relationship with other more powerful individuals who increase their influence over programme agendas and objectives (Pred, 1983). The first chair of START and some other board members had taken a pragmatic approach in collaboration to gain access to powerful councillors and council officers, as well as council funds and council-convened housing and neighbourhood meetings. However, START's dependence on the council for funds and office space meant councillors and

council officers were in a strong position to manage START and council relations, and get START to fit with council systems and ways of working.

In the spring of 2003, START seemed to be resolving some of its problems, but the council did not appear to want to work with START any longer. Politicians' views on the future of council-owned housing had moved on at the national and local level. In Sheffield, powerful councillors and council officers with control over funds and collaborative agendas were changing their approach to housing consultations and tenant participation in neighbourhood management matters. Meanwhile, Sheffield City Council had gained two stars for its housing management and estate services following a Best Value inspection.

The next section examines and analyses tenant and resident activists' efforts to rejuvenate START. It shows how these activists' efforts were too late to make any lasting difference.

7.2 Trying to rejuvenate START

Conflict between START board members over START's role and its relations with Sheffield City Council meant it could be unclear what START was doing to help TARAs and tenants. For example, William, START board member and chair of Westfield TARA, said:

Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together spends all its time contemplating its own internal navel rather than providing services [for Tenants and Residents Associations] [...]. If you are concentrating on survival or [there is] in-fighting, or whatever, then you don't actually do anything productive and that has been the name of the game.

At a START EGM, held in May 2003, a new constitution, and Articles of Association were finally agreed. However, Jonathon, the new START chair elected in December 2002 who had been a prominent member of Unity, had resigned in March 2003. He had felt there was not enough support coming from the council, and the wider tenants and residents movement to take START forward. Delia, the chair of Batemoor TARA, had taken over as the interim chair of START.

‘No real evidence that is the type of tenant involvement mechanism or vehicle we want’

Delia was optimistic about START’s future when she took over as chair. The board had adopted a new constitution and Articles of Association. START also had a new business plan that it was preparing to present to the Labour-controlled council. In May 2003, Delia said:

I took over about four or five weeks ago, as the chair, and from then things have moved very quickly. We have orderly meetings [...]. Meetings were horrendous, nobody wanted to go [...]. Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together is now all coming together.

Delia, START’s second new chair within a period of a few months, felt the umbrella organization was on a new and stronger footing. It seemed START was re-gaining some of the credibility that it had lost through variability in the quality of its business meetings and a lack of productive activity perceived to benefit tenants. However, Edmond, the chair of Basegreen TARA and the vice chair of START, recognised that it was going to take time to re-establish START and build people’s trust in the organization. He commented on START’s new constitution

and Articles of Association, saying:

They are our [the tenants and residents movement] Articles that Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together has adopted. We can sit back and say right this is why we want more than a twelve-month programme [to reorganize] because the first twelve months [...] has got to be a consolidation time.

Delia and her fellow START board members needed time for the new constitution, Articles of Association, and business plan to embed. START would become a charitable organization limited by guarantee. This would mean board members had protection from personal financial jeopardy if the organization got into financial difficulties or folded. In addition, START would gain extra independence from the council through an enhanced ability to raise funds through grant application activities or the provision of services. George, the company secretary for the Wisewood Estate Management Board (WEMB), thought a revitalised START board was in a strong position to re-build relations with the council and TARAs. He said:

I think that once they [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] have had their annual general meeting, elected their board, they have every chance then of making plans and meeting all the [recognition] requirements for the local authority.

Meanwhile, Delia, and other activists, felt START would be able to satisfy the council that it was taking appropriate action to sort out its problems. START would once again represent a majority of the city's TARAs at a citywide level, but also ensure that it was not too dependent on the council and could take charge of its own affairs. Alas, Marjorie, the Labour councillor who was the cabinet advisor on neighbourhoods and regeneration, was not so optimistic about the future of START, saying:

The new board would say that they had got a business plan in place and were looking to the future and had got lots of ideas and that but there is no evidence as such to suggest that they are making a difference. There is no real evidence that that is the type of tenant involvement mechanism or vehicle we want.

The council appeared to be distancing itself from a rejuvenated START and its board members. It seemed as if Marjorie and some of her fellow councillors wanted to see more evidence of START fulfilling the role of a particular type of intermediary support organization or tenant involvement mechanism. For example, they wanted to see START helping to get information about national housing policies to TARAs, gain TARA support for the council's TARA-recognition policy, and build a coherent TARA view on housing matters after a period of discussions and then reaching a consensus on issues. William, START board member and chair of Westfield TARA, remarked:

Suddenly, it [Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together] looks as if it might become effective because they have got a different crowd involved [...]. They are more than capable of doing the job; I count myself in that number. Now that [...] Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together looks like being a group that can actually be an effective group, suddenly the council are saying, oh no! untouchable.

However, Linda, the council's executive director for neighbourhoods, felt START would not be able to deliver on any new business plan that the board agreed on. Neighbourhood-based consultations with tenants to decide housing and neighbourhood matters worked best in Sheffield, not consultations with an umbrella organization. She said:

What works the best in Sheffield has been that local activity and I am less convinced that the citywide movement, in the three years I have been here, can point to real tangible successes as a consequence of its existence.

It seemed changed central government views on housing and neighbourhood improvement policy, and the ways that institutions can influence or determine what issues are important or not were having an impact on some councillors' and council officer's views on the future of START. There were different perceptions about START's purpose, but changes at the institutional level in thinking about housing policy had particular effects on the actions of some powerful councillors and council officers. They were the individuals with much influence or control over the setting of TARA and council collaborative agendas, the conduct of deliberations, and the operation of decision-making processes. Power can also take the form of contingent threats that contain a demand by an actor and make punishments contingent upon non-compliance (Tedeschi, 2001). At the national level, central government is a powerful player, able to influence or determine the shape of the political environment and create or eliminate opportunities for different types of TARA and council collaboration. It can do this through the introduction of statutory instruments promoting collaboration and joined-up action to solve complex social problems, and changes to funding regimes to encourage TARA and council involvement in certain types of collaborative enterprise or activity.

START and TARAs had little direct or immediate influence over the institutional and political framework within which TARA and council collaboration was located. In turn, START and TARAs had little influence over a powerful institutional language of collaboration that favours reaching a consensus on housing problems

and finding solutions to them, rather than conflict over who has power and control over important resources and agendas. Decisions are choices consciously and intentionally made by individuals between alternatives, but Lukes (1974, p. 21) says, *“The bias of the system can be mobilised, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individual choices.”* START and TARAs in Sheffield were able to choose between the transfer of council-owned housing to an RSL, a PFI arrangement to obtain extra investment for housing repairs, or the setting up of an ALMO that would devolve housing management responsibilities to a board comprising tenants, councillors and other community representatives. However, different societal-level embedded norms, traditions, and customs concerning the value of partnership and collaborative working were mobilised and recreated in ways that supported a particular type of consensual decision-making at the expense of recognising and dealing effectively with conflict. There was a strong central government emphasis in much of its literature on collaboration on the value of reaching a consensus on issues, and viewing conflict as dysfunctional and to be avoided as far as possible. This situation had important consequences for the promotion of the instrumental or ideological collaboration described by Huxham (1996). In Sheffield, the council and tenants were involved in more instrumental collaboration to produce tangible and practical outputs, such as improved completion times for housing repairs, rather than ideological collaboration such as disputing and changing council values or ways of working.

Different people had different perceptions about START’s purpose. One group of TARA activists felt START should note what sort of institutional and political environment existed and adopt a pragmatic approach in consultations with the council. The aim was to improve access to politicians and funds, and there was a

willingness to consider all housing management options including LSVST. Another group of TARA activists wanted to challenge aspects of an institutional and political environment that meant tenants had limited ability to get their own housing management options considered. There was much tenant protest against LSVST and some changes were eventually made to central government housing policy, including the introduction of the ALMO. However, the main elements of central government housing policy remained intact, including the selling-off or transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs, the splitting-up of housing strategy and management functions, and a moratorium on council-house building.

Meanwhile, some councillors and council officers felt that START needed to comply with central government demands on the council to implement national housing policies effectively at the local level because it obtained funds and low-rent accommodation from the council. These councillors took a hard line and insisted on START compliance with the council's TARA-recognition policy. Another group of councillors were aware that there was sometimes undue pressure put on START to help the council to implement unpopular national housing policies. In particular, the council's tenant participation officers were trying to build trust with START and TARAs, and better understand TARA culture and values. However, there were only two tenant participation officers and they lacked the status and power that professional housing officers possessed. Ultimately, a small group of powerful politicians and council officers were able to influence thinking on housing matters and take decisions that would have a significant impact on START and its operations. They were, in the main, reacting to a changing institutional and political environment that altered what they needed to do to satisfy central government that appropriate action was being taken to deal with housing problems at the local level. This group of councillors and council officers eventually pushed for more

neighbourhood-based housing consultations and decided to abandon relations with START.

Once again Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage fails to provide an adequate explanation of the way that institutions and power are involved in shaping political and collaborative environments. The theory focuses on phenomena that occur at the organizational level and provides useful insights on collaboration. Successful collaboration depends on organizations having the right types of capacity and skills, sharing resources and interests, and agreeing on aims and objectives. However, the theory fails to provide an in-depth analysis of the institutional factors that help to influence or determine not only the shape of collaboration but also what organizations will emerge, develop, and receive an invitation to participate in collaboration. In addition, a lack of focus on non-decision-making obscures the impact that it has on the ways that are available to organizations to get their own priorities for action onto relevant collaborative agendas. Paradoxically, more opportunities to participate in collaboration may benefit stakeholders that are more powerful. They have control over important resources including information, funds, and expertise and can manage or control agenda setting and consultation processes. Less powerful stakeholders may be disadvantaged in collaboration because they have reduced freedom to campaign on issues, or challenge dominant views and policies effectively. They lack power and control over important resources, or the authority to take certain actions in collaboration.

The next sub-section explains how Sheffield City Council eventually de-recognised START. Then, there is an examination and analysis of the role of institutions and power in the final council decisions made about the future of START.

‘Just in a pigeonhole and brought out when the council needed us to be around’

In September 2003, TARA membership of START was reported to be well under the 50% plus one threshold that it needed to be recognised by the council as the umbrella organization representing a majority of Sheffield’s TARAs. Council estimates indicated that thirty out of seventy-six TARAs or thirty-nine per cent of the total number of TARAs in the city remained affiliated to START (Sheffield City Council 2003a). The council decided to de-recognise START. Rosalind, the Labour leader of the council, said:

The funding that has been going into Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together will go into the neighbourhoods [...]. It is a decision that has been discussed and was agreed in the Labour group really and that will go into the council’s [decision-making] machinery.

On 23 October 2003, START’s first chair made a surprising statement to the *Sheffield Star* newspaper. She said:

There was never a true partnership between the council and her group. She told a scrutiny board, ‘we were just in a pigeonhole and brought out when the council needed us to be around, when there were visiting government ministers. We were just a tick box. Looking back, we were not helped at all by the council.’

