

**True Blues, Blacks and in-betweens:  
Urban Regeneration in Moss Side,  
Manchester**

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## Abstract

### **True Blues, Blacks and In-betweens: Urban Regeneration in Moss Side, Manchester**

In this thesis I describe state directed transformation through urban regeneration policy in the context of Moss Side, Manchester in the North West of England. The thesis explores connections between the state project of urban regeneration and the lives of residents' who were targeted by strategies. The thesis therefore moves from economic and political contexts that informed the policies of urban regeneration to how they were implemented and by whom, and then into the personal lives of residents in order to demonstrate connections between these. The latter half of the thesis focuses particularly on residents who were associated with the gang "GCG" who were often the targets of regeneration strategies. The thesis deals with a variety of themes: global cities, governance, constructing race, recognition politics, localities, simulations and violence. These are grounded in detailed ethnography describing Moss Side through residents lives which transformed as a result of regeneration policy. The thesis argues that urban regeneration strategies do not (as is often argued by regeneration practitioners) relieve the difficulties existing residents experience and yet often have far reaching consequences. I demonstrate this through a variety of examples: new governing structures, consultation processes, anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), gang members strategies opposing displacement, pirate radio disc jockeys searching for legitimacy, and the threat of sexual violence.

Tanzima Rahman, PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010.

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## Introduction

This thesis is about urban regeneration in Moss Side, an area of Manchester in the North West of England in Britain. The thesis describes Moss Side at a time of transition through state intervention from 2003 to 2010. I argue that urban regeneration was an intended and directed project of social transformation of Moss Side residents to make them acquiesce to changes that the state was undergoing and the changed role Moss Side had according to ‘the vision’ of the state project of urban regeneration. The thesis therefore focuses upon how existing residents responded to these transformations. It considers people who began to negotiate their own positions in regeneration structures, people who rejected their own exclusion and the difficulties of negotiating changing place. The thesis argues that urban regeneration in Moss Side was a method of governing individuals in an area that was assumed (by policy makers) to be difficult to govern. And I argue that the demand of transformation from urban regeneration policies compounded the pressures residents were already under.

The thesis contributes to the Anthropology of urban areas by providing detailed ethnography of a British inner city area and the relationship of residents to a state project of transformation. The thesis also provides a much-needed anthropological perspective to regeneration discourses. The length of study, familiarity with regeneration practices and the people who were targets of those practices, means that it offers valuable insights into current regeneration literature. My aim has been very different to current regeneration literature. Rather than inquire how “successfully implemented” regeneration policy was, I aimed to consider what lay behind regeneration practices, what was meant by sweeping terminology such as “social cohesion” or “well being”, what would be the consequences of the policy, how would residents understand their changing position and so on. These questions are a much-needed addition to urban regeneration theories that, written from within a policy perspective, are limited to evaluating the success or failure of implementing policy. I sought to explore the connections between the state project of urban regeneration and the

lives of residents. As such, the thesis is structured by beginning with wider political and economic processes that informed policy makers' decisions to target Moss Side with intensive state intervention through regeneration, and then develops further into the intimate spheres of residents' lives. I chose this progression in the structure to illustrate the connections between activities 'on the street' to wider political and economic processes. These connections are often lost, making the practices in Moss Side seem to occur in isolation to the conditions from which they emerge. I also chose this structure to illustrate the links between concepts that are often thought of as opposed and separate, such as global and local. This required considering not only the political and economic contexts urban regeneration strategies emerged from in the late 1990s and early 2000s, nor simply how it was implemented, but also how Moss Side residents understood them. As a consequence, the thesis considers a broad range of anthropological theories applicable to the situation rather than any one theory in great depth. This is because I wanted to ground the theory in the experiences as much as possible (rather than vice-versa).

The thesis questions the presumptions that architects of regeneration policies make, such as the conflation of material deprivation with a moral depravity (chapter 3). It also challenges the motivations behind using overarching terminology in regeneration policy, such as "wellbeing" "empowerment" and even the use of the concept "deprivation". Despite questioning the reasoning behind policy uses of exclusion, Moss Side residents experienced inequality and social, economic and political exclusion when compared to the rest of Manchester, England and the UK. The thesis describes how these experiences changed with regeneration and explores how those that were targeted by strategies of transformation responded to their changing positions. I consider how policies that had explicit aims of alleviating exclusion actually had many implicit conditions that had to be met for this inclusion to take place. There also remains the question, inclusion to what: legal employment, formal political structures and legitimate political recognition, education?

The thesis argues that these explicit and public aims of regeneration were less significant in regeneration than the implicit outcomes of transforming the ideals



of residents to become “self governing” (as discussed further in chapter 2). I argue through the thesis that “inclusion” in regeneration strategies and policy is perhaps best understood as avoiding displacement in the vision of a regenerated Moss Side. This vision was the results of the “we aim to”, “we strive to” and so forth of policy – a simulation of urban utopia, as chapter 6 argues. For people already existing in marginalized positions, the prospect of losing this already excluded place had large consequences. The thesis considers people who resisted their further displacement as a result of ‘the vision’. It also looks at people who utilized and were utilized by regeneration structures to negotiate a place in this vision of regeneration policies. This achievement of inclusion and avoidance of displacement involved a complicated and problematic transformation in identity formation (chapter 3).

54% of Moss Side’s population leave school with no qualifications (PAT 2007), and have a deep seated resentment and distrust for the education system as part of the “legitimate” world from which they are barred from full participation. Equally effective in maintaining this distrust is to see friends who had continued in the education system, working in what was often described as “shit jobs” anyway. An example that comes to mind is a friend who had achieved an MSc (Master of Science) and worked as a cleaner in a nearby hospital. This early development of distrust that comes from schools is compounded particularly by the development of an “Academy” school in Moss Side. Funded by alternative streams of financial support (such as an American Christian charity), the school (and other Academies like it) has an unclear relationship of accountability to local education authorities. A community forum in the area (the forum, MSCF, is described in chapter 2) began to make enquiries into the school after many parents and teachers at the school brought problems to their attention. It emerged that the school had a lack of understanding for local social contexts and regularly had police officers with bulletproof vests policing the corridors. Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) (see chapter 3) were also used to discipline students. This had the effect of criminalizing ‘bad’ behavior at a young age, creating further exclusion from ‘mainstream’ forms of employment. Children often underwent metal

detection before entering the school that also contributed to their self-identification as dangerous (chapter 4).

Aside from lack of educational attainment, there is a widespread belief that the bad reputation of Moss Side prevents residents from securing legal means of employment. Because of this belief, residents are often told during training for job applications to leave “Moss Side” from their addresses on their Curriculum Vitae (CV). This is thought to reduce the effects of what is referred to as “postcode discrimination”. In 2007, 33% of Moss Side residents experienced long-term unemployment (PAT 2007). The figure is particularly high in comparison to the 4.1% of the UK population as a whole in the same year (NHS 2008)). Reflecting the poor health care provision in the area, in the same year, 14.1% of Moss Side residents were on incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance (in comparison to 5% for the whole of the UK) (NHS 2008). With 60% of residents relying on benefits for an income and many others in low paid, unsecure forms of employment, the experiences of many residents resulted in disaffection. “Giro day”, the day that welfare benefits cheques were issued to those residents that could not open bank accounts (of which there were many due to bad credit histories) always meant queues to the bulletproof glass window in the very bleak post office to get money cashed. These queues sometimes reached outside the post office building and into the street.

The thesis considers residents’ experiences and strategies for dealing with this level of inequality by focusing the latter half of the thesis on the gang “GCG” (described further below) and their inclusion and exclusion of others through a form of “self-exclusion” similar to that described by Willis (Willis 1982(1977)). I have tried to describe how residents felt about the endless pressures<sup>1</sup> they experienced as a result of these combined economic and social inequalities and some of the self-imposed exclusionary practices carried out by gangs such as the GCG. GCG members experienced an increase in these pressures from the expectation to transform to the vision of urban regeneration

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<sup>1</sup> To give a ‘nod’ to Ken Pryce (1979)

policy. This was to avoid further displacement from the only place, Moss Side, that the GCG gang felt they could inhabit. I have tried to do this in a way that incorporates both how certain practices were a response to marginalisation, but also how that ‘exclusion’ was very much ‘included’ as part of the wider context that dramatically reduced their ability to participate. In other words, I will illustrate that exclusion should not be understood as a separation but very much as an integral part of the social structures in-which people from Moss Side have unequal agency.

Regeneration policy in Moss Side depended heavily upon the negative imagery and perceived threat of the gangs. The images were an integral part of regeneration strategies: they acted as symbols of the consequences of moral anomie, the implicit threat of what will happen if policy fails to transform (chapter 6). Without a target to regenerate there can be no transformation. To consider Moss Side residents as spatially, politically and economically separated fails to acknowledge the integral position that they have in state projects such as that of urban regeneration. The state is reproduced as much in Moss Side as it is elsewhere. Avoiding the appearance of isolation, whilst still describing the very real experiences and responses to exclusion, I have aimed through the structure and content of the thesis to illustrate these relationships.

I was working with a variety of interesting social groups, including Somali asylum seekers and their experiences of coming to the UK as refugees, young British Asians and their responses to the increasing Islamophobia in the UK and even attempts to work with True Blue fans who often expressed racist views. However, I chose to focus the latter half of the thesis on the group that I refer to as “GCG”. GCG is a pseudonym<sup>2</sup> for a large-scale organization that would often be described as a “street gang”. Indeed the name of the organization is after a street that once physically existed in Moss Side and continues to play a significant role in peoples’ imaginations and place making processes (that are described further in chapters 4 and 5). The network has approximately 500

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<sup>2</sup> It is actually also an acronym for the gang. I discussed this decision with senior members of the gang. I did this as thinking of an imagined alternative name may have led to offending the group. The significance of names is discussed in chapter 4.

members (structured in a hierarchy that is discussed further in chapter 4). GCG were involved in a variety of informal economic activities, such as drug deals, car thefts, money laundering, warehouse robberies and so forth. The less senior members, who were often the younger members, were mostly involved with the ‘less’ dangerous or perceived as less serious crimes (small scale drug dealing, robberies and so on) whilst the more senior members made more profitable transactions for deals that held more severe legal punishments but were less often caught by authorities.

GCG is well known throughout the UK as a key part of the negative imagery that accompanies Moss Side in popular UK media representations. Moss Side is often described by the media as the capital of “Gunchester” or the “British Bronx”. Recent interest in European gangs questions how a ‘gang’ should be defined (e.g. Van-Gemert and Fleisher 2005). GCG have a lot in common with this definition, such as being hierarchically organized, with strictly defended “turfs” or territories and violent relationships with rival gangs. But perhaps the most significant feature that these gangs have in common is not their youth or their ethnic background, but that they often emerge from impoverished areas. Young Moss Siders often found themselves involved due to having “no choice”. The thesis explores what GCG offered that members could not get by other means, such as political recognition, belonging, economic resources and social mobility. Once involved with GCG the ability to “go legit” became a remote possibility in their own views. There was also considerable social expectation on young people to get involved with GCG rather than other gangs.

Ages of the gang members I knew personally ranged from 14 to 60, but the focus of the thesis is on the younger “Wyke lads” who were the direct targets of urban regeneration strategies. “Wyke lads” is a pseudonym based on the actual name of this sub-group that is also based on the street from which they originated. The decision to focus on GCG was particularly difficult. Given the negative views and stereotypes of Moss Side as a black inner-city area with dangerous armed gangs as the British Bronx, I was very conscious of the problem of reproducing and contributing to this imagery. This problem was compounded further by difficulties in presenting their own reifications of ‘gang

culture' ethnographically without it seeming to be my analysis (chapter 4) or "ghetto cultural distinctiveness and autonomy" (Gregory 1998: 9). Not wanting to reproduce this top-down imagery of gangs, the decision of what material to include and what not to include, has therefore not been easy to make. I hope that the structure of the thesis and the focus on the state project of transformation through urban regeneration shows that I do not support any views that the existence of such gangs are a spontaneous phenomenon in isolation from their structural positions and global economic processes – even if at times the ethnographic representations of GCG's own views of themselves makes it appear that way. I equally want to make it clear I do not support 'culture of poverty' theories. Not wanting to glorify or sensationalize their activities, I chose in the end to include information on GCG activity only where it was specifically relevant to urban regeneration in Moss Side, which I wanted to remain the focus of the thesis. I wanted to avoid another contribution on gangs in isolation from the systemic causes of this embodied identity. The decision to focus attention on GCG in Moss Side was made since it was these gangs that urban regeneration strategies focused upon, even if the imagined dangers of the gangs remained implicit in actual policies (e.g. chapter 6).

Just as I was wary of contributing to perceptions of a dangerous Moss Side synonymous with gangs, equally I wanted to avoid contributing to an idea that inner-city gangs are synonymous with 'the race issue' or the regeneration term of BME (black minority ethnics, discussed further in the thesis). Nor did I want to support a view that anthropology must continue to search for natives even if that means 'third-worlding at home' (Koptiuch 1991). This thesis is about residents shifting understandings of their place as a result of a state directed policy of transformation, urban regeneration. I did not want to write the focus of this thesis to be black identity or race. However, because place making processes involved ideas of race and since the concept of race was implicitly central to regeneration policy targeting Moss Side, considering race became a means to question regeneration policies. I cannot say race directly permeated every aspect of life in Moss Side, but as the latter half of the thesis describes, for many of the residents, immobility, exclusion and confinement

along with the frustrations that these caused, did. And residents often explained these experiences as a result of racism.

Bonilla-Silva successfully argued that racism should not simply be considered on an individual level, thus pathologising examples of racism. He suggested that instead, it should be considered structurally as part of an overall matrix of inequality (Bonilla-Silva 1996). In agreement, I consider race as an articulation the most useful means of understanding the role of this concept in the regeneration of Moss Side. Race did not simply create another ‘layer’ of oppression. An “additive” approach to race leads to misunderstanding the complexity of race in regeneration. It was not that individuals in Moss Side experienced race, citizenship, class, income-inequalities or gender hierarchies and so forth separately or in addition to one another; but that their experiences were shaped from the interstices of these axes. It was the particular combinations that shaped their experiences, the ways in which these were articulated together (Wade 2009a) (also see (Glassman 2009, Hall 1992). Unlike governance theorists like Maginn, who argue that regeneration strategies such as community forums make race insignificant (Maginn 2004), the thesis demonstrates how the regeneration of Moss Side depended upon an amalgamation or articulation of various different scalar concepts (including race) that were measured, codified and enforced in regeneration strategies and in so doing reinforced the discourses that they emerged from (chapter 3).

Race is a difficult topic to discuss. On the one hand, it is necessary to be aware of the consequences of considering the myth of race as a biological reality (with a genealogy rooted in slavery and colonialism and the role of anthropology in establishing this myth) and yet on the other, simply replacing race with ethnicity ignores that race continues to be an inhabited social category (Wade 1993, Wade 2009a). A further problem then arises on how to discuss this inhabited social category without continuing to contribute to the perpetuation of the ‘race myth’ i.e. that there are separate biological races resulting from human genetic variation. This myth often leads to disastrous consequences, such as the belief that genetic variation of skin colour and outward appearance corresponds to other characteristics such as morality. But, “even if race has

absolutely no biological basis in human nature, people are clearly prepared to discriminate against others they define as racially distinct” (Wade 2004:159). Arguments such as biological race correlates to mental capabilities may seem archaic to many. However, the effects of these beliefs often remain implicit in concepts that those same people accept – such as intelligence quotient tests as the Smedley’s point out (Smedley and Smedley 2005).

‘Races’ are social constructions, resulting from social (both historical and contemporary) processes. And yet the continuing use of biology to explain difference remains, allowing the persistent embodiment of this social category. As Anoop Nayak states when outlining the problems of representing race “the deconstruction of race associated with social constructionist paradigms is yet to halt the dense economy of signs and signifiers that proliferate in contemporary culture and are an increasingly recognizable feature of the globalized West” (Nayak 2006: 412). For these reasons, I chose not to include a separate chapter on race. Nor did I wish to place an emphasis on the axis of race over others (such as citizenship, class, gender and so on) that worked in articulation with it in regeneration strategies. This is not to say, however, that the anthropology of race did not aid my analysis of the urban regeneration of Moss Side.

Claire Alexander’s (Alexander 1996) study on young black people living in inner city London counteracts the ways in which “young black men” often becomes a homogeneous identity in theory. She considers the flexible ways that the group she worked with constructed alternative identities. These were context dependent and negotiated through situations. She also explores how these alternatives were limited by outside images and expectations on young black boys and also how these were negotiated from a position of social, economic and political constraints. She describes this negotiation as “the art of being black” (Alexander 1996). The focus on the possibilities of negotiation perhaps works away from looking at how the group limits these possibilities from within the group perspective (chapter 4). However the study was particularly useful to understand the negotiations made by people in Moss Side participating in regeneration strategies and their conciliation of two quite different social contexts (chapter 3).

Although I later decided not to write in detail about Pentecostalism in Moss Side, Nicole Toulis's (Toulis 1997) study helped me to consider the particular importance of considering the intergenerational production of black identity in Moss Side. As such, I include not only the younger Wyke lads in my analysis, but also older GCG members, pirate radio DJs and 'community leaders' and their interactions with younger people. Toulis' study considers the ways in which religion centered in the identity of Caribbean immigrants from Anglophone places such as Jamaica. It describes how this effected the Christian denominations of subsequent generations (Toulis 1997). The study also considers how people that were otherwise marginalized, utilized Christianity to negotiate inclusion through religious grounds. Toulis illustrates how this participation was still limited to particular denominations of Christianity. This resonated with the ways in which individuals utilized regeneration structures to increase their inclusion but the conditions and possibilities of this were narrowed to being a "BME community member" (chapter 3). Steven Gregory's consideration in *Black Corona* (1998) to show an often neglected side of Black identity formation (away from poverty, exclusion and "ghetto" images that often dominate social sciences) influenced my understanding on the ways that regeneration practices restricted participation through identifying "BME community members". This also narrowed ideas of what was considered suitable "issues" for the politically reified entity the "Black Community" to be interested in (discussed further in chapter 3).

Paul Gilroy's "There ain't no black in the Union Jack" (Gilroy 2002[1987]) continues to provide a useful means to understand the complex relationships between race, class and particularly how "the black presence is thus constructed as a problem or threat against which a homogeneous, white, national 'we' could be unified" in the UK (ibid. 49). This "problem" of 'blackness' to homogeneity in the UK offers insights to the problem of achieving a unified and marketable 'vision' of a regenerated Manchester. This coherent vision is required for place-marketing purposes as described in chapter 1 and the problematic place of Moss Side within it is discussed in chapter 6. By illustrating the various



ways that race works in Britain to maintain class divisions, Gilroy's work in conjunction with his "After Empire" (Gilroy 2004) offers a means of understanding that the senses of loss experienced by "True Blue" football fans of Moss Side were for more than simply a stadium (chapter 1). The loss experienced was for what that stadium, as a cultural symbol, stood for in the imaginations of those that shared a belief in it. This was the loss of a "long vanquished homogeneity" and "repairing that aching loss is usually signified by the recovery or preservation of endangered whiteness – and the exhilarating triumph over chaos and strangeness that victory entails" (ibid.95). The 'multicultural' supporters of regeneration policies could never express these views explicitly. However one of "key aims" of regeneration in Moss Side was to reduce the area's "reception role" (chapter 1) for immigrants. This illustrates how these views existed in policy makers even if they manifested implicitly.

By considering how an area becomes racialised into being a "black area" Jaqueline Nassy Brown explores how racialised places then become central to racial identity formation. By exploring how place can be both exemplar and particular (also see Campt 2007) she negotiates how place and race interact, particularly in the imaginations of the people who live there. Her approach in considering how the particular place of Liverpool contributed to racial identity formation resonated strongly with my own experiences in Moss Side (chapter 4). This was particularly relevant when trying to understand the emerging concept in the area of a "proper Moss Side" (discussed further in chapter 5). In chapter 5, I consider how the particular social institute of radio in Moss Side transformed from a "pirate" station to a "private" one. During this transformation the racial identity of the station was changed. I found Maureen Mahon's work "Right to rock" (Mahon 2004) helped to illustrate the way that musical genres also become associated to racial identity formation and how this impacted Moss Side DJs' views on what would be considered appropriate music for a Moss Side radio station (discussed further in chapter 5).

The thesis is written from a point of view that comes from a unique amount of access and I draw on experiences and research from 2003 to 2010 when I lived in the area. When I wrote this thesis, Moss Side was undoubtedly "home" and

the “they” were “we”. This ambiguous position of researcher/researched has undoubtedly shaped this thesis significantly. I do not think this is a bad thing. I had the advantage of unusual levels of access to, on the one-hand regeneration structures and on the other hand the target of regeneration policy. Whilst I conducted hours and hours of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and filled in countless notebooks (26 actually) with detailed notes on my participant observation, I cannot say that I always realised at the time of my experiences that they would be included in the thesis; it was only when writing up that I decided to focus attention on the gang GCG’s activities. The decision to use my actual home (literally inside the house itself) placed an enormous amount of pressure on me since I was completely immersed in Moss Side life. My experiences of this are described throughout the thesis. I leave myself central to how I present my writing since I was central to the research. I tried to write the thesis in a way that is accessible to some of my friends in Moss Side. I firmly believe that anthropology should be accessible to those that it is written about. And so, I will make my thesis available to anyone I worked with on it. I have also explained my arguments in certain chapters to the individuals in them (and for the final chapter, Jamelia’s family) and will make myself available to do so in the future. I had discussions with individuals concerning how they wanted to be presented (this was particularly relevant for whether to keep accents in or not). Chapter three also includes an attempt at shared ethnography.<sup>3</sup> Despite all this, I can imagine that some people may be offended by what I have written in this thesis.<sup>4</sup> But, I hope that those that want to read the thesis will gain something from reading it. My biggest concern was reproducing popular images of a dangerous inner city area, which is all too often seen as a result of ‘black youth’. It was never my intention to do this, however my inquiry into urban regeneration inevitably led me to the targets of that regeneration. Regeneration policy depended upon these images and as such, analysis of these ideas became a central means to question regeneration strategies.

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<sup>3</sup> And of course, everyone involved knew that I was doing research for my PhD.

<sup>4</sup> I hope that they feel they can approach me to talk about it.

## **Chapter One**

### **Envisioning the Global City: A background to ‘the Maine Place’ and Moss Side’s Urban Regeneration**

In 1848, Maine Road was a tiny cluster of buildings amongst ‘indistinguishable fields’ (Farrer and Brownhill 1911:458). These buildings, on the ordinance survey map of the time, were labelled ‘Dog House Kennels’. In 1893 this insignificant group of buildings became re-named ‘Dog House Cottages’, which were still surrounded by open fields. Between 1901 and 1907 (my own house deeds say the house was built in 1904) the characteristic angles of the quadrilateral created by rows of red brick terraces was created. This distinctive shape at that time housed the ‘Brickworks’ that were built upon ‘Dog House Cottages’ (OSM 1848-2009). The Brickworks supplied the rapid growth of the city of Manchester and in 1904, when Moss Side was incorporated into the City, the distinctive rows of terraces supplied workers of the brickworks with housing. In 1923 these brickworks were replaced by Manchester City Football Club’s stadium ‘Maine Road’, named after the street that the entrance faced. The stadium remained until 2003, and the plans to remove and replace it with a new development is where this research began its study of the Moss Side area: with the loss felt by the “True Blues” (the Manchester City football fans), and with the suspicion from other local residents about the development planned.

Many theorists discussing football stadiums describe them as sacred sites. For example, following on work by John Bale (Bale 1993), who states that “The Stadium, like the church, is a place of congregation – and, some would say, worship” (in Gaffney: 2008: ix), Christopher Gaffney describes stadiums in Rio de Janeiro as places of worship (Gaffney 2008). Maine Road meant a lot to the “True Blues”. As a result the rows of terraces adjoining the stadium had many City fans living in them. The ‘True Blue’ name, that fans of the team give to themselves, can be thought of not only as due to the actual colour of the team shirt (which is a light ‘sky’ blue and white), but also as a parody of the notion of an aristocrat being ‘true blue blooded’. The general ethos of this team’s fans

is that of ‘working class heroes’ or ‘the underdog that comes up trumps in the end’. City Fans often set themselves in comparison to and against rival team, Manchester United FC, which they see as having ‘bought’ success with expensive players rather than the struggle and work of ‘City’. ‘United’ vs ‘City’ is also expressed by ‘True Blues’ as the team that may be famous across the world (United) in comparison to ‘true Mancunians’ who support ‘City’. The construction of the stadium as a sacred place by fans, such as that described by Bale, Gaffney and others, was confirmed to me by the experiences of loss by ‘True Blues’ upon the destruction of Maine Road. This loss of the stadium to Moss Side was often described as ‘losing the heart *and soul* of the place’.

“I still can’t believe it’s gone you know. I find myself just looking down the street and I can’t believe it’s not there anymore.”  
*Neighbour 2004*

The last match was played at Maine Road Stadium on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2003. Following this, many supporters came to the area, often by coaches, to ‘pay their respects’ to the grounds. This increased after the demolition of the stadium began in 2004. Many local resident ‘True Blues’ entered the demolition site in order to take various memorabilia (such as rows of seats from stands). One neighbour had furnished his back yard with various pieces that he had taken from the site, in addition to memorabilia he intended to sell on the internet auction site ‘eBay’. It was the conversations I had with ‘tourists’ to the site of Maine Road and particularly the conversations with True Blue neighbours living on streets adjacent to Maine Road that originally caught my attention for this research. The Maine Road area became a site of spatial melancholia, to borrow from Navaro-Yashin (Navaro-Yashin 2009), a place of mourning a loss. The language people used when describing their emotional responses to the decision to demolish Maine Road stadium was that of grief, loss, disbelief and trauma.

“It’s like they’ve just torn the earth away from under us, you know. I mean, everything we believed in, everything my dad taught us to believe in, it all came from here. I mean, if you weren’t part of it, you might not get it, it held us together. It was everything.”  
*Keith (May 2004)*

“You can’t replace Maine Road. Moss Side just won’t be the same. You can’t get back what we’ve lost. Not now, no, Moss Side [pauses] it’s just not ‘Moss Side’ anymore. Mark my words. There won’t be a place for us here soon”

*Mike (August 2005)*

“I’ve come to have a look, you know, see for myself that it’s actually gone. You see, I used to come here all the time: my dad, his dad, we were all city supporters, and now my lad, well he’s not going to come here – and, well like I say, I wanted to see it for myself. I don’t know how to describe how I feel about it – I mean, just like I’ve lost something”

T: [But the new stadium should be pretty good shouldn’t it?]

“Well, we can hope it gets better, but it’s just soul-less over there. It’s not going to be the same is it? We’ve lost a way of life.”

*‘Tourist’ Fan (2004 [during the actual demolition])*

Using Perth in Scotland as an example, Mason and Moncrief describe the way that football stadiums have increasingly been moved from inner city areas to the periphery of city centres (Mason and Moncrief 1993). Following their analysis of the decision making process behind such changes, the decision to relocate the stadium of ‘City’ to the Commonwealth Games Stadium in East Manchester, which was ironically the home of ‘City’ prior to 1923, would be the aim of reducing football-related disruption to the residents of inner city areas. Indeed such measures to reduce football-related problems through re-spatialization also occur within the stadiums themselves such as changes in seating arrangements. Mascarenhas describes this as part of a general development of disciplinary techniques (in the Foucauldian sense) used to manage football fans to prevent hooliganism that gained momentum and was seen as particularly needed after the ‘Hillsborough disaster’ of 1989 in which 95 people were killed (Gaffney and Mascarenhas 2006). “The agitated, noisy, vibrant and threatening collective body of which Hornby speaks was imprisoned and could not survive the modern “all-seater stadium” (ibid: 4). Manchester City FC’s move from Maine Road in Moss Side, however, was part of wider efforts to ‘regenerate’ (and this thesis will unpack what that means as it continues) Moss Side that began not due to football hooliganism, but for reasons such as the so-called ‘Race Riots’ of 1981 in Moss Side in addition to the associated economic motivations that are described in further detail later in the chapter.

The demolition of the stadium did not begin until 2004, over a year after the final match was played at Maine Road. After much ‘community consultation’ (these consultations will be explored in the following chapter) it was announced that a ‘modern housing complex’ would be built, which meant that rumours such as the one that avid ‘City’ fans Oasis (a popular music band playing the genre of ‘Britpop’ during the 1990’s) were purchasing the site to turn it into a music venue, were unfounded. How had the decision been reached? Why the focus upon ‘community consultations’? How would these ‘True Blues’ cope with the replacement of Maine Road with what to all extents and purposes, despite the developers denials, seemed to be a private housing complex named “The Maine Place”, with a seemingly antithetical set of values to City’s ‘True Blues’? How would this be understood? How would existing residents come to understand their new neighbours? Would this site retain its ‘sacredness’ but change its focus? Would displacement occur? And so forth... It was these questions that lead me towards an analysis of urban regeneration in Moss Side even though the thesis moved on from those questions to newer ones.

Information regarding activities on Maine Road was released slowly over the years and it was not until 2008 that building actually began on the site and a clear image of the housing complex, with house names such as Honey Bee and all with prices above £150,000 became. This amount is far beyond that which can be afforded by most current residents. Prior to this, residents often responded to my questions with views such as, “who knows what’s going on now in there?” I remained informed of the developments at Maine Road due to my research and became very actively involved in the regeneration process, as the second chapter considers further. As a result of this involvement I knew of departures from the agreed provisions, social housing allocations, local work force employment, promised community facilities and so forth. I had expected my neighbours to feel the same anger that I had felt at the broken promises made during the early planning stage. But people in the area generally did not have much to say about the issue one way or the other. For most residents a despondent “who knows, who cares, and what are we meant to do about it anyway” attitude prevailed. This was, however, combined with a sense of

threat of displacement, often expressed in the local saying “don’t complain too much or they’ll move you out to Moston” (another area of Manchester that had undergone significant regeneration) or as Mike (see above) said: “Mark my words. There won’t be a place for us here soon.”

This fear of displacement<sup>5</sup> has been considered in gentrification literature (see for examples Atkinson 2000, Newman and Wyly 2006). Indeed in Davidson’s discussion of whether new builds such as Maine Road can be considered gentrification, he treats displacement as the defining feature of gentrification (Davidson and Lees 2005: 1165). Upon considering regeneration, Loretta Lees (Lees 2003) comes to the conclusion that it is little more than gentrification under the disguise of new rhetorical devices. As she says, “It is difficult to find favour with gentrification, but who would oppose urban renaissance, regeneration and sustainability?” (Lees 2003 :61). However, whilst many of the attributes of gentrification such as displacement can be seen in regeneration and certainly gentrification literature has aided my analysis, I believe there is a significant difference in regeneration. Lambert and Boddy (2002) agree that although there are parallels in the changing social geographies, to call regeneration gentrification is “stretching the term and what it set out to describe too far” (ibid: 20). Cameron states that although like gentrification, regeneration also features community displacement and upheaval, a key difference is that whereas traditional gentrification was motivated solely by economic capital, either that of developers or of individual gentrifiers, regeneration is motivated not solely by economy, but by public policy (Cameron 2003: 2373). It is this policy of social regeneration that this thesis focuses upon. What social regeneration means in terms of: transformation of local government: a softening of the distinction between public/private, definitions of community, the growth of the voluntary sector, community ‘consultation’, increased policing methods such as Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO)s, and how these are understood locally by individuals, are all issues which are considered further in the thesis. It is this intentional shift towards ‘social regeneration’ that I believe makes regeneration very different

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<sup>5</sup> Resulting in a resistance to this displacement, as the thesis explores further in chapter 4.

from most definitions of gentrification. There is certainly gentrification occurring in Moss Side, but urban regeneration is more than simply gentrification; it is a remarketing, an actively designed transformation of an area and the people in it, rather than the unintended outcome of people and organisations that were doing something else.