Power in a structural sense is a pre-existing constraint in the form of reproduced asymmetric relations between organizations and individuals (Layder, 1985). Sheffield City Council seemed genuinely to want to work with START and TARAs to improve neighbourhoods and local services, but large inequalities of power and control over important resources in collaboration were problematic. Tenants and

residents stood to benefit from instrumental collaboration that improved neighbourhoods. However, a group of influential activists felt there was not enough opportunity for them to get involved in strategic housing and neighbourhood policy discussions and decision-making processes. The New Labour government made genuine, but only partially successful, attempts to devolve more power to communities (Newman, 2005). A central government language of collaboration developed that focused on organizations participating in collective instrumental activity to improve neighbourhoods (see chapter 1, section 1.1). However, as Chanan (2003, p. 57) points out, *“Partnerships will not succeed unless they provide real opportunities for people to express their views, influence decisions, and play an active part in shaping the future of their communities.”* In Sheffield, some prominent TARAs and activists were not able to express their views and effectively influence decisions on housing and neighbourhood management policy.

An established and institutionalised language may result in the depoliticizing of certain activities (Ng, 2001). START was, to some extent, hamstrung by a central government language of collaboration that promoted reaching a consensus on issues at the expense of recognizing conflict in collaboration. On the one hand, Unity had campaigned against what it perceived to be the privatisation of council-owned housing and had folded. On the other hand, TARAs opposed to the council’s TARA-recognition policy or protesting against the perceived privatisation of council-owned housing risked being de-recognised by the council or marginalised in housing consultations. For some organizations, it is also important to their members that they are not only autonomous but that they appear to be autonomous (Blackmore, 2004). Ultimately, START failed to gain the organizational autonomy it needed to convince sceptical TARAs and activists it could effectively represent their interests. Meanwhile, other TARAs affiliated to

START lost interest in an organization run by a board that was involved in a protracted dispute with the council over its role and funding. In the end, when START's help to find solutions to housing problems was no longer so important to the council, it was not as problematic as it might have been for the council to withdraw its funding for the organization and focus on neighbourhood-based housing consultations.

Conclusion

The effect of changing institutional pressures and the role of power in decisions made about the design of collaboration and stakeholder involvement are apparent in the spiral of deteriorating relations that developed between START and Sheffield City Council. There was a significant amount of TARA compliance with the council's TARA-recognition policy. TARA resistance to the recognition policy occurred, but the council's efforts to gain TARA compliance were largely successful but distracted from a focus on the valuing of difference and diversity in collaboration. Meanwhile, the introduction of the recognition policy and the way that it was implemented had helped to create some new forms of TARA marginalization and potential de-recognition by the council. Indeed, the senior civil servant with responsibility for tenant participation matters, when he was interviewed, stressed that TARA de-recognition by councils was not something that central government felt was helpful.

START's troubles, in part, seemed to reflect a lack of adequate opportunities for some influential activists to get involved in ideological collaboration that would allow them to challenge established housing and tenant participation policies. Some of these activists were also frustrated because they could not get certain housing ideas or concerns onto relevant agendas for consideration. In turn, there

had been a struggle for organizational legitimacy between START and Unity that had resulted in the collapse of Unity and the council recognizing START as the umbrella organization representing a majority of the city's TARAs. However, many of the activists that had been involved in Unity were still active and angry because they felt marginalized by the council. The internal wrangling within START over its role and relations with the council stemmed in large part from a council failure to address the housing concerns and grievances of former Unity members who had gained seats on the START board.

The changing national political environment helped to cause Sheffield City Council to change its views on TARA and council collaboration. Importantly, the council was in a difficult position, having to respond to changes in national housing and tenant participation policies and try to build trusting relations with TARAs and tenants. But the council was ultimately able to take unilateral action to determine its relations with START and TARAs. The council worked with START and TARAs, but was to some extent divided on how best to structure collaboration. For example, there were some housing officers with more traditional views on what partnership and collaborative working meant, and tenant participation officers trying to push for a more in-depth appreciation of START and TARA culture and values. From the outset, START lacked autonomy and the council's control over important resources was always controversial. START's heavy dependence on the council for its survival damaged its credibility because some TARAs and activists felt it was a compliant organization and did not represent all of the city's TARAs or tenants. START's attempts to improve its credibility came at a time when the changing national political environment meant it was no longer so important for the council to work with an umbrella organization. Internal wrangling within START over its role and relations with the council provided some of the

evidence that the council used to justify setting up Neighbourhood Commissions and de-recognizing START. This caused START's first chair to conclude that there had never been a true partnership between START and the council.

Chapter eight will draw some conclusions about what the study of START and TARA relations in Sheffield demonstrates about the need for an enhanced theory of collaborative advantage that includes concepts drawn from institutional theory and theory on power to show how collaboration can progress in different ways. Some of these different ways of progressing may lead to some stakeholders being disadvantaged in collaboration. The chapter starts by recounting the central government rhetoric on collaboration and examining the reality on the ground. Then the research questions are re-visited to assess the extent to which the study of TARA and council collaboration in Sheffield has helped to provide insights that enhance understanding of collaborative phenomena. Theory on institutions and theory on power are viewed as valuable in helping to explain the impact of macro-level institutional policies and pressure on the activities and actions of collaborating organizations. At the same time, the possibilities for enhancing theory on collaboration, with its focus on activities and actions occurring at the organizational level, are explored. Finally, a new concept is introduced to help explain the way that institutions and power are implicated in the shaping of a political environment that can result in some organizations and individuals being disadvantaged in collaboration, as well as sometimes empowered.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions

This chapter concludes the thesis by drawing together the evidence on TARA and council relations in Sheffield, and how they were affected by the New Labour government's housing, Best Value, and tenant participation policies. It was noted in chapter one (section 1.2) that the central government rhetoric on collaboration has tended to emphasise organizations' and individuals' responsibilities for making collaboration work. What is neglected in the central government literature is the role of institutions in shaping the environment within which organizations are able to emerge or not, and the opportunities that they have to participate in different types of collaboration. The main research question, focused on the extent to which New Labour policies had changed the political environment within which TARA and council collaboration is located and has to operate. Little was known about the extent to which TARAs and tenants had been empowered or not. In addition, no in-depth research had been undertaken to see how New Labour policies had affected opportunities for TARAs to influence council decisions on priorities for action to develop housing strategies and improve neighbourhoods. Other sub-questions emerged after a review of institutional theory and theory on power literature.

The first set of sub-questions focus on the extent to which TARA independence and empowerment depends on the power and influence collaborative agenda-setting and decision-making processes. A second set of sub-questions focus on the opportunities that exist for TARA involvement in the instrumental or ideological types of collaboration described by Huxham (1996) and outlined in chapter two

(section 2.1). More specifically, these sub-questions are concerned with the chances that TARAs have to participate in collaboration to improve housing and local services, or collaboration that challenges housing policies and established council ways of working with tenants to deal with housing problems.

This chapter draws together the research findings to examine how institutional theory and theory on power help to explain the way that TARA and council collaboration developed in Sheffield. Some of Huxham and Vangen's (2005) ideas on what makes collaboration successful can be discerned in the way that the council set up collaboration with TARAs but it still did not work well. A re-examination of institutional theory and theory on power provides insights on how macro-level institutional activities impacted on TARA and council relations in Sheffield. These institutional activities enabled and constrained different meso-level or organizational activities in collaboration that resulted in intended and unintended collaborative outputs and outcomes as well as new forms of TARA inclusion and exclusion in collaboration. Central government and council control over important resources in collaboration and collaborative agenda setting processes influenced the opportunities that existed for TARA and activist involvement in instrumental collaboration that included the day-to-day management of neighbourhoods and ideological collaboration that included challenging policies and influencing housing and neighbourhood improvement strategies.

Theory of organizational isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) provided insights on the institutional pressures that caused predictable and unpredictable consequences to occur at the meso or organizational level and the micro-level and individuals in collaboration and their actions (see chapter 2, section 2.2). Sheffield

City Council responded in certain ways to central government policies and tried to get START and TARAs to fit with its systems and the need to convince Best Value inspectors that tenant participation was working well in the city. Lukes' (1974) three-dimensional theory of power was used to examine how central government and council power influenced collaborative decision-making at the local level (see chapter 2, section 2.2). First, central government and council power prevented some potential issues getting onto relevant agendas. The council developed criteria and standards that START and TARAs needed to meet to obtain official recognition and eligibility to receive a share of tenants' levy and other monies; this affected the focus and trajectory of deliberations and decision-making. Second, central government and council power contributed to the maintenance of unresolved and latent tenant concerns over housing matters. The council's actions to implement its TARA-recognition policy affected opportunities for TARA participation in instrumental or ideological collaboration, and the chances of different types of problems being effectively dealt with. Third, central government and council power sustained a process of non-decision-making in situations where central government housing preferences reduced the scope for START and TARAs to think about the different ways that council-owned housing might be managed at the local level.

The findings from the research undertaken in Sheffield challenge some of the key contemporary political views on collaboration. They also challenge theory on collaboration and the theory of collaborative advantage (that suggests that collaboration is generally a 'good thing' and problems that arise can usually be dealt with at the organizational level). A central theme stemming from the research findings is the failure of much theory on collaboration and the theory of collaborative advantage to consider in enough depth the effect that institutions and

power have on the shape of collaboration at the local or neighbourhood level. A new concept, that of 'disempowering involvement', that emerged from the analysis of the research data collected on TARA and council collaboration is used to help explain how the activities and actions of institutions, organizations, and individuals impacting on each other in complex and often unexpected ways can lead to some organizations being disadvantaged in collaboration. It is argued that theory of collaboration can be further enhanced by taking into account the role of institutions and power in shaping or determining collaborative activities and actions at the local level.

8.1 Institutions and collaboration

Chapter two argued that theory on collaboration and collaborative advantage focuses primarily on meso or organizational-level phenomena and their impact on collaboration. MacDonald and Chrisp (2005) have suggested much of the literature on partnership-working focuses only on dealing with meso or organizational and partnership level problems to improve the chances of producing benefits. Huxham and Vangen (2000a, 2003, 2005) acknowledge that central government policies will impact on the environment within which collaboration is located but suggest that a focus meso or organizational and partnership level problems and solving them is usually sufficient to ensure partnership working and collaboration is successful. However, theory on collaboration and Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage fail to effectively deal with the way that institutions and relations of power are profoundly involved in creating and maintaining a set of institutionalized core values, beliefs, and ways of working that help to shape the activities and actions of organizations and individuals in collaboration.

Unpacking collaborative advantage

In chapter two (section 2.1), it was shown that collaborative advantage occurs when some objective is met that no organization could have achieved working on its own and each organization is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could working on its own (Huxham, 1993b). To help ensure collaboration is successful stakeholder organizations need to carefully decide on who to involve or not (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a), the way communications and the conduct of meetings will work (Huxham and Vangen, 2000b), and how to build productive relationships (Huxham, 1993b). It was also argued that Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage does not pay sufficient attention to the role of institutions and power in influencing or determining the shape of the political environment and collaboration at the local level. This would include understanding the effects of institutionalized traditions, customs, values, and beliefs on the actions and activities of collaborating organizations and individuals.

Indeed, chapter two (section 2.1) argues that views on collaboration more generally tend to be underpinned by a rational, management-oriented approach (Doyle, 2004) and a tendency to ignore or underplay the role of institutions in shaping partnership or collaborative discussions and decision-making processes (Diamond, 2006). It is the precise characteristics of the relationships that exist between institutions, organizations, and individuals that Huxham and Vangen (2005) do not elaborate on. Sydow (2006) felt Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage needed to consider in more detail the way that institutions are created by organizations and individuals, and can then independently affect their thinking and behaviour. Institutional theory and theory on power provided ideas and concepts used to help understand the political pressures that created and eliminated opportunities for TARAs to get involved in different

types of collaboration. The intention was to examine collaboration to see how it may or may not lead to participating organizations experiencing benefits that are associated with the creation of collaborative advantage.

The next sub-section considers how central government policies changed the wider environment within which collaboration at the local level is located.

Central government and political opportunity structures

The New Labour government, elected in 1997, introduced policies that established a new overarching framework for partnership and collaborative working at the local level. A dominant central government culture and core values that promoted collaboration to decide priorities for action to improve neighbourhoods and solve complex social problems were obvious in its housing, Best Value, and Tenant Participation Compact legislation. However, there was still central government bureaucracy and prescribed ways of working that affected what was going on in collaboration at the local level. The government introduced legislation that changed the way that councils were organized and their relations with tenants and the associations that represent them. At the same time, councils had central government housing and neighbourhood improvement objectives to meet and were in a difficult position trying to meet central government demands and listen to tenants.

DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) theory of organizational isomorphism provided insights that helped to explain how institutional pressure on organizations influences how they are involved (or not) in collaborative activities (see chapter 2, section 2.3). First, coercive institutional pressure forces organizations to comply with legislation, rules, and regulations, or face the prospect of sanctions that can

include reduced access to important resources and intervention to take control of functions and services. Second, mimetic pressure can cause organizations to imitate other organizations that they feel have been successful in obtaining what they need to function effectively. Third, normative pressure coming from more powerful organizations or individuals can cause less powerful organizations or individuals to behave in certain ways.

In Sheffield TARA and council collaboration was affected by coercive pressure that came from central government and legislative and regulatory demands that impacted on the council and TARAs, backed up with a threat of sanctions for non-compliance. The New Labour government's Best Value and Tenant Participation Compact initiatives were top-down imposed on councils. The influential TARA activists interviewed felt that key aspects of these initiatives were as much about central government and the council gaining control over TARA activities as giving them new powers and freedoms. The council was experiencing pressure to implement national policies effectively at the local level and sanctions might be applied if there was non-compliance that included a loss of central government funds for housing repairs or intervention to take control of housing or other services. Consequently, the council put pressure on TARAs to become more formal and operate in ways that helped it to implement national policies effectively at the local level.

On the one hand, it may seem reasonable that TARAs should meet some organization standards before they are officially recognized and eligible to take part in compact and other relevant council-convened meetings. On the other hand, there is the issue of the formalization of what were mostly relatively informally organized TARAs, and the risk that they were gradually being incorporated into

council systems and made to fit with council ways of working. A group of prominent activists felt that TARAs with a long history of independence and protest against poor housing conditions were less able to campaign on some housing issues. There was a need to focus on considering the merits of central government preferred housing management options rather than challenge the reasons for wanting to transfer council-owned housing to RSLs in the first place.

Three significant effects of coercive central government pressure on Sheffield City Council and its relations with START were identified. First, the issue of council funding for START, and council control over the collection and allocation of tenants' levy monies (an addition of ten pence per week to the rents of participating tenants and homeowners making an annual payment) to support TARA activities. START's dependence on substantial council funds of around £100,000 each year and council-provided office accommodation at a low rent impacted on its independence. It seemed to be in the council's interests to support START to help meet a central government requirement that there was evidence of council and tenant discussions to produce a citywide tenants participation compact and persuade Best Value inspectors that tenant participation activities were well established in the city. At the same time, START's first chair and some other board members had been keen to take a pragmatic approach when considering the possible benefits of LSVST. Other high-profile activists perceived START to be beholden to the council and locked into an arrangement that meant the council that it depended on for its survival overly influenced its views on some housing issues. The council was also able to put a lot of pressure on TARAs to meet certain organizational standards (relating to the conduct of meetings, officer elections, and communications with members) to be eligible for a share of tenants' levy monies that they felt rightfully belonged to them (see chapter five, section

5.2).

Key Finding 1

Central government pressure on the council to show tenant participation was working well and effectively implement its housing policies helped to cause Sheffield City Council to put pressure on START and TARAs to operate in certain ways to be eligible for a share of council and tenants' levy monies. This led to disputes between some high-profile activists and the council concerning the council's power and control over funds that impacted adversely on collaboration.

Second, it seemed the council sometimes wanted to reach a consensus on issues relatively quickly whenever possible, without thinking about the implications for collaborative discussions and decision-making (see chapter 6, section 6.1). The New Labour government had worked out its housing policies and an agenda was set with three preferred options for the future management of council-owned housing. There was pressure on councils to quickly set up successful collaborative ventures. In Sheffield, it seemed more time could have been devoted to foundation-building and different organizations getting to know each other well in the early stages of TARA and council collaboration to engender trust and respect for each other's values and views. The need for collaboration and its outcomes to fit with central government political cycles and elections was not conducive to spending time on the development of collaborative structures or ideas at the local level. Much scope existed for some tenants' housing concerns or suggestions not to get onto relevant agendas for discussion because they did not fit with government policy or were considered impractical in the political circumstances. A fourth option for the management of council-owned housing proposed by some activists in Sheffield would not be easy to develop given the national political

situation regarding policy on housing futures. A more open and transparent council consideration of the fourth option might have helped prevent some of the anger that activists felt when it was quickly rejected. It seemed there was sometimes a process of non-decision-making like that described by Lukes (1974). The non-decision-making could include missing potential solutions to neighbourhood problems because some ideas do not get onto relevant agendas for discussion or the constraints on deliberation in collaboration mean some ideas might fail to enter into people's imaginations in the first place.

Key Finding 2

There was central government pressure on the council to do things quickly, achieve results to fit with relatively short national political cycles and timescales, and choose approved solutions to problems. This situation impacted adversely on opportunities for tenants to get their housing concerns and grievances onto relevant agendas and the potential for innovation because reaching a consensus on issues happened too quickly without adequate opportunity to think about alternative solutions to problems.

Third, as TARAs changed to meet the demands of the council and its TARA-recognition policy some were becoming more like each other. This need not have been a problem but evidence of a loss of capacity for innovation emerged as more formalised ways of working reduced the flexibility to look at housing and neighbourhood problems from different perspectives. Many TARAs did decide to sign up to the recognition policy and they lost some of their independence, experienced much council pressure to adopt central government approved housing management policies, and failed to change the main thrust of national housing policies (even though some TARAs found ways to resist some of the

effects of recognition once they were officially recognized). Sheffield City Council had introduced a recognition policy to try to deal with some of the uncertainty surrounding relations with a diverse range of usually informally organized TARAs, and ensure that they conformed with central government demands relating to organizational standards and the implementation of national housing policies at the local level. However, central government had not anticipated the potential problem of a *de facto* de-recognition policy that excluded non-compliant TARAs from important council-convened meetings held to discuss neighbourhood matters (see chapter 6, section 6.2). For example, in Sheffield, there was the issue of Unity and its exclusion from collaboration because its ideas did not fit with central government or council plans for the future management of council-owned housing. At the same time, potentially innovative TARAs might be excluded from important meetings simply because they did not have the capacity to meet the council's recognition criteria.

Key Finding 3

The council's TARA-recognition policy was introduced to deal with uncertainty surrounding relations with a diverse range of TARAs and ensure they met central government organization standards. However, it caused some organizational isomorphism and loss of capacity for innovation in collaboration. Moreover, there was the unanticipated problem of TARA de-recognition and their exclusion from collaboration.

It is not sufficient to focus mainly on the organizational level, as Huxham and Vangen (2005) have, to understand how collaboration is located within a wider institutional and political environment that organizations and individuals often have little direct control over. In some situations where problems affecting collaboration

at the organizational level (such as how to agree on who to involve, the sharing of resources, and the setting of aims and objectives) are resolved it will still fail or underperform because the institutional climate (including its customs, rules, and regulations) help to determine what it can achieve. Coercive pressures were reinforced by normative pressures on START and TARAs coming from powerful councillors and council officers able to steer discussions in collaboration away from ideological matters such as challenging national housing policies (see chapter 6, section 6.1). This is not surprising since most council officers would see their job as ensuring compliance with central government policies and directives. However, the council's tenant participation officers felt their focus was on helping tenants to articulate all their concerns, and there were disputes between them and housing officers over the need to better understanding TARA culture and activists' campaigning and advocacy role in collaboration. It was the views of more powerful senior housing officers that tended to dominate whilst the views of less powerful tenant participation officers risked being ignored or overlooked.

The next sub-section examines how these institutional pressures contributed to the creation of different opportunities for START and TARA involvement in different types of collaboration, and reduced the chances of collaborating organizations benefiting from the creation of a genuinely empowering type of collaborative advantage.

An imbalance in opportunities to participate in instrumental and ideological collaboration

An imbalance in collaborative discussions meant there were inadequate opportunities for a group of influential activists to participate in ideological collaboration. This situation led to:

- conflict over values, power, resources, and ways of working in collaboration to be ignored or suppressed
- reduced freedom for activists to campaign on some housing issues
- a lack of opportunities for activists to challenge a dominant central government language of collaboration and beliefs about its purpose
- a lack of opportunities for activists to influence the development of housing strategy and policy

These phenomena and activists' memories of a long history of often difficult tenant and landlord relations in Sheffield (see chapter 5, section 5.1) helped to cause mistrust of both central government and the council. As Lukes (1974, p. 21) says, *"Institutions in particular and sometimes organizations or individuals can succeed in preventing potential issues from entering into the political arena"*. A number of influential activists felt there was too much top-down central government imposed housing and tenant-participation policy and the council had unfairly marginalised Unity and helped START to obtain the TARA support it needed to be officially recognized. Much controversy had surrounded the demise of Unity (which had opposed the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs) and activists aligned with this TARA coalition viewed START as helping the council to implement unpopular national housing policies at the local level. Important tenant housing concerns and grievances were left unresolved after the demise of Unity and former supporters of

this organization were still about and on the board of START. Some of the START board members who had been aligned with Unity had not supported Jean Gleadall, START's first chair, or her relations with some senior Liberal Democrat councillors and council officers. These board members were also critical of the way START operated and they worked to undermine the credibility of START decisions that they felt were not in the best interests of the tenants that they represented. The outcome was a failure sometimes to work together in genuinely collaborative and innovative ways.

The next section sets out the new concept of disempowering involvement, used to help explain the spiral of worsening relations and crisis in collaborative working that developed between START and Sheffield City Council. The concept embraces the idea that to understand collaboration at the meso- or organizational-level, it is necessary to have an in-depth knowledge of macro- or institutional-level phenomena and how they impact on organizations and collaborative activities. It might be easy to identify some institutional phenomena because they relate to the impact of central government housing and tenant participation legislation and guidance on TARA and council collaboration. It might be less easy to identify other institutional phenomena because they relate to the impact of institutionalised traditions, customs, and norms on TARA and council collaboration and how individuals think about issues and behave at the local level, which are often implicit rather than explicit.

8.2 Disempowering involvement

The research shows that different macro-level (institutional), meso-level (organizational), and micro-level (individuals interacting) activities and actions are complex and interconnected, with phenomena and events that happen at one level impacting on phenomena and events that happen at other levels. At the meso- or organizational-level, there were problems between START and the council caused by differences in organizational culture and difficulties agreeing the purpose of collaboration. Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative inertia provides insights that show how organizations' inability to share power and resources effectively can lead to collaborative outputs or outcomes that are less than could reasonably be expected. However, this theory like that on collaborative advantage fails to deal adequately with the way that institutions and power shape the political environment and opportunities for organizations to get involved in different types of collaboration.