### **Envisioning a Global Manchester: Placing global economic shifts**

Manchester is a place where at some point in its history power has been spatially concentrated, as happens with most cities in Sassen's view (Sassens 2001a). Manchester's power emerged mainly through the city's economic power which came as a result of its manufacturing industrial success (Hylton 2003). Manchester, like many other industrial cities in the United Kingdom, found itself in a difficult position during the global economic shift from manufacturing to information-based economies, described by Castells (Castells 1989). During the late 1980's and 1990's, Manchester became one of many Northern cities and towns that experienced the harsh realities of the recession that affected the UK. This shift from making 'things' to 'information' meant that for Manchester to retain some of its power, the city had to compete with other cities in order to attract businesses to the area, to attempt to achieve the status of what Sassen described as 'the Global city' (Sassens 2001b). In Manchester, this competition has been particularly with Liverpool. Liverpool is close in proximity, a city of similar size, similar economic tradition and has a history of power relations with Manchester. During the Victorian industrial boom, Manchester produced many goods, particularly textiles. The nearest access to a fully functioning port to transport these goods was Liverpool. As a result Liverpool had considerable control over Manchester. It was not until the end of the Victorian boom (1887–1894) that the Manchester Ship Canal was built. The ship canal did help to increase Manchester's autonomy and wealth, but was thought to have come too late to achieve the impact that it was hoped to create (Farnie 1980, Gray 1997). Nowadays the two cities compete to attract new information and service-based businesses and to be considered as global, or cosmopolitan cities, so the rivalry continues. Munck's description of reinventing Liverpool is a typical example. Although somewhat jokingly, he feels it necessary to make competitive comparisons with Manchester in his



introduction (Munck 2003). This competition between cities as places makes the “fantasy of spacelessness” (Smith 1996:72 ) of information flows that Castells implies, particularly untenable. The images of Manchester from the late 1980’s until recently have not been in keeping with a ‘global city’ (Sassen (ibid) awards this status to New York, London and Tokyo). Images of Manchester contradict, oppose and compete with each other: Neon signs celebrating multiculturalism on Rusholme’s ‘curry mile’; the designer brand of bohemia from the northern quarter; rainbows of Canal Street’s Gay area; celebrations of nationhood in the estates of Wythenshaw; racism in north Manchester; ‘Indie’ pubs and clubs; Harvey Nichols and Vivienne Westwood<sup>6</sup> shoppers; folk clubs in Chorlton<sup>7</sup>; the ‘shameless’<sup>8</sup> scroungers; the museum and gallery consumers; the ‘scallies’<sup>9</sup> of Salford. From the ecstasy-popping clubbers of “Madchester” to the gangsters in Moss Side, the capital of “Gunchester”, the list goes on. One of the objectives of regeneration, particularly for the ‘Cultural Strategy Team’ who are part of the regeneration team in Manchester’s local government, is to produce an appealing ‘Vision’ of Manchester that is marketable and competitive. Chapter six considers this ‘Vision’ of regeneration in more detail. This vision, or image of the city that is marketed through regeneration, has the purpose of not only attracting new businesses from within the information economy to the city but also the sort of skilled workers who are able to service it, making Manchester ‘the connected city’ ‘the knowledge capital’.<sup>10</sup> In order to be attractive to these workers, who are by and large young professionals, with degrees and qualifications, ready to participate in the new economy, both in terms of production and consumption – suitable housing is required. This economic drive was, I believe, the main motivation for the decision to re-assign Maine Road to a housing complex and

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<sup>6</sup> Expensive designer outlets

<sup>7</sup> An affluent gentrified area close to Moss Side

<sup>8</sup> A popular Channel Four programme that began in 2003 depicting life in North Manchester as full of drug taking, alcoholic, benefits scammers

<sup>9</sup> ‘Scallies’ is a word used to negatively describe young people usually under 25, with a tendency to steal things and take advantage of people; they may mug you or steal your bike. A Scally is usually conceived to be white, with a skin-head (shaved hair) and a black waterproof tracksuit with trainers. Although ‘the Scallies’ were actually a gang that originated in Liverpool during the 1970’s, in contrast to Salford’s ‘Perry Boys’ (so called due to their attire of a Fred Perry T-shirts) the term Scally, now applies to anyone fitting the earlier description.

<sup>10</sup> These were both campaigns of the regeneration team of Manchester and ‘the Manchester Partnership’ (which will be further detailed) in 2005.

to 'regenerate' the surrounding area of Moss Side. This is not to say that 'social gain' (to borrow a regeneration term) was not part of the regeneration agenda. Indeed, social regeneration was the topic most discussed, as the thesis will illustrate. It was an example of 'Third Way' politics that emerged with New Labour; the idea that there is some middle ground between free market capitalism and social democracy.

### **Third Way Politics: New Labour's Shift from welfarism to the search for 'social cohesion'.**

Manchester has historically had a Labour local government in Manchester City Council. Blake describes how Manchester gained the reputation of being part of the 'Looney Left' during the years Margaret Thatcher was Conservative Prime Minister between 1979 to 1990 (Blake 1997, Seldon 2000). During these years there was a dramatic shift, not only in the UK but across much of the world, towards what is often described as 'neoliberal' economic structures and their associated political and social values. Neoliberalism, as a term, has had a broad usage, such as an attack on equality (Duggan 2003), a 'thought virus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001) which allows the creation of a situation where "the future can be bought instead of earned" (Giroux 2004:4). Although neoliberalism originated with the Chicago School of economists led by Milton Friedman in the 1970's (George 1999), it was a combination of these ideas, along with those of Hayek, which built upon those of Adam Smith that combined to underpin Margaret Thatcher's ideas in the UK. Nikolas Rose points out that it is only in the naming of neoliberalism that a combination of different ideas emerged as an individual concept (Rose 1999:28). And there is no doubt that Thatcher and Reagan contributed to those ideas. It was under the strong influence of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, who was US President between 1981 and 1999, that there was a "lemming-like rush towards urban entrepreneurialism" (Peck and Chapter 2002:38). When I use the term 'neoliberal' to describe urban regeneration, it is to describe the set of values and practices which encouraged the 'free market', such as private/public partnerships: that rewarded 'entrepreneurial spirit'; promoted competition; discouraged social welfare provisions; encouraged a retracting state with governance from a distance; placed emphasis on consumerism and individuality

and eroded public responsibility for communal welfare. As Thatcher famously claimed, within this perspective “there is no such thing as society”. In the UK post-Second World War principles that established state provision of people’s welfare “from the cradle to the grave” such as the National Health Service (NHS) was transformed to be considered “the extravagant good fairy at every christening, a loquacious and tedious companion at every stage of life's journey, the unknown mourner at every funeral” (Margaret Thatcher, quoted in Rose 1999:139). Rose and Miller describe how ‘welfarism’ as a particular mode of government developed in Britain, particularly after the Second World War (Rose and Miller 1992). The Beveridge report (Beveridge 1942) outlined a welfare contract of alleviating want, disease, idleness, ignorance and squalor, in exchange for thrifty, industrious and socially-responsible citizens.

Given Manchester’s history of a Labour local government and its historical manufacturing history, this move away from ‘welfarism’ as a form of government, along with the curbing of trade unions and the replacement of collective empowerment with self-interests and a retracting welfare state was not received well. Long-term Labour supporters such as Robert, whose experiences of this transformed role of local government to something called governance, are discussed further in the following chapter. I worked closely with Robert and his brother David for three years in a community forum. Robert, 65, was a retired councillor. He left the Labour party after being a local councillor for over 20 years and many more years of being a Labour Union leader, because, he said, of his disagreement with Labour’s part in ‘the war on terror’ which began in 2001. I would often visit his sheltered accommodation flat that he shared with his disabled brother and the brothers would reminisce about the days of old Labour whilst complaining about the new business approach of Manchester City Council. Robert would often tell me about the increasing volume of people contacting him when he was a councillor, regarding terrible and yet typical problems they experienced trying to access benefits. These were problems that he believed should never occur under a “true” Labour Government. He felt as though there was very little similarity between the Labour Party he remembered and New Labour. He felt left behind, “a socialist dinosaur”. He would often joke about it, but there was always a

sense of sadness about what he saw as betrayal. Given the number of years of his commitment to a Labour Government, with the ideals of social democracy and his high level of dedication and having to resign over ideological differences in his older years, one can easily understand his sadness. Whilst Robert retained an involvement with the voluntary sector, he increasingly found himself sidelined in urban regeneration situations, as the next chapter illustrates further.

The economic shift, which commenced with the Thatcher government, continued with the Labour government that came into power in 1997. This happened particularly through the 'Third Way' that was developed by sociologist Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1998, Giddens 2002, Hayden 1996). The 'Third Way' emerged as an attempt to find a middle ground between capitalism and the ideals of Labour for providing socialism through democratic means. It was seen by some (e.g. Finlayson 1999) as a watered down version of Labour values. Temple (Temple 2000) successfully describes how New Labour appeared as a pragmatic solution to the previous Tory Government's problems. He describes a government in which the main objective, in its appearance, was to illustrate just how pragmatic and dynamic a solution they provided when compared to the Thatcher government. Some of the consequences of this on regeneration are described in the next chapter. One such pragmatic solution was the 'Third Way'. Temple describes 'Third Way' politics as providing capitalism with community spirit (Temple 2000). Driver and Martell discuss how social democracy became secondary to the more immediate need for solutions to recover from the effects of Thatcher's Government (Driver and Martell 1997). And Hall describes how at this time, a critique of capitalism became reduced to criticism of Thatcher (Hall 1998). Temple illustrates how Giddens' book 'The Third Way' (Giddens 1998) was not a social analysis but rather a prescription on how to solve a social problem (Temple 2000). Driver and Martell describe how these potential solutions to social problems, such as the promotion of 'communitarianism,' emerged (Driver and Martell 1997). 'Communitarianism' advocated a situation in which 'stakeholders' of the community emerged to have a new political importance and society became something in which individuals had to invest if they wanted

the benefits of it. The following chapter will ethnographically illustrate one result of this shift in the conceptual relationship between people and the imagined social whole, with the development of 'the voluntary' sector, often referred to as the 'third sector' (where public is the first, private the second and voluntary/community the third). It also considers how the need to illustrate the outcomes of pragmatic decisions (accountability) combined with 'communitarianism' gave rise to the importance of 'community consultation' over decisions on regeneration. With New Labour, equality became synonymous with a 'healthy' society. Under the propositions by Giddens, social cohesion appeared as the panacea to all problems, economic, social and political. A reified conception of community appeared in policy as both the cause and solution to these problems (the following chapter will describe this further). Politically, it appeared as though the relegation of society under the previous government had created an emergency of anti-social behaviour, and investment into the community appeared to be the answer. The use of sociological claims meant that this intrusion into everyday life was seen as a justified necessity. To do this also requires identifying and labelling particular social phenomena as 'problems', which is developed further in the thesis.

An example of 'Third Way' methods in Manchester was the bid to host the Commonwealth Games in the city. This event (or events, since the first bid was unsuccessful) illustrates not only the need for Manchester to compete as a city, but also the way in which the approach towards public and private partnerships was continued to achieve goals in an 'any means necessary' approach to recovering from the recession. Cochrane et al. (Cochrane, Peck, and Tickell 1996) identify this as the point at which Manchester City Council opened its doors to the private sector. They state that this door, once opened could not be closed again. Whilst I see how the bid process illustrates one of the earlier partnerships in Manchester, it was not an isolated phenomenon. Across Manchester and the UK, public/private partnerships were used to fulfill a perceived need of recovery in the post-recession era of the mid 1990's. It was this same perceived need for recovery that encouraged the perceived need for regeneration strategies to begin. Smith and Fox consider the different effects of regeneration models between those that have required regeneration for a

specific event (like the commonwealth games), or regeneration that has used an event for wider regeneration efforts (Smith and Fox 2007) (unfortunately their analysis of regeneration itself is limited to evaluating terms of successful implementation, rather than what regeneration is). These partnerships seem best illustrated by Urban Development Companies (UDCs) (which began with the previous conservative government) and their continued formats. Manchester's partnership (in the thesis I use a pseudonym of 'the partnership') is considered in detail in the following chapter. It is comprised of private companies, public sector groups and voluntary sector groups; including Manchester City Council, voluntary sector groups and other partnerships such as 'the airport group'. The complex power relations are discussed in the following chapter, however the following is an example of how these ambiguous dynamics influenced the early progressions of 'The Maine Place' development.

**From Maine Road to the Maine Place: The choice to transform a stadium to a housing complex.**

Members of the public (or the community) were invited to attend an event in 2003 in which various companies presented why they would be the best with the most "social gain" offered. Other development companies competed with Lowry homes for the Maine Road project. During the competition, each company promised to deliver on certain "social gain" issues. These included business opportunities for local business people, jobs for local people, training, community resources and so on. In 2004, early in the development of plans for 'the Maine Place', a number of conditions were given to Lowry Homes (the company developing the site). One of these was the allocation of some 'community amenities' on the site. Over 2 years later, what form these amenities would take became clear. The plans for the "Main Place" showed a mixture of 'family-sized housing' that had 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms each with a lawn and garage and also blocks of four-story flats. The earlier phases of the regeneration project (between 2003 and 2006) focused particularly upon the social housing that would be provided on site. This would be one third of the total 150 housing units. However, only people who were more deeply involved with the regeneration of Maine Road knew that 'Social Enterprise' (a private

company with social ‘not for profit’ aims) were purchasing these houses at almost full price from the developing company and that all 50 of these units were single flats (not the implied family housing) and that people applying for the houses would be chosen by a selection committee who were looking for ‘suitable’ candidates and ‘key workers’. Also, plans only emerged 3 years after the bidding, to show that the local business opportunities would be shop fronts with standard priced leases that made them beyond the reach of local people in the area and a supermarket’s “local” branch. Using a legal loophole validated allowing a major supermarket onto a site that advertised local business opportunities; since it was officially a franchise of the major supermarket, it could be classed as a “local business”. Very few local people seemed to be employed. When a local community forum (MSCF which the second chapter will describe further) inquired about this, they were told that there were not enough qualified local people to do the work and that it was therefore the training agency that had failed to deliver, not Lowry Homes, who would be happy to employ people if they were qualified. A friend that worked for the training company told me that they did not have sufficient funds to do such large-scale training. They had not been given any additional funding for the Maine road project. Jimmy was a neighbour who lived on our street adjacent to Maine Road. He was an Irish construction worker who lived in Moss Side for many years. He was what was once called a ‘Navy’ – a migrant Irish casual but skilled worker. These have been common in Manchester since the Victorian era and the famine in Ireland in the 1850’s. In the time that I had known Jimmy he had always liked an alcoholic drink. However, the sight of his drunkenness became more and more frequent in the streets where we lived as he found it increasingly difficult to find work. He explained his drunkard behaviour to me as a result of boredom. He told me that he was a “working man” and without work, he felt he was nothing. Jimmy had thought that with the construction work involved in regenerating Maine Road, he would have lots more work than usual. On the contrary, the large construction companies coming into the area brought their own relatively cheap workers with them. Jimmy explained to me that he was even willing to take lower pay than he used

to get, but since he did not have “any of the papers” (referring not only to specific qualifications but also without a National Insurance number)<sup>11</sup> he could find no employment. This was a complaint of quite a few of the local construction workers I knew. It became an increasingly regular occurrence to see Jimmy staggering in the streets on his way to buy more alcohol. His appearance deteriorated rapidly. Jimmy began to hardly recognise me on the street as his condition of perpetual drunkenness became such that he often failed to recall where he was and had to be shown back to his house again. Jimmy’s example describes a tension between informal and formal spheres that the thesis returns to. Whilst the legal obligations of large development companies meant they could not risk employing people that were not fully trained and qualified workers, there is a considerable cost of this structural exclusion to construction workers such as Jimmy. This tension was increased by people’s expectations of opportunities from Maine Road. Expectations that came as a result of the marketing campaigns and promises described above. But things were not going to be the way the advertisements in 2003 seemed. What there were going to be though were an NHS ‘poly-centre’ and a primary school. But, in order for the primary school to open, two others would have to be shut (this was completed in 2009). And the ‘poly centre’ would come at a price also. Moss Side has a population density almost 3 times greater than the rest of the city (Council 2009). However, it has no General Health Practitioners (GPs in the UK offer the first point of contact between patient and doctor) in the area. Most residents use the walk-in centre in Hulme or the over-burdened multiple practitioner practice associated to the University of Manchester in Rusholme, which has mainly junior and inexperienced doctors. The effects of poor health care provision in Moss Side should not be underestimated and health problems and lack of good treatment for problems often figure as a topic of conversation amongst residents. It is common to be unable to get an appointment at the GPs. I have waited along with other residents at the closed doors of the medical centre in the hope of getting an appointment when it opens. This occurs since there are so few appointments available per day. The phone lines are so busy that often by the time one can get through, all the

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<sup>11</sup> National Insurance numbers are UK identification numbers allowing one to work.



appointments for that day have been filled. Patients are advised to avoid the same situation occurring the next day, by queuing at the closed doors before the surgery opens to ensure an appointment is available. This is a minor complaint in comparison to the time I had the wrong tooth removed at the NHS ‘walk in centre’. I found it difficult to keep my mouth open and complained during the extraction that I was in incredible pain (this was because the dentist had anaesthetized the correct one but was extracting a healthy tooth). My protests were met by the stern disciplinary voice of the dentist, who clearly ‘knew better’. Luckily, I could utilise the university dentist to ‘correct’ the situation (although I never got my tooth back, or replaced). This is not an option available to most residents, although in emergencies they may join the queues and attend the dentistry training hospital at the university. Given these difficulties, the announcement in 2006 during a regeneration meeting of a new medical ‘poly-centre’ was gladly met. This would provide a number of different medical facilities that would be made available in one place. A friend who worked for the National Health Service (NHS) as a community liaison worker for the PALS (patient advice and liaison services) said to me after the meeting that he was very surprised to hear the announcement. He had not previously known that this plan was going ahead. He was aware that a feasibility study had been done, but the results had shown that it was not possible for the local NHS to fund such a centre without closing either the large medical centre currently used by most Moss Side residents or two of the surrounding GPs’ surgeries. As far as he knew, it had been decided that this would create a worse situation in Moss Side and would not help the area cope with the large influx of people expected at the Maine Road site. He thought that the regeneration team, the development company and ‘the partnership’ had been informed of this. Another colleague in a more senior position within the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) of the NHS later confirmed this. She told me that she had personally told the ‘Re-gen Team’ that it was unfeasible to fund such a project in Moss Side, an area in which the funding was already very scarce in comparison to the population density. Angrily, she explained that if they could have afforded a new medical centre in this area, there would already have been one; the fact remained that the Primary Care Trust did not have the money to do it without closing down other services and she did not see that this

was the best option for existing residents, due to the reliance on these services and the problem of geographical distance that would be created if there was simply one centre on the site.<sup>12</sup> But the announcement had been made in such a way that the Primary Care Trust, the local administrators of the National Health Service, had no choice but to go along with the plans. This illustrates the complexity of the new partnerships power relations.

A lot of urban regeneration literature focuses upon particular policy documents, plans or changes in task forces. Most literature relies upon short term (perhaps 3 to 6 month projects) following the impact of one particular implementation of a policy. This does little to illustrate what happens afterwards. I have therefore intentionally avoided following the implementation of a single policy or illustrating one particular document, strategic plan, agenda or so forth – isolating that particular one from the many I was involved with. Some theorists (such as Mithran 2005) successfully map how one policy transforms into another, for example in Mithran’s case, how the physical regeneration of the Conservative government transformed to the social regeneration focused upon by New Labour. Studies are more often than not limited to contact between residents *through* residents associations or other formal structures within the regulated spaces of regeneration.<sup>13</sup> Most critique remains within the evaluative role of whether regeneration has been successfully implemented or not, rather than what regeneration is. The changed goal of urban regeneration policies from the physical and economic regeneration of dilapidated buildings to the transformations of social regeneration in communities for ‘social cohesion’ requires in depth ethnographic enquiry and over a long period of time with sustained contact with those involved in a variety of contexts. I hope this thesis achieves this.

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<sup>12</sup> She added, on a lighter note, that it would be impossible to close down the Rusholme practice as, “there’d be anarchy”. She like many others who were involved with the regeneration of Maine Rd believed that these facilities were going to be for the new residents at the expense of the old residents.

<sup>13</sup> The following chapter discusses this further.

### **The Mossy Side of the hill: Some background to regenerating Moss Side**

At the turn of the millennium there was a move towards the term ‘urban renaissance’ and away from regeneration. This was around the time the ‘problem’ of urban regeneration was awarded a specific government ‘task force’. However in Manchester, as with other cities, the term regeneration remained. Many theorists however prefer referring to the process as urban renaissance than regeneration (for example Davidson and Lees 2005, Evans 2003, Imrie and Raco 2003, Lees 2003, Mace, Hall, and Gallent 2007, MacLeod 2003). Amin et al. (2000) point out that, “Urban renaissance is largely for the middle-class while urban regeneration concerns itself with the working-class... the renaissance will define how the city will be and regeneration will ensure that the poor have some part to play in it” (Amin 2000: 54). In this model it is as though physical regeneration is now complete and a ‘cultural’ (in the regeneration use of the word rather than an anthropological one) renaissance is now possible (Tiesdell and Allmendinger 2001). Amin’s approach also fails to see the relationships between how ‘the city’ is thought of as the centre and ‘the poor’ are localised in the inner city. This means that an analysis of the complexity of how inner city regeneration is required for city centres to achieve their renaissance and the relationships between the centre and the inner city is missing and so the spatial exclusion that residents of inner city areas to the city centre is also lost. I will argue in the next chapter, that Amin may be right to the extent that regeneration concerns itself with making the urban ‘underclass’ *feel* as though it is still involved with the city, however this is only achieved in the carefully constructed environments of regeneration (such as the community consultations discussed in the next chapter). I consider these socio-spatial inequalities further in chapter four. I refer throughout the thesis to urban regeneration as a name for various interconnected and interdependent implementations of policy with the aim of redefining the area ‘Moss Side’ by transforming the residents in it. I choose to continue using regeneration as a term over alternatives primarily as this is what Manchester’s governing structures refer to. For example, there is the Regeneration Team of Manchester City Council (MCC). But I also prefer the term ‘regeneration’ as it illustrates the way in which the transformations taking place were disguised as somehow ‘natural’ by utilising a socio-biological idiom. Regenerative qualities

seem to imply a ‘natural’ and automatic spontaneity of re-growth, such as that in plants or bodily tissues. This obfuscates that there were architects of urban regeneration policy. It makes it unclear that urban regeneration was, as I argue through the thesis, an intended and directed project of social transformation in Moss Side residents to make existing residents acquiesce to changes that the state was undergoing and the changed role Moss Side had.

“A key objective [of regeneration] is to reduce the area’s ‘reception role’ [for immigrants] to create more stable neighbourhoods” (Council 2007). This excerpt is from the “Rusholme and Moss Side Local Area Plan” but was a common idea throughout the regeneration strategies I was involved with. This concept of having a “reception role” meant that according to regeneration strategists, Moss Side seemed a likely place for immigrants to choose to arrive in when first coming to the UK. This failed to acknowledge that many of these immigrants were actually housed in Moss Side due to fewer other options due to financial strains and council housing policies. According to Ward, this role of Moss Side for housing immigrants began around the 1930’s when the more affluent residents began to move to southern areas of Manchester (Ward 1975). However even before this, Moss Side homed many Irish immigrants leaving Ireland as a result of the great famine of the mid-1800’s. Nonetheless, as the houses became run down wealthier occupants of Moss Side left to find better housing conditions. This meant that the large arrival of immigrants to the UK during the 1950’s found Moss Side’s cheap prices, style of houses allowing multiple occupancy, the proximity to places of work and so forth, an ideal place for them to stay. Of these immigrants in Moss Side, the most significant is arguably the Caribbean immigrants often referred to as ‘the Windrush Generation’. The Empire Windrush landed in Tilbury in 1948, bringing people from the Caribbean to the UK to fill the labour shortage created by the Second World War (Phillips 1998). These immigrants tended to work in the low paid unskilled level of the job market, particularly in manufacturing. Although these times were remembered as hard, they are generally remembered nostalgically.

“Well, you know it wasn’t so easy then. I remember we all [all her family] were in one room, my sister all [the whole family] in the next room. It wasn’t so bad for us

[her and her partner] you know, we only Ian and Levi born then [the eldest two of her six children], and them still small so not causing me too much trouble like later years. We all be working on the wool [factory] on Great Western [Street in Moss Side]. You couldn't get the food we can now, me remember drying bonnets [a type of chilli] out when me could find it and trying make green bananas be like plantain. Things [food] be coming over you know, but not regular. But we had fun you know. We used to go round places [each others houses] kids growing up together like they do now. Used to seem like a big adventure to us back then, playing at being grown up in this new place.”

Friend's Aunt, aged over 70, arrived in the UK in 1959

This history of housing new immigrants continued with the large numbers of Somalis settling in the area since the 1990s. There were a lot of conflicts between Somalis and Caribbeans in the area. When I asked people if race mattered to them, they would reply that it did not. However, race and ethnicity shaped many of the interactions I noticed between groups in Moss Side. For example, as the fourth chapter will consider further, the category of “student” was always white. Certainly the views of Black residents on African residents and vice versa were very forthcoming.

“The street is so much cleaner now, see not this one, but the one past that with the red door, has a nice African woman, here, Czech man who did Younis' wall, here see nice and clean now, no problems now. Before, you could not put even rubbish outside without people stealing, you see these Blacks, they're not good, not clean, drinking alcohol in the street, yes really, you see them in summer time, all doors opened, everyone sitting outside, no clothes, drinking, smoking nesha [a term for taking an intoxicant substance] smoke, loud music, they don't care,

not good, not clean people. Now it's getting better, things cleaner now."

Mr Ali, Somali man who lived on the same street as me. Aged around 45. Recorded conversation about changes in the area.

"Oh god, the smell, come on T, you can't say that's right, it never happened before. It stinks so bad, who throws rubbish out like that? It never happened before they came. The end of the alley is just full of rotting meat and bread. And it's those flat breads they have; so don't tell me it's someone else. I know it's a cultural difference, they're probably used to just chucking stuff out for the animals, I heard someone tell me that it's against their religion to waste meat, so they have to give animals chance to eat it first, so they just throw it into the alley. But we're not in Africa anymore; there are bins, not vultures. And to be honest, I just don't like the language they speak, it just sounds aggressive, when you're on the bus, and they all start shouting at each other, but then I guess that's because they're from a tribal war country, they're just used to being aggressive."

May, West Indian mother of 4, aged 35 born in Moss Side. This was actually during an interview, which may explain why May is attempting to sound more sensitive to 'cultural difference' than she usually does.

"You can't tell me that you think it's better round here because they're here. And you can't tell me that they are doing all they can to fit in. Round here, we accept everyone – right? [I nod]. We're as multi-cultural as you can get round here, look at you and James [my partner] – right? [I nod]. You got Asian lads coming into the snooker rooms, you got blacks, whites irish – right? [I

agree]. So there's no way it's down to us that they can't fit in. Fiona, she goes down the school, picks the kids up right, she's tried to say hello, but you can't say hello to them, you can't even make eye contact, else they'll move across the street, look at you funny or whatever, so there's no way you can tell me that it's down to us"

Discussion with a neighbour, of mixed Caribbean and White man in his late 30s, regarding a mutual Somali neighbour.

These are typical statements in the area. And race shapes many other interactions between groups, as the thesis will illustrate as it continues. In 1981, Moss Side (like other areas in UK cities that year, such as Toxteth in Liverpool, Brixton in London, Chapel Town in Leeds, Bristol) saw what is often described as a 'race riot' that culminated in the storming of Moss Side Police station. Each of these riots across the UK had a particular trigger assigned to it by the local press and local residents, an assault on a woman, the entering of the National Front (NF; a militant right wing neo-Nazi group) into a particular music venue and so forth. People I have spoken to attribute different causes for the eventual storming of Moss Side police station in June 1981.

"It was a weird time you know. We were seeing everything going to shit. The whole country. We were seeing our parents fighting and splitting up, things were just fucked you know...I mean I went to school with these guys... I'll admit I was involved in it all; they [the NF] gave us answers when we needed them. But it was easier than that you know, we just wanted to fight, we didn't care who we were fighting, we were angry and just wanted a fight."

Keith, White neighbour and 'True Blue', conversation in the street in 2007.

"T, right, I can only tell you what made me decide to get involved right. Things had been brewing up a while. The

“Wythenshawe lads”<sup>14</sup> had been in Moss Side a few times, throwing their weight around, nothing we couldn’t handle though. We were all sat in the pub,<sup>15</sup> me Roman, Levi some of the others. A group of skinheads walk in. First they’re just stood there right, staring at us. We carry on drinking and whatever. I mean we weren’t really heavy back then. We were just minding our own really, just youngsters. Then one came over and knocked a pint over on our table, said sorry but was clearly taking the piss [insincere]. We had mates in that pub right, white mates that we went to school with and everything, and they just did nothing. So some of the other black guys we knew came over and stood by the table, Ian stands up and says “that’s fine” – and then all shit breaks out...”

Ian, 50-year-old Black friend (during an interview in 2008).

Other Black friends who were involved explained that it was the frustration they felt from the police support of the NF (National Front, extreme right wing organisation in the UK) entering the area and attacking young men. One friend claimed that a lot of the violence that was declared (by authorities) as carried out by Black people was actually committed by the NF. Abs, an older gang member of the organization “GCG” (the Moss Side street gang mentioned in the introduction and whom the latter half of the thesis focuses upon), told me that it was actually the riots and the following need for protection and security that really gave GCG the boost it needed in terms of membership and support, although this same member has usually explained the origin of the gang to be trade of illegal drugs. However, the idea of gangs being a system ‘in-lieu’ of the state is supported by theorists such as Rodgers (Rodgers 2003) who finds a similar situation in Nicaraguan street gangs. Rodgers describes how these street gangs do not work as insurgents against the state, but rather to do the

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<sup>14</sup> This is a pseudonym

<sup>15</sup> [the Parkway pub – where the riots are said to have begun. It is located on Lloyd street south, close to Maine Road and has now been converted into flats],



things that the state has failed to do.<sup>16</sup> So many people had different ideas of what caused the riots, and in Kathryn Manzo's introduction to her book on the politics of Race and Nation, she states that one of her motivations for her book was "nor did I ever hear a sophisticated explanation for why Manchester woke up one morning in 1981 to find shops burned in Rusholme... and a police station under seige in Moss Side." (Manzo 1995)

There can be no introduction to Moss Side's regeneration that does not somehow include the features that bring the area the most attention. Seemingly the biggest reason for such strenuous urban regeneration efforts in Moss Side is due to the popular perception of Moss Side as the dangerous Black 'Bronx of Britain', capital of Gunchester and home of the hooded gangsters. There are many examples of these views on Moss Side, for example the Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling in August 2009, claimed to have seen 'urban warfare' for himself in the streets of Moss Side, having been shown bullet holes in windows and places where people had been killed. He compared it to a US television program called "The Wire" which depicts hard American gang life (News 2009). Penny Fraser (1996) states that it is this reputation that prevented investment of businesses, which happened elsewhere in the city in the 1990s, into Moss Side (Fraser 1996). She criticises the focus upon the similarities drawn between so-called 'problem' inner cities which she explains means that the differences of particular places become obscured. She continues by discussing how Moss Side has become the archetypal British example of the inner city and how this has been detrimental to Moss Side. Accounts of Moss Side gangs, such as Mares who even claims that the GCG<sup>17</sup> *are not* a hierarchical organisation (Mares 2001)<sup>18</sup>, frustrate me due to their inaccurate accounts which emerge from seemingly little or no contact with actual members. The latter half of the thesis therefore focuses on the lived experiences of being involved in GCG.