Organizations operate in an institutional environment where particular customs, laws, rules, and regulations underpin the development of organizational practice and ways of working that both enable and constrain activity and action. Organizations can influence and change institutions but their ability to do so will often be determined by structural constraints on organizational freedom. Such structural constraints include the demands on organizations that come from other organizations that they depend on for their survival (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). At the institutional-level, central government devised and changed the national housing and tenant participation policies that helped to determine how Sheffield City Council would work with TARAs and find them either co-operative or un-co-operative. Central government policies also influenced the council's decisions to

take more control over how monies were collected and allocated to support TARA activities and introduce a TARA-recognition policy to try to reduce uncertainty in TARA and council relations. Meanwhile, activists in collaboration were treated differently depending on how their demands fitted with a dominant central government language of collaborative-working.

On the face of it, the New Labour government's desire to ensure a wide range of organizations are involved in collaboration to improve neighbourhoods and local services, and apparent support for bottom-up solutions to neighbourhood problems, was laudable (Foley and Martin, 2000) because it emphasised the importance of empowering community groups (see chapter 1, section 1.2). However, a difference is often discernible between what is contained in formal texts and the reality of actual day-to-day practice (Foucault, 1978). Mandated collaboration can help to sustain dominant–subservient relations between central government and organizations at the local level (Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). START and council relations and collaboration felt coercive and forced to a significant number of prominent activists in Sheffield. They were frustrated because they could not get some of their housing concerns and priorities for action to solve neighbourhood problems onto relevant agendas. Not enough space existed in collaboration for what Mouffe (2005) has called agonistic deliberations in which the positive aspects of certain forms of conflict are explicitly recognized. In collaboration that includes plenty of scope for agonistic deliberations the campaigning role of the TARA would be better recognized than it has been in the past through a greater focus on the value of identifying different as well as similar views and thinking on issues. Activists were more involved in collaboration, but often felt frustrated and angry at the lack of power and influence they had over important decisions about the future of council-owned housing.

These findings suggest that institutional pressures on organizations and the way that power operates can result in the suppression of conflict and contribute to a problematic process of non-decision-making and inertia, or a process of 'disempowering involvement'.

More than just inertia

Huxham and Vangen (2004, p. 191) say that collaborative inertia occurs when, *"The output from a collaborative arrangement is negligible, the rate of output is extremely slow, or stories of pain and hard grind are integral to successes achieved."* A number of factors at the meso- or organizational-level were found to contribute to the onset of collaborative inertia. They are difficulties in:

- agreeing joint purpose
- communicating because of differences in culture, values, and language
- developing joint modes of operating
- managing power imbalances and building trust
- managing accountability
- dealing with the sheer logistics of working with others.

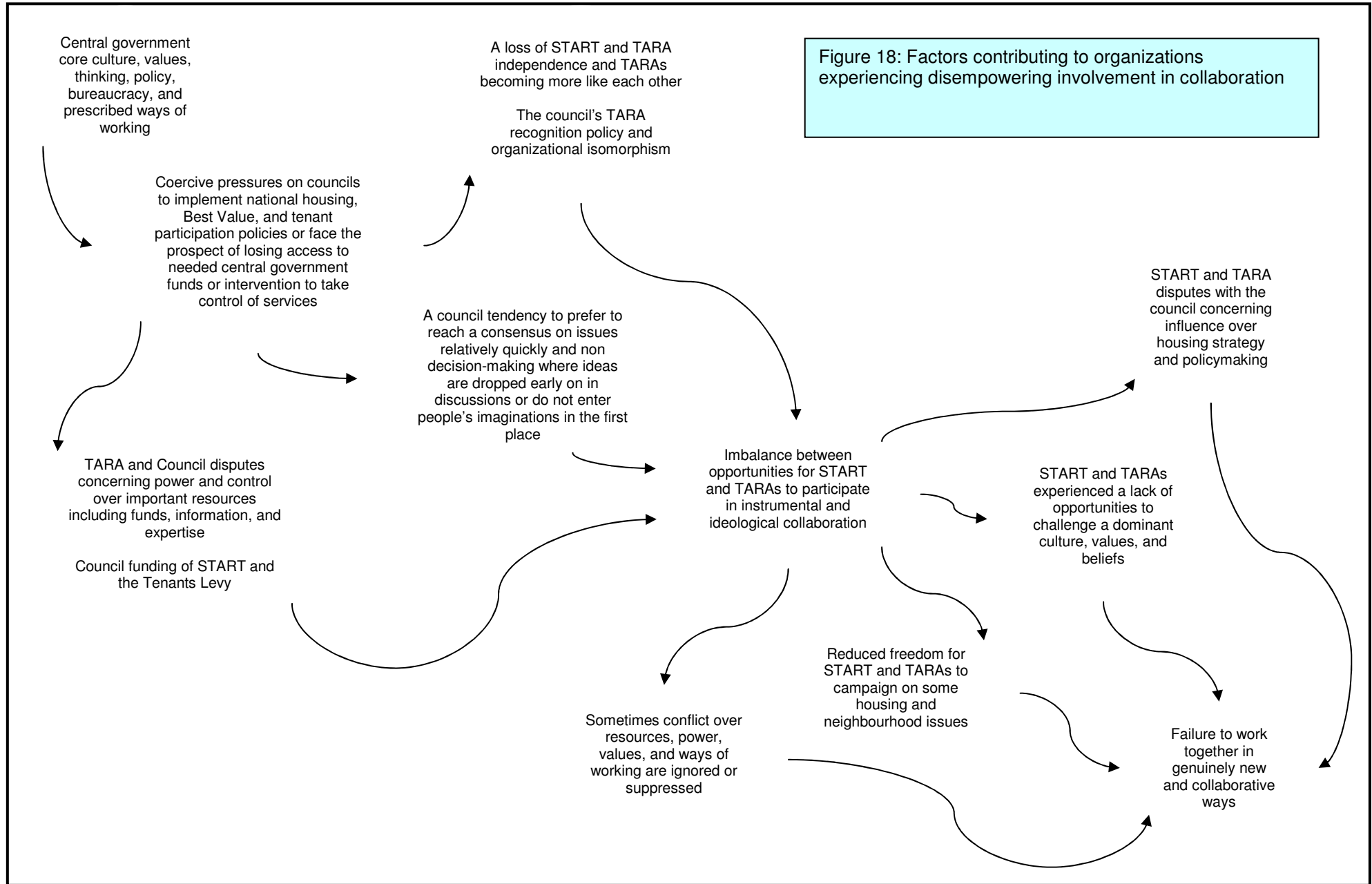
(Huxham and Vangen, 2000a)

However, the circumstances that contribute to organizations and individuals experiencing disempowering involvement in collaboration go beyond focusing mainly on the effect of phenomena occurring mainly at the organizational-level in collaboration. The process of disempowering involvement includes much more emphasis on macro- or institutional-level activities and actions that help to influence or determine what opportunities exist for organizations to participate in different types of collaboration. In this study a combination of central government

legislation and regulation steered collaboration in a particular direction that closed down as well as opened up deliberative and decision-making opportunities. There were also unintended consequences when Sheffield City Council responded to legislation by introducing a recognition policy that risked excluding some TARAs and extending its control over funds distributed to TARAs to support their activities. Even if the council and TARAs had managed to sort out all of the organizational problems that could cause collaborative inertia there were institutional phenomena impacting on collaboration in ways that would cause difficulties in relations. For example, there was a central government approach to collaborative-working that was often quite bureaucratic and prescriptive which combined with the council's responses to legislation, set in motion a train of events that led to START and some activists experiencing disempowering involvement in collaboration. The different circumstances that contribute to organizations' or individuals' experiencing the effects of disempowering involvement in collaboration feed into each other and can produce a downward spiral in trust, leading to an intensification of organizations' and individuals' distrust of each other and worsening inter-organizational and inter-personal relations. The institutional and collaborative circumstances underpinning the process of disempowering involvement are set out in figure 15 and include:

- bureaucratic and prescribed ways of working
- inequalities of power and control over important resources
- differences in organizations' level of influence over strategy and policymaking
- imbalances in the opportunities that exist to participate in instrumental and ideological collaboration
- a lack of opportunities to challenge a dominant culture, values, and beliefs
- reduced freedom for organizations to campaign on some issues
- conflict is suppressed or ignored in collaboration

- a loss of organizational autonomy and organizations becoming more like each other
- reaching a premature consensus on issues and non-decision-making
- a failure to work together in genuinely new and innovative ways



In Sheffield, not all TARAs or activists experienced disempowering involvement in collaboration and much useful instrumental work was being undertaken to improve neighbourhoods and local services. Nevertheless, as the points already outlined show, some overly bureaucratic and prescriptive central government policies, council reactions to them, and inequalities of power and control over important resources helped cause a situation where there were inadequate opportunities for TARA activist involvement in ideological collaboration that challenged central government policies and established ways of working. This caused some TARA activists to experience disempowering involvement in collaboration. They felt unable to effectively influence housing policies and strategies or the culture, values, and beliefs underpinning collaboration and its purpose. A number of these activists were START board members and some had been aligned with Unity, the TARA coalition that had opposed the transfer of council-owned housing to RSLs. START lacked independence from the council that provided it with most of its funds and low rent office accommodation, and dissatisfied activists complained about not being able to get some tenant concerns and grievances onto relevant agendas for discussion, fewer opportunities to campaign on housing issues, and a lack of power needed to ensure a wide range of views and ideas on housing matters were debated. Consequently, the fallout from the disempowering involvement that these activists experienced was serious, and included damaged relations of trust between the council and the wider tenants and residents movement, the eventual collapse of TARA representation at a citywide level, and in some instances a failure to work together in genuinely new and innovative ways.

The next sub-section elaborates on how a process of disempowering involvement affecting organizations and individuals involved in collaboration impacted on the types of issues considered, the decisions made, and outcomes.

Missing knowledge and non-decision-making

The New Labour government outlined in different housing and tenant participation policy documents how it wanted TARA and council collaboration to consist of certain activities and actions (see chapter 1, section 1.1). In Sheffield, the council could have obtained extra knowledge about tenant housing experiences as well as concerns and grievances through a better dialogue between tenants and their representatives. Sometimes it seemed missing knowledge had contributed to a process of non-decision-making in collaboration (caused by failure to obtain sufficient information about tenant experiences and provide adequate space for the development of potential solutions to housing problems). The institutional environment within which TARA and council collaboration was located helped prevent some deliberations from happening.

The process of disempowering involvement includes the rejection or suppression of some of the views and experiences of a less powerful organization or organizations in collaboration by more powerful organizations that deem them inappropriate or irrelevant. Indeed, the circumstances in which power is configured can be organized so that, consciously or not, certain types of organizational practice are privileged over others (Foucault, 1977). Sheffield City Council had much power and control over important resources and was able to devise organizational standards that TARAs needed to meet to gain official recognition and access to tenants' levy monies that it collected on their behalf. At the same time, it was possible to put pressure on TARAs to help meet central government demands concerning the implementation of national policies at the local level. An organization's disempowering involvement in collaboration will often consist of taking part in activities that mean some types of knowledge or experience are prematurely

discounted and potential alternative ways of thinking about problems are not explored. These effects might have been mitigated by individuals in the council who could have championed or nurtured collaborative relationships and collaborative working (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). The status and power of key individuals in collaboration is a significant factor in the success of collaborations (Huxham and Vangen 2003, 2005). Unfortunately, the council's tenant participation officers, trying to act on behalf of TARAs, lacked the power and status that would ensure their views were taken seriously.

In modern times, collaborations have become a key policy instrument in the new centralism that consists of the implementation of specific centrally initiated programmes of action at the local level (Skelcher, 2004). An increase in collaborative activity at the local level was accompanied by new central government devised methods of regulating it incorporated into housing and Best Value performance management practice. New opportunities for communities to be involved in shaping their future may represent a new form of governing 'at a distance', and can be seen as perpetuating state power through new forms of technical and managerial control (Taylor, 2003). The upshot is TARAs are invited to participate in different discussions, but lack the power or influence over collaborative agendas and strategic policymaking needed to make a substantial difference. Organizations can work together whilst existing relations of power between them remain largely unchanged (Balloch and Taylor, 2001).

The next sub-section considers how the concept of disempowering involvement can be used to develop an enhanced theory of collaborative advantage.

An enhanced theory of collaborative advantage

Huxham (1991) is interested in collaboration and the capacity of organizations to collaborate. She developed ideas on collaboration and collaborative advantage and collaborative inertia while working with public organizations to produce strategies for collaborative working. Huxham and Vangen (2003, 2005) recognized the environment within which collaboration is located can influence organizations' decisions about its purpose, and even suggested that central government policies and funding regimes often steer collaborations at the local level in particular directions. However, they do not provide an in-depth understanding of the involvement of institutions and power in shaping or determining the political environment within which collaboration is located. Nor do they focus much on the role that institutions play in creating different opportunities for organizations and individuals to participate in instrumental or ideological collaboration.

Institutional structures and social forms are created by organizations and individuals, but can take on a separateness of their own and an ability to independently enable or constrain organizational activities (Giddens, 1979, 1983). The theory of collaborative advantage could be further enhanced, if developments in institutional theory and the theory of power are used to improve understanding of the effects of a dominant institutionalized language of collaboration and established traditions and ways of working on the actions and activities of organizations and individuals. It is also useful to consider how central government mandated collaboration works where the organizations have very different cultures and values and large inequalities of power exist between them. Lukes' (1974) three-dimensional view of power helps to show how some organizations can be disadvantaged in such situations. First, institutional actions can stop some issues

getting onto relevant agendas. Second, institutional pressure on organizations to achieve certain objectives can mean the potential for conflict exists where people's real interests are not recognised and met. Third, a process of non-decision-making may develop in situations where people's views and preferences increasingly conform with institutionalized practice, and they become less able to imagine any alternative to the situation they are in.

The next section considers the value of the research and the scope for future research on collaboration especially between large public sector and small community-based organizations.

8.3 Limitations of the research and future directions

My interest was in theoretical generalizations not statistical predictions. I was concerned not with prediction but aiming to generate new theory that can better explain why collaboration can be problematic and lead to inertia or worse actually disadvantage some of the parties involved. Kennedy (1979) suggests it is possible to generalise or comment on what might happen in various research situations using evidence gathered from a single case study if the data collected captures the characteristics of the phenomena under examination because similar findings are likely to emerge in other similar situations. I wanted to improve understanding of mandated TARA and council collaboration and emphasise the potential for the transferability of learning to other similar situations where organizations are collaborating. In particular, it is likely there will be many instances where organizations are faced with one or more of the problems identified in this thesis that can lead to one or more of them experiencing a sense of disempowering involvement in collaboration.

In different parts of chapter 3 (especially sections 3.1 and 3.4), descriptions were provided of various research limitations. Three issues that had a noticeable impact on decision about the way to conduct the research were:

- The timescale for the completion of the thesis
- The time that could be spent in the field
- The availability of financial and human resources

The timescale for the completion of the thesis meant it was necessary to undertake fieldwork and obtain the bulk of the interview, observation, and secondary data needed over a period of approximately nine months. There was limited scope for preliminary investigations of the case study location and opportunities for extended pilot work with relevant individuals to develop ideas about semi-structured interview questions and who to interview. A restricted level of resources in terms of the finances available to undertake a period of intensive fieldwork (and cover the costs of travel, accommodation, and subsistence) helped focus attention on the need to avoid spending too much time on data collection and being careful to limit visits to the case study location. The limited time spent in the field constrained attempts to build a deeper rapport with people and get to know them well. In addition, there were fewer opportunities than there might have been to make contact with different individuals and get them to tell their stories about their housing experiences, the role of START, and TARA and council collaboration. The sole researcher involved in research planning and a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis must carefully divide their time between the different activities to ensure that the effective and efficient completion of the research. In such a situation, the amount of time devoted to any single research activity must not jeopardise work on other research activities. No scope existed for the employment of other researchers to help with research

activities if it was not possible to complete them on time.

Doing some things differently might have helped improve the research. Even within the tight timescales set for the completion of the research more time could have been spent on planning fieldwork activities. First, through devoting more time to establishing early contacts with key gatekeepers a reduction in the time spent on such work later on when interview and observation activities are taking up much time is achievable. Second, an extension of the pilot work phase of the research to include more space for thinking about how data collection would link with data analysis could have helped prevent some of the early struggles to cope with a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis. The logistics of such a process and fitting it in with other research activities proved much more difficult than anticipated. Third, despite the constraints on the time available to carry out different research activities some longer periods of days and weeks spent in the field might help ensure much richer and varied data is collected.

Further elaboration on the process of disempowering involvement and its effects on different organizations and individuals in collaboration would help to more accurately determine its pervasiveness and the damage that it does to inter-organizational relationships. At the same time, it might be possible to identify additional factors that contribute to the onset of disempowering involvement. What is needed is a much more concentrated focus on the role of institutions and how their activities and actions impact on organizations and collaboration. An improved understanding of how institutional rules and regulations impact on organizations and collaboration at the local level is needed that helps to show how institutionalized traditions, customs, norms, and widely accepted ways of working affect organizations and collaboration. Much scope exists to better integrate

institutional theory and theory on power with a well developed description and analysis of the different factors that can contribute to the process of disempowering involvement.

And finally...

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past”

(Karl Marx 1852).

Embedded institutional values and beliefs can acquire an enduring presence of their own in society that guides the actions of organizations and individuals in the future (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). This thesis shows that despite the central government rhetoric on the value of collaboration it did not work well in Sheffield. The council did many of the things that Huxham and Vangen (2005) say are important to make collaboration successful but many problems arose. Even if organizations have the capacity to collaborate and are able to trust each other, share power and resources, and agree common goals, collaboration may still not work. Institutional cultures, values, and beliefs, and socially embedded traditions, customs, and norms all affect the way institutional pressures, the political environment, and political opportunity structures develop and influence or determine what organizations emerge and get involved in collaboration at the local level. An enhanced theory of collaboration will use the concept of disempowering involvement and a three-dimensional view of power to show how institutions can cause organizations and individuals to act in certain predictable ways that impact on how they collaborate.

The research showed how institutional actions and the institutional environment impact on collaboration at the local level and contributed to a spiral of deteriorating TARA and council relations and a process of disempowering involvement.

Three key conclusions stand out from a theoretical viewpoint. First, Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage fails to deal with the combined influence of institutions and power on the purpose of collaboration and what it can achieve. Second, the use of institutional theory and theory on power to explain collaborative phenomena has shown how collaboration can lead not just to inertia, but a process of disempowering involvement can occur that disadvantages one or more of the stakeholders in a collaboration. These theories have also helped to provide insights on the way institutional policies caused expected and unexpected activities and actions at the organizational level. Some of these activities and actions caused some stakeholders to feel disillusioned and frustrated with collaboration and contributed to the onset of a process of disempowering involvement that affected some stakeholders and left them disadvantaged. Third, institutional theory and theory on power can be used to develop an enhanced theory of collaboration. This enhanced theory will have an increased capacity to explain the way that institutional activities and actions help shape the environment within which organizations emerge in the first place and thrive or not. A greater emphasis will be given to examining the way institutions favour particular types of knowledge and experience over others and contribute to the creation or elimination of opportunities for organizations to get things onto relevant agendas and get involved in decision-making processes.

The thesis also provides some practical findings and conclusions with implications for policy. First, the importance, from the outset, of honesty and clear communications about the purpose of collaboration and what it can achieve together with warnings about the dangers of creating unrealistic expectations is highlighted. Second, the need for a realistic assessment of the extent to which collaboration can involve all relevant organizations (including those with a campaigning or advocacy role) and deal with ideological deliberations is required. Third, it is useful to explicitly acknowledge that collaboration may not always have the potential to be a 'good thing' or be the best way to deal with complex social problems. Sometimes the institutional environment that exists will cause a particular collaboration to fail because it prevents some problems at the meso- or organizational-level from being solved. Fourth, policymakers and collaborating organizations might benefit from an awareness of the potential for a process of disempowering involvement to arise that means one or more of the less powerful stakeholders in a collaboration are disadvantaged because they have inadequate opportunities to contribute to collaboration in ways that ensure they are able to provide innovative inputs in discussions and develop their own ideas and solutions to problems.

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TARA Activists		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Patricia	START board member and chair of Jordanthorpe TARA	9 January 2003
Edmond	START vice chair and chair of Basegreen and District TARA	5 May 2003
Wendy	Treasurer of Batemoor TARA	6 May 2003
Delia	Chair of START and chair of Batemoor TARA	6 May 2003
George	Company secretary, Wisewood Estate Management Board	23 May 2003
William	START board member and chair of Westfield TARA	4 June 2003
Colin	START board member and Hackenthorpe TARA	4 June 2003
Danny	START board member and secretary of Foxhill TARA	5 June 2003
Norman	START board member, chair of Shiregreen TARA, and Shiregreen TMO steering group member	19 June 2003
Stewart and Arthur	Stewart – START board member and Gleadless Valley TARA; Arthur – chair of Gleadless Valley TARA	19 June 2003
Paul and Claire	Paul – START board member, chair of the North Sheffield Action Group, and Shirecliffe TARA member; Claire – North Sheffield Action Group and Shirecliffe TARA	20 June 2003
Gillian	Past START board member and chair of Leverton TA	11 July 2003
Ellie and Frank	Ellie – past START board member and past chair of Westfield Halfway TARA; Frank – Westfield halfway TARA	11 July 2003
Gerald	Past START board member and chair of Arbourthorne and District TARA	25 July 2003
Helen and David	Helen – START board member and chair of Firshill TARA; David – secretary Firshill TARA	25 July 2003
Jonathon, Martha and Kitty	Jonathon, chair of START and chair of Hackenthorpe TARA; Martha and Kitty – Hackenthorpe TARA	3 June 2003
Michael	START board member and Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association	5 August 2003
Florence	Past START board member and chair of Longley Hall Farm TARA	5 August 2003

Councillors		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Tom	Liberal Democrat – deputy leader of the opposition and shadow spokesperson for housing	10 April 2003
Arnold	Labour – past cabinet member for housing and direct services	3 March 2003
Victor	Labour – cabinet member for health and social services	9 April 2003
Roger	Labour – cabinet member for neighbourhoods	9 May 2003
Christine	Labour – cabinet advisor on finance and performance	8 May 2003
Marjorie	Labour – cabinet advisor on neighbourhood regeneration	6 May 2003
Naomi	Labour – cabinet member for education	6 May 2003
Rosalind	Labour – leader of the majority party	4 August 2003