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<sup>16</sup> The fourth chapter considers this further

<sup>17</sup> Although Mares does not use a pseudonym, I have chosen to do so.

<sup>18</sup> They are an incredibly strictly hierarchical organisation as the thesis will illustrate in later chapters.

### **And so...**

This chapter aimed to introduce a background to Moss Side, starting with the loss of Maine Road Stadium. By exploring regeneration and giving some background to possible economic justifications for regeneration, the thesis goes on to explain the social transformations that took place. One suggested justification was the need for Manchester to recover as a city from de-industrialisation, competing to find a new position in an information-based economy. I hoped to show through a discussion of 'Third Way' how New Labour continued the economic policies of the Conservative government. I explained how Third Way led from the physical regeneration of dilapidated buildings (as with the Conservatives) to a social regeneration driven by an 'any means necessary' position to recover. The chapter also gave some history of why Moss Side in particular was considered an area in need of serious intervention through regeneration strategies particularly due to its reputation as the archetypal British inner city, the "British Bronx" or "Capital of Gunchester". Having looked at the circumstances under which Moss Side became a target for regeneration, and argued that a combination of political and economic factors were involved, I will be going on to explore how these policies worked in practice. The thesis therefore continues by considering the ways in which urban regeneration strategies were implemented and what political and economic factors shaped the policies. The next chapter ethnographically demonstrates the complex relationships between the groups involved with implementing regeneration policies and argues that urban regeneration strategies can be thought of as a new mechanism of government.

## **Chapter two:**

### **From the community, for the community, by the community: Implementing governance without government?**

In this chapter I argue that urban regeneration practices were the major part of the development of new mechanisms of government in Moss Side. Following Rose and Miller, the chapter will show how “the political vocabulary structured by oppositions between state and civil society, public and private, government and market, coercion and consent, sovereignty and autonomy and the like, does not adequately characterise the diverse ways in which rule is exercised in advanced liberal democracies” (Rose and Miller 1992: 174). I argue that regeneration structures put in place in Moss Side were the development of such diverse means of governance. During this development, a balance was struck between new authorities representing the ‘community’ and more traditional elected forms of government and paid city council workers. The chapter also considers how these new balances were mediated through spaces of regulated freedom (Rose 1999) such as the “Community Forum.” The chapter begins to unpack how the aims stated below were implemented and what may have motivated them.

“Aim 1. Better Governance: By building on the skills of local people and communities so they are empowered to engage in local service delivery (such as regeneration programmes).

Aim 2. Better Voluntary and Community Sector Service Delivery: Through supporting the development of local organisations and community groups to influence services and provide services that meet Best Value standards (such as community based and run childcare schemes).

Aim 3. Better social infrastructure: Through increasing and building on the skills of people to engage and carry

out actions if they want. This could be through groups, organisations or networks (such as the CASH or Change grants, Participatory appraisal or Community Network for Manchester) as well as individually.

Aim 4. Better Social Capital and Cohesion: Through supporting people of different backgrounds to make sure they feel valued for their part in making communities better places to live. We want to foster the development of a sense of place for all.” (Council 2008)

This is an extract from a pamphlet by Manchester City Council, given to community development workers in Manchester 2006 (which included myself at the time). It was designed to explain what ‘community engagement’ was. It was later (in 2008) used in the “want to get involved” campaign during the “community engagement strategy”.

When most Moss Side residents spoke about ‘the council’ it was interchangeable with the state, central government and local governing structures. It seemed that their experiences and/or senses of exclusion meant council activities and “the council” was a mysterious, obscure and yet somehow malevolent singular entity. This malevolence was considered to be working against individuals’ efforts to succeed. Many people felt that there were no lines of communication from “the council” other than demands and reprimands; council tax, court date appearances, fines, suspension of benefits, housing problems, complaints from neighbours and so on – and these problems were all somehow “down to the council”. For most people in Moss Side “the council” was regarded as a reified concept of control, consistently conceived as an oppressive force. It was the ‘the thing’ that did things to you, but not for you. For example, it was “the council” that shut down a favoured venue (something to you) and “the council” not efficiently clearing refuse from Somali takeaways (rather than for you). In the imaginations of those concerned, “the council” provided a single entity to whom the increased noise and pollution from the Maine Road construction site could be attributed. And also “the council” who were blamed for not taking the increase in missing pets seriously. This fear began in January 2008 when construction on Maine Road began. My own cat went missing at this time and on asking neighbours and

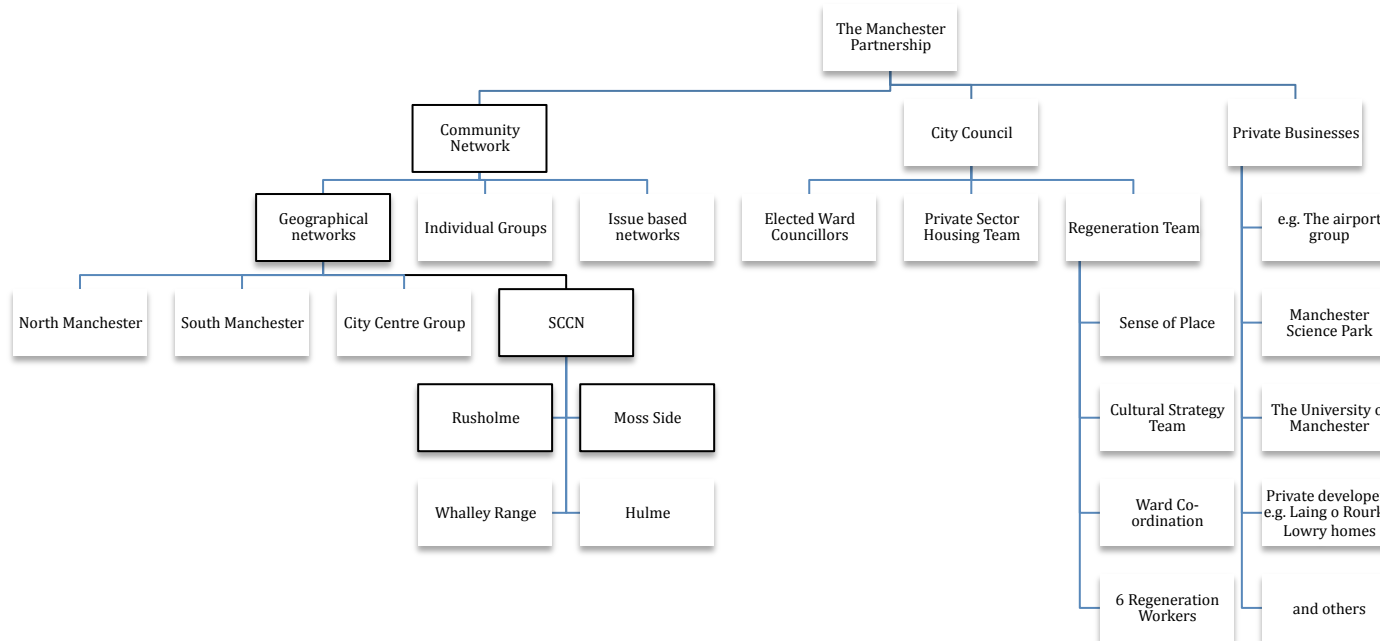
friends in the area if they had seen it, I was told several tales of other cats that had gone missing and how many cats were getting sick and coming back covered in ‘chemical dust’. How much actual truth there was in the relationship between the construction site and pet welfare is questionable, however it does illustrate a general distrust of activities taking place on the site. ‘Community engagement’ through regeneration aimed to transform this local perception of “the council”. This transformed perception was to be achieved largely through the voluntary sector (also referred to as the community sector or the third sector, where the public and private were the first and second). I argue that a new local perception of ‘the council’ was required to achieve a particular goal – that of self-regulating regenerated communities. Williams, using biosocial terminology, gives us his recommendation on how to “cultivate” or develop “self help” in “deprived” inner cities (Williams 2005). And in many ways, this is what we (the individuals involved in regeneration through the voluntary sector) were responsible for – cultivating so called ‘self-help’ through increasing participation with regeneration structures. This was described as many things, “engagement,” “participation,” “increase cohesion” and so forth. I will illustrate how regeneration policy hoped to achieve this by inculcating certain ideals such as favouring market capitalism and being tied to one another in a transformed ‘cohesive community’. The apparent removal of government in a self-regulating, self-governing, cohesive community<sup>19</sup> appeared to be the ultimate aim of the policy architects of social regeneration. This would not only be cost-effective, but would also leave the state free to do its new work, seemingly to service ‘the free market’ rather than it’s previous work of governing citizens and so leaving this to be regulated through consumerism. This is since the market is no longer seen to be naturally occurring but something which government must help (Burchell 1996). To transform the social situation to achieve conditions of self-reliance and cohesion, first an initial increase of government policy-orientated intervention was required. I continue to argue in this chapter, that regeneration policy was one such intervention and begin by considering how the transformation was implemented.

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<sup>19</sup> I shall consider what ‘cohesive’ may mean through the thesis.

## Implementing Regeneration: Emerging local government structures.

Groups involved with implementing regeneration strategies:-



I have drawn this chart to represent an organisational overview of and the relationships between those most directly involved in regenerating Manchester. However, as with most organisational charts, it does not explain the implicit power relationships between the groups or that they were shifting.<sup>20</sup> I only include it to simplify explanations of the groups involved in order to explain relationships between them ethnographically.

The Manchester Partnership acted in a way similar to Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) that were developed by the Conservative government during the 1980's (see Imrie and Raco 2003 for a further description of UDCs). As urban regeneration policy moved increasingly from physical regeneration to social regeneration, the partnership approach increased. Booth, discussing the

<sup>20</sup> Nor does this chart include different groups that I do not discuss in this chapter (for example the many departments of Manchester City Council).

regeneration of Sheffield, celebrates the way in which New Labour's partnership approach and the single regeneration budget (SRB) has increasingly meant a transformation of local government structures (Booth 2005). The Manchester Partnership certainly affected local government. They were responsible for creating and enforcing the Vision of regeneration. My first experiences of the Manchester Partnership were working on the 'community strategy' and 'agenda 2010' documents and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in 2004. LSPs outlined the plans and the direction in which we (i.e. those involved with designing and implementing regeneration) were to implement the various policies to transform 'the community' to be in keeping with the Vision. The Manchester Partnership held authority over all the other governing structures this chapter discusses. The individual businesses involved with the Manchester Partnership became more obscured as time went on, as did their relationships to decisions made about Manchester's regeneration. The Partnership website once contained links to the individual companies involved, but then restricted public links to public sector organisations, the voluntary sector umbrella organisation 'the Network' and a group called 'Manchester Enterprises'. It took years for members of The Network to get access to the Manchester Partnership. When they did, the Manchester Partnership opened wide some of its doors and focused on the public image of the Partnership, whilst protecting the rights of its private companies by obscuring the relationships further.

Most of the descriptions in this chapter come from my experiences of setting up the Moss Side Forum, working with Robert in Rusholme and as a "Strategy Leader" for the Network. The experiences stretch over 3 years of working as a community development worker, attending countless Forum meetings, conferences, strategy groups, ward co-ordination meetings, policy writing and implementing, organising community events that I attended and so forth. My own participation began in 2004 as a community development worker for a forum (RFF) in the neighbouring ward to Moss Side, Rusholme. RFF was led by ex-Labour councillor Robert (who I briefly described in the previous chapter). I made this 'link' through a neighbour and friend who worked for RFF after finishing her PhD in anthropology. When she left to move abroad,

Robert asked if there was anyone she knew who could fill the role and so she introduced me to Robert. This passing on of jobs through word of mouth was very common in the voluntary sector. Normally, Robert hated the idea of an ‘old-boys-network’. However, he saw the ‘community sector’ as a separate issue, as it was ‘for the good of the community’. He believed that when something was ‘for the good of the community’ such networks were acceptable. The Rusholme Forum was at that time the representation of ‘community’ during consultations regarding the development of Maine Road. The reason given to me at the time by the “regeneration team” (of Manchester City Council) for this group being used was that there was no Forum in Moss Side. I believed that RFF was not representative of the views of residents in Moss Side. As a result some colleagues and I set up the Moss Side Forum in the years that followed. And at the same time, the regeneration team developed the Maine Road Steering Group.

SCCN was an umbrella organization for four geographical forums, itself part of a wider network of organizations (see diagram above). The four Forums of SCCN were distinctly different in their methods of operation, access to resources and relationships to wider Regeneration structures. Each forum had a particular issue that they focused upon. Whilst in theory they were to act as geographical forums to represent all the voluntary sector organisations in their area, they were in the main issue led. MSCF (the community forum in Moss Side which is discussed further) focused on “BME issues”<sup>21</sup>, Whalley range focused upon “youth issues”, Hulme Residents Association (HRA) were concerned with housing-stock transfer and (Rusholme and Fallowfield Forum) RFF focused on health, with funding coming from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) part of the National Health Service. Not surprisingly, these issues reflected the concerns of the professionals involved with the forums (which is distinct from the ‘communities’ of the area). RFF was comprised mainly of older post-retirement members, with a Christian philanthropist background involving various churches in the area. WRFF had mainly professionals involved, including some from the voluntary sector and indeed an academic

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<sup>21</sup> BME – Black Minority ethnic – the thesis discusses this further in the thesis



who taught voluntary sector courses at the Metropolitan University. HRA emerged during the height of Regeneration in Hulme which is a ward neighbouring Moss Side. During the regeneration of Hulme large areas were demolished in a way that is common for the ‘clearance’ method of regeneration. People were offered temporary housing elsewhere in the city with the claimed aim of re-housing in Hulme once the development was completed. Very few of these original residents currently reside in Hulme. Whilst the Council can state that it did not forcibly remove anyone from Hulme due to regeneration, the displacement of residents certainly had this effect. HRA’s historical opposition to the regeneration in Hulme meant it was always seen as a notorious joke amongst other voluntary sector groups, being activist-led it was “not recognised” by Manchester City Council other than through its involvement with the umbrella organisation ‘Network’. MSCF comprised mainly of out of work and working class African Caribbean residents of Moss Side and voluntary sector organisations working mainly on so called ‘BME issues’ *Black and Minority Ethnic issues*.<sup>22</sup> I focus on the MSCF, due to the connection to field site and my direct involvement in establishing this group. Community forums serve a variety of functions in a transformed and transforming government. The chapter argues that they also provided legitimacy for planned changes through consultation. Furthermore, that they provided a regulated space of interaction, inculcating regeneration values such as ‘self-regulating’ governance by emphasis upon “participation, engagement and empowerment”. This was all done with the aim of creating “social cohesion”.

### **Gaining legitimacy: Unpacking the increasing ambiguity of power relationships.**

The process of being recognised as a legitimate ‘community organisation’ illustrates the balances of governing through regeneration policy. Community

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<sup>22</sup> When I first came across this term it was during a meeting when someone mentioned including the BME’s in a certain implementation of regeneration policy. Spoken it sounds a little like BAME. I thought this may be some ethnicity I had never heard about and so kept quiet and asked a colleague after the meeting what it meant. I realised that this was the legible ethnicity of so-called multicultural Manchester, the Black Minority Ethnic which could mean absolutely anyone non-white.

forums occupied a precarious position between ‘being legitimate’ and ‘being community’, making governmentality literature particularly useful to understand it (as I will discuss through the chapter). There was an increasing importance placed on the role of Forums within regeneration practices. MSCF was to bridge the gap between the traditional government structures of ‘the council’ and ‘the community’. The description of setting up MSCF that follows is with the aim of illustrating how community forums created a space in which freedom was regulated in the ways described by theorists such as Nikolas Rose (Rose 1999). SCCN’s forums, all distinct in characteristics, were codified organisations. They had written constitutions, minuted meetings, some were registered charities and others were corporations limited by guarantee, committees were elected and so forth. And yet, their stated aim was not only to represent ‘the community’ but also to *be* community. As such, the forum’s legitimacy was obtained through a balance of qualified ‘professional’ community development workers and actual residents, both considered to be part of ‘the community’ in need of regeneration. As a resident, a PhD student at the university, a leading member of MSCF, RFF, SCCN and also The Network, I had “many hats”. I would often be asked to clarify in meetings “which hat” I was wearing that day. Different voluntary sector groups often used my “many hats” to increase the combined agency of the group at meetings. This was particularly the case when involving the Manchester Partnership. Since my legitimacy came from different spheres, I was particularly useful in situations in which relationships were strained due to political complexities. One instance in September 2007 was regarding a development company that was commissioned to make more Academy Schools in Manchester. The Academy School in Moss Side was being heralded as a successful model to apply elsewhere in the city. The Academy School in Moss Side is an example of the increased use of public and private partnerships in Manchester as a result of the New Labour “any means necessary” pragmatic approach to government (as described in the first chapter but also see (Booth 2005, Boyle 2005, Carter 2000, Teisman and Klijn 2002)). Built by developers, to fulfill their legal obligation to spend a percentage of profit on social gain, and funded by a Christian charity, the school was not accountable to the Local Education Authority as was the case for other schools. MSCF had

been enquiring about local objections to the running methods of the school. Whilst the campaign gained a lot of local support from residents, city council workers, elected councillors and so forth, it was difficult to hold the Academy School accountable due to the ambiguity of the partnership. The school was considered as far from successful by parents, students, teachers, councillors, residents and Network workers. Handing out Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs which we will further consider in the next chapter) very regularly (which meant young people were criminalised for mis-behaving at school and could face imprisonment), many parents and more students had problems from the lack of understanding of students' social contexts. A member of MSCF desperately called me one morning. Devon and Marley were in a meeting with a private developer company from the Manchester Partnership and the meeting was going particularly badly. They were attending a course at the Metropolitan University regarding Black Identity and Education. The organisers of the course had agreed for students to be consulted by development companies about the Academy schools. Marley, infuriated at not being heard in the meeting, rang me from the toilet and asked me how soon I could get down to the meeting. I arrived, a little rushed, fifteen minutes later, having changed my clothes and cycled down. I apologised for being late and acted as though I was supposed to be there, taking a seat (such 'consultations' are often 'invite only' and the conditions carefully controlled, as we shall see later in the chapter, but just to explain the secrecy here). I met Marley in 2004 at a music event in Moss side. Around 40 years old, he had a very deep voice, with a thick Jamaican accent, in which he was quite often speaking in rhymes. His teeth (not tooth, teeth) were gold; he had dreadlocks down to his knees, always wore incredible amounts of 'bling'<sup>23</sup> and liked to be referred to as 'the Prince'. People who did not know him (and many that did) interpreted his mannerisms as aggressive and the way he spoke to people as threatening. He was the sort of person, who if he rang you and ask you how soon you could be somewhere, you got there. He was also incredibly passionate about the need for more suitable educational methods for young Black kids, particularly boys, and also

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<sup>23</sup> Bling refers to rings, earrings, necklaces or any other very obvious jewellery designed to display wealth. Often platinum and diamonds – or of course, more usually fake versions.

the importance of finding new ways for such boys to conceptualise the causes of their emotions and anger about structural oppression.<sup>24</sup> I could sense his relief when I was speaking about the problems faced by people in Moss Side regarding the teaching methods at the Academy. He tried to contain himself while I was speaking but at one point, slamming the table with his fist, he shouted out, "yeah man, listen to T, she speaking truths like bullets straight at you". Groaning inwardly at my more assimilated knowledge of the interpretation of a reference to bullets and Marley's general manner as a representative of typical black male violence, I continued speaking in my 'regenerated' voice. The problem faced by people like Marley was that without the correct cultural capital to have a voice in dominant discourses their contributions were often bypassed (Bourdieu 1977). By my articulation of his feelings, Marley felt that his views were being heard. I did not want to disillusion him by telling him it would make no difference. I had already heard that the plans for the five new academies across Manchester had been given the go-ahead. Areas of land had already been allocated and schools in these areas were already earmarked for closure.

In all cases of 'partnership' work I came across in urban regeneration contexts, it was almost always the case that the private companies held most authoritative power: either through controlling funding, or through their dominance at meetings by appearing more professional. People working in the voluntary sector are often unfamiliar with the corporate settings of private enterprise. More often than not, in the many examples I can recall of Public/Private/Community partnership projects, such as the 'Spring into Health' scheme of 2007, groups from the private sector were treated as though their presence was of particular value and virtue. They did not have to be there, they could be out earning and yet they were donating. It was as though volunteers and members of the community had nothing better to do anyway, and besides, this was their civic duty. And the public sector generally made demands without offering finances to fulfill them. Towards the start of my

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<sup>24</sup> Some of the consequences of not being able to do this are considered in chapter 4 and chapter 7

involvement with RFF I attended meetings with Robert (mentioned in the first chapter and chair of the Rusholme Forum I worked for) whilst familiarising myself with the work I was to do. In the many varieties of traditional public sector situations, such as meetings in the Town Hall, Robert was totally comfortable and taught me a lot about working within the public sector. However, with regeneration transformations underfoot, he found himself increasingly lost in partnership meetings. For example working on an online-community calendar, which was funded by the ‘connected communities’ campaign from central government and implemented by Manchester Digital Development (public and private organisations and also ERDF<sup>25</sup> money from the EU). Robert and I attended meetings with high-up, power suit-clad businessmen giving power-point presentations, advertising the ready made project which they wanted our ‘community’ to endorse. Robert would try and interject his thoughts and would be politely sidestepped and the meeting would continue. Robert increasingly asked me to attend such meetings without him. Whilst I began to attend most meetings on my own anyway due to the ‘many hats’ I wore, Robert still attended meetings with MCC, but never with more complex partnership meetings where our role was more complex and ambiguous. However, such meetings have the aim of inculcating volunteers to encourage their entrepreneurial spirit. Another way in which this spirit was encouraged was the shift to bidding for funding. The Network received funding from various sources, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Manchester City Council, The National Lottery and from central government funding schemes such as ‘the 100 day Respect Challenge’. They were responsible for the distribution of these funds to the different voluntary organisations The Network represented. During 2005 funding changed from grant or aid based distribution (i.e. a fixed monthly or yearly amount) to a commission-based funding approach (organisations would have to bid against each other for funding for specific projects). This shift occurred across not only The Network but Manchester City Council and other national funding groups. The aim was to make receivers of funding ‘more entrepreneurial’ and

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<sup>25</sup> ERDF – The ERDF fund is European regional development funding. Although this funding allowed some autonomy from local governing structures, it was often still through local governing structures that this funding was unofficially given).

less dependant, encouraging “healthy competition”. It was not a covert or implicit aim as with many other hidden urban regeneration strategies, it was explicitly to get away from “dependency culture” to help “the community” get more “life skills” helping to build individual “social capital”.<sup>26</sup> Specific members of the network and actual employed development workers attended “strategy meetings”. Whilst it was not a stated policy, these members were the more ‘professional’ members i.e. those with some form of training and formal education. During the strategy meeting in which this shift was ‘agreed’ upon, it was pointed out that it would be us, the development workers, filling in the funding applications and so to move to this bid and commission based funding would do little other than create irregular and unreliable funding patterns and more work for us. And all agreed, even Wayne, Chair of Network. But the shift was beyond us and occurred despite resistance. Whilst individuals and organisations initially refused to put bids in, since their funding was then cut, they had little choice but to eventually adapt to the global trend towards entrepreneurialism. Jones and Evans (2006) describe how people working in regeneration tend to be highly reflexive of how to achieve their aims. Whilst some resistance is possible, it must be done with the awareness of possible repercussions, such as of cut funding. This move to bidding systems meant that this was even more the case. We had to invent imaginary projects every three months in order to get funding that would cover our basic running costs, juggling money between groups. I often found myself in the position of having to apologise to groups as funding could not be found and projects had to cease mid-way through. It also meant groups increasingly had to work to maintain personal relations with us in order to retain funding. Equally, we had to qualify to funders where the money was being spent, and as such, groups such as HRA who had lost favour with funders were often sidelined from funding streams. Quite often however, people working in The Network would not implement policies that they personally disagreed with. There was usually a ‘meeting after the meeting’ during which the workers who knew each other well would discuss the points of the meeting informally, over a cigarette (for the smokers),

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<sup>26</sup> The use of the term ‘social capital’ is frequent throughout regeneration. What this form of social capital refers to is limited to Robert Putnam’s (1995) view of social capital rather than Bourdieu’s (1987) approach.

in the car park. The importance of attending this informal meeting is revealed in that even the non-smokers would stand out with the smokers, sometimes (or rather often, given Manchester's weather) in the rain. We would chat and unintentionally arrive at a consensus about what we would ignore and what we would do. However, if a policy was being insisted upon by the Manchester Partnership, we found ourselves under increasing pressure to execute them. Many of the particular examples that we were forced to continue with were consequences of their relation to the Respect Agenda, which came from central government in 2005 (although it was officially launched in January 2006, Tony Blair (then PM of Britain) began talking about it in September 2005 which was also when we began implementing aspects of it in Manchester). The Respect Agenda focused in large, on New Labour's re-election campaign. It finally pointed the finger firmly at the target of so-called anti-social behaviour or ASB.<sup>27</sup> The Respect Agenda was awarded an action plan, task force and in areas of particular concern (such as Moss Side) there were even 'Respect Squads' all fighting ASB. Since the agenda was from central government, policies surrounding it could not be simply discarded by non-implementation. It manifested in a variety of changes in Manchester, from areas which became 'alcohol free zones' in which drinking alcohol (or being suspected of drinking alcohol) in public is a finable criminal offence, to a huge increase in 'stop and search' interventions by local police and using ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders) thus effectively criminalising the presence of young black men on the streets of Moss Side, which is further discussed in the next chapter. Most of these manifestations involved legalising a particular view of the social contract by means of controlling and transforming the conception and construction of what is considered 'public space'. This also transformed what was considered as an acceptable amount of policing. This construction of 'appropriate use' of public space is common in regeneration as Macleod illustrates in the clearing of beggars from Glasgow streets (MacLeod 2003). Many of these changes were unpopular amongst The Network workers. We were constantly told of the importance of implementing such policies. This was, after all, at the heart of

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<sup>27</sup> How this was identified and understood and attempts to 'fix' it will be explored in the next chapter

what regeneration was about – eradicating the anti-social and the achievement of the New Labour panacea, social cohesion. This was an initiative from central government via the Manchester Partnership and as such we had little resistive capability. This shows that whilst decentralisation of power from central government may be a common theme of neoliberal governance, this does not necessarily mean that central government has relinquished power. It seems more accurate to consider a central government that, whilst retaining its power, has increased the role of de-centralised concentrations of that power, such as the Manchester Partnership, to possess an increased function in carrying out the aims of central government with a ‘best value’<sup>28</sup> approach by utilising the ‘voluntary sector’.

**Retaining Legitimacy: The ambiguous position of ‘voluntary sector’ government’.**

At the time of my involvement (2004–2008) The Network was an organisation in disarray and seemed unequipped to take on the responsibilities of a retracting welfare state. It was difficult to imagine how this cultivation of self-help could be successful enough to replace welfarism. For an organisation receiving millions for the voluntary sector, the organisation was appallingly organised. Simple things, such as bills for the office that was hired in the city centre regularly went unpaid, and not due to lack of funds. Having grown from a small grass-roots organisation, I often felt like The Network (or rather Wayne) had bitten off more than they could chew, but the demand to fill the welfare gap meant higher expectations upon us. With a core team of five, all working under Wayne, there was always more work to be done than people capable of doing it. Funding applications were regularly late, conferences delayed, policies written in the last moments and so forth. Between 2004 and 2008 Wayne (chairman of The Network) had been removed from office twice whilst under investigation by Manchester City Council for missing funds. Actually, the money only appeared missing due to incompetence rather than actual theft. Wayne rarely allowed people to see the accounts of The Network. Prudence,

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<sup>28</sup> This is a common term utilised in regeneration policy, as for example the community engagement pamphlet above.



who was a development worker that I was particularly close to as a friend, described this as “one man and his empire”. This indeed was another familiar issue for The Network. Due to the ambiguous position of this emerging institution of governance, people were unwilling to relinquish the little authority they had gained; this meant that they were also unwilling to devolve work as this would reduce their role in The Network. Even when they were willing, there were not enough people to take it on. This need to retain a position became particularly apparent when, on trying to ‘leave the field’, I produced a community directory. This directory had all my contacts with different organisations. I had ‘signposts’ for where an individual resident could go for help on any particular issue that effected them. It meant that anyone could build these links themselves. I thought this was a great idea. It would mean that I could leave the field more easily, as people involved with MSCF and RFF could just go to the organisations themselves and not through me. I was therefore surprised by the hostility I received by other development workers. It was unusually difficult getting details from people I had worked with. For example, I might have a postcode missing, or not know an organisations web address to include in the directory. This may simply have been since those involved were busy, but I found people not wanting to give this knowledge out. People who would usually enquire how a project was going and offer assistance did not do so for the directory. Since contacts became a form of capital, giving mine out in a directory not only to fellow workers and so undermining the competition between them, but also to members of the public and so confusing further the roles of governor and governed, the directory was interpreted as challenges the legitimacy of their own roles. I in effect gave away some of their capital by removing their connection to this hub and so their legitimacy as ‘experts’. People in The Network who made their way from a position of being a ‘recognised member of the community’<sup>29</sup> to leading an organisation of their own, constantly felt that they were not considered equal to community development workers. And they were not treated equally. They would often be left out of meetings altogether when Wayne decided “we’ve just got too much to do”.

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<sup>29</sup> The conditions of this we will see in the next chapter

## **Governance without government?: Is “top down” giving way to “bottom up”?**

Regeneration literature often pays attention to following particular changes in schemes of governance (e.g. Mithran 2005). However I found that these changes were not as significant as they appear. They illustrate a change in marketing strategies rather than actual aims. Throughout the various ‘strategies’, ‘challenges’ and ‘tasks’ in particular rounds of regeneration I participated in across the city as well as in Moss Side, faces in meetings stayed pretty much the same, only with different capacities. This was made possible by the ‘many hats’ one worker could wear. These constant shifts in governing schemes and policies did make it difficult to keep track of who was accountable to whom. Any of the regenerators, be it a community development worker or a member of MCC regeneration team, had to spend significant amounts of time keeping up to date with changes by attending countless meetings. It was important to attend as many as possible to know where changes in funding were, which new ideas had gained importance such as NEETs (not in education employment or training)<sup>30</sup> and to keep up to date with constantly changing knowledge that would define a person as an expert. The shifts in departments and task forces were designed to make things appear dynamic and rapidly transforming rather than a particular change in the individuals involved or approaches taken. As Mace et al questions with regards to East Manchester (Mace, Hall, and Gallent 2007) why the national urban regeneration “unit” changed to a “task force”. They argue that there must be a rationale behind it and that a task force seems more proactive, that they are actually doing something and that a task force sounds more military and thus makes its purpose an urgent one (Mace, Hall, and Gallent 2007). This militarisation also supports the view of an “any means necessary” approach (as described in the previous chapter and by (Temple 2000)) to regenerating social cohesion in urban regeneration. But these changes in titles of strategies were less significant in actual practice since the individuals involved remained the same.

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<sup>30</sup> This group became a condition of securing funding. A project claiming to reach more NEETs got more funding and so forth.