Council officers		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Alison	Tenant participation officer	18 July 2002
Simon	Head of housing – operations	4 March 2003
Caroline	Tenant participation manager	20 January 2003
Philip	Senior housing officer, tenant liaison, Southey Green area housing office	3 March 2003
Diane	Acting area manager, Burngreave area	23 May 2003
Dominic	Senior housing officer, tenant liaison, Burngreave area	20 June 2003
Robin	Senior housing officer, anti-social behaviour and tenancy management, Crystal Peaks area housing office	17 July 2003
Robert	Housing manager, Manor, Castle and Woodthorpe Area	17 July 2003
Edward	Housing manager, Central area	18 July 2003
Linda	Executive director, neighbourhoods	04 August 2003

Others		
Name	Position	Interviewed
Barry	Partners in Change – community consultant	16 December 2002
Professor Ian Cole	Sheffield Hallam University	7 February 2003
James Gorringe*	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, tenant participation branch	13 November 2003
Rob Furbey*	Sheffield Hallam University	17 December 2002
Denise	Aldbourn Associates – associate consultant	4 November 2003
Phil Morgan*	Chief executive, Tenant Participation Advisory Service	7 August 2003

Primary Sources: Questionnaire Survey

TARA Representative	
Name	TARA
Sally	Binstead and Cookson TARA
Mary	Heeley Common TARA
Karen	Secretary, Westminster TARA
Simon	Chair, Galsworthy TARA
Anonymous	St.Stephens TARA
Norma	Addy, Martin, Oxford St., TARA
Helen	Westminster TARA
Anonymous	Littledale, Bowden Wood, Halsall and Colister TARA
Gillian	Doe Royd TARA
Melissa	Jordanthorpe TARA
Gordon	Westfield and Halfway TARA
Anonymous	Wisewood TARA
Glen & Brian	Longley Organised Community Association Ltd
Dennis	Norwood and Bishopsholme TARA
Rosemary	Lower Manor TARA
Donald	Lane End TARA
Roland	Longley Hall Farm TARA
Trevor	Arbourthorne TARA
Belinda	Longley Hall Farm TARA
Edward	Shiregreen TARA
Alistair	Crookes and Walkley TARA
Vickie	Stocksbridge and Deepcar TARA
Anonymous	Westminster TARA
Rodney	Richmond Park and Birklands TARA
Claire	Arbourthorne TARA
Mark	Hanover Tenants Association
Gerald	Albion and Area TARA
Vincent	Stovin, Uttley, and Greenland TARA
Isobel	Norfolk Park TARA
Leonard	Chair, Springvale and Shipton St. TARA
Amanda	Greenhill Bradway Tenants and Community Association
Kim	Mortomley TARA
Matthew	Westminster TARA
Thomas	Manor Park TARA
Samantha	Manor Park TARA
Lionel	Chair, Wensley TARA
Gregory	Langsett and Walkley Community Association
Tim	Foxhill TARA
Maureen	Acting Chair, Martin and Oxford St., Tower Blocks, Tenants Association
Norman	Secretary, Foxhill TARA
Abigail	Martin and Oxford St., Tower Blocks, Tenants Association
Lauren	Falstaff TARA
Pauline	Winn Gardens TARA
Agnes	Thorp TARA
Olivia	Wensley TARA
Geraldine	Binstead and Cookson TARA
Jack	St. Stephens TARA
Malcolm	Norfolk Park TARA
Sam	Brushes TARA

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APPENDIX 1

The New Labour Way

The New Labour government, elected in 1997, introduced a type of third way politics, *“shaped by Thatcherism yet also a reaction against it”* (Lister 2001, p.425). It was a third way politics that assimilated some Conservative ideas but involved much policy adoption or adaption as well. A key aim was to create a new set of welfare policies based on rights and responsibilities. At the same time, there was an increased emphasis on cooperation and joint-working between public and private service providers in a new partnership for a new age (Powell 2000). Labour’s programme of policy development and implementation was guided by a belief that electoral success had in large part been achieved by renouncing a various old Labour welfare state values (Burnham 2001). Meanwhile, as Lister (2001, p.431) points out there was a *“reluctance to acknowledge the power of deep structural inequalities and a shift from a concern with equality to a focus on social inclusion and opportunity”*.

Bevir and O’Brien (2001) have elaborated on a New Labour approach that builds on the idea of a society made up of empowered stakeholder organizations and individuals contributing to the social and economic well-being of the UK. In turn, central government adopted a managerialist approach that emphasised that what matters is what works and promoted more joined up government to help to solve carefully demarcated problems (Lister 2001). Central government interest in performance measurement also increased despite the old Labour warnings about the *“dangers of organizations pursuing their own targets to the detriment of overall public service goals”* (Cutler and Waine 2000, p.322). An enabling state and

participating citizens would help to facilitate the development of partnerships based on trust and various shared user and provider responsibilities and objectives to improve local neighbourhoods and services (Bevir and O'Brien 2001). However, Burnham (2001, p.128) suggests these new partnerships also involved a process of depoliticisation or *"placing at one remove the political character of decision-making"*. Meanwhile, central government politicians and officials continue to maintain arm's-length control or influence over important resources and deliberations and benefit from the distancing effects of depoliticisation.

The Best Value regime, for example, comprises a stakeholder review of services to ascertain what services to provide in an area and how they should be delivered. Best Value is different from CCT because local authorities are not obliged to submit services to a competitive tendering process or privatise services. New Labour felt that it was not always desirable to expose public sector services to competitive market scrutiny. However, Bevir and O'Brien (2001, p.541) points out that central government remained concerned about bureaucratic inefficiency and *"marketisation is seen as an appropriate response in at least some cases, so that 'competition' will retain an important role in service delivery"*. But, Clarence and Painter 1998 suggest that despite the apparent flexibility in Best Value policy the threat hanging over local authorities of central government intervention to secure improvements in services in some situations does not augur well for building trust in central and local government relations or increased collaborative working between organizations at the local level.

A focus on community action is a fundamental part of the New Labour philosophy that helps to separate it from both Conservative and Old Labour ideas and target the deleterious effects of the market on people and the places where they live. Indeed, *“community is invoked in the third way as an antidote to the effects of the free market in producing inequality”* (Levitas 2000. P.194). Much recent interest in citizen participation has emerged in response to concerns about a democratic deficit, desire to improve the legitimacy of decision making, and protestations by disadvantaged people wanting more say in matters that affect their lives (Barnes, Newman and Sullivan 2004). Levels of New Labour activity designed to promote the inclusion and empowerment of local citizens to improve the areas in which they live are substantially higher and different to that seen under the Conservatives. In particular, the emphasis is *“not just on economic development but renewing local democracy and tackling social exclusion”* (Bache and Catney 2008, p.425). In turn, the development of ideas concerning opportunity and the building of a political and social environment based on equality and respect for each other’s views marks out New Labour philosophy on the role of the community. The aim is to ensure the provision of *“high quality services delivered by local partnerships characterised by high levels of user and community participation and offering sufficient consumer choice”* (Ellison and Ellison 2006, p.338).

APPENDIX 2



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15 November 2002

Caroline Moore
Tenants Participation Manager
Sheffield City Council

Robert Dalziel
PhD Student

Dear Caroline

Collaborative Working Between Tenants and Residents Associations and their Local Authority

In July, I was able to meet with your colleague, Alison Jones, to talk about my research interest in collaboration between tenants and residents associations and their local authority. I gained a useful insight into some of the collaborative work that is going on between associations' and the City Council in Sheffield. I also enjoyed very much my visit to a meeting of the Council's 'City-Wide Housing Forum' where I listened to a debate on housing management and 'Best Value' and talked to some people about their experiences of work with tenants and residents associations. There is certainly a great deal of varied association and council collaborative activity going on in Sheffield.

I am now ready, having prepared a detailed research proposal, to begin talking to people in different tenants and residents associations and the City Council about their experiences of collaborative and partnership working. A useful starting point would be a meeting with yourself to talk about your experiences of collaboration and partnership working with different associations in the city. I will telephone sometime in the next week to arrange a suitable time when we can meet.

I have enclosed, with this letter, an overview of my research proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or queries about it. I look forward very much to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely

Robert Dalziel

APPENDIX 3

Robert Dalziel
PhD Student

26 November 2002

Ann Pemberton
Chair START

Dear Ann

Collaborative Working Between Tenants and Residents Associations and their Local Authority

In July, I was able to meet briefly with Joanne Field and Patricia Mason, at the START office, to talk about my research interest in collaborative working between tenants and residents associations and their local authority. I gained a very useful and informative insight into some of the collaborative work that is going on between different associations and the City Council in Sheffield. I also enjoyed very much my visit to a meeting of the Council's 'City-Wide Housing Forum' where I was able to listen to a debate on 'Best Value' and housing management and talk to some people about their experiences of the 'Best Value' process. There is certainly a great deal happening in Sheffield.

I am now ready, having prepared a detailed research proposal, to begin talking to more people in different tenants and residents associations and the City Council in Sheffield about their experiences of collaborative and partnership working. A useful starting point would be separate meetings with you, Joanne and Patricia. I will telephone early next week to arrange a mutually convenient place and times to meet.

I have enclosed, with this letter a summary of my research proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or queries about it. I look forward very much to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely

Robert Dalziel

APPENDIX 4

Research Proposal

Collaborative Working Between Tenants and Residents Associations and Their Local Authority

Robert Dalziel
Open University Business School
Email: r.m.dalziel@open.ac.uk

The Housing Act (2000) and the Local Government Act (2000) have given tenants new rights and by changing local government structures altered their relations with the local authority. New statutory undertakings including the 'Best Value' review and the compilation of 'Tenants Compacts' emphasise the importance of collaborative working as a means to more effectively plan and deliver local services and meet government neighbourhood management and development targets. At the same time various incentives have encouraged tenants and residents associations to adopt new practices and formal constitutions to make themselves more representative and accountable to funders and their members.

My research aims to investigate collaboration between different tenants and residents associations and their local authority and consider the local context within which that collaboration occurs. It will look to see how the recent housing and local government legislation has affected democracy and collaboration at the local and neighbourhood level. This kind of research is not currently being done and there are significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of collaboration between tenants and residents associations and the local authority. I hope that my research and the theoretical ideas that it will generate can help associations and the local authority to gain a novel insight into their own situations and collaboration.

Collaboration between tenants and residents associations and the local authority can help to get things done in an area like making sure that the streets are kept clean, the dustbins are emptied when they should be and there is a quick and efficient housing maintenance and repairs service. Collaboration can also help to ensure that government neighbourhood management and development targets are achieved. It may be much more difficult or even impossible to achieve some desired objectives where the different organizations in an area work in isolation from each other. The local political opportunity structure or the political culture in an area which serves to encourage (or not) debate on local matters and participation in local decision making has been identified as having a significant impact on the possibilities for collaboration and partnership working (Bockmeyer 2000, Stevenson and Greenberg 2000).