Whilst the individuals remained the same, it was by no means a simple issue retaining positions of involvement. This was particularly evident in the conflicting relationships between government MCC workers and the development workers from The Network. Lisa Haikio (Haiko 2007) agrees with governance literature, which in the majority believes that ‘top down’ government is giving way to the ‘bottom up’ governance (e.g. Blanc and Beaumont 2005, Booth 2005, Stoker 1998) in which policy making has moved from government of society – to government through society. However, her example of sustainable development in Finland does illustrate the emerging tensions between traditional democratic institutions and new governing systems with regards to retaining/achieving legitimacy and authority, particularly how “actors negotiating multiple tensions draw on a repertoire of cultural resources and socially feasible discourses” (Haikio 2007:2150). The shift towards voluntary sector governance created a change in ‘who has the right to represent the community’ that complicated both representation and ‘community’. MSCF gained power from not only representing ‘the community’ but also by ‘being’ the community due to the large numbers of residents who attended. However, this was not simply an example of ‘top down’ giving way to ‘bottom up’ as much governance literature seems to celebrate (e.g. Stoker 1998, Stoker 1999). MSCF could easily be used to herald the success of new governance structures, governing through rather than of society (indeed in Manchester’s regeneration it often was)<sup>31</sup> however, it needed the authority of more traditional forms of democratic representation. To be recognised as a “Community Forum” that was legitimate, it was not enough to have many residents of ‘the community’. We also required “Local Councillor support”, “City Council” workers support, “Voluntary Sector” organizations. We had to carefully select topics and avoid the reputation of HRA who were ‘not recognised’ and most importantly we needed the support of members of the Regeneration Team of Manchester City Council. And yet, although authority of the Forum may have relied upon familiar government structures, MSCF also challenged that authority. Since the Forum was also ‘the community’ challenging legitimacy to represent, it was

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<sup>31</sup> For example, at the time SCCN was the only geographical network with 4 operating Forums and myself and a colleague went across to East Manchester which was also undergoing regeneration to help set up Forums there.

able to oppose traditional structures on a variety of issues. People involved with the traditional, and readily identifiable, fixed government structures were understandably reluctant to relinquish their responsibility and role to this confusing form of governance. As such, the relationships between individuals of both The Network and MCC shaped the success (or failure) of different Forums. Robert's experience as an ex-councillor and strong relationship with MCC meant RFF gained authority through those relationships, relying upon traditional authority sources. Whereas MSCF initially depended upon those links to gain support, it later gained authority through its ability to 'represent' and 'be' the community with large numbers present at meetings. For example, Moss Side's Ward Co-ordination meetings were designed for different governing institutes, from departments of MCC and The Network to ensure everyone worked together for 'the Vision'.<sup>32</sup> 'Ward co-ordination' was a sub-branch of the Regeneration team of MCC and as such MSCF's invitation to Ward Co-ordination was an indication of acceptance as a legitimate organisation; yet community representatives confirm the legitimacy of ward-co-ordination. Although my diagram above illustrates relationships between actors as equal, they were not. The 6 regeneration workers, often nicknamed the "regen team", held the most authority. Their attendance at a community meeting would ensure that the issue of the meeting was taken seriously and brought up in a variety of situations and therefore be taken seriously. As such their attendance was sought after. They were also more likely to attend meetings with issues that were particularly sensitive, when a restoration of previous authority may be required, as for example a meeting about 'pirate radios' as I explain further in chapter four.

It was even more difficult for traditional public sector workers to accept the emerging ambiguity of who was the governor and who was the governed. As Saward points out, those who do not feel they have to justify themselves or their actions do not have to make explicit their claims in representation (Saward 2006). Shifts in governing structures through regeneration strategies aimed to create (at least the appearance of) a situation in which 'the community'

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<sup>32</sup> The thesis considers this Vision throughout but particularly in chapter 6

transformed from the target to the means. Individuals targeted by regeneration policy had to understand their changing roles as governed citizens (also see Boyd 2006). As Nikolas Rose says, “To govern is to cut experience in certain ways” (Rose 1999 :31) and involvement with Forums was one means of doing that. My neighbours and friends transformed themselves for regeneration contexts such as MSCF meetings. This was done in a variety of ways and, as the next chapter explores, for a variety of reasons. Different accents were used, they wore different clothes. Things they never really thought about much one way or the other, or had normalised as part of their lived realities became transformed into issues of serious concern and so forth. MSCF meetings created a discipline serving to act as a “space of regulated freedom” (Rose 1999: 22). The more explicit reason for meetings would be an actual issue (be that education, radios, license changes, gun crime etc.). However, the disciplined space of regulated freedom taught those involved how to act “regenerated” by inculcating the values of regeneration; the regenerating quality of this was that they could then take these ideals into their more everyday spheres of social life. For most of my friends, other than having someone they were familiar with present (i.e. me), forum meetings seemed the usual alienating reified concept of “the council” described earlier in the chapter. And why wouldn’t it? Despite all the advertisements of urban regeneration, both in terms of campaign strategies and also in governance literature, the primary aim was for residents to be better ‘engaged’ and community development workers were to achieve the aims of ‘community engagement’ outlined above. I should add this that the MSCF no longer exists. When my involvement ended so did the forum. This illustrated to me particularly that the celebration in governance literature of forums may be explained by forums attracting attention during their popularity. Organisations often dissolved quickly and the turnaround was rapid. When I asked friends in Moss Side why they stopped going they said they saw little point after I left. Most of my friends living in Moss Side rarely experienced unfamiliar settings, staying mainly at home, friends’ houses, the supermarket and the local venues.<sup>33</sup> Attending Forum meetings meant entering unknown buildings, navigating

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<sup>33</sup> Staying in the familiarity of Moss Side is considered further in chapter four

peculiar codes, with a register to sign, people sitting around a table where only one person is supposed to talk at once, in a different manner to what they were used to, not aggressively and even then only once a Chair tells you – you can speak now. These were unfamiliar means of gaining authority. Friends came to me after meetings explaining how weird they found the experience. Yet they continued coming. They did not expect Forums to be familiar, they expected it to feel like ‘the council’, which it did. What seemed ‘alien’ was to be allowed into environments they had previously considered inaccessible.

### **Community consultations as a means of accountability.**

“Community Consultations” were another means by which the aims of “community engagement” were achieved, particularly making the previously reified concept of “the council” seem more accessible. Although, as I will argue, the actual impact from consultation processes upon government strategies was minimal, Community Consultations grew in importance considerably between 2000 and 2010 to become a job title in itself. They involve legal requirements with sets of conditions to qualify as a consultation. There are now numerous courses available to become an ‘expert’ in this field. I believe consultations offered a means to audit the performance of a community as citizens by measuring their views whilst also adding legitimacy to the shifts of government to governance described in this chapter, with the appearance of top-down giving way to bottom-up. Consultations provided the means for regeneration policy to appear “from the community, for the community and by the community”; which was a common way of describing a successful regenerative policy in practice. The similarity to the Gettysburg address by Abraham Lincoln “that government of the people, by the people, for the people....” is unmistakable. But more often in consultation events, “the community” on paper were actually the community development workers of The Network – a handful of colleagues and their contacts, such as myself. I often appeared transformed into a supposed “representative of the BME community”. When MSCF made a complaint to the regeneration team that their choice of the Maine Road Steering group as a point of contact for consultation was not appropriate as it was not representative of Moss Side residents. Moss Side residents were told that a “representative of the BME

community” had been present and the group was therefore representative. I questioned this further, asking who it had been since I was unaware of anyone in the group. The regeneration team member was embarrassed. They had taken the name Tanzima Rahman in the minutes as a defence of the otherwise all white group. This was not the first time this had happened, I have also appeared as a representative of the Muslim community in support of certain strategies, despite the fact that I was hardly a representative of practicing Muslims and I actually opposed the policy in question. Of all the surreal moments<sup>34</sup> of my involvement with regenerations ‘Community’ (streams of sanitized minutes, Chairs speaking, the vacuous language, the new ethnicity of BME with me as a representative and more) in contrast to the community (with a small c) I knew in Moss Side, the most surreal aspect was the conversion of general offhand statements being converted into ‘Community Issues’ and concerns. Someone mentioned to a councillor a fear of cycles. The councillor mentioned in one meeting that someone had to walk a different way through the park due to their fear of cyclists. By the next meeting ‘the cyclist problem in the park’ became an item on the agenda. And eventually, bikes were banned from the park in question and a city wide policy was written.<sup>35</sup> I gradually became acclimatised to community consultation events as stamps of approval for these seemingly arbitrary changes, but it was three years before the feeling of surreality wore off.<sup>36</sup> This artificiality was increased by people I knew suddenly taking the ‘community issue’ very seriously whereas they had never mentioned this pressing issue before the consultation. The methods used to get ‘community views’ at first astonished me – ‘Do you want to be safe?’ Yes or No – to find out if people want more surveillance cameras.<sup>37</sup> With over two-hundred attendees (most consultation events would be glad to have over ten “members of the community” present) the consultation event for “The Mancunian Agreement” took place in the Manchester G-Mex conference centre in March 2006. The Mancunian Agreement emerged from the central government strategy of The Respect Agenda and became part of Manchester’s

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<sup>34</sup> The qualities of ‘simulation’ are discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>35</sup> This is an example from Moss Side but there are many more like it.

<sup>36</sup> This is considered further in chapter 6

<sup>37</sup> From the Respect Challenge campaign in the REC park of Moss Side.

2015 community strategy vision. It was a “voluntary, but formal”<sup>38</sup> codified agreement defining “the essence of being Mancunian” and outlining “what individuals can do to achieve the 2015 vision” spanning across the whole of Manchester. The entire Manchester Partnership officially organised the event and indeed it was their publicity that was the most prominent on the day. However Network members had done most of the organisation.

There are many songs I can think of that could act as an anthem for Manchester. For example, the popular Mancunian song, ‘24 Hour Party People’ by the Happy Mondays.<sup>39</sup> The Mancunian agreement anthem of choice was St. Chrysostom’s Primary School’s melody with lyrics such as “there’s a rich culture, so everyone can gain”.

The anthem in its entirety:-

“Manchester! Manchester! Manchester!  
We are all different, deep down we’re still the same.  
There’s a rich culture, so everyone can gain.  
There’s a celebration in everything we do.  
There’s a friendly spirit that welcomes you!  
Manchester is a very good place  
It’s got fabulous people who put a smile on your face  
This is Manchester.  
This is our Manchester! Manchester! Manchester!  
Manchester!  
Manchester is exciting and fun.  
There’s good times everywhere, for everyone.  
This is Manchester.  
This is our Manchester Manchester! Manchester!  
Manchester!”

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<sup>38</sup> Effectively, forced upon those most in need of regenerating, those not in need of regenerating should have no problem with signing it anyway.

<sup>39</sup> A famous song associated heavily to Manchester from its Ecstasy (a popular drug in the UK) ‘Madchester’ times from the 1980’s to mid 1990’ when Manchester was famous for its music culture and particularly the Hacienda Nightclub, the popularity of which still attracts people to live in Manchester today.



We were expected to sing along to the anthem before lunch was served. The massive event was attended primarily by people from within ‘The Network’ and their families. Even though this was very early in my involvement with regeneration efforts, I recognised a lot of the faces from other events and meetings. Most people attended for the same reason I did – we felt obligated. It was part of the job to attend such events. The weather that day (as with most days in Manchester) was grey, slightly wet and cold. Yet as we approached the entrance to the G-mex, we were met by two Black drummers, dressed in mock leopard skin with stripes across their faces, wearing beads and headdresses, banging djembe drums.

The G-mex itself is an impressive building with huge glass doors. In the foyer were gigantic signs for the Manchester Partnership with slogans such as ‘What’s the plan?’ written on a background of cream with autumnal coloured leaves. After signing in, with our names, addresses, organisations, postcodes, and of course ethnicities, we entered the hall. On the floor was a large piece of paper and felt-tip pens with which we were asked to “tell us what you love about Our Manchester”. Sprawled across the floor, with a few children placed either side, was a young woman who I vaguely recognised as a TV soap star from Coronation Street which is produced in Manchester.<sup>40</sup> There were various workshops, discussion groups, videos to watch, etc. These all inculcated people with ‘the Vision’ of regeneration. Glossy images attacked the senses from all the walls. Huge posters from the high Gmex ceiling to the ground depicted perfect white teeth on faces of various ethnicities, sat amongst leafy trees and parks, picnics, football games, perfect parents and children, with slogans telling people ‘This is Our Manchester’. These images seek to replace understandings of what Manchester means with the Vision, hoping to create a self-fulfilling prophecy – you say it long enough and it becomes true. As though what exists outside the doors of the G-mex is unreal, the Vision is

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<sup>40</sup> Perhaps a more accurate television character about Manchester may have been Frank Gallagher from popular Channel 4 TV show *Shameless*, which depicts a drunken father-of-nine, benefits fraud practicing, ecstasy taking absent father. Shows are often about how the family gets away with some situation or another. Frank Gallagher often has monologues with himself describing the difficult situation of the ex-working classes and their alienation. Whilst he is a shameless scrounger, he is able to articulate the reasons why he is in the situation he is in.

real.<sup>41</sup> Upstairs at the G-mex was a conference-room full of urban regeneration organisations. Each had their stall, full of advertising devices; badges, magnets, pencils, pads of paper, mugs, bags, pens, stop smoking, start volunteering, stop eating, start working, stop being black start being beige (I admit that I added that last one but it follows from Gilroy's assertion that blackness poses a problem to unifying senses of 'we' in the UK (Gilroy 2002[1987])). The hidden messages of regeneration were everywhere; silently inculcating behind slogans, charms and glossy images.

Legitimacy is required for any government to succeed in its governance. People must be complicit in their governance and must have trust in the government to act in their best interests. Urban regeneration's consultation process is a new mechanism of producing legitimacy. Legitimacy has moved in recent years from a trust in bureaucracy and the bureaucratic process, to what Michael Power successfully described as the Audit Explosion, to trust in the audit (Power 1994). What occurs during the consultation process is a result of the question, 'who audits the auditors?' i.e. that if trust only lies in the *process* of audit, then how does one trust the auditors? The answer for the Labour government seems to be this mysterious all purpose political entity, 'the community'. Consultation events seek the views of 'the community' on particular issues, as though consultation events are for 'the community' to audit policies – a gigantic focus group if you like. The 'bottom up' process is often advocated by policy makers (and governance theorists) as the best way to achieve Giddens's panacea, social cohesion (as explored in the previous chapter). However, it is, in my view, the 'community' that is the target of being audited, not vice versa. Views are measured, resistances discovered, incorporated or quelled by being made illegible and illegitimate. The consultation process seeks to create an apparent situation in which 'the community' can express its discontent. By creating such legitimate means of expressing discontent, but carefully policing the conditions of this expression, other methods of communication become not only illegible but also illegitimate.

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<sup>41</sup> This is further explored in chapter 6

“As expected, feedback on the new community strategy was largely positive, endorsing the new vision”

“The vision has general support from all quarters and does not need substantive amendment”

Extracts from Network minutes on the outcomes of the event in 2007

During one workshop for the Mancunian agreement, legitimising this ‘voluntary but formal’ agreement, we were asked questions such as: “Do you want a happier neighbourhood”; “Do you want more opportunities”. We were given ‘post it’ pads to answer, “Yes” or “No”. This black and white question making is a common feature of consultation. Who would say, “No” to ‘happier streets’ (whatever that meant)? Only the ‘anti-social’ surely. It would not be made clear that ‘happier streets’ meant locking up alleys; not allowing drinking alcohol in the park; not being allowed music playing too loudly from shops; stopping car access to certain streets; more police stopping and searching young children and intimidating them, and so forth. The way the questions were made, and the limited scope for ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ responses meant that there was little means for complexities of opinions to be expressed. Some discussion did take place in workshops and some challenging questions were made from subversive individuals who saw the idea of having this agreement as an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) being placed on the whole of Manchester codifying the “essence of being Mancunian”. However these views were not legible in the consultation results. The questions demanded yes or no. The minutes stated, “As expected, feedback on the new community strategy was largely positive, endorsing the new vision”. Whilst it is clear that many of the actions considered ‘anti-social’ by policy makers can be understood as an objection to the structural position of inequality of the ‘perpetrators’ and the effects of global forces upon them (as we shall see further in the thesis) it is easier to dismiss this defense by saying – ‘Well if they had a problem with the Mancunian Agreement (for example) why didn’t they express it in any of the many places that have been created for voicing such objections?’ The more legitimate places there are to voice objections, the more illegitimate objections

made outside these spaces become. By creating these spaces of objection and carefully controlling their conditions, the more the legitimacy of urban regeneration as a mechanism of government increases. Groups such as MSCF expressed resistance within consultation spheres but making them in a legitimate way endorsed the system that residents were trying to resist. And yet to do so in other ways, as the majority of residents did,<sup>42</sup> complaints were dismissed as illegitimate and labelled ‘anti-social’.

Even more effective than seeming to give ‘the community’ the power of auditors of policy, was to make it seem as though the policy had actually come *from* ‘the community’. On reading the ‘Mancunian Agreement’ it is quite clearly a manifestation of central government’s Respect Agenda that I described previously. However, the consultation process suggests the agreement has come ‘from the Manchester community’. The event not only advertised but also qualified as accountable ‘proof’ for the agreement as quintessentially Mancunian; home grown, endorsed by Coronation Street Stars<sup>43</sup> for “our Manchester”. It was suggested that Mancunians united with “friendly spirit” and in a “rich culture where everyone’s to gain,” were not only complicit in the agreement, but were the architects of it. The agreement proposed to be a celebration of “the essence of being Mancunian’ rather than a transformation of what this means. This not only obscures the relationship with state practices, but implies that there is *no one to be in a relationship with* – the policy is (as the regeneration saying goes) ‘from the community, for the community, by the community’. Local workers of The Network were disturbed by the very concept of the Mancunian agreement. There were alternative consultation events arranged to try and balance views out. However, these were done by individual workers who were still under pressure from ‘the Manchester Partnership’ to push the agreement through. Unsurprisingly, there was no funding available for such alternative consultation events in comparison to the tens of thousands spent on the G-mex event. The Network only really had the means to amend details, despite opinions such as, “It’s a Stalinist

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<sup>42</sup> The thesis considers this further in the thesis

<sup>43</sup> Coronation Street: a popular TV soap opera based in Manchester. Three of the popular character actors were present at the event.

nightmare,” being expressed and recorded. Despite such resistance it was still introduced through initiatives such as “100 days of respect challenge” that were part of the attempts to regenerate ‘the community’ in each area of Manchester, all in the name of ‘the Vision’. Since these issues are related to the Respect agenda of 2005, from central government, resistance by Network workers was not sufficient to stop the campaign.

Whenever it was expected that there would be challenges to implementing a new policy, more of urban regeneration’s celebrated new mechanisms of government were used; such as community forums or consultation events. Most consultation events did not go to the extravagance of the Mancunian agreement event at the G-mex. It was much more common to have a quiet community centre booked on a Thursday evening, with more workers than residents present, repeated every fortnight or month for the mandatory period of three months to ‘consult the community’. These events were also often at inconvenient times, such as in working hours or at school breaking times of 3.30pm, when parents were busy with children. It was also very common to see that the council were indifferent to the demands on people’s time, times by which complaints could be made would be frequently announced quietly and coincided with Christmas or school holiday times when people were busier than usual.<sup>44</sup> The residents who did attend were usually the same few faces seen at most events. They seemed keener on having some company and a cup of tea, with the feeling of being valued and having a chat with someone about their day-to-day matters, rather than making changes. These ‘good citizens’ were usually happy to agree with whatever we told them was going to be good ‘for the community’. And indeed, it would usually be only certain groups that were asked to represent ‘the community’ during in-depth consultation. For example, MSCF became a well known and significant ‘representative of the Moss Side Community’. I developed it alongside other Network workers due to RFF being the point of consultation for Maine Road developments. RFF is comprised mainly of middle class, older white men. It did not seem to be

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<sup>44</sup> Several people I knew planned to resist the gating of the alleys and this was the case for this issue and others

representative of the people that the development would most directly affect and the views did not correspond with the many residents I knew. As MSCF developed, the Regeneration Team along with Lowry Homes (the development company) created the ‘Maine Road Steering Group’ specifically for consulting on issues of Maine Road. Although MSCF had a representative in this group (me, although I had access before due to my involvement with RFF) MSCF was avoided as being “too difficult to work with”.<sup>45</sup> I was asked to relay information to the rest of MSCF (by this point MSCF had well over 50 members). So, the controlled conditions of consultation are also achieved by determining who counts as ‘community’. The Mancunian Agreement, on the other hand, went heavily against the existing consensus amongst voluntary sector workers *and* ‘the community’. It was particularly difficult to convince people to join the Mancunian Agreement. But the claim remained – this is, “from the community, for the community, by the community”. It is as though the rules, the game, the referee, the terrain and the decision to play, are all from the ‘community’. As though there are no outside relationships affecting this. These situations of apparent ‘self-governance’ are what so much current governance literature celebrates. However, it seems to me those celebrating this fail to see that the appearance of “bottom up” often requires a lot of “top down” management.

The theoretical framework of governmentality (in Rose’s Foucauldian sense) helps to describe the relationships between the urban regenerators of Moss Side. I have chosen governmentality over the more recently developed concept of governance that often accompanies the policies of urban regeneration. Governmentality was a concept developed by Foucault in his Collège de France lectures between 1978 and 1979 (Gordon 1991).<sup>46</sup> As Lemke (Lemke 2002) explains, governmentality offers a link between Foucault’s work on the genealogy of ‘the state’ and historical development of political rationalities such as that in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977) and the genealogy of ‘the

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<sup>45</sup> Regeneration Team member

<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, my French is minimal and so the audiotapes (currently the only available format) of these lectures are inaccessible to me. As such, I rely upon accounts of governmentality from authors such as Burchell, Dean, Gordon, Lemke, Osborne and of course Rose.

subject' such as that of History of sexuality (Foucault 1979). Regeneration policy targets the relationship between the state and individual subjectivity. The description of the growth and use of the 'voluntary' sector in the politics of urban regeneration offers a means to explore this link ethnographically.

### **Welfarism to Community?**

The British Urban regeneration policies of the 1990s and early 2000s had a strong emphasis upon making 'the community' less reliant upon the state. This was described to be for 'achieving social cohesion', 'empowering communities', making the community 'happy, healthier and wealthier' and so forth. Whatever else lay behind these slogans, a basic message was clear -- learn to look after yourselves. A huge amount of governance literature promotes this policy. For example Turner-Lee and Pinkett advise that communities (and those governing them) should consider the 'assets' of each individual member of the community, who can then offer their services (free of charge) rather than to consider what is lacking (Turner-Lee and Pinkett 2001). Burchell's comparison of 'old' and 'new' liberalism offers an explanation of this move towards what Donzelot described as the 'automization' of society in 'the face of exclusion' (Burchell 1996). Under Margaret Thatcher's version of neoliberal philosophy, society was seen to be an 'artificially'<sup>47</sup> produced result of state involvement in peoples lives (see Burchell 1996). This view led to Thatcher's famous claim (as described in the previous chapter) that society does not ('really') exist. Within this outlook, what does exist then is a costly obstacle to liberalism; costly to maintain (such as welfare) and that results in the growth of the state. On the other side of the Atlantic there was a related but rather different approach, Cruikshank's analysis of governance in California illustrates the contradictory way in which taking care of yourself transformed from being a 'private' matter to an issue of social responsibility, which becomes a matter for the state to ensure (Cruikshank 1996).<sup>48</sup> This becomes the interesting challenge for liberals (old and new): within this view

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<sup>47</sup> Of course this is not to say that I see such definitions between what is 'natural' and 'artificial' -- only that this is the perception within neoliberal ideology.

<sup>48</sup> The following chapter continues to illustrate a similar situation of 'social inoculation', understood as an individuals responsibility.

individuals must learn to take care of themselves and not be a burden to the state and also learn what 'assets' they can offer to the community, so that the state may 'roll back' or retract, in order for us (as citizens) to experience what Etzioni claims is the 'common' good (Etzioni 2004). However, according to Etzioni, in order for individuals to learn this, the state must increasingly intervene in peoples' lives, increasing government techniques to do so. This results in the growth and development of state apparatus to seemingly reduce the state. This chapter examined an example of this process by exploring the use of the voluntary sector in developing urban regeneration policies in Manchester. While the governance literature carrying out research on these issues has a number of interesting points to make, the research techniques used have not been ethnographic, which has made them of limited use in my analysis of Moss Side's regeneration. Whilst articles such as Blanc and Beaumont's (Blanc and Beaumont 2005) criticize themselves for not engaging with actual residents, restricting their definition of 'local actors' to those working in regeneration (local councillors, housing associations and senior planning officers) most of these studies that in effect promote the concept of urban regeneration that is being implemented in Manchester do not describe the everyday experiences of people who are the objects of these policies. The lack of an ethnographic approach has meant that their work has been characterized by short durations of study, limited face-to-face contact and researchers focusing mostly on what I described in this chapter as 'spaces of regulated freedom' such as the community forum rather than involving themselves with people outside regeneration contexts. Obviously, non-ethnographic research that is particularly focused on looking at the effects of regeneration does not engage with people who are not directly interested by regeneration but who are nonetheless affected by it. For all these reasons, the ethnographic approach that I am taking in this thesis can add something to the existing literature on urban regeneration policies and techniques. Individual policies or particular techniques for implementing new governance are considered in a range of articles, including Fernback's, who considers how information communication technology can be considered as both a measure of and a means to increase community empowerment (Fernback 2005). While that might be useful for those trying to develop better urban regeneration policy implementation, that



approach does not add a great deal to an understanding of the wider political and social context that is at the heart of my interest in the research. Such studies also do not critically assess the political ideals behind concepts as ‘community engagement’. Whilst theorists such as Boyle (Boyle 2005) add historical background to the development of emerging governance concepts and organisation such as “the community sector”, almost all the recent governance literature is not aimed at intellectually assessing such concepts, but instead begins from the position that there is a social problem (which itself is often unclear and left implicit as I will further discuss in the thesis), and that the ‘solution’ lies with the community of individuals at fault. In short, the vast majority of this literature is policy-orientated and descriptive rather than analytical. Inevitably this means that the literature will reflect and reinforce, rather than critically assess the concepts upon which the policies rely. In that context a reified conception of ‘community’ emerges as both the solution and problem to achieving ‘social cohesion’ and a self-regulating society. This notion of self-regulation is key to the idea of a transition from government (implicitly from above) to governance (implicitly a form of self regulation). These apparently self-evident transitions turn out to be rather less self-evident when examined a little more closely. In that respect, I agree with Gordon’s now rather old argument, that government is better understood as an activity not an institute (Gordon 1991); and using Foucault rather differently from the policy-oriented research, government can be seen as an activity undertaken by a wide means of capillary institutions and existing in shifting relations between ranges of disciplinary techniques followed by individuals who are self-regulating in the conditions of their own freedom or otherwise (Rose and Miller 1992). The values of government are inculcated through these techniques (Rose 1999). Policy-orientated contemporary governance research does not focus on these techniques of power; that research occupies a particular position between governor and governed, and is inevitably political as a result. This position is explicit rather than implicit for some governance theorists, for example Frank Field (who is also a Labour MP); his discussion upon the politics of behaviour amongst neighbours (Field 2003a) in his book entitled ‘Neighbours From Hell’ reads more as a political manifesto.

**And so...**

In this chapter I hoped to describe how regeneration policies were implemented and the complex relationships between groups involved in this implementation. I sought to question the appearance of top-down policies of government giving way to bottom-up approaches of governance by offering ethnographic detail about regeneration practices such as the 'Community Consultation'. I argued that the view of governance theorists that top-down has given way to bottom-up governance seems pre-emptive rather than actual and obscures the complex relations of legitimacy. In these shifting relations, something can be understood of a change in power, particularly regarding representation of the community as a form of legitimacy. Whilst new opportunities to voice objection arise, the capacity to oppose is limited and the implicit messages of regeneration were inculcated in spaces of regulated freedom. Having argued that urban regeneration was a new mechanism of government, I now continue by considering how individuals underwent personal transformations and how transformation was enforced upon those for whom the inculcation in spaces of regulated freedom failed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Finding a place in The Vision – Four examples**

In this chapter I explore how individuals underwent a process of being ‘regenerated’ and how methods were developed to enforce this transformation. I argue that regeneration policies in Moss Side implicitly depended upon other discourses and I focus particularly upon race. Policies therefore implicitly reinforced these other scales. I utilise the concept of scales, rather than simply difference or variations. I argue that attitudes were measured, exacted and set in comparison to one another and placed on an implicit scale. The idea of scales is particularly useful, since individuals were expected to modify their behaviour to reach the state of being regenerated from non-regenerated. This scale was flexible, like the scale of citizenship described by Aiwa Ong (Ong 2005), Citizenship was also one of the various axis that the scale of regeneration depended upon and existed at the interstices’ of. And individuals could (and according to regeneration policy should) transform themselves by moving along the scale to become more regenerated. This scale was measured by a variety of means (which the chapter considers) and policed by new methods such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order. I also hope to show that the negotiation of the scale was far from straightforward and through the four examples at the end of the chapter, I illustrate how individuals negotiate this. As the previous chapter explained, new governance techniques increasingly created ambiguous lines of governed/governor or in this instance regenerated/regenerator. Although involved with regenerating others, the four examples describe how individuals negotiated their own identity to become regenerated.

### **Transforming Moss Siders and the scales of regeneration.**

Urban regeneration was not just about selling property. Nor was it simply leading ex-industrial/de-industrialised cities to new industry.<sup>49</sup> Urban regeneration in Moss Side sold a lifestyle, a particular cosmopolitan image of a lifestyle – to the so called “creative classes” (Florida 2002, Pratt 2009). Although I am more inclined to agree with Maruksen’s criticism, that Florida’s ‘new class’ has no particular group identity (Markusen 2006). And with Peck who problematises Florida’s argument, saying that it does not offer more insight into an emergent group once taking into account increased qualification attainment (Peck 2005). However, a particular cosmopolitan image of lifestyle was being marketed by regeneration strategies. This was helped along significantly by private sector (particularly developers such as Lowry Homes) place imaging or remarketing. And as Young et al point out describing Manchester city centre, it is a new, young, white, professional, middle class, urban elite, upwardly mobile place that is the desired result of urban regeneration policy and practice i.e. the fulfillment of the regeneration Vision. “By binding individuals into shared norms and values around, for example, city-centre lifestyles, but which also pathologise undeserving ‘others’” (Young, Diep, and Drabble 2006:19). As such, the diverse group of people living in Moss Side, placed themselves and were placed at different positions on this scale of regeneration – some as pathologies in need of regeneration and others less in need of regeneration. This scale includes race, law abiding citizenship, cosmopolitanism and so forth. It is an amalgam, existing at the interstices of various other socially accepted value scales. For example a Somali young man will exist at a different point to a ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Generation’<sup>50</sup> West Indian; one was *yet to acquire full status* whereas the other had *lost their rights* (see also Aiwa Ong’s description of South-East Asian differentiation between citizenship (Ong 2005)). This scale of regeneration was in the main part left implicit. Although the implied opposite of regenerated would be ‘degenerate’ this was never openly stated. However, policy targeted the prohibition of certain activities and

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<sup>49</sup> As described in the background chapter

<sup>50</sup> I prefer not to use the term ‘2<sup>nd</sup> generation’ due to biosocial implications.

supported others. This set up a clear indication of the intentions of urban regeneration. Means to measure the scale were developed. For example, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation was derived to identify the areas of the UK that were the most deprived (ODPM 2000). In the index, Moss Side was deemed to be in the top 5% of Britain's most deprived areas. Legibility is essential for governing structures to be able to 'see' and therefore to control aspects of social life (Scott 1998) however, how material deprivation is then equated to social deprivation is left unclear. And the implicit moral conflation of material deprivation to social depravity is left unsaid. For example, one way deprivation was measured by the IMD was whether an area had a supermarket or not. Although Moss Side had no supermarket (although there was a large supermarket ASDA in neighbouring Hulme) there were many Asian, Somali and Caribbean grocery shops offering high quality fresh fruit, veg, halal meat and so forth, for very cheap prices. There were also "pound shops"<sup>51</sup> for household goods. And so, the conceptual conflation made by the IMD, i.e. that a lack of supermarkets means a lack of goods and furthermore, that the lack of a particular good means that the activity that the good is designed for is also not done, is inaccurate.

The use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) offers a much clearer indication of the usually implicit scale of regeneration. The relationship between ASBOs and the aim of urban regeneration strategy is clear from the Home Office statement explaining that "Anti-social behaviour doesn't just make life unpleasant. It holds back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and creates an environment where more serious crime can take hold" (HomeOffice 2009). Tony Blair first introduced the ASBO in 1998 under the Crime and Disorder Act. Since that time it has been strengthened by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act in 2003. Whilst ASBOs are a civil order issued by magistrate courts, breach of the conditions becomes a criminal offence. Each ASBO is personalised to the 'anti-social' person and conditions are negative prohibitions, not positive ones; so you may not walk down a particular street

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<sup>51</sup> Shops where all items cost £1, where most people buy detergents, shampoos, dishcloths, clothes pegs, buckets or any other household item they need

rather than you must walk down another. They have a two-year minimum and no maximum. When breached, ASBOs can result in custodial sentences of upto 5 years (see also Bruney 2002, Flint and Nixon 2006, Squires 2009). Of course, what is anti-social depends upon who is determining the social, what is contributing to the set of practices that are classed as the norm. Such points may be obvious in anthropological theory, however they become obscured in this very unusual legality of the ASBO. ASBOs have been given for diverse reasons, such as noisy sex (BBCNews 2009) to a suicidal woman prohibiting her from standing on bridges, car parks and so forth (Flint and Nixon 2006:943). Ideas of civility become codified in the enforcement of one set of values over others.<sup>52</sup> In addition to ASBOs and ABCs (Agreed Behaviour Contracts) the Respect Agenda (described in the previous chapter) saw the increased use of “Stop and Search” as a method to “facilitate a cultural shift” ((HomeOffice 2003), p. 6) in order to “bring back a proper sense of respect” into British society (Blair 2005). This was based upon the “active promotion of civility” (Flint and Nixon 2006:939). With Stop and Search, there is no need for a warrant, simply fitting a ‘criminal profile’ or ‘acting suspiciously’ allows the Police and Community Support Officers to stop a person and physically search them. A person’s car can be searched without a warrant and without that person being there. Whilst the civil enforcer is supposed to have a particular reason, since the broad condition of ‘acting suspiciously’ is justification, stop and search was increasingly used in Moss Side as a method of intimidation and relied upon racial profiling.

Most young people I knew in Moss Side paid little heed to ASBOs as a form of control. The only relevance was as an honour; your first time in court, your first (criminal) record etc. I have known young Black kids get ASBOs that made it illegal to walk on particular streets, despite family members living there and it being a place where they often reside. Other ASBOs prevented particular people from speaking to one another, prevented individuals entering certain shops, not allowing them anywhere near the school in Moss Side (after his own

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<sup>52</sup> Chapter six considers the ideals of ‘the Vision’ as an urban utopia (and therefore civil) further.

expulsion from the school), banned wearing hooded tops or hats in public places and even prohibited standing in a group of more than three at any time on any street. There were many other such seemingly arbitrary rules. In this way a particular view of 'the social' and the 'anti-social' became codified and enforced. These were of course hard to enforce in practise. One boy I knew, 15 years old, had broken his ASBO by entering Moss Side. He was caught by a 'civil enforcer'. The boy did not know where the official boundary to Moss Side started, and had presumed it was Lloyd street south and so went to a shop that was actually officially in Moss Side, even if it was still Rusholme in local conceptions. The young people I knew found Stop and Searches far more intimidating. The use of Stop and Search in Moss Side went up dramatically in 2005. This may have been due to the Respect Agenda of central government (see previous chapter) but the dramatic increase in policing was interpreted locally as 'cleaning Moss Side up' to bring Moss Side into the regeneration vision for the benefit of attracting new residents. People in Moss Side were used to relying on one another for safety as the police rarely entered the area. This was clear to me as soon as I moved into Moss Side before I was involved with any gangs. A man was attempting to force entry into my home, trying to peer in through the windows at me. The man was clearly under the influence of a drug with similar effects of Crack or PCP (angel dust). He was trying to force my front door and was shouting as he peered through the window at me. At the time without the gangs for support, I rang the police. Their first question was whether the person was black or not, I had already given them a full description of the person's clothes etc and no, he was not Black. It was 45 minutes before a car came. I went outside. I did not know that before I had rung the police, my neighbors had already seen what was happening and people had sent their sons out to stop the man from getting into the house. Knowing the area better than I did at the time, my neighbors knew there would be little point in calling the police in such situations, that it was a matter for 'the community' or the social group referring to themselves as community. Eventually when the police arrived I opened the door. Old Mr Khan from the shop across the road and several of my neighbours were on the street. They had all seen what was happening and had got rid of the man themselves before the police had arrived. Mr Khan (who has now sadly passed away) had sent for his sons to come and

stand by my door to make sure the man did not come back. When I emerged from the house and seeing that I was scared, he said to me “What were you afraid of? Are you not our daughter?” My neighbours were used to relying upon one another, not the police. During the “Spotlight on Moss Side” (a particular regeneration campaign from 2006 to 2010) police presence was much more common, on horses, on foot, in patrol cars, bikes and numerous helicopters. Various illegal operations that were accepted as part and parcel of living in Moss Side were shut down, police raids occurred daily, there was closing of whole streets and Stop and Searches also went up dramatically. This resulted initially in practises becoming less open. Ingenious means of getting around problems developed; such as fire crackers marking the time to go to a prior arranged location to pick up drugs, or people being more subtle. For example, the local Ice-cream (and drugs) van driver was no longer as public in his activities. He stopped doing his rounds in the darkness of 10pm in the middle of winter anymore when it seemed inconceivable that the ‘Popeye the sailor man’ tune from the van indicated to children that it is time to cool down with an ice cream. This public illegality has almost totally ceased now.<sup>53</sup> Although local pubs continued to sell cannabis and ecstasy it was done with much more caution. Previously if a stranger had missed the Ice-cream van, they could go to the pub, ask for “a double gin and tonic and an ounce of weed” and without knowing anyone, would be served. The service continued, but only to people known in the area. Certainly my own knowledge of the Ice-cream and drugs van came when I was new to Moss Side in the summer of 2003. I simply asked for an Ice-cream and was repeatedly asked, “yeah, and what do you want with it” I replied nothing, no chocolate flake, no sprinkles just the ice cream, a little more wearily: “yeah... but what do you want in your cone?” “Err nothing.” “You just want an ice cream?” “Err yes.” And then a rather surprised “Oh right sure no problem, I thought you wanted some drugs.”

Stop and Search infuriated the young gang members I knew, due in particular to the invasion of personal space and physical contact. The actual consequence of being caught with drugs or weapons was less inconvenient than the actual

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<sup>53</sup> Further descriptions are in the following chapter.



search itself. And for younger people, Stop and Search can be terrifying. A son of a friend, not involved in any activities associated to gangs, was stopped and searched on the street in 2007. Myles is generally well-mannered; probably since Kashia was a fierce mother who always demanded to know the exact purpose her sons (she has 3) had for going out. She was not naïve to the area, having grown up in Moss Side herself. She would rather let the boys out but know what they were doing then have them force their way out “disrespect” her and begin the, at times dizzyingly, rapid involvement with ‘hard’ criminality.<sup>54</sup> All three of her boys were very respectful of their mother. The eldest at 19 was involved in some gang activities, but only for a few economic activities and ‘soft’ criminality, which Kashia knew about and accepted. Myles came home to say he was petrified after being stopped by the police, as he did not know what he had done. At 13 years old, he went out to get some fried chicken and chips at 11pm on a Saturday night from a local take-away. Whilst a boy of this age being out may not be part of the urban regeneration vision and so considered a challenge to it, this is not particularly unusual behaviour for someone his age in this area. The probable causes for why authorities may consider a young boy out at night are justified as for his own safety. His mother knew he was out with his friend for the purpose of going to the chicken shop, which was very near his house. His older brother was also out somewhere in the near area. But the reason Kashia felt able to let her son out at 11pm to go to the chicken was because she knew most people in the area. People out in that area of Moss Side at that time knew Myles as a member of the community. For many residents of Moss Side who were known to one another, there was enough of the politicised ‘social cohesion’ (discussed in the first chapter) in Moss Side to allow Myles safe passage to the chicken shop at 11pm. But the presence of the boys was unacceptable to officers of British law, who presumed they must be involved in some ‘anti-social’ or ‘anti-vision’ (and so, in with the new legality of ASBOS also illegal) activity. Myles knew more about Stop and Searches than most young boys in the area. He asked the officers for their police identity numbers and what exactly what he had been stopped for and also demanded the paperwork for the stop explaining exactly

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<sup>54</sup> There was a general acceptance in Moss Side of ‘lesser forms’ of criminality.

what they had done that seemed suspicious. Whilst he insisted to me that he asked all this very politely, I have no doubt he will have done this in an aggressive or “taking the piss” (making fun of someone) manner, as this is how he would usually respond when threatened or in moments of fear. He was told the Stop and Search was due to the suspicion of concealing a dangerous weapon. Myles had never carried a weapon. The situation left him afraid and that fear quickly turned to anger. The success of Stop and Searches, other than to cause terror, anger and then resentment in young Black men, is debatable, particularly since people involved in gang activities claimed that officers were too worried about stopping their members who were known to the police for carrying drugs or weapons in fear of the repercussions for the officers. Kashia’s own fears came from whether the states Social Services department would get involved. Kashia has previously been on ‘the register’<sup>55</sup> due to the father of her middle son’s violence towards her. She once rang for an ambulance after she was beaten up, which then required the involvement of the police and Social Services since she had been stabbed. Whilst the partner did not get a criminal conviction due to Kashia not pressing charges, the involvement of Social Services meant that her children were put on the ‘at risk’ register. The form of control and policing that comes from the states Social Services act as a constant fear for residents such as Kashia. The involvement of Social Services was always associated locally to ‘child snatchers’. This often prevented people seeking the states help due to the fear of having children taken away. It also meant that threatening people with the involvement of Social Services was treated as a serious threat. To use it may mean ostracizing yourself from the rest of the social group. It breaks not only the ‘not grassing up’<sup>56</sup> code of ethics, preventing informing on activities, but to the worst authorities: Social Services.

Whilst ASBOs are a clear indication of the scale I describe, most of the time, such enforcement was not needed. The inculcation of message through new governing structures described in the previous chapter, meant regeneration was

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<sup>55</sup> ‘the register’ is the local description for the Social Services register for vulnerable adults or young people.

<sup>56</sup> A grass is someone who informs the authorities of illegal/not-allowed activities

highly successful in transforming individuals. The subtlety of this transformation means the best way to demonstrate it is through four detailed examples of individuals who underwent the process. I knew these individuals in a variety of different contexts over a number of years. As such, the changes in them that I believe are a result of participation with urban regeneration can become clear.

#### **4 reflexive responses to the scales of regeneration**

##### **Prudence**

When I first wrote the previous chapter, I included a whole section on different meetings and events I participated in. I had evaluated them in terms of ‘social gain’. I detailed many of the difficulties I faced setting up the MSCF. I needed to mention all the running around I did, getting leaflets printed, doing funding applications, advertising events to people, organising old peoples events in which some individuals had not left the confines of their council allocated ‘homes’ in the last five years, youth trips out of the city in which many of the kids had never been outside the city before, DJ workshops coaxing kids into education programmes to get basic qualifications, health events, sorting physical fights out in meetings and political battles amongst members and more. I wanted to include how South Central Community Network was the first area to have four working geographical forums and that as a result of my work we went all over the city setting up similar forums. In addition to providing a very useful guide to running community forums, I also wanted a pat on the back for all this work I had done to make a great representative Community Forum, I wanted to show that I had done my bit. And this sentiment of self-reliance, self-help, ‘doing my bit for the community’ (as described in the previous chapter) that regeneration strategy relies upon. There were lots of times when I felt obliged, despite having lots of my own work to do, to help small voluntary sector groups or individuals involved with groups. It could be filling in a funding application, sorting out a dispute, taking an individual in need to the relevant organisation they wanted the services of, explaining letters they had received, it could be any number of tasks, big and small. Urban regeneration required the creation of (and endorsement of many

previous views) an idea of an ‘average citizen’ who realises their duties and obligations to others, for free.

I first met Prudence when she began working as a development worker for The Network. I worked closely with her and also saw her socially on a variety of occasions, we went to each other’s houses and she was one of the few people from my fieldwork who met my partner. From a working class background in North Manchester, Prudence 28, was someone who ‘made it good’ from her family. It took over a year of knowing her before she told me about her own background and the troubles she faced growing up. In work contexts she absolutely, always maintained the professionalism expected of a paid development worker. She engaged with the various roles of her job description and took the role seriously. We worked on a variety of projects and she was closely involved with the Moss Side Community Forum. To all intents and purposes she was a successful urban regenerator.

The complexity arises when knowing her own private views on the work she did, some of which would come out during ‘the meeting after the meeting’ as described in the previous chapter. In the privacy of the two of us she would happily expose her role as the cynical worker.

P: “It’s all bollocks really Tanya: No one gives a shit about all this. Why else is it we end up having to spend ages trying to get people to turn up?”

T: “So why do you still do it?”

P: “Why else? It pays.”

T: “Yeah, but not particularly well”.

P: “I know, but it’s better than the other work I’ve been doing.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> From a semi-structured interview in 2007. Prudence was used to having semi-structured interviews at my home. We had built up a relationship outside both regeneration and my own research contexts. More often her scathing views of the activities of the network would focus around individual members inadequacies or ‘megalomania’ of ‘one man and his empire’.

However, the financial payment is not the only reason she works in the community sector. During my involvement in urban regeneration, I had a variety of very well paid jobs offered to me coaxing me away from my work. This is not uncommon and people are often referred to as ‘turn coats’ if they become too involved with Manchester City Council or a particular voluntary sector organisation that is closely involved with MCC with stable paid employment. Such opportunities were also available to Prudence. She was offered a permanent job with Trafford Council that she turned down, as she would be ‘stuck in an office not meeting anyone’. Involvement in the voluntary sector allowed Prudence a sense of recognition for the work she was doing, for her charitable nature. This is something that paid development workers had to balance to maintain their legitimacy. The ‘voluntary’ sector was presumed to be charitable and so work was to be free, yet to be more than simply another ‘representative of the community’ required some sort of financial payment. To express the need to be paid for work was to go against the ‘charitable’ ethos of the sector despite the fact that more often than not the people involved are doing work that would previously be the work of the state. As such Prudence would feel as though she had to do work that was beyond her paid job. We would often have to go to several meetings in a row, often lasting until 10pm. Whilst I had ulterior motives for my involvement (i.e. research for this thesis) she had no particular reason to subject herself to such tortures of boredom. Yet she often felt obliged not only to retain legitimacy by attending network meetings, but also to a variety of community organisation meetings of which she had no necessity to go. However attendance was considered an act of charity, helping negotiate the complexity of being a paid member of the voluntary sector.

Prudence was cynically participating in the reproduction of the state (Navaro-Yashin 2002) and although she was undergoing the process of regeneration in her own identity, she was also involved in regenerating others. The distinction between regenerator and regenerated became unclear, as individuals moved along the scale of regeneration.

## **Roman**

Before writing this section about ‘Roman’, unsure on how to represent this good friend without insulting him, I explained to him what my intention was for the chapter and asked how I should represent him. I asked him specifically about how to show his language, whether to keep his accent in or not. He wanted me to keep his accent in and wanted to add particular details about his life, such as his conversion to Christianity and a few points about his own involvement in urban regeneration. He also wanted a photograph of him in, but when I pointed out that this might cause problems as by his identification any of the children he works with or the Wyke lads (more details in the next chapter) may also be identified, he agreed it would be better not to, but thought that in that case I should add a description of him. Most of the representations I make of people in the thesis have been discussed with the persons involved, other than unfortunately Jamelia of the final chapter (which has been discussed with her family). However this particular section is more of an example of shared ethnography since much of what is included is through discussions with Roman. It is interesting that there are points about Roman's life that I would not include due to sensitivity towards him, that he is not bothered about me including. Other issues that I do not see as relevant, he wants to include. Whilst I have done a whole series of semi-structured interviews on a variety of issues with Roman, he came round to my home to discuss this section of the thesis (over numerous drinks on my part and smokes on his). This is a negotiation between the two of us in having this friend as a case study in what I hope is close to shared ethnography.

I heard Roman's voice before I met him. On moving to Rusholme in 2002, the only radio station I could pick up in my bathroom was the local pirate station of which Roman was a DJ. Roman is 6ft, Black, aged 47 (but claims to look nearer to 37). With short dreadlocks, that are usually very neat and in a middle parting, he has a gold tooth on his left carnivore. Usually in jeans, shirts and a jumper, trainers, a black leather jacket, he wears glasses with a gold frame. He is the first to admit his notoriously flirtatious habits and cheeky humour and enjoys pushing his luck in most situations, often flashing a subversive grin in conflicts. His usual demeanor is one of friendly politeness however, having

seen his anger in serious situations, I see where his previous reputation of hardened gangster comes from. Roman used to be a senior gang member. Starting as a runner (someone who takes small quantities of drugs and more often at the time information from one point to another) when he was 13, he worked his way through the ranks of an extremely notorious gang in the area (GCG) and became highly regarded. He participated in the riots of the 1980's and remembers the times afterwards when:-

“We ruled the streets, we walked up n down Great Western (a street in Moss Side) with guns here at me side, faces out, in front o de police, in me head me used to be thinking, what you gwan do man? This me street, me moss side, and me people – what you gwan do? N be staring at dem police man”.

For a period of time around the age of fourteen, Roman was taken into the care of the state through Social Services. This was after an incident in which Roman stole money from his father for a trip to Blackpool. He stole the money from the front room of the house, which he remembers was retained only for his father and his father's visitors. Roman, unlike many, had his father around. He remembers his father as a formidable character who he feared terribly. Roman urges fathers to take responsibility of their children. Despite his fathers presence he still got involved in gangs because “it was too dangerous not to”. However it was fear of his father that kept him alive all these years. He refused certain jobs for the fear of “me father belt wid a buckle made of metal harder than diamond”. Despite the fears of his father, he stole the money as he had his eye on the neighbour's daughter, who “kept so nice, man, her dad so fierce, no one dare touch her”<sup>58</sup> but he thought he would be the one to be able to reach her. Since she was going on the trip, he became desperate to go on the trip too. Whilst he had stolen some of the money, just enough for the trip, his sister, seeing that Roman had stolen some money, stole the rest of it while he was away on the trip. Roman returned home very late that day to the face the wrath of his father, who beat him very badly. Roman does not see a problem with this beating since he knew he would get it when he was stealing the money and

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<sup>58</sup> The thesis considers this gender hierarchy in the final chapter.

he still did it. He says that people are faced with violence everyday in Moss Side, and the fear of a beating from your parents is one of the only threats that have any effect on young people. He laughed when telling me how his cruel sister never owned up to the money she took even while he was getting a beating. Roman's father decided that he was getting into too much trouble. Whilst he was doing things on the street that his father knew about, to steal from him broke certain codes of ethics. As such, Roman's father wanted to teach Roman a lesson and called Social Services to take Roman away. Whilst Roman had already been in trouble with the police by this point, it was the threat of Social Services which worried him. At this time it was hard to find foster families for Black teenagers. Roman found himself fostered by a White family finding himself –

R: "Somewhere in middle of nowhere in Scotland! All dem green fields all over".

T: "In Scotland? Why did it have to be so far away?"

R: "Me think dem thinking, get him out, get him away an im see gang aint only way living life. Me dad thinking im teaching me big lesson man, sending me out. But me loved it [clicks fingers]. All dem fields, me never seen so much green, and the girls ..."

[Roman is smoking a joint in the kitchen]

T: "Yeah but what about your greens?" [nodding to the weed]

R: "Me was a boy den, you get me, me not miss it a bit in dem fields. But what me miss most was food, Maan! Dem White folk, just boil it up, say it cooked and food! Was bland man, bland..."

Roman has been a very dear friend to me. He has ensured my safety in a number of (in retrospect) very dangerous situations. In the early phases he used to tell me not to worry when I saw weapons around as "Caant no one touch you wid me". My friendship to him allowed me access to parts of gang life in Moss Side that I would never have considered safe without his friendship. We have been through many difficult situations and emotional strains together over the



last few years and his help has been immeasurable. I doubt this thesis could have been written without his help. We first met in 2004 and became friends particularly through going to music events together. This was just after the death of his 16-year-old nephew who had been shot. It was this bereavement that made Roman decide that he wanted to ‘go legit’. I remember being shocked at seeing him shaking, repeating over and over again, “in da kitchen man, they kill him in da kitchen at him aunty house man” as though this breach of gang ethics was more to bear than the actual death. Looking for answers, Roman turned to religion at this time. His conversion came when an international DJ that he respected had a conversation with him about the existence of god before the gig. During the gig the DJ said that there was someone present that needed saving and Roman stepped forward. After this he was baptised, which was a momentous occasion for him.

Roman also started to get interested in voluntary sector work and began his journey of being a legitimate ‘representative of the community’, visible in the regeneration effort. At the start of his involvement he turned up late and very often under heavy influence of intense cannabis use (“stoned”), shouted aggressively at meetings and once even had a physical fight with someone; he swore frequently, spoke in a very thick Jamaican accent, made suggestions which were considered inappropriate and did unusual acts such as collecting left over sandwiches and food from meetings. He had no idea about minutes, agendas, or any of the other various expectations on him in return for his involvement. He felt belittled by ‘the council’ (see previous chapter) at meetings and on a variety of occasions said to me he did not see the point in his involvement with urban regeneration. However he continued his participation as it gave him a sense of ‘being legit’ and participating in what he describes as “giving something back”. The involvement gave him access to sense of legitimate status and political recognition away from gangs.<sup>59</sup>

Whilst attending these meetings, he was still well known in the area amongst younger gang members. Everyone knew him and respected him. Since the

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<sup>59</sup> Chapter 4 considers this relationship further.

death of his nephew was the trigger to become involved with regeneration, his cease in involvement with gangs was accepted as a reaction to this death rather than a rejection of the gang<sup>60</sup> and he was still accepted in the circles he previously belonged to. As he got increasingly familiar with structures of regeneration and participating in the various means of ‘engagement’ for ‘the community’,<sup>61</sup> Roman began to change various aspects of his behaviour. Romans engagement with urban regeneration was not for access to material resources, but for an individual sense of self-improvement. He wanted to ‘clean up’ and ‘go legit’. He began carrying a folder with him that he had been given by one of the mothers of his six children. He began keeping minutes of meetings and leaflets in this folder. Although he never bothered to read any of this material, he began keeping them as markers of his participation. He began to attend increasing numbers of meetings with me and began to understand the processes of regeneration. He realised that when urban regenerators referred to ‘stake holders’ and ‘community guardians’ of the ‘BME community’ these terms applied to him. He wanted people to leave gang life behind and was happy to play this role in regeneration. His association with me from the inception of Moss Side Community Forum meant that he held a particular authority within the members of the Forum and my association to him gave me a particular authority with the gang members I began to grow a relationship with. I began to notice that along with the folder, Roman carried a pen in his leather jacket, and started to ensure he arrived to meetings on time, held back when he expressed his view until the chair asked him to speak and had begun to modify his language considerably to articulate his points. He also ceased to use his flirtatious charms in meetings as often as he used to. These changes occurred very gradually and were not only due to his involvement with urban regeneration structures, but also Romans general decision to change the way he was. He had made this decision before entering into urban regenerations structures. The participation with urban regeneration offered him a means to gain status in what he described as ‘being legit’. Roman became the chair of MSCF and also integral to the transformation of radio ‘from pirate to private’

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<sup>60</sup> This is a difficult negotiation as explored in the next chapter ‘living and staying in Moss Side’

<sup>61</sup> Regeneration phrases

(chapter 6). He began to see his importance in the urban regeneration process as a valued “member of the community”. He learnt the skills necessary to play this role: the language of regeneration, phrases such as “I am doing this to give back something to the community” or “I want to empower the next generation to make a different future” or “it takes a community to raise a child” – things I had never heard him say before. We received funding for DJ workshops encouraging local young people to use facilities in a community centre we were closely involved with. As Roman was so well known in the area due to his past gang membership and continuing fame as a successful local DJ, people who would not ordinarily attend such controlled social spheres came due to the nature of the activity being in keeping with their own taste group and the presence of Roman at the events. These events seemed more like everyday Moss Side, unlike canoeing on the park’s lake or other activities offered by Manchester City Councils youth team. For the young people, this was not considered as ‘the council’ or even MSCF, it was just Roman and T doing music in a hall. And in this way, through individual links, regeneration values reached further into the everyday lives of residents; though the emerging governance structures offered by the voluntary sector described in the previous chapter.

Roman became a legitimate ‘representative of the community’ in urban regeneration by appropriately modifying his behaviour and increasing his knowledge on urban regeneration structures. Once understanding the rules he began to learn to utilise his previous errors as forms of resistance (as a weapon from the weak (Scott 1985)). For example, before he understood the social etiquettes of formal regeneration structures, he suggested having patties<sup>62</sup> as catering for a meeting that other people in MSCF particularly from the city council, decided was inappropriate when inviting the Regen Team to a meeting (the importance of which was explored in the previous chapter). At a meeting around year later, with just 5 people present, the same Manchester City Council (MCC) representative who had scoffed at the idea of patties as catering, joked that he was expecting some sandwiches since it was a lunch time meeting.

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<sup>62</sup> A pastry or pie, often with curried chicken as a filling

Roman said in a thicker than usual Jamaican accent: “Yeah man, you got all de big budgets, me not getting no pay ‘ere, you want your catering, you gi’ your 2 pound and me find your catering”. We all gave him £2. He then went to the local patty shop and came back whilst the meeting had begun, with some patties in paper bags and a half smoked joint behind his ear. He put the patties in the middle of the table and said, “Boss, your catering arrived,” mocking a subservient attitude similar to what one may imagine a Black servant of history to have, particularly by calling him “boss”. He fully knew what message these carried patties in paper bags with the grease soaking through in the middle of the table (rather than the neat packaged sandwiches people were expecting) sent out and what he had done by asking people for the money for them. By this point he had gained authority as a “member of the community”. He was a recognised member of a variety of different organisations and had positions on many urban regeneration ‘engagement’ systems. He also knew people could not openly reject his behaviour. It would be seen as culturally insensitive or anti-multiculturalism. His position of authority as a recognised “member of the community” was above that of the City Council worker in this particular context<sup>63</sup> (although one can easily see this is a micro-situational increase in agency (Collins 2000b) and detrimental on a macro level). His resistance to “cashing in on the problems we facing here” became apparent closely after the ‘Jessie James incident’ that is discussed further in the chapter “Visions, simulations and green fences”. We were supposed to meet Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister of Britain who came to Moss Side following the ‘incident’. Roman rang me completely stoned (under the influence of cannabis) saying: “Tell him, me not getting up even fa Queen today T, if you going yourself” I was also very hung-over from the excesses of the previous night and replied that this was probably the best policy for me too.

Roman was happy that his involvement with urban regeneration had changed the way he was. He gained official recognition for the first time in his life and felt that his contribution to society was being valued. He knew that his

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<sup>63</sup> The meeting was about plans to hold a Respect action week

behaviour had been altered through the involvement. It was his desire for change that made him begin the involvement and as such he felt like he was making a change in the area and in himself. The effect that Roman had in the community would have happened with or without his involvement to regeneration. However this involvement made a number of the young men we worked with see that there were alternative means to getting status to the gangs that they participate in. Roman believed that the voluntary sector was a great thing, helping people feel like they were ‘giving something back to the community’. Whilst Roman became ‘legit’ through his involvement with urban regeneration, he was still regarded with the same respect from wider social situation. This is not the case for others involved with urban regeneration.

### **Gloria and Rian**

Whereas Roman rarely mentioned his past experiences of violence in urban regeneration settings, others recognised that to re-signify experiences in Moss Side as hardships and describe the affects of violence awarded them a position in regeneration practices. I in no way wish to imply that the experiences faced by Gloria and Rian were not heartfelt or genuine. However, the re-presentation and reinterpretation of these experiences as hardships in urban regeneration contexts had a political advantage. The main target for regeneration strategies in Moss Side was social cohesion. The biggest obstacle to social cohesion was gangs and specifically gun and knife crime. As such, individuals with experiences of that violence had a more direct relationship to regeneration strategies. Usually most people affected by tragedies of gang life in Moss Side were hardened to the grief and would not generally speak to one another about it. Going to funerals became a regular social event for me. And speaking to victims and perpetrators of various violent acts was an everyday act. I also witnessed several acts of violence. Furthermore, I lived within the pressures of constantly being aware that I may end up at the receiving end of violence. And like everyone else involved in the social group, I was hardened to this and was not aware of how it affected me.<sup>64</sup> Holding things in, keeping things quiet and not showing you are troubled is with the idea of preventing ‘letting them

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<sup>64</sup> Some of which are described in the final chapter, ‘keeping it real, you get me?’

(opposition/perpetrator) win'. Grief resulting from violence was never fully accepted. The violence was by no means affectless, but grief was everyday and not something that people generally spoke about.<sup>65</sup> My first Moss Side funeral surprised me with the festive air. This sense of having a party was heightened by the fact that the wake took place at the West Indian club, where we attended various music events. However, in urban regeneration contexts, individuals often re-identified the experiences of loss through violence to re-identify themselves as victims of loss.<sup>66</sup> This identity of a victim of "Moss Side's" violence helped secure a position as a "representative of the community". Communal grief transformed into individual capital, which is seemingly quite contrary to the aims of regeneration strategies.

I met Gloria and Rian through my involvement with MSCF. Husband and wife, they were parents of 12 children and ran a prestigious voluntary sector organisation in Moss Side. I knew the couple and 3 of their children well and visited their home regularly seeing them at a variety of events and family occasions over 5 years. The examples of Gloria and Rian illustrate that what may originally be a conscious collusion with regeneration to get material benefits (Haikio describes how people involved in new governing structures are highly reflexive of their positions (Haikio 2007)) becomes adopted in an actual change in personhood over time. The values of the regulated spaces of governance (see Rose 1999 and also previous chapter) become gradually internalised.

2005: -

"I'm an illusionist, it's what I do, I know what I'm doing, I'm going to do what needs to be done to get this off the ground, I'm going to be straight with everyone in this room, because I trust you, but you know (name of rival representative of the community) will play all the tricks he

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<sup>65</sup> An exception to this was during the Jessie James incident as explored in chapter six

<sup>66</sup> The final chapter describes how girls refuse this status of "victim" regarding sexual violence.

needs, he's got all his plans worked out, and if any of you are going to back him, I can't work with you."

This was about the possibility of investment in a community centre by a development company which had to invest a certain amount of money on social improvement in the area.

Rian was stating that he was willing and aware of the way in which he must represent himself that he can create whatever image of himself he needs to get the results he wants. He often referred to this as "the game we have to play". He was at that time fully aware of the show he put on, but this was an illusion not actually changing his own subjectivity. The "illusions" he put on for regeneration purposes, remained in regeneration contexts, and his Black Identity was never an issue that needed discussion or explanation outside these contexts. However, over several years, he came to take the illusions on as part of himself. In 2009 I reminded him that he used to describe himself as an "illusionist".