Collaboration between different organizations is a key component of the 'Best Value' review and 'Tenants Compacts' which seek to examine and improve local services and show how tenants and residents associations and the local authority

can work together to achieve desired neighbourhood management and development objectives. Through collaboration the different interdependencies that exist between associations and the local authority can be harnessed to produce a different and better response to local problems. But, a focus on collaboration that is principally about managing the planning and delivery of local services may not be the only or the best way to tackle some of the more difficult problems that face a neighbourhood. Sometimes new collaborative opportunities and structures may have to be created. If the circumstances are right the different people who are involved in collaboration can develop a range of skills and capacities, which can help them to achieve desired objectives. Working directly with the local authority and its officers or indirectly through different intermediaries and brokers, forming strategic alliances and coalitions and taking up positions on different committees and boards of the local authority and other local organizations.

I intend to use a qualitative research methodology to get an in-depth account of people's experiences of collaboration at the local and neighbourhood level. Using a case study approach to focus on collaboration between three or four tenants and residents associations and the local authority. Eliciting different perspectives and considering what a person's comments reveal about their experiences of collaboration and how they can be used to make inferences about the state of the actual collaborative environment. The research will entail collecting a considerable amount of detailed or 'rich' information about collaboration between tenants and residents associations and the local authority. The findings will be used to improve our knowledge and understanding of collaboration and develop some of the theoretical ideas that are used to describe and explain collaboration and its function and purpose at the local and neighbourhood level.

The methods that will be used to collect information and data on collaboration between tenants and residents associations and the local authority are described in table 1 below.

Method	What it Involves
Interviews	Talking informally and tape-recording conversations with different people, in tenants and residents associations and the local authority, about their experiences of collaborative and partnership working.
Observation	Attending different formal and informal meetings of tenants and residents associations and the local authority and observing events.
Field Notes	A detailed written account of my observations, thoughts and reflections.
Focus Groups	Working with small groups of tenants and residents to learn more about their collective experiences of collaborative and partnership working.
Secondary Material	Scanning books and journals, pamphlets, documents, minutes, newspapers, publicity and archive material.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods

The issues of confidentiality and anonymity are very important and have been carefully considered during the research planning and design phases. The aim is to give people clear information about the research and its purpose and tell them how the findings might be used in any future deliberations or reports. People must,

as far as it is possible, be given the opportunity to consent or not to take part in the research.

Research in the field will last for about one year and focus on collaboration between three or four tenants and residents associations and the local authority. Between thirty and forty interviews will be carried out with people in the different associations and the local authority. Each interview is anticipated to last for about one hour and will take place at a mutually convenient time and location. In addition I will require access to some of the meetings of the tenants and residents associations and the local authority and some of their documents and records that are relevant to collaboration between them.

Bockmeyer, I.L., (2000) 'A Culture of Distrust: The Impact of Local Political Culture on Participation in the Detroit EZ', *Urban Studies*, Vol.47, Issue 13, Dec. 2000.

Stevenson, W.B., and Greenberg, D., (2000) 'Agency and Social Networks: Strategies of Action in a Social Structure of Position, Opposition and Opportunity', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol.45, Issue 4, Dec. 2000.

APPENDIX 5

Robert Dalziel
Open University
Business School

16 April 2003

Dear Sir/Madam

Tenants and Residents Associations and Partnership Working

I am a mature full-time PhD student with the Open University's Business School in Milton Keynes. I worked in industry and then the voluntary sector for a while before I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to pursue my research interest in the work of tenants and residents associations.

I would like to talk to different people in Sheffield who are involved with the tenants and residents movement. To obtain their views and opinions on the role and work of tenants and residents associations and partnership working. I want to produce a document that will be a unique reflection of the history of the tenants' movement in Sheffield as well as a snapshot of current activity.

As an active member of the tenants and residents movement I would very much like to meet with you to talk about your work at a time and place that is convenient for you. Your comments will be very useful and confidentiality is guaranteed. No individual will be identified in any report or document.

I very much hope you can help me and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or queries.

Yours Sincerely

Robert Dalziel

Please reply using the most convenient means:

Open University Business School
Michael Young Building
Milton Keynes
MK

Telephone: 07748380769
Fax: 01537 23987
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APPENDIX 6

Why do Tenants and Residents Associations Collaborate?

Semi-Structured Interview Themes

Theme	Possibilities for Discussion
Local Political Opportunity Structure	<p>How does the local political opportunity structure affect opportunities for collaboration?</p> <p>How well do activists and associations understand their environment and the local political opportunity structure?</p> <p>How much is known about the different opportunities for collective action and collaboration that exist in an area?</p> <p>How might the political opportunity structure determine whether collaboration is instrumental or ideological?</p> <p>What local authority help is made available to associations and at what cost?</p> <p>To what extent do associations and the local authority value each other's role and work?</p>
Strategies for Influence and Action	<p>Who is influential? Why are they influential? How is influence exercised?</p> <p>What strategies do activists use to gain influence and power for themselves and the association they represent?</p> <p>How do activists and others know what they want to achieve?</p> <p>What about disruptive strategies and conduct that devalues or destabilises collaboration?</p> <p>What is the role of the umbrella federation of tenants and residents associations?</p> <p>To what extent does each of the partners in collaboration participate and exercise options?</p> <p>What are the time, skills and capacities needed for collaboration?</p>
Historical Relations and Context	<p>How have relations between associations and the local authority developed over time and what are the implications for collaboration?</p> <p>How do historical patterns of collective action affect the development of existing organizations, institutions and collaboration?</p> <p>What are the effects of existing traditions and cultures are they a help or hindrance?</p> <p>What are the effects of language, protocol, procedure and process on collaboration?</p>

<p>Power</p>	<p>Who has it? Why do they have it? How do they use it?</p> <p>Is there a 'real' transfer of power from the Local authority to associations or can the local authority substantially retain its power but in a different form?</p> <p>What values, beliefs and interests predominate in collaboration?</p> <p>What are the implications for collaboration of power derived from mandate and power derived from authority?</p> <p>How does power operate in conscious and visible ways and unconscious and invisible ways?</p> <p>How are policy preferences decided and implemented?</p> <p>Power is it: one-dimensional where decision-making behaviour is observable and it is assumed there will be 'real' and observable conflict?</p> <p>People's actions are based on conscious preferences and they are aware of their interests and articulate them?</p> <p>Power is it: two-dimensional where the 'mobilization of bias' as a concept, that is, a set of predominant values, beliefs and institutional procedures (rules of the game) operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain individuals or organizations?</p> <p>Power is it: three-dimensional where decisions are choices consciously and intentionally made by individuals between alternatives, whereas the bias of the system can be mobilized, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individuals choices? The bias of the system is not simply maintained by a series of individually chosen acts but also by the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups and the practices of institutions?</p> <p>What about dissident activists and associations and resistance to council policies?</p>
<p>Authority</p>	<p>Who has it? Why do they have it? How do they use it?</p> <p>Is responsibility different from authority?</p> <p>What different domains do the partners in collaboration possess?</p>

<p>Resources</p>	<p>What sorts of dependencies exist between associations and the local authority?</p> <p>What sorts of interdependencies exist between associations and the local authority?</p> <p>What sorts of exchange relationships exist?</p> <p>How are the resources required for collaboration mobilized and used?</p>
<p>Control</p>	<p>Who controls access to and use of different resources?</p> <p>Who has access to and control over different channels of communication?</p> <p>How is collaboration initiated and by whom?</p> <p>How are the priorities for collaboration decided and actions decided?</p> <p>What incentives are there which might encourage consensus and compliance rather than conflict and resistance?</p> <p>What are the processes, which operate to modify views and expectations and reduce or eliminate conflict?</p> <p>What housing and estate budgets and functions are controlled by the different organizations?</p> <p>What is the role of the tenants and residents association federation?</p> <p>What are the internal and external forces acting on organizations and collaboration?</p>

<p>Collaborative Purpose</p>	<p>Why collaborate? With whom? What for?</p> <p>Is collaboration a requirement, needed or even always the best way to achieve objectives?</p> <p>Collaboration on what terms?</p> <p>How is collaboration managed?</p> <p>What are the benefits and costs of collaboration?</p> <p>What about free riding (the exploitation of the few by the many) making a limited or no contribution but receiving 'free' public services?</p> <p>What about social structural barriers and unequal power that can make difficult or prevent participation (the exploitation of the many by the few) and the emergence of elites?</p> <p>How does collaboration help organizations deal with uncertainty and the problem of scarce resources?</p> <p>What different contributions to collaboration do tenants and residents associations and the local authority make and why?</p> <p>What are the different meta-goals (for collaboration), organizational goals and individual goals?</p> <p>What are the different explicit goals, assumed goals and hidden goals of collaboration?</p> <p>Whose capacity is being developed and what for?</p> <p>Is collaboration about empowerment or more responsibility without a 'real' shift in power from the local authority to associations?</p> <p>How much is collaboration about rational choice, contingent choice, serendipity, non-decisions or no choice at all?</p>
<p>Task Oriented Instrumental Collaboration</p>	<p>How much is and should collaboration be simply about day-to-day estate management issues and getting things done in an area?</p> <p>How much is this sort of collaboration just about improving or maintaining existing procedures, practices and institutions?</p> <p>How much and in what ways is collaboration used to standardise, institutionalize and control the activities and actions of associations?</p>

<p>Values and Institution Changing Ideological Collaboration</p>	<p>How much is and should collaboration be about changing values and institutions?</p> <p>How is difference and conflict dealt with?</p> <p>What are the effects on collaboration of overarching political and institutional frameworks?</p> <p>Should and can collaboration act as a catalyst for change in normative structures and accepted ways of doing things?</p> <p>Can established institutions adapt sufficiently and quickly enough to meet new challenges or are entirely new institutions required?</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Whose governance structures, what for and what about history and trust?</p> <p>What are the effects of government legislation and local authority policies on collaboration?</p> <p>How do performance targets and performance measures affect collaboration?</p> <p>Who decides what is measured, how it will be measured and what for?</p> <p>What are the effects on collaboration of formal constitutions and standardization?</p> <p>What is and what is not measured and what does this mean for collaboration?</p> <p>Is it possible to measure everything and the future?</p> <p>Must associations be democratic, representative and accountable; why, what for and who to?</p> <p>Who are included or excluded from collaboration and why?</p> <p>What are the effects of bureaucratisation and professionalization?</p> <p>What change is possible without either partner in collaboration losing confidence in collaboration?</p> <p>Is leadership designed into collaboration, focused with a clear vision for the future and high profile leaders; implied and fragmented and consensual but confused with an implicit vision and sense of direction; or emergent and formative, relying on implementation to shape policy and pragmatism to develop future direction?</p> <p>What happens when things go wrong or collaboration fails?</p>

APPENDIX 7

'Why do Tenants and Residents Associations Collaborate with their Local Authority?'

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Theme:

A The Local Political Opportunity Structure

1. Can you tell me something about your/your organization's relations with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
2. Can you tell me about the local issues, which are important to you/your organization?
3. What different opportunities are there to try to deal with these important issues?
4. What different opportunities are there to try to deal with these important issues?
5. Can you say something about how you/your organization works with others to try to tackle these important issues?
6. Are there any other ways in which these important issues could be tackled?
7. What interest do you/your organization have in changing people's views or the way they do things?
8. How is your work/the work of your organization assisted by others?

B Strategies for Influence and Action

1. Can you tell me something about the different people who are activists or leaders or influential in your organization and other organizations?
2. Do you/your organization/other people work in particular ways to influence others?
3. How do you/how does your organization go about determining its priorities?
4. Is there anything that does or can disrupt your efforts to work with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
5. What is the role of START/the City Council/Councillors?