"People learn, I've come to understand things better, I know more about what's going on now, there's a war going on out there (meaning a race war) and we have to learn to be part of the change, it's our responsibility to be part of that change".

Rian had witnessed a shooting outside a pub in Moss Side, an experience he regularly drew on to gain authority in regeneration contexts. I never heard him talking about his grief or upset from this or similar events (which were at that time tragically common) outside regeneration contexts. People tended not to talk about such issues in public, but besides this, he rarely thought about these events as "issues" before. However, over the years he began to concentrate his attention on seeing gang violence as part of a race war where Black people have been taught to kill themselves (he describes this as "self-extermination"). What may have begun as an intended and purposeful illusion in order to get

political recognition,<sup>67</sup> this became an internalised part of his subjective identity. The previous chapter explored how regeneration contexts act as regulated spaces of governance. The aim was also that individuals involved with these contexts transferred the values of regeneration practices into wider contexts. However, by trying to transfer values of regeneration to other situations Rian encountered problems. Rian recounted the shooting some years later in the pub that the shooting took place. This was an unusual thing to do in Moss Side. As I explained, people tend to feel the need to move on, not mentioning deaths and shootings of the past too often. And furthermore, it was always a good idea not to say too much in public since there was always an agreed social norm of silence for the purposes of not offending people. Violence committed in Moss Side often had long histories of rivalries. It was always tricky to know who had done what. As such, the general rule in pubs, clubs and other public social spaces, was not to say anything that might offend anyone when it came to violence such as the shooting in question. But this particular evening in the pub, Rian recounted the shooting in the same language and behavioural codes that he used in regeneration contexts. He spoke with authority and urgency to save “the community”, demanding influence with the strength of his voice. He was faced with an argument from a mutual friend more directly involved with the incident. When I later asked my friend what he thought about Rian talking about the shooting, my friend, shouted in distress “what ‘im know bout that? ‘im not know noting, ‘im not no-one, talkin like dat in pub man, who him talking to? Shoutin him mouth off”. Whilst Rian may have gained political advantage from recounting past events in a particular way in regeneration contexts, this did not hold value in actual social contexts. On the contrary it caused him to lose status value having confused the contexts in which the action held political recognition.

Rians wife, Gloria, had a spiritual view on things. Describing the same shooting, she said that she “felt the strength of Africa” in her and mourned every child living in the poverty of Moss Side. She saw universal motherhood in all women and considered it her duty to “help peace elevate and alleviate the

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<sup>67</sup> Chapter four considers recognition politics further.



children of Moss Side from these troubles”. Similarly to Rian, I believe Gloria used to say these things with a pinch of salt, not taking it too seriously but responding dynamically to the governance structures she engaged with which gave a particular veneration to the struggling “BME” (Black Minority Ethnic). But she increasingly began to attend meetings in traditional African attire wearing a cloth headdress frequently, whilst still wearing everyday clothes at home. By 2009 she only wore traditional African clothes, both in the public and the privacy of home. She re-decorated her home to include African figures, wooden statues and cloth wall hangings that were not present 4 years before. People responded quickly to new structures of governance in the regeneration setting. Within 4 years, Gloria had transformed her own belief system. I believe that this increasingly Africanised view of herself came as a result of her gain in status in urban regeneration contexts that she then transferred to wider parts of her life. Whilst of course such changes could have come from a variety of reasons and influences in her life, since it was initially only within regeneration contexts that she began wearing traditional clothing and only within this context that she began using phrases which can be heard elsewhere in regeneration such as “it takes a community to raise a child” reaffirms to me that this is where her shift in personhood came from.

Both Gloria and Rian began as conscious ‘illusionists’ yet eventually, it seems, they became the illusion. This example is not to illustrate how regeneration policy does not always work out the way it is intended (i.e. that multicultural policy sometimes actually increases polarization) but how people begin to understand their position and relation to ‘the Vision’ of regeneration. Within four years both Rian and Gloria had transformed their identity. This transformation may have been more easily achieved due to their *shared* involvement with urban regeneration. This may have made the transfer of their behaviour from regulated spaces of governance to private spheres of the home easier. Their regeneration has been more ‘successful’ than it may have been as individuals. Our wider social group still accepted Gloria and Rian, but with a tiresome tolerance. People felt that they had a tendency to “preach on” in social situations and “talk about what they know nothing”. Their attempt to extend their governance to those around them was taken less seriously than for

example Romans. Whereas Roman's change was taken as sincere and therefore respected as "fa Real",<sup>68</sup> Gloria and Rian's demands of "returning to our roots" and talk of ancient civilizations of Africa were less easy to relate to. However, they were not a source of ridicule as was the case for Devon.

### **Devon**

Whereas Gloria and Rian 'toned up' their ethnicity in regeneration contexts, Devon 'toned down' his to find a place within 'the Vision' of urban regeneration policy. His involvement with urban regeneration predates my own. He had been involved with various different organisations and pitted himself against Manchester City Council on a variety issues and events. His accent and language changed to be full of buzzwords, catch phrases and 'management spiel'. He began to speak in a rather forced middle class accent. People would joke to me often about his speech patterns by imitating him and saying how they felt that Devon considered himself better than others in the area. He was often described as a 'turncoat' who had gone against what others from our social group wanted. Whilst he was identified increasingly as "the council" his decisions were usually for his own benefit. With fingers in many businesses in Moss Side, Devon quite openly said that his aim was to make money, for local people in Moss Side and for himself. But his dress, his accent and his views were taken by wider social groups to be "the council". This in itself is quite telling of how the shift described in the previous chapter was understood in everyday local views; the involvement of private sector interests with the transformation of governance structures meant people increasingly considered the public and private sectors (and the voluntary) to be one and the same. Devon relied heavily on his views on Black Identity to gain access to authority as a "member of the community". Perhaps the most prominent marker of being able to represent "the Moss Side Community" in the codified structures of regeneration strategies was to be Black. Although I do not see that being Black has as much relevance in non-regeneration contexts or amongst the social group Moss Side community (without the capital C). The views of Black identity that Devon expressed in regulated spaces of governance were incongruent with the

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<sup>68</sup> The last chapter considers this desire "fa Real" in more detail.

ones he expressed in private. In urban regeneration contexts, Devon presented a 'sanitized' view of flexible ethnicity. They were views that could match the USA's civil rights movements. But in private his views were far more extreme. Perhaps the most telling moments of him utilising concepts of Blackness in order to gain the authority of being a representative of "the Moss Side Community" were during the months leading up to the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade on March the 25<sup>th</sup> in 2007. A considerable amount of finance was being invested in the area to run projects related to the event. The Moss Side Community Forum (described in the previous chapter) was made responsible for allocating funds and supervising projects. It was made very clear to us what sort of activity would be 'suitable' and projects would also have to pass through regeneration's "cultural strategy team" (CST 2006). We opened up the bidding process for funding six months prior to the anniversary. The Forum negotiated the many voluntary sector groups presenting ideas. Discussions were heated and argumentative, patronage and nepotism was rife as projects with friends leading them were demanded as "the best" and voluntary groups that had just been formed days in advance emerged with bids. Old rivalries found the battleground of who could best represent 'the Moss Side community' which quickly became synonymous with 'the Black community'. Moderate views became extreme and people adopted views resonating more with black supremacy rather than racial equality. For example, one idea put forward to the group was to link past slavery to modern forms of slavery such as child labour, to which Devon shouted that the white colonial city councillor even wanted to take slavery as his own, thus stealing yet another generation's Black history. On another occasion a heated argument erupted on why Somali residents of Moss Side should not be included in a particular video project about heritage. Whilst Devon and I got on reasonably well, his views on Somalis was a constant source of argument, as was his views on White people. I finally lost my temper on this occasion and asked why he was so racist, he shot out of his seat shouting "I'm not racist, but they're the ones who sold us into slavery so what are they even doing here?" Getting into further debate with him on the issue made the situation worse, particularly when I pointed out (more out of anger from his behaviour towards the Somalis in the meeting than anything else) that immigration was different to slavery, and the people he

considered ‘the Black Community’ in Moss Side did not actually arrive at the UK as the slaves he evoked from the US context. In Devon’s opinion, Black people are so physically powerful, so intelligent and so generally superior, that White people have had to subjugate them from the start out of fear. He has shown me books that ‘prove’ his point. He has made me read literature on why Indian civilisation is based on African civilizations, pointing out a Hindu temple from 1500BC which has terracotta tiles of a woman with hair braids, ‘proving’ ‘Black people’ were in India. He explained any person who did not agree with him that Black people are superior as the result of being “puppets of their white masters”. He did not mention for the first two years of my knowing him, that his wife is actually White. He brought it up during one of my arguments with him when he said he did not have a problem with White people, he was even married to one. Given his view that White people are physically, mentally and spiritually inferior to Black people, did he then think his wife was inferior to him? Our arguments often lasted hours. His private views did not diffuse as the years went on, and his public regeneration views remained surprisingly multicultural (in the politicised sense). With Devon’s entrepreneurial spirit, he repackaged his views for the contexts of urban regeneration and his engagements with these new structures of governance seeing them as business opportunities. In meetings Devon would speak about equality and empowerment. He included aspects of his views such as the need for Black people to ‘unite’ and ‘empower’ themselves. But in meetings he would refer to the need for Black people, African people and Asian people to work together. He used this message particularly whilst setting up his ‘business consortium’. The stated aim of this consortium was to ensure that local businesses benefited from the economic regeneration of Moss Side and not the large companies. I was (of course) all for this and backed it through MSCF. I never did quite worked out exactly how Devon was planning to make money from this venture, other than getting funding to pay for his time and materials, but knowing Devon I was sure he would be.

On one occasion in a MSCF meeting I was accused of “pretending to be Black” by Rose. I had known Rose for around 3 years. Whilst not particularly close but with many mutual acquaintances and friends, we would say hello and pass

the time of day if we saw each other around Moss Side outside meeting contexts. The accusation arose when we were deciding who should attend a conference to represent Moss Side regarding education. The choice was narrowed to myself or fellow worker Prudence. It was decided that I should go, not only because I knew the context better, but also because I was “Black”. I said that I did not think this was a good reason to choose me over Prudence, but also that I was not actually Black. Rose got angry saying I had always said I was Black and why had I been pretending all this time. I never said I was Black and presumed it was obvious that I was of Asian heritage. Rose decided that this confusion must have been an intentional pretence for political leverage (which also supports my argument that a particular identity of being Black and “Moss Side” offered a means to political recognition in regeneration contexts); rather than realising that seeing a strong woman involved in governance structures in the role that I had, what I did socially and my familiarity with the Moss Side community fitted in more with her views of being Black than Asian and that ethnicity is a fluid construct made from a variety of influences making the confusion quite a simple one. It was actually Devon who came to my defence saying that we had to work together and that I was a representative of Moss Side and that we must “recognise our allies”. This “recognition of allies” in what many Black residents of Moss Side consider a Race war shows that Devon’s representation of his views on ethnicity are instrumentalist to the context and situation. Devon also often made comparisons between Moss Side and Rusholme. Asian people from Pakistan and Bangladesh mainly populated Rusholme. Rusholme was famous for the ‘Curry Mile’ on which a mile of Oxford Road is strewn with neon lit restaurants. It also has a few Asian grocery shops, clothing shops with saris and lehengas, Asian sweet shops, paan shops and music shops. Rusholme is visited by Asians from all around the north of England, and also visitors of other ethnicities searching out food and clothes looking for the ‘Rusholme experience’ (for a history on the development of the curry mile see (Barrett and McEvoy 2006)). Devon felt that people in Rusholme learnt to brand their ethnicity to ensure they fitted into the ‘rich culture so everyone’s to gain’ model of multiculturalism. He hoped that Moss Side would also learn place marketing strategies for Moss Side’s

West Indian and African-Caribbean identity, celebrating jerk chicken shops and the carnival.

Devon's beliefs in black supremacy is an example of Fanon's now classic description of the way in which black people use white tools to inhabit the racial identity they understand they belong in (Fanon 2008(1986)[1952]). Devon believed in the problematic racial concepts I discussed in the introduction, such as believing that differences in phenotype meant significant biological variance between races that also somehow equated to morality. He simply inverted the arguments but in so doing reinforced a biological basis of racism. Although much social science is dedicated to understanding racism, less focus seems to be placed on racism from black people. There are lasting effects upon inequality that emerge from the continued belief in the concept of race (in articulation with other axis of power). Continuing to see this as only "something carried out against people of colour" (Eichstedt 2001:458) fails to examine the ways in which black people, such as Devon, have begun to use these "white tools" (in Fanon's terms) to invert their position of oppression. I believe this further subordinates black people to a position of weakness. I therefore thought it was important to include Devon's example in this chapter.

### **Identifying and becoming a BME community member:**

I chose to focus this chapter upon ethnographic detail of the four "case study" examples. This was because I believe that the advantage of knowing the individuals over a long length of time allowed the best means of illustrating the role of race in regeneration.

The utilisation of Blackness and/or being able to representing yourself as a victim of violence in order to gain empowerment through a reverse status process is a short lived victory. It is only a micro-situational empowerment, the achievement of which requires corroboration with a macro-situational position of being disempowered. Describing how the term "minority" makes Whiteness the norm and that those utilising their status as a minority to increase agency creates a situation in which "one might say it offers a carrot and a stick, but the

carrot is a mirage based as it is on false democratic ideology that works in tandem with ideologies of race, class, gender, and sexuality” (Spears 2000:52); Spears explains that the internalisation of minority status (which is arguably what Rian and Gloria have undergone) is the third stage of hegemony (in Gramscian terms). I argue that it is not only race that was internalised through this participation but also many other implicit scales (citizenship, civility, cosmopolitanism, charitability and so forth) that were reinforced by the interstitial scale of most in need of regeneration (by implication degenerate) to those most regenerated. The views of workers for the public sector and MCC’s “Regen Team” in particular with dealing with “community representatives” are usually to consider it a necessary hurdle to jump. For example a City Council worker in Private Sector Housing knocked on my door to do a questionnaire and audit of the areas views. When I opened the door to him, he was surprised and said: “Oh, it’s you...” I replied not to be so surprised, I do actually live here. Whilst filling out the questionnaire one of the questions was whether I own/rent/social housing etc. I replied that I owned the house: “Oh that’s great, that’s just the sort of people we’re trying to attract”. After saying this, it was as though he tried to eat back his words, stumbling onto the next question rapidly and mumbling the words – he had contradicted all the usual social cohesion rhetoric he usually bombarded me with in official contexts.

Gloria, Rian and Devon all understood that identifying themselves in a particular way as “black community members” served to gain them access to regeneration structures and so increased their political agency. By reconfiguring their black identity they gained a place in the vision of regeneration. Vered Amit also discusses the context of Canadian representations of ethnicity in governing structures and the “fetishization” of ethnicity and “challenges it poses to the conceptualization of ethnicity and political representation” this brings (Amit-Talai 1996). One of the stated aims of regeneration is an increase in “engagement”. One particular aspect of this engagement was political engagement with new emerging governing structures, such as the community forums discussed in the previous chapter. In *Black Corona*, Steven Gregory considers how in the specific location of Corona, New York, an urban community and political identity was created (Gregory 1998).

He locates the study in the temporal context of past political engagement developed in the US 1960s civil rights movement. Gregory considers how the politics of place entered into not only racial identity but also particularly a political racial identity. Gregory describes how people were positioned in complex networks of power and dominations. Gregory explains that, whilst activists in the civil rights era found new ways to make politics include racial issues, this decreased during the 1980s. He describes how particular state policies, particularly the “war on poverty” (rather than the exodus of middle class blacks from inner cities), created a situation in which race became separated from other political issues and political and discursive possibilities were narrowed as a result (Gregory 1998). Similarly, regeneration structures also created a situation in which participators such as Gloria and Rian understood that their main possibility of engagement was by re-producing a particular view of “member of Moss Side’s black community”. The examples show how regeneration policy served to reify and narrow the target of regeneration to the “BME community”. Furthermore, the examples illustrate how, like in Gregory’s study, state policy of regeneration served to restrict the possibilities of race entering political discussions to the topic of gang violence. Despite race working in articulation with other axis of power, in regeneration strategies, race was a separated topic of “BME issues”. This was further restricted in Moss Side to discussing gang violence and furthermore only a particular gendered aspect of gang violence as chapter 7 discusses further. And so, even though it was incongruent with the everyday imaginings of the black community, a particularly narrow reified view of so-called “black issues” entered the political engagement of regeneration structures.

Whilst Gregory’s study illustrates the specific ways that this occurred in Corona, a particular detail is added by the examples of Roman, Gloria and Rian. All three were originally aware that they were creating a particular public identity of themselves to gain access to regeneration which they believed would give them access to resources (which in fact it did). Another aim Gregory had when writing *Black Corona* was to re-address the interest of social sciences away from inner-city poor black areas with a focus on deprivation. This was to move past the binary opposition of ghetto and mainstream (Gregory 1998). As



such, he does not look at individuals travelling through these two dominant images. Neither Gloria and Rian, nor Roman had previously expressed any interests in political issues, on race or otherwise. However, through involvement with regeneration, they increasingly learnt to be a “BME community member” i.e. a particularly politicized identity with a narrowed concept of possibilities of discussing one particular topic, that of race. The three of them, but particularly Roman offer a means of understanding how people used state policies to travel through spheres often seen in binary and separate terms – however constricted that involvement was.

**And so...**

As described in the first chapter, with New Labour regeneration policies, the focus of urban regeneration moved increasingly from the physical regeneration of dilapidated buildings to the regeneration of communities with New Labour policy. By focusing upon ethnographic examples, I hoped to illustrate how individuals came to understand their positions on this scale and why urban regeneration was sometimes described as social engineering (e.g. Woudhuysen 2005). Urban regeneration strategies were about creating a transformation in Moss Side through residents. The defining and criminalising of the ‘anti-social’ through the Respect Agenda enforced the Vision of regeneration policy. However, the definition between regenerator/regenerated was far from simple. The scale measuring residents’ regeneration in Moss Side took into account various other socially constructed and accepted norms. This included race. Individuals involved learnt how to utilise their positions (for example through race) to gain recognition in regeneration strategies and regulated spaces. The following chapter considers the response of Moss Side residents “the Wyke lads” to regeneration strategies in Moss Side, particularly their response to displacement to “students” and a lack of recognition.

## Chapter Four

### Recognising Moss Side: How the Wyke lads dealt with displacement

“Them could go anywhere, you get me, and them coming here – flashing their shit off in the streets like they own the place man, you get me? This is Moss Side, that shit aint down here. We keeping the streets real man”<sup>69</sup>

In this chapter I explain Wyke Lad and GCG<sup>70</sup> practises as protection from their own anger and resentment that arose from a lack of recognition, disappointment from failed attempts at social inclusion and resentment towards older generation acceptance of “shit jobs”. I describe a situation in which, although the organisation GCG was a result of economic and social exclusion, by creating practises to exclude others (namely “students”) for members, they rejected inclusion rather than they were excluded – as though ‘wallpapering the cells of their own confinement’. This protection arose from their sense of control over the design of wallpaper – their ideas of what was “gangsta” in opposition to being “legit”. I explain some of their exclusionary practises that came as a result of fear of displacement and control over what particularly a *Moss Side* Gangsta meant. This fear was due (at least in a very large part) to urban regeneration strategies that specifically targeted them.

Wyke lads would like people to believe that it is not safe to walk around Moss Side without adhering to “Da Rulz”. Clearly, the Wyke lads should not be understood as isolated or spontaneous to be feared separately to ‘the rest’ of society or law abiding citizens – rather should be understood not only as emerging from (as this also indicates a separation and marginality) *but as an*

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<sup>69</sup> Verion, 17 years old, Black Wyke lad – during an interview in May 2006 – what is ‘real’ to the Wyke lads is considered further in the final chapter

<sup>70</sup> As the chapter will further describe, the Wyke lads are a sub group of a large hierarchical organisation known as GCG. GCG are the largest gang in Moss Side, Manchester and possible the UK.

*integral part* of structural inequalities. Lien (Lien 2005) makes a similar point, referring to Pakistani street gangs in Oslo, that “the container model” affects ability to understand a social structure, preferring studying sets of interconnected roles which extend widely. Galtung (Galtung 1991), who refers specifically to gang violence, states that activities of gangs are reactionary to their position of inequality and deprivation, a proposition that is shared by many theorists. However, Dowdney (Dowdney 2003:17) amongst others, explains that the success of gangs are to be understood not as parallel or resistant to state powers but as a “concurrent presence exploiting state weakness” (2003:17) whilst explaining young peoples uses in the drug trade in Rio de Janeiro. In Moss Side however, GCG narratives often claim that they emerged in the 1980’s more as a system ‘in lieu of the state’ similarly to that described by Rodgers (Rodgers 2003) about Nicaraguan street gangs. Rodgers describes how these street gangs do not work as insurgents, but rather to do the things that the state has failed to do. For example, as Kinnes (Kinnes 2000) illustrates in the context of South Africa the social motivations of belonging, acknowledgement and recognition (since the state fails to do these) in what he describes as “youth gangs” develops into economic motivations of organised criminal groups. This ‘in-lieu’ of the state is not only for recognition, but also in vigilante style protection of ‘the community’.<sup>71</sup> Many of the Wyke lads activities can be thought of as resistance<sup>72</sup> whereas others can be thought of as a system ‘in-lieu’ of state<sup>73</sup>. Similarly to Paul Willis’ classic learning to labour (Willis 1982(1977)), looking at how working class boys teach themselves their working class identities, ‘youth gangs’ such as the Wyke lads learn to *exclude themselves* rather than experience social exclusion. Mainstream forms of media such as soap operas, the news, and newspapers create and maintain images of dangerous youth gangs which detracts attention away from more serious and ‘insidious violence’ (Moser and Winton 2002:25)<sup>74</sup>. Van-Gemert and Fleisher

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<sup>71</sup> I have had various experiences of this myself, some of which are discussed elsewhere and also in the introduction.

<sup>72</sup> Such as the act of going to the city centre – defying segregation norms as I explain further in the chapter.

<sup>73</sup> Such as initiation processes to climb the hierarchical gangsta ladder where other forms of social mobility are inaccessible, as I further describe in this chapter.

<sup>74</sup> Moser and Winton identify the more serious and ‘insidious’ violence of organised crime in comparison to youth gang violence (2005).

call for the abandonment of preconceived images of gangs, stating that “hierarchical ranks and rules for membership, initiation, and so on, have become a point of reference” (Van-Gemert and Fleisher 2005:12) no longer relevant in analysis of European gang contexts. However, whilst I may have entered research with the intention of abandoning these images, the Wyke lads illustrated to me, that these were points of reference for *their own* understandings of themselves and so still totally relevant. Sassen would see such ‘street culture’ as an attempt to gain a presence in the global city (Sassens 2001a). And Bourgois (Bourgois 2002(2nd ed)) has successfully illustrated how many of the Wyke lads activities may be considered as a search for respect from an alternative source given the lack of access to dominant social, political and economic spheres. In agreement, this chapter demonstrates how certain practices of the Wyke lads may be considered as a result of their hidden (from one another) desires to have a presence, a role (perhaps any role, even a negative one) in a regenerating Manchester. But, I find Charles Taylor and Nancy Fraser’s work (and the many theorists who followed them) on the politics of recognition particularly useful in this chapter. Taylor, in a genealogical method, explores how the politics of universalism (universal dignity) creates a dynamic relationship with the politics of individualism or difference, considering how everyone ‘should’ be recognised for their unique identity (Taylor 1994:105). But I found most useful for this chapter, how Taylor, using Hegelian concepts of identity (where a person’s identity is created through reciprocal relationships with another’s i.e. that subjective identity is made by a person’s (subject’s) actions being recognised in a certain way by another person and both subjectivities being made by that reciprocal understanding) explains that to not engage in reciprocity by denying recognition, or by mis-recognising the other person involved, distorts the relation of the person to himself. And so, Taylor transports this Hegelian concept of reciprocity and subjectivity formation to groups, by stating that a group being misrecognised or devalued by not being able to engage in equal reciprocal relationships with dominant society makes groups “malformed” (Taylor 1994:104). Although I am not sure I could agree to their being “malformed” or ‘unhealthy’ as this presumes the dominant group to be the ideal, some of his work certainly resonates with the ethnographic material that I

am about to present in this chapter. However, as Nancy Fraser rightly points out, to move from considering only the politics of ‘cultural’ recognition from ‘economic’ redistribution (not that these should be considered separate in the first place) is not a solution and both should be considered simultaneously as articulations of a common problem (Fraser 1996). Fraser’s particularly useful amendment to Taylor (for this chapter) that ‘culture’ becomes a concrete reality which runs the risks of reifying group identities and so miss the connections to the “institutional matrix” which such group identities are entwined with (Fraser 2000:113). This problem of reification becomes particularly interesting as the chapter illustrates, since the Wyke lads and GCG, in attempts to be recognised and visible, actually reify themselves in attempts to provide the image of Black, dangerous *Moss Side* gangsters. This image of a dangerous Black Other, although as Fanon explains, is made by White tools (Fanon 2008(1986)[1952]), the Wyke lads understanding is not that they must “turn white or disappear” (Fanon 2008(1986)[1952]: 75) (such as their parents did in “shit jobs”) but to be recognised in regeneration strategies, policy and Vision – the only relational position they can occupy is that of ‘dangerous Moss Side gangsters.’

At this point, it seems apt to remind the reader that gangs in Manchester are not a new phenomenon (which is a view often taken by the architects of regeneration – that there is a contemporary emergency which is the result of the collapse of ‘social cohesion’ requiring regeneration through the “Respect Agenda” and validating the need for ASBOs and stop and searches). However, such gangs are not as new as they seem. Take for example the Victorian Scuttlers (Davies 2008). The Scuttlers, were gangs who liked to ‘scuttle’. To scuttle was to fight, knife, and generally attack a rival gang with vicious intent. Similarly to the Wyke lads and GCG, different gangs of the Mancunian phenomenon Scuttlers, were named after the streets or areas that they emerged from (e.g. the Grey Mare boys from Grey Mare street in Bradford (an area near current Ashton in Manchester)).<sup>75</sup> Similarly, they also had certain clothes that acted as uniforms; pointed shoes tipped with metal, silk scarves, caps worn to the back exposing a square fringe, bell-bottom trousers and a belt that was ornate and used as a

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<sup>75</sup> Not the city in West Yorkshire

weapon. They had a variety of weapons that they used and attacks were violent. Scuttler gangs existed mainly in the slums of Victorian Salford but existed throughout the city. And fighting usually took place regarding “territory” for example “the Rochdale road wars” in 1870 (see Davies 2008 for a more detailed account.). Another prominent similarity is their marginalised positions, terrible housing conditions, poverty and frustration. And ironically at the time the phenomenon was described by Alexander Devine in 1887, as due to parents, schools, the media (in this case “penny dreadful books” rather than “rap music”) rather than the poverty faced by the Scuttlers (Davies 2008).

As Penny Fraser pointed out, what seems to mark Moss Side gangsters and the GCG as particularly notorious is their status as an “inner-city” and “ethnic” gang (Fraser 1996). Mares (Mares 2001) also describes GCG as an “ethnic gang”. However, although most members are Black, I disagree that their group identity is based around ethnicity (Unlike Lien's study of a Pakistani street gang in Oslo, who do consider being Pakistani a defining requirement of belonging (Lien 2005)). The situation in Moss Side resonated more strongly with Les Backs study of South London (Back 1996). He describes how two adjacent neighborhoods negotiated what he describes as ‘cultural exchange’. One of the neighborhoods was distinctly Black as a result of what he (and other theorists) describes as “white flight” and the neighboring area was seen as a “no go” area for black people – even though as Back describes, residents in both areas had developed non-racist identities. Back explains how the young people involved in gangs in the two neighborhoods developed non-defensive positions of their ethnicity which was a result of identities based on their locality, developing through cultural syncretism such as in new musical genres (Back 1996).

Whilst as I said above, GCG members were in the majority Black, the gang included white members and members of mixed heritage and belonging was not based specifically on race. This chapter will illustrate that the issue of difference was one of economics, politics and class: yet, these are all related to ethnicity and race. And as I discussed in the introduction, I chose not to separate race as an isolated consideration since it permeated all urban regeneration practices in Moss

Side. Here, may it suffice to say that I see the continued importance of race<sup>76</sup> in articulation. As Wade describes, the effects of articulations (or combinations) are more than the sum of their separate affects (Wade 2009a:23). The combined effect of race *with* class (or recognition politics, or economic alienation, or political exclusion) becomes more relevant in the analysis of regeneration than reviewing what race in isolation meant. What race means is contextual. For the purposes of this chapter, in addition to what I said in chapter three, perhaps it is enough to remind oneself that: race is a production of a category that is inhabited and contested and to consider it only as class oppression subordinates race's relevance (Omi and Winant 1986); since race construction is considered historic often racism is also taught as something in the past (Willis 1996) considering it as historic ignores the continued affects; whilst the usability of race as an analytical category may be limited (e.g. Loveman 1999) it should not simply be replaced by ethnicity<sup>77</sup> since this obscures the continued relevance of race (Wade 1993) and often leads to a simple superseding of race taxonomy with ethnic groups; the relevance of race continues as the category is still inhabited; race is produced structurally and is relational to the structures that create, maintain and re-affirm this category (Bonilla-Silva 1996). Although GCG did not condition group belonging through race but issues of economics, politics and class, in Moss Side, these were all related to race.

I worry that this thesis appears to support a view of GCG as an essentialised, reified, homogeneous dangerous Other in a self-reproducing bounded community, contained in a society safe from outside influences, disconnected and autonomous, safely bound in its own locality, autonomously reproducing a culture of poverty –rather than explain relationships of GCG to state projects such as Urban Regeneration. However, the Wyke lads' attempts to portray themselves in just this way, means that I run the risk of ethnographic descriptions appearing as my own. The GCG member aims of maintaining and generating a self-contained and autonomous view of Moss Side, placed a huge stress upon me personally. Since in other contexts I was relatively free to move about, I

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<sup>76</sup> Given that I see race as a concept of socio-historical construction rather than as an analytical category.

<sup>77</sup> Although ethnicity is often a more useful analytical concept than race

experienced an overwhelming sense of constraint. I was unaware at the time, but I experienced an immense relief when I finally managed to disentangle my ties to GCG and actually left Moss Side, away from sources of the “ordinary affects” (Stewart 2007) of living in Moss Side. Even for non-gang participants, being *from Moss Side*, meant most residents rarely left the area. The experiences of living within, shopping, working, going out socialising all within Moss Side, made me feel confined into place – both socially and geographically. This sense of confinement as a result of fully being a “Moss Sider” affected me greatly. Opportunities arose to go elsewhere in my work, yet the thought of leaving Moss Side other than the hour drive to see family seemed inconceivable. Although of course no one would have actually stopped me, it is one of the many unsaid criteria of belonging. *Being in Moss Side* felt like such a required condition of membership that to break it seemed unimaginable. When I began writing up I found it impossible writing whilst participants were still coming to the house, yet the thought to move or to stay with friends outside Moss Side did not occur to me. It is a conceptual confinement that is hard to break, even now. Although I re-iterated to the group (and to myself) that I was not a gang member, I realise now that although without title i.e. a defined role in gang hierarchy, I still had to adhere to the same conditions and criteria of the group, the same restrictions and demands regarding their exacting rules. Not only did this confinement mean that I could not leave Moss Side, I also found I could not mention movements within the city, the country and in fact the world as this marked my social mobility (as the chapter will further consider). I had come to see this binding to place as an everyday effect of life in Moss Side – simply the way it was. Whilst for me this was through a choice to do field work in Moss Side, for Wyke Lads it is through few alternatives. Whilst many exceptions and allowances were made for me, I was constantly aware (whether I fully realised it or not) of the repercussions of stepping outside the boundaries of belonging, such as becoming “a student”.

### **“Students”: Social mobility as a condition for exclusion**

As I described above, the politics of being recognised as a gangster, which the Wyke Lads and GCG members had adopted from more dominant discourses on what being a Gangster meant, in order to be recognised they felt the need to appear very separate from non-gangsters. Whilst of course boundaries to gang



membership were permeable (which I illustrate further in the chapter by their acceptance of myself – someone clearly not a gangster), overlapping and frequently shifting, their attention and focus remained upon what kept them apart, rather than social distances that could be overcome. For Wyke Lads, social markers (particularly engagement in “being legit” and social mobility as I describe further) made clear that – you and I are not alike, and therefore you do not belong here in my place, and furthermore I may treat you as I wish until you leave. As Wade reminds us, “once a category of people is defined as other, the way is opened to treat its members in all kinds of discriminatory ways, create negative and indeed fantastical images about them...” (Wade 2009a, Wade 2009b:37).

“Students” were not necessarily people studying. For Wyke lads, “students” were a particular social group who were: socially mobile, educated, with particular visible social markers, cosmopolitan and had the linguistic style considered as ‘well spoken’ by British society. They were white and trained to participate fully in the dominant social, political and economic worlds of Britain. Florida refers to this group as the growing “creative classes” (Florida 2002, Pratt 2009). I am more inclined to agree with Maruksen’s criticism, that Florida’s ‘new class’ has no particular group identity (Markusen 2006). And I also agree with Peck who problematises Florida’s argument, saying that it does not offer more insight into an emergent group once taking into account increased qualification attainment (Peck 2005). However, as a result of urban regeneration remarketing strategies, a social group, very different to the usual residents of Moss Side, was emerging, and the Wyke Lads referred to them as “students”. Working mainly in what is described as the service sector, such as call centres, these young professionals distanced themselves from actual students attending the universities of the city. They preferred to spend leisure time in the city centre or in nearby alternative areas such as Chorlton, rather than places associated to students such as Fallowfield. That these professionals distanced themselves from actual students or that they had no collective identity, was irrelevant to the Wyke lads who considered these “cosmopolitans” and their social mobility as being “students”. Whenever a “student” moved into the area, the Wyke lads immediately “sized them up” i.e. assessed the extent of

their qualification as Other. Wykes regularly discussed new people moving into streets, sharing information; whether they had interacted with anyone, whether they used local shops or attended local events, which social status symbols they displayed such as clothes, bikes ridden, instruments carried and what their house seemed like. I believe this group became labelled “students” due to the geographical proximity of Moss Side to the institution of the University of Manchester, which is around one mile away, but seemed to them socially distant if not distinct. Although “students” became the term for Other (see above) my own involvement with the university was not seen as a problem; rather it was looked on as a good thing, one of their own making it in a world they were usually excluded from. Indeed Wyke lads still ask me how things are going. They were always happy to answer questions and be involved with the project. They often said during general discussions that I should get some detail or story down, or they would say to put my recorder on or get my notepad out, as “this needs to go in”.

An exception illustrates how central social mobility is to being identified as a “student”. A particular friend, Harriett, who lived on the street adjacent to Maine road that I resided on with my partner between 2002 and 2003, is clearly of an upper class background. Having unexpectedly been left money on the death of an estranged father, she bought her house outright in cash as soon as the news to demolish the stadium was announced; she had plenty of money left for extensions and made her garden into an urban oasis, with wisteria and honey suckle against the wall. Her spoilt (and admittedly fat) cat, who rarely left her back garden, remained her preferred house companion. In her mid fifties she spent her days smoking cannabis (which she would not buy from locals as “they’re dreadfully frightening, I get it sent in the post from a friend”) and watching Korean detective and martial art films. In addition she also enjoyed playing Chopin on her Bechstein piano that sat in the front room by the side of her open fireplace. She only worked ‘temp jobs’<sup>78</sup> every so often when

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<sup>78</sup> These are temporary employment jobs covering the work of an employee who may be on leave for a particular reason, or when the post has yet to be filled when replacing workers. Harriett, like many others, is signed to an agency who gets her work when she wants it. Given

particular bills came (which she was often surprised with since she forgets things need paying for since she never had to think about it before), or when she felt the need for company. Similarly to other residents of Moss Side, she kept a gun in the house, on the front windowsill in fact; although this gun was an antique rifle “but it still fires, and it’s just looovely”. I first met her in 2002, when she was fussing my cat. Clearly of an upper class background, her views on ‘Moss Siders’ made me see why Wyke Lads may feel so affronted by emergent gentrifiers. Yet she was never identified as “student” or targeted by Wyke Lads in any way. Whereas a couple who I knew living in the area at that time, one of which had completed a PhD in anthropology, were targeted. In 2007, one of the Wyke lads, having seen me with Harriett in the street said, “oh you know that lady”. I said I did fearing what the consequence would be since my partner still lived on the street and was in closer contact with Harriett. He just laughed and said “she’s crazy that lady”. Harriett was not a “student”. Due to her age, her lack of training and occupation, and her choices in lifestyle, she was not the “right sort of people”<sup>79</sup> regeneration was trying to attract. Harriett was not aspiring upwardly mobile with no desires to leave Moss Side, or gain employment. She did not go on holidays abroad, or even in England, particularly since she did not like to leave her beloved cat, (other than the RHS Chelsea Flower Show which she attended every other year). She was stationary in Moss Side. This meant she was not according to the Wyke lads definition, “student” – she lived, not stayed in Moss Side. Unlike the 28-year-old cellist who bought a house on my street and rented two rooms out to an office worker and someone working for a public relations agency. The household is a good example of the typical young professional population that began to emerge in Moss Side. Finding the area fashionable they told me they had liked the sense of “vibrant community” in the area, and that since the house was cheap (relative to other areas of Manchester, but still beyond the reach of most Moss Side residents) it was a good investment as they believed that Moss Side was likely to become “the next Chorlton”. This idea of “the next Chorlton” was also a typical view from gentrifiers and parallels can be drawn between other

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the types of work, the cost of the agency, and the short time duration, the pay per hour is quite low with little security.

<sup>79</sup> “the Right Sort of People” is considered further in “the Vision” chapter.

gentrification studies (e.g. Atkinson and Bridge 2005, Newman and Wyly 2006).<sup>80</sup> Chorlton is an area which was once not too dissimilar to Moss Side, but has now become an affluent area, with residents like the sort of people Žižek describes as “liberal communists” (Žižek 2008); shopping in the local organic supermarkets, buying fair trade goods, going out to folk clubs and real ale pubs and so forth. The Wyke lads saw this household as “students” and broke into the house on several repeated occasions in 2007. As with most robberies within Moss Side, breaking in is not for economic reasons but for marking difference – an issue of recognition rather than economic redistribution (see discussion above). That recognition is the main goal can be understood since conversations afterwards were not about what commodities were stolen or how much money could be made (as was the case for thefts of warehouses or other activities concerned with economic redistribution) but rather what havoc they made in the house, what one member urinated in, how much fun they had tearing plants up or pulling pictures down, along with a ridicule of décor, fridge and wardrobe contents and other destruction of status symbols. Thefts committed for economic purposes tended to be in affluent areas or warehouses storing merchandise for large companies. There is a general rule amongst GCG, not to “shit in your own back yard/on your own doorstep” or “you don’t shit where you eat” i.e. not to steal from your own neighbourhood.<sup>81</sup> So for the Wyke lads, to break this rule for “students” was to show that these “students” did not belong in Moss Side. Break-ins within Moss Side were accompanied with a message, often of intimidation. On this particular occasion, things progressed with the continuous targeting of the household for break-ins or attempted break-ins. This in itself is a practice that was very common at the time in Moss Side and I knew many instances between 2002 and 2009 (although it decreased through these years). I eventually challenged the Wyke lads and said that their behaviour was getting out of hand, due to an incident with a pet from the household.<sup>82</sup> They claimed that the

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<sup>80</sup> Although as I argued in chapter one, practises of urban regeneration include traditional gentrification methods – particularly displacement, but it is significantly different, particularly the systemised approach of partnerships, including the voluntary sector and new mechanisms of governance

<sup>81</sup> Furthermore “no one round here’s got anything worth nicking”.

<sup>82</sup> Violence towards animals in Moss Side is not uncommon.

household had been “asking for it” because they were “flashing around” symbols of social status. During this argument I asked them to go through the markers of difference that they believed made their actions ethical. "Taste is first and foremost the distaste of the tastes of others" (Wacquant 1998:223). Most of the markers that were pointed out would have also qualified me into that social taste group (Bourdieu 1987); choice in clothes, style of house decoration, taste in music, the musical instruments in the house, as well as having a pet of my own. I pointed out that according to these markers and according to actual relationships to the university, I was more a “student” than the attacked household. The incident with the pet had particularly disturbed me and I was arguing in a shouting manner. I demanded to know whether this meant that they had the right to treat me equally or even worse. They were surprised and offended that I suggested this. The qualification of being “Student” were not the simple matters of taste as the Wyke lads often explained. And although I was often worried that I (or my cats or my partner who lived in the area) might experience such a targeting, I never did. I never had anything stolen from my home (I lived in Moss Side for 8 years) nor have I ever been threatened by any of them. Indeed when my mother came to my house when I was away one evening, as she attempted to get into her car to leave, a young man on his bike with his identity concealed by a scarf around his face was by the driver door stopping her from being able to enter her car and apparently had the intention of robbing her. My mother, a short Bengali lady, said in her own accent: “Hello, I am Tanya’s mummy I come to feed her cat.” The young man immediately said: “Oh, sorry, er hello,” and rode his bike away. When I next saw the Wyke lads, whose “turf” or “territory” this area is, making it likely to be one of them, I asked: “So who was thinking about robbing my mum?” One of them laughed nervously and I immediately knew it was he. The nervousness was due to my higher position in GCG to his own, combined with the strong ethical code within the group against doing any harm to members of family, particularly mothers. He told me: “Shit T, I didn’t know it was your mum did I?” I laughed and said it was fine, now he knew what she looked like he would know better. There are many factors that meant I was not a “student” even though I actually am one. I consider further in the thesis, particularly the final chapter, consequences of Wyke lads need for recognition

resulting in the “need to elaborate and display an authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity, it puts moral pressure on individual members to conform to a given group culture...The overall effect is to impose a single, drastically simplified group-identity which denies the complexity of people’s lives” (Fraser 2000:113). Whilst Fraser is warning theorists against reification of groups whilst studying their identity politics, GCG members employed recognition politics themselves and so fall into the trap that Nancy Fraser warns us of (Fraser 2000), by making themselves (rather than theorists doing the same) appear a reified group of gangsters in a hypostatized culture – although of course, they were not. I continue this chapter by using my own acceptance in this group to illustrate what mattered to them beyond their ability to be recognised.

### **Climbing the Ladder: Gang hierarchy as an alternative form of social mobility**

In this section I describe GCG practises that offered an alternative means of recognition from within the group, where it was not available from other means. Whereas “students” were socially mobile, GCG members could move up the gang ladder. It took me years to become accepted as “one of their own”. I began by befriending the Wyke lads, a group of boys aged 14-25 living on a street near mine<sup>83</sup> and gradually, through relationships to other more senior members, got to know people in various positions in the hierarchical structures, to the point where my presence was accepted by the people considered “L1” or “commanders”<sup>84</sup> of the hierarchical gang. “L1” is the very few (I know of 5) people at the top of this extremely tiered system with “runners” and “footmen” at the bottom. The movement from one tier to another was marked by initiation processes and often

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<sup>83</sup> The first time I spoke to the Wyke lads was when they had blocked my way on the pavement with their bikes. I had been reading for quite a while and had just taken my glasses of which tends to leave me with a bit of blurred vision. Blocking my way, they asked me what I had been looking at. I told them that I wasn’t looking at anything in particular since I had taken my glasses off and that they should move their bikes out of my way immediately and that it is they that should learn to mind their own business. The familiarity of my authoritative tone meant they moved their bikes out of the way. From this initial point of contact the tone was set for the rest of our relationships.

<sup>84</sup> Interestingly many of the ranking terms came from military terms.

celebrated. Initiation processes took a variety of forms, but were always within Moss Side itself. They involved robbing a particular house or turning a car over and setting it alight. For example, the task may be to rob a house on a particular street. There were indications and markers for which house is easier or harder. Marked in chalk somewhere on the house there would be the sign for relative ease and worth of robbing the house. An open square meant that the house is usually unoccupied during the day. A square with a triangle roof on it meant that the house is unoccupied during the day and has things worth stealing. A square with a cross in it meant that although the house is easy to rob, there is little worth stealing in it. A square with a cross and a triangle roof, meant that the house is difficult to rob but worth it. These were also the codes used during usual robberies that took place in more affluent areas. A glove placed on a windowsill meant the house may not be robbed, and that glove must be returned to the initiator afterwards.<sup>85</sup> The visibility and presence of such processes has decreased significantly in Moss Side, a sign that the aimed transformation of regeneration practices (whether through governance techniques or increased policing as described in the previous chapter) is working. Within 5 years of regeneration starting with the demolition of the stadium<sup>86</sup> houses with the Graffiti sign of GCG post break-in, or cars set alight became restricted to “proper Moss Side” which is a new category of Moss Side considered in the next chapter.

I came to know two of the five high-ranking “L1” GCG members and did a series of interviews with “commanders” and several “generals” which is the status that Roman once held. From his research, Mares (Mares 2001) states that GCG are not a hierarchical organised gang. He bases this upon an interview done with a member in prison who states that they can not see how one person could rule the gang (Mares 2001:156). As I mentioned there are actually five L1s which may explain why the individual said no *single* person could rule, but the participant does not say that GCG is not hierarchical, since it clearly is. There

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<sup>85</sup> I asked what my home would be classed as, and Totts (who was of the senior ‘General’ rank in GCG and an initiator, and told me these particular details during an interview) explained to me that it would be the glove since the glove was used for members of the gangs and their families’ homes. I disconnected my burglar alarm, not only as I felt no need, but also I knew they were of no use. It is incredibly easy to disable an alarm, even I can do it now. It takes me around 15 seconds for a modern system and around 5 seconds in an older one.

<sup>86</sup> Although other rounds of regeneration preceded the current one

are a number of errors with details in Mares work, which may be the result of speaking to police officers and official bodies to gain information rather than members. To think GCG are not hierarchical, simply re-emphasizes the importance of proper ethnographic research. Whereas I conducted numerous interviews on commanders and generals, I managed to get a total of two interviews with DV himself. Although I saw him (and the other L1 I knew) and spoke to him on a variety of occasions it was difficult getting him to commit to actual interviews.<sup>87</sup> When I bumped into him during a mutual friend's funeral<sup>88</sup> I asked him again, joking that I had asked him a few times and was close to giving up. He said he would come around the next day, which to my surprise he did. It was usual for me to do interviews with individuals upstairs in a separate room that had my computer in which I recorded interviews straight into through a condenser microphone in the room. The Wyke lads called this "T's office" or "the office"<sup>89</sup> whilst other people continued to socialise downstairs.<sup>90</sup> During this interview only two Wyke lads stayed in the house downstairs in the kitchen (which is where we usually spent time). When I later asked if it was because they were afraid of DV, they replied it was more a mark of respect. In addition to his obvious status of respect and fear, his reliance on American phrases recognisably "gangsta" were less than that of Wyke lads.<sup>91</sup> He did not refer to his own violent past as much as other people I knew, nor did he intensify his Jamaican accent or use Patois in dialect divergence when I asked probing questions or ones that created tension.<sup>92</sup> Interesting as DV is, this chapter focuses

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<sup>87</sup> He always maintained it was due to him being a "busy man" rather than a reluctance to participate – and I have no reason to think otherwise.

<sup>88</sup> This was after 2 years of involvement with GCG

<sup>89</sup> Whereas it was actually also used as my living room. The only room that the Lads had no access to was my very small bedroom – which didn't help the senses of confinement and difficulty I experienced of doing anthropology from literally *within* my home.

<sup>90</sup> Unless it was a particularly sensitive interview, in which case we would be alone in the house or I would go to their homes.

<sup>91</sup> His need to reiterate his position within GCG was less and indeed other than his very large 4-wheel-drive black car, with tinted windows, he did not display as many markers of status (although his clothes of a black suit, shirt and shoes always looked expensive).

<sup>92</sup>The Wyke lads often brought knives to the house. The knives themselves were not what one may imagine as a kitchen knife, but a whole variety of lethal weapons. Some had buttons that could be depressed to create other parts to extend from the knife once inserted into a victim. Whilst these weapons would be shown to me, it reminded me of children showing people new toys. Although they knew I did not like these weapons and did not want to see them, they would be displayed to me proudly when they had bought new ones. The knives were usually bought from a particular person who circulated them across Manchester or from the internet. It was these



on relationships with the Wyke lads rather than L1s or generals like Roman, since it was these “runners”, “greens” and “foot men” (terms for lower level members) who directly experienced the changes of urban regeneration strategy. The Wyke lads were mainly “leaf greens”; situated towards the lower middle of the hierarchy. Their main roles were relatively minor; dealing in skunk cannabis and a few ecstasy pills as well as “rob to order” (which is when someone will ask for a particular item to be sourced, stolen and passed on for a price, be it a red leather sofa or a plasma-screen-TV. The demand for obscure items or difficult to steal items were often used as initiation tests.) collecting money from other dealers (although this responsibility lay particularly with one member in particular, Zacc, who was considered a “Footman”). But Wykes had the primary role of “maintaining a presence”. As DV put it to me, when I asked him why he does not step into particular situations of violence to prevent the cycles of retaliation which although usually between gangs sometimes occurred even within the same gang, during a semi-structured interview that lasted over 2 hours in 2006 after an hour conversation beforehand:

“You see, it’s not my problem what they do about stuff like that, if they see it’s justified, then they should go on and do it. I’m not here to tell them what they can and can’t do. That’s up to them to decide. You see, they’re there in *their* Moss Side, they have to let people know, we are here (i.e. making the presence of GCG visible in the streets marking that Moss Side belongs to them), if you want to go off and do something else, that’s fine, if you don’t want nothing to do with us, then that’s fine too, but if you want to go off and get in on someone else’s shit, well that isn’t fine, and that’s where they step in, to remind people, what it’s about (referring to joining another rival gang).”

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displays and other interactions similar to them that I knew were because of the project, that it was not me that they wished to show these weapons, but the thesis itself.

According to DV, the Wyke Lads had the role of maintaining a particular concept of Moss Side. Whilst it is both acceptable not to be involved in the gang and to do “something else” possibly referring to ‘being legit’ (although how accepted these options actually are in practise, is questionable) it is not acceptable to join a rival gang and it is the job of the Wyke lads to remind people of this. Whilst I did not pursue as challenging lines of inquiry as usual, and DV dominated the direction of the interviews, he responded to my questions comfortably. My desire not to offend DV was compounded by knowing he was armed with a gun at all times, and I was also very aware of the two “security” members waiting in the kitchen for the interview to end. Whilst these were unnerving, I did not feel threatened by DV nor did I see him reifying a “gangsta” image as The Wyke lads did. DV’s explanations resounded more with economic re-distribution, offering a means to make money – rather than a need for recognition.

### **‘Two tokes T’: Overcoming conditions of exclusion**

My unfortunate nickname throughout my fieldwork was “Two tokes T”. I had gone for a wonderful lunch at the home of Ian’s (a friend from Moss Side) aunt. The aunt was amongst the first immigrants in Moss Side in the 1950’s, getting a house that was cheap due to the run down conditions of many of the Victorian houses in the area. This generation of immigrants is often referred to as the Windrush generation, named after the SS Empire Windrush; the ship that brought 492 Jamaicans (amongst other immigrants) to Tilbury in the UK (see also Ward 1978). As discussed in the first chapter, the Windrush was seen by many as the start of large scale immigration to the UK which had the aim of filling the labour shortage after the Second-world-war (Phillips 1998). At the house, there were a few familiar faces amongst the gaggle of kids, uncles, cousins and other extended family members who had come to eat Aunties jerk, rice and pea that Sunday. After dinner, everyone was smoking cannabis and I was offered a joint. Having been a smoker in the past and quite keen on trying to fit in, I thought I may-as-well have a few ‘tokes’ (a toke is one inhalation on the cannabis “joint”). I was not aware of the different smoking practices to

other contexts that I was familiar with. Although the cannabis was less strong<sup>93</sup> the joints were smoked pure i.e. with no tobacco. This meant there was more cannabis in one joint than I would have smoked in a month (around a quarter of an ounce). I suddenly became aware of how strong the joint was. As such I went to pass it along to the next person. Ian looked at me quizzically and asked “What you doing T?”. I explained that I was, as was usual in contexts of smoking cannabis I had experienced, passing the joint on. My friend told me to look around. Everyone had their own joint in their hand, which meant I was supposed to smoke the whole joint myself. Roman later explained that weed for him was like tea to me. He explained that when he came to my house I made him a cup of tea; I did not expect him to bring his own tea bag as I would find this rude, and he would be annoyed at having to bring his own. But also, I did not expect him to share his cup with me. So I continued to try to smoke the joint.<sup>94</sup> However once I had, I ended up having “a whitey”. This term may refer to how the room seems too bright from excess pupil dilation or it may be an inference to presumptions on ethnicity differences of being able to smoke cannabis. I ended up having to ask Ian to walk me home, a journey of only two or three streets, around three minutes on foot. This was the event where I acquired the nickname ‘two tokes T’<sup>95</sup> which he (and Roman who was also present) would often recount to others with glee.

Names are complex things, often taken for-granted. Indeed, how we reference someone is “at the intersection between language and social structure” (Enfield and Slivers 2007:2). As such a lot can be interpreted from whether we use a referential form of name e.g. tall Damon, a triangulation referent of name e.g. Morgan’s brother Dean, whether we use full names e.g. Morgan Smith, titled names Mr Morgan Smith etc. As Endfield and Slivers summarise, some linguists explain that a name may work to bypass other referents, having a direct relationship to the particular referent rather than through links of

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<sup>93</sup> Than the hybrid and modified forms I had previously smoked, such as ‘skunk’.

<sup>94</sup> There were various other issues around weed that came to be important, such as me keeping my own ‘stash’ to offer older people and how my offering of it to younger members was mediated by positioning myself as an older kin member.

<sup>95</sup> A ‘toke’ is one inhalation on a joint (cigarette made with cannabis) – the nickname infers my inability to have more than two inhalations on the joint before wanting to pass it to the next person.

semantic notions or through clusters of semantic notions (Enfield and Slivers 2007). Amongst these was Kripke (Kripke 1981(1972)) who challenged descriptive theories of naming by saying that the cluster theory of referents was implausible, proposing that names acted as rigid designators. A rigid designator is a name that will be correct in all given situations. For example Dean may not be Morgan's brother (a referent) in another situation, whereas he will always be 'Dean' i.e. a person's name is a rigid designator, not a description of reference. Other theorists claim that naming is a universal condition with many variations of cultural expressions and as such should be given particular interest for its comparative properties (Tooker and Conklin 1984). Conklin and Tooker's American ethnological society conference in 1980 which culminated in the work 'Naming Systems' (1984) as well as Bodenhorn and Bruck's more recent collection (Bodenhorn and Bruck 2009) illustrate the many ways in which naming practices illustrate something about a particular group. There seems to have been a particular anthropological interest placed on the compositional nature of names in Native Americans (e.g. Iteanu 1999, Mithun 1984). The main interest on naming practices looks to have been during the 1970's although contemporary studies consider the role of nicknaming in playground and workplace bullying (e.g. Crozier and Dimmock 1999, Fortado 2002) although I would consider this 'name-calling' rather than nicknaming. To clarify what I mean by nicknaming (also see Morgan, O'Neill, and Hart 1979), I refer to a moniker given to someone that is used as an alternative name to that used outside the group. It may involve an abbreviation of a full name, for example T, but will have an additional descriptive term with it.

Most people involved in GCG have such a nickname that reaffirms ties to the group via the recollection of a shared past event. I have only been able to use my own example, as to use others, however much I try to disguise them, makes it clear to anyone involved who that person is and risks their anonymity in the rest of the thesis. It has also been difficult coming up with pseudonyms for participants. This in itself illustrates how effective this naming is in evoking shared memories (not that all the participants in the nicknaming need to have experienced the original event or even know the story that the name refers to).

Another similarity in many of the nicknames is the use of humour. This particular use of humour in my nickname was to overcome being an outsider from being too 'legit' – it was particularly employed when I openly critiqued GCG or Wyke lad activities. I would usually be 'T' except when I made comments that were considered too 'legit' when I would jokingly be called 'two tokes T'. Discomforts from my open admonishment of their activities was often overcome by joking that it was "just T getting 'two tokes T'" over an issue. Searle stated that using a name as a direct referent avoids the need to use references that might cause offence, such as 'Fat Tony' rather than another, for example 'Tall Tony' (Searle 1958). Contrastingly, for GCG, nicknames publically evoked difference that may otherwise mean non-belonging to the group – such as me being 'legit'. So in summary, the GCG example of naming practices, nicknames are used to overcome difference, increase solidarity of the group and to resolve tense situations by the invocation of a difference that may otherwise exclude conditions of belonging, for example 'two Toke T' as an invocation of my 'being legit' which may have otherwise meant I was a "student" rather than GCG.

Joking about two tokes T was not always enough to overcome difference. Being 'legit' was what Wyke lads imagined to be the hegemonic view of the majority of the British middle class participating in the 'legitimate' political, social and economic world, desiring upward social mobility as "students" did. The start of my PhD began a few months after I had started working in urban regeneration. It is hard to say which of these had a greater effect on reducing my acceptance by the Wyke lads. However, my involvement with two recognisable institutes of power 'the university' and 'the council' had a serious impact on my developing relationships with the Wyke lads as I became (temporarily) 'too legit'. This problem of me being 'too legit' came apparent in the winter of 2006 when a robbery, conducted by the Wyke lads, had gone wrong. The first accusation was made against me and my commitment to the Wyke lads was under question. For a period of around 3 months, although the

boys came to the house less, I was made aware<sup>96</sup> that my house and my movements were watched. During this surveillance, I had visited a friend whose son was involved in a rival gang. Eventually two of the Wyke lads came to the house to question me on it. I said in a manner more aggressive than their own, that I had no idea that her son was in another gang and that it really did not matter to me who was in which gang as I was not a gang member and nor should I ever be confused as being in their gang and if they didn't cease following me around, I may have to take steps of my own. I used a tone of voice that would not be out of place for an older relative to use; I hoped that my friendliness with their families (and a member of their extended kin as explored by Carol Stack (Stack 1983)) would justify this use of tone of voice as it had done on many occasions before. During the accusation it emerged that someone had informed the authorities about the robbery and they asked me what I knew about it.<sup>97</sup> I explained that I had not "tipped off" anyone before and saw no reason why I would suddenly start to do so now. I demanded that if they had an accusation to make, to bring one of the generals or commanders in to do it – that it was not their position to make an accusation to me. They apologised and the situation was immediately resolved. I later often reminded the two Wyke lads of this accusation (made un-sanctioned given my higher standing in GCG) in a light way to resolve conflicts to remind them of my own position. Not responding angrily would have created more suspicion – plus, I actually was angry that I had been accused and followed around. If something went wrong and the authorities had been informed on an activity, I would jokingly say, "Well I saw Dave at a meeting and thought he'd like to know" (Dave being a Chief Police Officer in the area). My position within GCG meant that on one occasion I felt that I could inform on the Wyke lads – although not to the authorities, to the intended victims. In August 2007 the Wyke lads planned to stab a member of rival gang LSC<sup>98</sup> (in a nearby area) and rape his sister. Having overheard them discuss these plans in my kitchen, I stated that I

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<sup>96</sup> For example if I went somewhere (such as the local shop or cash point) one of the lads would skid their bike in front of me with their face concealed and then expose their face to me.

<sup>97</sup> The question of whether or not I had provided a 'tip off' (the informing of the authorities) had never occurred before, despite other times when such accusations could have been made against me.

<sup>98</sup> Like GCG, LSC is a pseudonym (and acronym) for a particular gang.

could not knowingly participate in this attack by not informing the intended victims of the plans.<sup>99</sup> I told Totts, a ‘general’, that if it was not called off, I would tell the intended victims. I was told I could tell whom I liked and do what I liked; it would not alter their plans at all. I informed the intended victims (a brother and sister). This particular incident did not take place. The Wyke lads knew my views on sexual violence anyway and they did not feel particularly betrayed by my actions. Whenever similar situations arose, Zacc would say to “leave it” before I started “having a go” – voicing some condemnation of their activities. Whilst I appreciate the importance of suspending one’s own beliefs and not placing value judgments during ethnographic research (particularly important regarding gangs) I doubt we would have been able to create the close relationships we did, if I pretended that I did not find some of their practices truly abhorrent, which I freely admit I did.<sup>100</sup>

The most telling answer to why I was not “student” was “Yeah, but you live here, you don’t just stay here”. The large transient population in Moss Side, who stay a year or two, never really become part of the loose and ambiguous un-politicised social group that refers to themselves as the community. Perhaps it is again the ability of social mobility that echoed the physical move that frustrated and conditioned this difference of “staying” or “living” Moss Side. A friend who was born and raised in Moss Side but spent several years living in the USA had returned to live in Moss Side. A car was driven into her front porch by accident by a Wyke lad who had stolen the car. June went to the Wyke lad’s aunt and asked her to pay for the damage as the sheltered housing association would not pay for repairs unless she reported the crime. The aunt refused to pay and consequently June had to report the crime (without saying she knew who had done it) in order for her housing association (a social housing agency that rents houses out in the area) to pay for the repairs. This

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<sup>99</sup> Interestingly it is my private diary, not field notes that reminded me of these events and this decision. At the time I regarded this not as research but as part of my normal life in Moss Side distinct from my ‘proper’ research which I considered to be about the voluntary sector, citizenship and direct structures of urban regeneration.

<sup>100</sup> To pretend to be able to suspend my feelings (particularly towards gang rape) would have been another misrecognition, as the last chapter considers further.

resulted in a systematic targeting of June's home where she had a two-year-old baby. Wykes kept throwing things at her window, sitting on her front doorstep, bouncing balls off her window, breaking the back-door lock open, put dog feces in an envelope on fire so that when June went to stamp it out got it on her shoes, threw lots of rubbish such as strewn open bin bags and discarded furniture and so on. June said: -

“Well, they don't know I was born and raised here; to them I'm just someone turning up new. I didn't have much choice but to report it, I couldn't stay with a hole in the front of my house! I'm not bothered though; they'll stop soon enough. It's like an endurance test round here, they'll try to push you out, but they'll accept you in the end.”

And the Wyke Lads did eventually stop targeting her and saw that she had no choice if the housing association would not pay the repair costs without reporting the crime and that she had not actually given out the identity of the boy involved.

**Desiring mobility whilst wallpapering their own confinement:  
Strategies of emotional defence against exclusion to social mobility.**

Zacc: “Yeah, but you aren't acting like you're better than us. You still come out, and we can come round and stuff, they'd never let us in that place”.

Tanya: “Have you asked”?

Zacc: “No, it just wouldn't happen”.

From an interview following the incident with the pet in August 2007

The questions of difference went further than Zacc could articulate; it is simply inconceivable for him to think of a situation where “students” and Wyke lads could interact “it just wouldn't happen”. Later we began to converse again



about the attacking of the household with the cellist, which by that time had led to the occupants moving out of the area.