6. Can you tell me how issues for discussion and options for action are determined and considered?
7. What sorts of skills and capacities are important if working together is to be successful?

C Historical Relations and Context

1. How have relations with tenants and residents associations/ the local authority changed over time?
2. How have the changes impacted on efforts to work together?
3. Do past experiences affect relations today?
4. How do established ways of doing things impact on efforts to work together?
5. Can you say something about the language and rules that surround relations with tenants and residents associations/the local authority and efforts to work together?

D Power

1. Can you tell me something about people who are influential?
2. Why are they influential?
3. How do they use their influence?
4. Can you tell me what capacity your organization has to make decisions or take action?
5. What do you think are the most important things to try to achieve by working together?
6. Can you say something about what sort of authority you/your organization has to represent the views of others and act on their behalf?
7. What sort of things influence your thinking or the views of your organization?
8. How are activities worked out when you are working with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
9. How are the activities turned into action?
10. What difficulties or conflict arises when organizations try to work together?
11. How is dissention or disagreement dealt with?

E Resources

1. Can you tell me something about how organizations working together do or do not depend on each other?
2. How do tenants and residents associations/ the local authority use their separate resources when working together?
3. How do you/your organization go about obtaining the resources you need for your work?

F Control

1. Can you tell me anything about the ways in which the resources you need for your work are held by other people or organizations?
2. Can you say something about the sorts of ways in which information is exchanged between your organization and tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
3. Who are the important players in initiating efforts to work together?
4. Can you tell me how priorities and actions are decided?
5. Are there any ways in which agreement on priorities and actions is encouraged or discouraged?
6. How is conflict between tenants and residents associations and the local authority resolved?
7. How are different views and expectations taken into account?
8. What control do you/does your organization have over what happens in an area?
9. What is the role of START/the City Council/Councillors?
10. What sorts of things in your organization impact on efforts to work with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
11. What sorts of things outside of your organization impact on efforts to work with others?

G Collaborative Purpose

1. Can you say something about why you/your organization works with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
2. Who do you/your organization work with?
3. What sorts of things do you work together on?

4. What are your thoughts on working together to achieve particular objectives?
5. Are there any other ways in which objectives are achieved?
6. How are the ways in which tenants and residents associations and the local authority work together determined?
7. What are the pros and cons of working together?
8. How do you/does your organization contribute to the process of working together?
9. Are there things which make it difficult for you/your organization to participate in efforts to work together?
10. Are there any particular things you want to achieve through working with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
11. Are there any particular things your organization wants to achieve through working with tenants and residents associations/the local authority?
12. Are there any ways in which working together can produce benefits to society that extend beyond the people and organizations involved?
13. Has working together improved your capacity/your organization's capacity to work more effectively?
14. Are there any times when organizations working together have seemed to be working to achieve different ends?
15. Can you say something about how decisions are made when tenants and residents associations/ the local authority work together?
16. Can you say something about how decisions are implemented or action is taken to achieve objectives that arise through working together?
17. Are alternative solutions to problems considered or developed?
18. Is there space when working together for experimentation and a novel approach to be taken to deal with issues?

H Task Oriented Instrumental Collaboration

1. Can you tell me something about tenants and residents associations/the local authority working together to get things done in your area/an area?
2. Is it important?
3. How is it organized?

I Values and Institution Changing Ideological Collaboration

1. Can you say something about tenants and residents associations/the local authority working together to change peoples views or the way things are done?
2. Has working together changed political structures or thinking or institutional practices?
3. Do you think existing organizations are set up or have sufficient capacity to adapt to meet the challenge of modern complex problems?

J Governance

1. How is working together between tenants and residents associations and the local authority regulated and monitored?
2. How is trust involved in working together?
3. How has government legislation affected the ways in which tenants and residents associations/the local authority work together?
4. How have changed local government structures affected the ways in which and residents associations/the local authority work together?
5. How do requirements to achieve particular objectives affect the ways in which tenants and residents associations/the local authority work together?
6. How are the things that are measured/monitored decided?
7. How are they measured/monitored?
8. What is the purpose of measurement/evaluation?
9. How is the structure and set-up of tenants and residents associations/the local authority decided?
10. How is your organization made up?
11. How does it serve its members?
12. Can you tell me something about the role leaders play in working together?
13. What happens when things go wrong?

APPENDIX 8

Sheffield City
Tenants and Residents Associations

22 July 2003

Sir/Madam

I am writing to you to ask for your help in a study I am conducting as a researcher at the Open University Business School. The purpose of the study is to gather information that will contribute to understanding how partnership working between Tenants and Residents Associations and the City Council in Sheffield operates.

As an active member of a Tenants and Residents Association, I would be grateful if you would complete the enclosed short questionnaire as far as possible. As Tenants and Residents Associations differ from each other in important ways, it is important that I hear from as many Tenants and Residents Associations as possible to obtain a rounded picture of how they work with the City Council. Please answer all the questions which you are able to, if there are some questions you are unable to answer please leave them blank but do not let this stop you from completing the other questions and returning the questionnaire. All replies will remain confidential and no individual or association will be named in any future analysis or article. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your reply.

If you are willing to be interviewed I would be really interested to hear your views on Tenants and Residents Associations and partnership working. The interview would not take very long and would be confidential. Interviewees will not be named in any future analysis or article.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for helping with this study.

Yours sincerely

Robert Dalziel
Researcher

Telephone: 0987765434
Email: r.m.dalziel@open.ac.uk

The Tenants and Residents Association and Partnership Working

The aim of the research is to gather some information about your tenants and residents association and partnership working with the council. It should take about 10 minutes to complete and all replies will be confidential.

Please answer the following questions by entering the appropriate information in the space provided or by ticking the boxes that apply.

1. What is the name of your tenants and residents association?
.....
2. What estates, neighbourhoods or districts are covered by the tenants and residents association?
.....
3. How many tenants and residents on average attend meetings of the tenants and residents association?
.....
4. How does the tenants and residents association work with the council? For example, is it involved in discussions about housing and neighbourhood matters, work on environmental or regeneration projects, or shaping and deciding housing and neighbourhood policy?

PLEASE TURN OVER

5. How is the tenants and residents association involved in the production of a 'Tenants Compact' or agreement between the association and the council about partnership working and priorities for action in its area?

6. Has the tenants and residents association signed up to the council's official recognition policy for tenants and residents associations?

Yes No

7. If the tenants and residents association has not signed up to the council's recognition policy can you briefly say why?

8. Is the tenants and residents association a member of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together (START)?

Yes No

PLEASE TURN OVER

9. If the tenants and residents association is not a member of Sheffield Tenants and Residents Together (START) can you briefly say why?

10. Does the tenants and residents association have a constitution?

Yes No

11. Does the tenants and residents association have a business plan?

Yes No

12. If you are willing to talk to me about your work and experiences in the tenants and residents movement please give your contact details below.

Name

.....

Contact Address

.....

.....

Telephone

.....

Email

.....

**PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE STAMPED AND
ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Robert Dalziel, Open University Business School, The Michael Young Building, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, Telephone 07748380750, email r.m.dalziel@open.ac.uk

Appendix 9

CODES	Interview Sessions																																										Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
Authority and Legitimacy	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	3	7	0	1	0	8	7	8	1	0	2	1	8	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	0	3	5	3	3	0	6	4	0	.93
Conformity and Conflict	7	4	3	4	0	1	1	3	0	2	5	1	3	6	7	1	3	0	8	15	6	9	4	13	10	15	10	7	8	17	10	5	13	5	8	10	13	14	5	10	9	9	284
Culture	10	8	3	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	6	2	3	4	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	5	2	2	4	2	4	3	5	6	0	0	0	3	4	0	2	2	4	1	2	102
Difference and Diversity	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	2	5	6	1	7	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	1	6	1	0	59.
Government	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	1	0	6	4	3	0	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	3	2	7	1	1	10	2	4	2	5	3	0	0	0	2	2	3	6	2	8	11	1	106
History and Context	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	8	1	0	4	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	48
Leadership	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	3	4	2	3	2	5	0	1	0	2	2	0	4	1	0	0	0	46
Local Authority	4	6	4	5	2	4	1	6	2	6	18	3	6	7	6	6	10	2	13	21	22	17	8	22	18	39	18	12	12	33	31	9	24	4	15	19	14	20	8	23	22	14	536
Monitoring and Performance	1	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	1	5	3	2	6	2	0	3	1	0	4	7	1	3	0	1	1	0	5	0	3	0	0	69.
Negotiation and Collaboration	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	10	9	6	6	11	2	18	4	25	12	11	14	6	7	2	16	11	7	13	18	14	10	16	3	15	19	9	20	11	21	13	11	373
Networking	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	30
Power, Influence and Control	2	1	2	1	10	2	2	2	1	6	12	1	3	6	8	3	13	1	11	16	8	12	7	20	6	15	4	9	3	15	9	2	6	1	4	5	9	13	4	14	15	3	287
Process	15	13	9	2	12	11	14	4	16	13	19	8	13	8	10	3	15	4	19	15	14	10	10	10	3	19	9	7	11	19	13	0	9	3	11	10	10	8	8	10	11	7	435
Recognition Policy	2	3	3	0	2	4	3	1	11	3	5	0	2	2	5	0	1	0	7	8	2	2	4	3	3	5	10	3	2	2	6	1	7	0	1	3	1	4	2	7	6	1	137
Representativeness and Accountability	3	13	4	2	10	3	8	0	1	5	2	5	6	11	6	0	10	0	15	5	15	13	3	17	10	18	12	5	12	12	10	4	15	1	2	10	6	10	1	11	5	13	314
Resources and Access	4	4	3	1	4	6	4	1	4	2	3	2	1	5	7	0	0	1	7	4	11	9	11	14	6	8	11	5	4	8	7	2	8	0	4	6	4	12	1	14	5	6	219
Standardization and Institutionalisation	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	6	7	0	2	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	38
Structure and Agency	0	3	7	1	9	12	10	6	3	6	7	0	3	2	5	4	7	0	11	5	11	7	8	10	5	11	7	2	2	9	14	2	8	0	4	7	8	13	6	10	5	5	255
Tenant Participation Compact	6	1	1	0	4	11	1	4	5	1	5	4	2	5	2	5	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	3	1	1	5	4	1	2	1	0	5	2	1	3	3	2	1	104
Tenants and Resident	10	4	2	0	5	2	9	1	5	0	2	9	5	7	3	1	3	1	7	17	11	8	7	14	6	16	11	2	18	16	11	4	14	1	7	21	14	9	2	11	6	13	315
Tenants and Residents Associations	10	3	6	3	4	6	4	1	4	4	13	8	13	11	14	5	6	1	13	18	17	11	2	24	24	14	22	11	11	30	20	7	24	4	5	28	17	15	0	21	7	14	475
Timescales	1	0	3	0	4	5	2	2	3	0	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	2	1	0	3	4	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	56
Uncertainty and Change	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	4	0	3	0	5	8	3	3	2	5	1	2	1	1	6	1	3	0	3	0	2	1	4	5	0	0	75
Values and Beliefs	2	0	0	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	1	0	3	2	3	4	0	6	1	7	2	3	6	3	9	0	2	1	3	75	
Totals	81	75	59	20	87	79	63	42	63	57	118	67	76	98	103	35	97	16	160	158	158	134	94	180	109	219	157	99	125	211	191	55	173	25	102	166	118	177	62	190	127	105	4531

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