“Well, like we ain’t got nothing T, we can’t do the things they do, we can’t just go if we don’t like it. I want out, I want to be like you and go places, but what am I meant to do? We got nowhere to go, you won’t ever be let alone (referring to the difficulties of leaving gang life), and then they (‘students’) come and take the piss out o’ what little we got, you got to see why they’re (other Wyke lads) irate”.

June 2008

Zacc felt that he only belonged in Moss Side. He may ‘want out’ as he put it, but unlike me did not have the social mobility to do so.<sup>101</sup> This mobility (or lack of) was often spatialised in conceptions. Social mobility was often referred to as “going places” reflecting social mobility’s association to physical mobility. Despite its multicultural advertisements in regeneration slogans and posters, Manchester remained segregated in the ways described by social geographers such as Massey, Denton and Low (Low 1999, Massey and Denton 1998). As such, the Wyke lads rarely went to the city centre. When they did it was often to reassert their commitment to the ethics of “I don’t give a shit what they think”. Going to the city centre proved to themselves and to others in the group that the values of a society that labelled them as dangerous frightening and evil gangsters were firmly rejected – a rejection of rejection. They told me how they were perfectly aware of the fear they created in the city centre; as people clutched their bags tighter, security guards followed them around shops and they were regularly moved on from sitting or standing in the city by the police, or civil enforcers.<sup>102</sup> It may have been that they were signs of segregation failing, that the danger had not been contained in places such as Moss Side, that they were so feared in the city centre in traditional

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<sup>101</sup> And even for me with more social mobility, it has been an arduous process of finally ‘leaving the field’.

<sup>102</sup> Civil enforcers are a new form of policing which has emerged alongside urban regeneration processes. Civil enforcers do not have the same training as Police officers. They are also paid less and have less powers than an actual officer. However they wear uniforms very similar to police officers, particularly the high visibility jackets and often detain people for stop and searches to be done by actual officers.

understandings of ‘matter out of place’ (Douglas 1966).<sup>103</sup> This spatial segregation of race between the ‘inner-city’ and the ‘city centre’ has been discussed by various theorists such as Caldeira (Caldeira 2005). By considering the history of the perceived need for building “fortified enclaves” and gated communities in Sao-Paulo, Brazil to provide safe housing for white Brazilians, Caldeira explains how favelas served to further segregate the presence of black people outside black areas. These “fortified enclaves” or in Mike Davis’s terms neighborhoods of the “fortress city” (Davis 1992) or gated communities are a result of what Setha Low describes as results of discourses of urban fear (Low 2003). GCG members were perfectly aware of how their presence contributed to this urban fear and interpreted their presence in city centers as a “fuck you” to “the authorities” and the world of “legit”. Sharon Zukin illustrates how the presence of black people in city centres becomes normalized in roles of servicing white people, such as serving in restaurants or as cleaners (Zukin 2003). Although Zukin is describing the US context, as Goldsmith successfully argues, in terms of producing racially segregated spatial orders, US urban contexts have globalizing effects on European ones and the similarities of urban segregation in the US and UK make such comparisons useful (Goldsmith 2000). GCG members were not present as cleaners, servicing restaurants or other as they described them, “shit jobs” (see also (Pryce 1979)). Since they were not in the city centre in expected roles of service, they were therefore seen to be in the classic sense, matter out of place (Douglas 1966) and therefore dangerous. And the Wyke lads say that they loved this. To not love this, or to desire ‘going legit’ was considered a rejection of the group, damaging to the brittle senses of trust by preferring to attempt social mobility – which they saw as a futile endeavour. Older people told me that when they were younger they felt as though they were thrown into joining; once they had it was difficult to leave. This is not to support some notion that there is an autonomous cycle of their own ‘culture of poverty’ (Lewis 1996(1966)) (for a critique see Goode and Eames 1996) but more that they

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<sup>103</sup> It does not affect the levels of fear felt by other people that the actual criminal acts that Wyke lads commit are minimal in the city centre in comparison to other enterprises, mainly restricted to ‘theft to order’ (when someone will offer to pay a certain amount for a particular item in advance and then someone, usually junior members, will steal the item for a pre-arranged fee) matters little.

were continually and systematically excluded from a whole set of cultural practices in a social world to which they were refused entry; to attempt to later enter such a political, economic and social world was not only risking failure, but also risked the emotional protection that the public rejection of that world provided, having to accept a position of victims of symbolic and systemic violence.<sup>104</sup> For Zacc it became difficult to maintain his public views with private ones. Zacc increasingly opposed planned activities or stated a view that diverged from the dominant views held by the group. The response would ordinarily have been implying someone is effeminate and homosexual or taunts that they would rather be sleeping with a male gang member, implying someone had ‘lost the balls’ and the very serious consequences of this accusation within this homophobic group. With Zacc the taunt transformed into him was “spending too much time with two toke T”. The Wyke distrust of Zacc expressing views considered too legitimate was overcome by relating to me, someone who belonged to both the social categories.<sup>105</sup>

I often attended parties from the ‘legit world’ of “students” and felt awkward when people recounted adventures in Moss Side to fellow young professionals or postgraduates. This recoil came perhaps from my own fears of “third-worlding at home” (Koptiuch 1991). For many young home owners the fashion of chatting about how house prices had gone up, what work they had done to the house themselves, trips to Ikea and great finds on eBay, also included what prospects of improvement the area had to be “the next Chorlton”. Moss Side became an increasingly attractive adventure onto the property ladder. Clear parallels can be drawn with gentrification literature (see for just a few of the examples Butler 1997, Cameron 2003, Davidson and Lees 2005, Hackworth and Smith 2001, Mace, Hall, and Gallent 2007, Massey 2005, Newman and

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<sup>104</sup> I rely upon Bourdieu for symbolic violence and Žižek for systemic violence.

<sup>105</sup> This role of acting as a negotiator was more significant for Roman. Having grown in years and hierarchy of the gang, he decided to ‘go legit’ after the murder of his nephew, as he said in the previous chapter. On several occasions over the last four years, when disputes occurred amongst younger people, parents would ring Roman and me up to try and dissuade people from retaliation attacks. Views that were too close to those of dominant society, which could not be expressed by others, were more accepted from us than would be acceptable from within the immediate group. And also than those belonging completely in the ‘legit world’ such as police officers, teachers and so forth.

Wyly 2006).<sup>106</sup> “Student” attempts to bridge differences were met with ridicule from the Wyke lads, due perhaps to the pressures of displacement, both symbolic and actual, as a result of regeneration policy. To choose to live in Moss Side, was taken not as flattery but as antagonism or as Zacc put it, “taking the piss”. As Scott points out, “illegibility, then, has been and remains a reliable resource for political autonomy” (Scott 1998:54). Often such illegibility of cultural practices made it difficult for “students” to engage in local practices. For instance buying meat from a halal butcher.<sup>107</sup> Whilst of course Muslims used them, many other residents did too, for the price and quality of the meat. The meat was stored in trays which appeared to people not familiar with these butchers as unclean; it was not pre-packaged, a customer decided exactly how much of which piece they wanted and how they wanted it sliced, and the butcher will did exactly that, wiping his hands on his bloody lab coat as he went. How much was charged depended on how fresh the customer thought the meat was, how good it looked, how much you bought and your personal relationships. To people who do not have the knowledge of local systems, the breaking of almost any state set health and safety regulation, the incomprehensible pricing systems, limited English, seemed not only unhygienic but unfathomable in comparison to the clean aisles of the supermarket, where the meat is cleaned, wrapped, placed on a tray, and wrapped again with a clear £2.99 price-tag printed on the label. But for the people using the local system, there was no confusion and indeed was preferable to alternatives such as the supermarket.<sup>108</sup> Another such example (and there are many) is when a man around the age of twenty-eight came to the local Rastafarian church and music venue to listen to a famous reggae artist. He tried to chat with Totts at the bar. Totts did speak but whether to regain approval of the group, or through genuine disdain for the man, when he got back to the table of friends, he imitated the mans middle class voice saying “This music is really banging”. The group proceeded to ridicule the man. I later pointed out the contradiction to Totts

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<sup>106</sup> But as I argued in chapter one, urban regeneration is different to gentrification, although it shares some common features such as displacement.

<sup>107</sup> (meat slaughtered according to Islamic doctrine)

<sup>108</sup> However, the lack of a supermarket is one of the ways in which Moss Side is measured as deprived in the index of multiple deprivation (discussed in chapter 3); deprived economically, which is then conflated with socially and also morally as discussed in the third chapter.

complaint of “students” not attending local events due to irrational fear, whilst ridiculing their presence. It seemed important to GCG members to maintain difference; as though by excluding themselves, they were exempt from social exclusion. By perpetuating the mythology surrounding them, they felt control over interpretations of them.<sup>109</sup> Whilst it offered a form of emotional defence against external and dominant views of individuals in the area, the claiming of the rules in a game in which you are bound to lose, seems a small victory. It is as though others may have built the walls of the exclusion, but by wallpapering them they can appear to be their own.

### **And so ...**

By considering how Wyke lads responded to changes in Moss Side that were the result of regeneration I wanted to explain the frustrations they experienced. In this chapter, I hoped to illustrate how and why GCG members attempted to maintain recognition as “Moss Side gangstas”. I wanted to describe the difficulties they faced as a result of social exclusion and how their own maintenance of a reified other “the Moss Side gangster” made their own exclusion easier to bear – “wallpapering their own confinement”. I wanted to show the difficulty Wyke lads had of being “a Moss Side gangsta” when Moss Side was changing to be a place that “students” were increasingly present. By developing strategies to exclude “students” and developing their ideas of being the excluder rather than excluded, they avoided being hurt by their exclusion. It seemed that it was particularly the exclusion from social mobility that affected them. This may have been since other forms of exclusion were ameliorated by gang alternatives, such as economic activities or using gang hierarchy as an alternative means for increasing political recognition within Moss Side, however they could not gain the social mobility that “students” had available to them. To Wyke lads, “students” with the availability of mobility deciding to stay in Moss Side seemed particularly unfair and a threat to their

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<sup>109</sup> Wherever I went in Britain, when I got asked where I live, it was always followed with a remark about how violent Moss Side is or was. My reply was always, ‘It’s not as bad as everyone says, it only affects you if you’re involved with it’ despite the knowledge I had of the areas practises. My own senses of belonging mean that I feel I cannot betray the area to outsiders. Of course, the act of writing ethnography is not excluded from these feelings. It has been problematic for me to come to the decision of what to include or not to include. This is particularly the case for the final chapter.

ability to maintain their idea that it was they who rejected the views of the rest of society rather than it was they that were rejected. The thesis now continues by describing a situation in which Moss Side residents found ways to mediate the changes of regeneration, through following the transformation of a radio station 'from pirate to private'.

## Chapter Five

### **From Pirate to Private: A moment of Regeneration**

“Our vision is for inner South Manchester to become "The Living City", comprising successful, well managed neighbourhoods, a sustainable housing market, and attractive centres that support a full range of shops and community facilities.

The Living City will be made up of strong, cohesive communities, which are well connected and have access to excellent educational and employment opportunities.”

Excerpt from the South Regeneration Strategic Framework  
(ManchesterPartnership 2004)

In previous chapters I considered what informs urban regeneration policy, how individuals engaged in regeneration practises to learn ‘self-governance’, how people came to understand their position within regeneration policy and practice, and in the previous chapter I considered how gangs resisted the regeneration of Moss Side. Whilst it is the next chapter that considers specifically the ‘phantasmatic’<sup>110</sup> qualities of the Vision of regeneration policy, this chapter has the difficult task of presenting an example of regeneration taking place. Having been tempted after reading Giroux’s call to identify moments of neoliberalism (Giroux 2004), to find a moment of regeneration, I attempt here to describe how the often-intangible process of regeneration happens. As a result, this chapter is ethnographic, drawing upon the literature from previous chapters to illustrate the process of regeneration in an entire example over seven years.<sup>111</sup> I am also purposefully ambivalent about my own

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<sup>110</sup> I borrow Agamben’s term here as it helps describe the intangibility of the concepts and discourses which the Vision depends upon - which avoid fixity and dissolves upon attempts to contact (Agamben 1993:23).

<sup>111</sup> A problem with regeneration literature is the limited contact (often only within regeneration contexts) and short durations of study. By considering the changes in Radio over a period of 7 years, a better understanding of the overall change that occurs through regeneration can be understood.

position between researcher and researched, regenerator and regenerated.<sup>112</sup>

This is to illustrate how ambiguous these positions were.

Despite the Wyke lads and GCG's resistances to the changes of urban regeneration I discussed in the last chapter, Moss Side was transforming and had changed significantly over the 7 years of my involvement in the area. The Moss Side where GCG members claimed to have "ruled the streets" increasingly reached the Vision of the "Living City" described above. When I pointed out how things which would have once been unacceptable to Wyke Lads (such as "students" walking around with iPods and bags obviously used for transporting laptops, not paying attention at cash points and so forth)<sup>113</sup> were ever more occurring I was increasingly given the answer "well, that's not *proper* Moss Side". In "Dropping anchor, setting sail", through questioning why it is that "Black British" seems to be an oxymoron, whereas "Black American" does not, Jaqueline Nassy Brown explores the importance of place on racial identity formation. She considers the way Liverpool plays a central role in black identity and racial identity formation for who she describes as "Liverpool Born Black". She does this by considering the "mutual constitution of spatial and racial subjectivities" (Nassy-Brown 2005:5). Nassy Brown scrutinizes how place becomes a vehicle of power and how Liverpool as a specific place offered the basis of rationalizing economic inequalities by "Liverpool born blacks". She also develops how a view of Liverpool as an exceptional situation is an image that is sustained by insiders and outsiders of the city. Describing how residents see the particular specificity of Liverpool as a place making a particular Blackness, she does not fall into the trap of reifications of place, looking at how the 'local' is already 'global' and vice a versa. As Wade says whilst describing Nassy Brown's work, "seeing a place as different from everywhere else often depends on cutting it out of the network of interconnections that constitute it." (Wade 2007:364). In the same way, GCG

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<sup>112</sup> Which has changed considerably over the seven years and not always in the same direction!

<sup>113</sup> There was a time when spending so much of my time with GCG members meant I actually walked around the streets seeing the way they saw – how someone held their bag, how someone else stood outside a shop, dress codes of the area such as if a persons right or left sock was rolled up to indicate if they were armed or not – to see if they respected the codes of the area, understanding non-compliance as threats to GCG authority.



views on racial identity formation depended upon their views of Moss Side as a place in specificity, “cut” from the connections to wider parts of the city, UK and globe. For them, it was as DV explained in the previous chapter, *their* Moss Side: the place of the riots in 1981 (discussed in chapter 1), the place where previous GCG headquarters were, the name of the street from which the gang was named, the place where “turfs” had been fought over for more than three decades. Whereas many of these places no longer existed in physical terms, they continued to play a large role in people’s constructions surrounding their Moss Side identity. Moss Side’s role in making the identity of GCG was so central that transformations in the area that challenged their views of the area created the need for a secondary distinction of a “proper moss side”. Similarly to Nassy Brown’s work, people inside Moss Side and external images contributed to a view of a dangerous inner-city area of dangerous black gangsters as though this is an exceptional *local* situation - despite that actually, the local is already part of the global and vice versa and how the two maintain each other. Whilst I disagree with their separation of local and global, for GCG members, “students” and other changes in the area were interpreted as a situation where the global entered the local. This created a situation in which, for them, the local had to be defended to the point where failure to defend created a new category of “proper Moss Side”. By creating a “proper Moss Side” the mutual spatial and racial identity formation, particularly the view of “Black Gangsters”, could still exist without the threats of displacement from place. GCG are not “Black Gangsters” but specifically “*Moss Side* Gangsters” and furthermore “*proper Moss Side* Gangsters”.

I had never heard the distinction of *proper* Moss Side before the winter of 2007. The area demarcated by Lloyd street south onwards, had always simply been “Moss Side”. Initiation processes that only took place in Moss Side took place on the streets in question. However, as the results of regeneration became more apparent, a process of secondary elaboration took place in which GCG members changed where *proper Moss Side* was, increasingly restricting it to the Alexander Park Council Estate. The housing estate has always had more place marking activities of GCG take place. The estate is on the border of Hulme and fenced in by the multinational supermarket ASDA. Three stories

high flats with very small windows effectively wall the estate in where actual boundary walls cease. There are few roads in and few roads out; a crescent road that runs through the estate links most of the roads within the estate. Although there were only a few random attacks on people, it was quite easy to end up in the wrong place at the wrong time or to anger the wrong person. Unless a person had a particular reason to go in, it was unlikely they would. Transport in and out of the estate was limited. No buses ran through (although they ran on the main roads either side), taxis regularly refused to pick me up and it was unwise to leave a car or bike there unless attended by locals or with the appropriate “tag”.<sup>114</sup> The relevance of “tagging” my vehicle became apparent whilst sat on a bench in a relatively affluent area of Rusholme. I had organised a voluntary sector “Community Event” and arriving early, I decided to have a cigarette and call my friend. Two young men (around the age of 19) first grabbed my phone and smashed it on the floor saying it was a “shit phone”.<sup>115</sup> I held my bike against me as a shield, ready to unbalance them by pushing as they pulled if they produced their knives. Then I punched one in the face during a verbal fight, they got on their bikes to leave with haste. As they did so, one of them shouted back to me “If you’re from Moss Side, you should stay in Moss Side”. My bike (although expensive and valuable) was not tagged as I saw no need.<sup>116</sup> Swearing Zacc to secrecy from the others (I feared what GCG may do as a retaliation) I asked what the attack on me had meant. He told me that the park in question was the border between the GCG and rivals LSC. To sit on a bench, on a phone with an expensive bike, smoking and not paying attention or being afraid, was taken as a challenge. Zacc advised me to put senior colours on my bike as was fitting for my higher associations. This would prevent these “petty low rankers” from “messing with the wrong person”.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Tags are markings often with associated colours which represent a members rank and gang. Tags are often on jackets, on scarves and painted on bikes or vehicles.

<sup>115</sup> This was probably to prevent me calling anyone rather than the lack of monetary value.

<sup>116</sup> Given the GCG codes it was doubtful at this point that anyone would have stolen it, or even attempted to – which was why this incident shocked me.

<sup>117</sup> I chose not to tag my bike in anyway and was disturbed that even a rival gang LSC could identify me as GCG, I still wonder how they knew me.

Unsurprisingly, the Vision seemed incongruent with the daily-lived experiences of residents in Moss Side. And yet, things *were* changing. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, changes occurred. For example, one Jamaican café was replaced by another, with practically the same menu and in the same building. The decoration changed little, although the name of the café changed from an individual's name (the previous owner) to “Caribbean Sunshine”. The previous owners were involved in a bit of minor money laundering and were loosely associated to members of GCG. A local businessman and shopkeeper ‘Uncle’, who bought many houses in Moss Side during the early 1980’s, owned the building of the café. At this time, due to the riots,<sup>118</sup> houses were difficult to sell and people offered a ‘buy one house – get one house free’ marketing strategy to sell up and get out. The previous café was a place of various social interactions and discussions to do with lower level activities of GCG; such as cannabis drug deals, taking “rob to order”<sup>119</sup> jobs on, sharing information and so forth. The increase in policing as a result of regeneration strategies meant Uncle became worried about his involvement with the café.<sup>120</sup> This is another of the indirect results of regeneration strategies that makes it difficult to perceive. In addition to increased policing, Uncle felt that new residents (“students”) were more likely to “cause trouble” by reporting activities not adhering to the “no grassing” rules of the area. Uncle tripled the rent on the building. The café shut down and later “Caribbean Sunshine” replaced it. This new café may seem in statistics, in urban regeneration literature, or even to shorter durations of ethnography to be pretty much the same sort of café; serving the same menu of relatively cheap Afro-Caribbean food. But it became devoid of the social interactions that took place there. Like the change in name, it transformed from a place of personal relations to a less dangerous, multi-culturally ‘attractive’ café – a little bit of “Caribbean Sunshine” in an otherwise grey Manchester day, part of the attractive living quarters for the city. Although it may appear as an example of economic regeneration a social transformation occurred, supporting my claim that urban regeneration requires much more

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<sup>118</sup> Described in the first chapter

<sup>119</sup> As described in the previous chapter, this is when a customer will ask for a specific item that one of the Wyke lads will then steal for an agreed fee.

<sup>120</sup> This is despite very little actually illegal activity taking place within the café itself. However its association to GCG meant that it would be under suspicion.

social intervention than gentrification models of governance, to the point where it should be considered a method of state directed social transformation.

Hartley points out (Hartley 2000) that radio has a large role to play in the establishment of democracy and civic participation, coining the word “radiocracy”. Martin Spinelli (2000) reminds us that this use of radio to promote a certain set of values is not new. He describes how, in the US context of the 1930s, the development of radio happened through state promotion and regulation, and how the “surrogate space” of radio broadcasts continues to be an “essential element in the rhetoric of democracy and equality” (Spinelli 2000: 270). And “1) each emergent medium is instilled with hopes of initiating utopian democracy, providing for universal and equal education, and bringing a sense of participation in a community; 2) investment in these hopes is encouraged by those in positions of cultural authority and political power and ultimately exploited for commercial gain; and 3) the rhetoric of these promises obfuscates any real understanding of the material place of the emergent medium in society and ultimately nullifies any potential for social change the emergent medium might have had.” (Spinelli: 2000: 268). Spinelli examines the role of emerging media in a search for the fantasy of a utopian democracy – which seems to inform the Vision of regeneration. Whilst for the Pirate DJs involved JoyFM was a ‘one-up’ on “the council” finally gaining legitimate recognition in identity politics, it is probably better understood as an example of what Winseck and Cuthbert describe as “pragmatic democracy” where power is expressed as a conciliation (Winseck and Cuthbert 1997) and also part of the wider release of power from the “BBC model of paternalistic nation-state broadcasting” (Buckley 2000: 181) to “community broadcast licenses”. As the second chapter described, one of the aims of regeneration policy is to redefine Moss Side as a ‘self-governing community’ or a “well managed neighbourhood” (see above). The transformation in JoyFM is an outstanding example of a regenerated social institute in Moss Side, it not only became legitimate, but also legitimating, spreading the values of regeneration and advertising the Vision – indeed our funding depended upon it and we were coerced into broadcasting Home Office adverts, allocating certain hours for

Greater Manchester Police programmes and so forth. My own culpability<sup>121</sup> became clear when first considering what happened with the development of Joy FM. This ‘moment’ of regeneration was actually over seven years of my participation, which is still ongoing as I write this. I now attempt to summarise this moment in one chapter.

### **Pirate to Private: Background to becoming a ‘legitimate’ radio station**

I had already known some of the DJs for a couple of years when the opportunity of ‘going legit’ came to my attention in 2004. As previous chapters illustrated, my relationships with individuals often allowed the mediation to ‘being legit’ and despite their suspicion of all things ‘council’, they were interested in being recognised. Knowing the people involved in a variety of contexts allowed me to notice their reflexive shifting in opinion according to situation. Pirate radio stations have been part of Moss Side for at least 50 years. The reasons people gave for this varied, although what people ‘outside’ Moss Side<sup>122</sup> thought mattered little. Everyone agreed that it was the audience ‘in’ Moss Side that mattered. My first experience of the radio, although I knew little of it at the time, was in my first house in Rusholme in 2002. I could not listen to any other radio station than “Itchy Bum Radio” from the bathroom. I later learnt this was because none other than Roman had been transmitting it illegally from my street. Many stations have come and gone. As rivalries move and arguments shift power relations, stations change. There was a general understanding that newer people involved should respect the “old timers”. The specifics around each particular dispute were complex and deep set, involving gang alliances, kinship ties, people crossed in money transactions, people seen to have some how sold out – either through music events or through “Multi FM” a multicultural community broadcast station in a nearby area. Misunderstandings, disputes, conflicts, power struggles, arguments and fights were commonplace. Yet amongst this brittle trust there was immense loyalty. There were a variety of ways in which the group sustained loyalty and hierarchy. For example, the pirate stations were usually broadcast from one of the typical red brick terraces

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<sup>121</sup> Considering I was opposed to many regeneration practises at the time.

<sup>122</sup> Not to say that this distinction of inside or outside Moss Side is clear or that it means that there are no inter-connections between.

of the area, moving venue from time to time to avoid detection by the authorities.<sup>123</sup> Since it is easy to make excuses for carrying around CDs, records and players, I was told it is only the radio transmitter that secures a conviction. It was therefore the job of the newest member to transport the transmitter. However, concessions were made for those with criminal records, on probation or even researchers with a bad knee.<sup>124</sup> Power relations within the radio context did not have to echo those outside. Individuals' talents were not overriding, but certainly counter balanced other hierarchies. A good DJ does not have to be a good gang member. I found that the suspension of other rules meant problems outside the radio context could be addressed more easily than in other social contexts. A particular phone-in programme I conducted about homophobia illustrated this to me; the suspended space of anonymity in Pirate FM allowed an expression of opinions that would not otherwise have been accepted. Although I had spoken to Wyke lads about homophobia on a variety of occasions, these views differed from the phone-in which I conducted after an individual was stabbed to death when the group found out he was gay. Although Pirate FM played lots of songs with homophobic content – such as the very famous and popular T.O.K. (a Jamaican group playing in the genre referred to as dancehall music) song which starts by asking people to “set rules, set laws” (referring to ‘street laws’) and advocating that everyone “burn out” (setting a house alight) the “chi chi man” (homosexual) or “Rat tat tat every chi chi man dem haffi get flat” (every gay person must get shot down) (T.O.K 1999). The phone-in allowed GCG members to express sympathy with the victim's family and even to the victim. This would have been unacceptable in other contexts. Both Roman and Ian had regular shows on the radio to talk about problems between gangs. As Roman said, it was important for him to be able to contribute to, as he put it, a healing process that he describes below.

### **What it means to *us*: Reforming notions of a “Black Community”.**

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<sup>123</sup> Although there was one particular venue which was repeatedly used.

<sup>124</sup> I was in the situation of being the most logical person to transport the transmitter since I was the newest member, had no previous criminal record and would be least likely to experience a stop and search from the police. However, since I had recently smashed my knee and torn my ligaments, I was let off from this expectation. Furthermore, there is perhaps the gender division of responsibility since I was also the only woman present (on that particular evening. There were other women involved; although the majority were men).

Pirate FM cut across the diverse and loosely termed group who regularly referred to themselves as Moss Side's Black community. As Amit, Joseph, Baumann and others have warned, community is an easily reified concept evoked for different political ends (Amit 2002, Bauman 2001, Joseph 2002) and as Fraser warns this is particularly the case for recognition politics (Fraser 2000). 'Moss Side's Black Community' was invoked and re-invented during the regeneration of Pirate FM so this chapter also illustrates how regeneration transformed community (with a little c) to Community – in its politicised and reified form, that fit in with the Vision of “well managed neighbourhoods”. During a meeting, a Manchester City Council (MCC) worker from Moss Side made a reference to an event advertised solely through Pirate FM and word of mouth. She knew that the only other people who would understand this would be other listeners and so part of the 'us' – the imagined community of 'Moss Siders'. From my experience of her, she would not have endangered her position in legitimate spheres for other Moss Side practises. She preferred to distance herself from most people in Moss Side. With an undisguised distain, she often explained issues as “excuses for failure” and expressed the familiar attitude of “well if I can do it, why can't they?” Despite this desire to distance herself, when it came to matters of the Radio, she aligned herself with the 'us'.

Older members, who had been involved with earlier stations during the 1960s, told me pirate stations were just about hearing “decent music” (such as DJ Bug);<sup>125</sup> “decent” for Bug meant music like socca or calypso. For Bug, the pirate station was an accessory to fun. He fondly remembered how DJs also offered entertainment at 'shebeens'.<sup>126</sup> Residents would often reminisce about these shebeens and explained that they stopped after the first wave of riots created a “crack down” of policing in the area. Others say that once they were allowed to go into pubs and clubs (many still remember the 'No dogs, Blacks or Irish' signs) there was no need for such parties anymore. The most missed venue of this era is undoubtedly the Reno club, which everyone recalls with a great fondness, for good music, somewhere to go, where people would 'mix'

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<sup>125</sup> Sadly “DJ Bug” passed away soon after Joy FM launched.

<sup>126</sup> Which were illegal drinking and smoking parties in the area that took place from the 1950's to the 1980's.

with each other, from wherever they were from. For the people who became involved in radio during the 80's (such as Roman, Ian and others of this generation), the stations were more about having a means of disseminating local knowledge, letting people know what was going on, good and bad; locations of parties and people killed in shootings. This local information service became particularly important in defending themselves against the National Front (NF) and police in the face of the riots. During this time, the hugely successful pirate station of the time was raided by over 500 police officers. This was despite one of the DJs being told by the chief of police that they would not raid the station and if they had to, it would be done with minimal force, with prior warning if the DJs agreed to come quietly, which they all agreed to do, in order to avoid using force. Many DJs were brutally injured and one was actually killed in the process.<sup>127</sup> I was told "it is a matter of having the right to our own identity, something they've consistently tried to prevent us having. With 'Soleil'<sup>128</sup> we said that the only reason we have to do this, is because you won't let us *hear ourselves, speak for ourselves or be ourselves*. We told them, if they were gonna bust us, we'd go come with them willingly, but they'd never silence Moss Side, it might have taken 30 years, but we've got that station in the end" ("DJ P"). For this generation during the riots, the radio was about trying to help the community.

"We needed radio, to survive. In them days we didn't have no mobile phone like dem kids flashing now, something going down, boom, on the phone, everyone there straight, easy (referring to the need for other gang members to get somewhere quickly when a situation of violence or potential violence occurs). Then, we didn't know haffa time what really happening, me remember having to get me bike fast man, riding roun' passing message roun' when me was ickle boy [grins]. [Face becomes serious] We had to stay together back den, all kind of ting going down; you know, all dem "GCG" dis, "DD" dat. Dem bad as police,

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<sup>127</sup> I have been asked by the DJs to mention this particular event to illustrate the long history of trying to get a Moss Side station.

<sup>128</sup> Also a pseudonym



maan, aint 'dem'. It 'us'... me involve too, me admit and me face me responsibility, we all done stuff... Radio like we stepping in, try an' heal some of that. We trying give some'ting back, trying to get some'ting good from all dis shit.”

At the time of the riots, the radio let people know where others were being attacked in order for aid to get to the location in time to help defend against the NF or police. It also, as it does now, let people know of deaths and funerals in the area. Younger people, such as JewelBee (who played an integral role in achieving the OFCOM license) and Miles saw radio as a resistance movement, with a “why shouldn’t we have our own station?” attitude, emphasising Black rights.

"I'm just tired of it all you know, the Craigs, the Roshauns [rival Pirate DJs whose personal argument disrupted a meeting to the point where I called the meeting to a halt as violence erupted]; I just don't see why it always has to be like that with us. Why do we always have to have all this crap behind what we do...*I know my stuff, I know how to broadcast, and I've got the qualifications and worked hard for them.* And I've got to work in some stupid call centre selling broadband? I mean, it's got nothing to do with what I want to do. If the BBC isn't going to give me work because I'm Black, then I want us to have a station of our own... I'm just sick of it T, being black doesn't mean we can't do it.”<sup>129</sup>

JewelBee believed that it was her Blackness that prevented her from getting a job at the BBC. Something that all the different people involved with the Moss Side radio project agreed with is that they wanted an alternative to dominant voices in radio. They wanted to be able to hear programs that they related to throughout the day, rather than allocated hours. They wanted ‘a voice’, a

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<sup>129</sup> JewelBee is in her mid 20's and is incredibly bright with a diploma in presenting from the metropolitan university and a half hour show on the Multicultural station.

matter much politicised (see Tacchi 2008 for an example of this) but which relates strongly for the need to be recognised. Whilst no one had ever actually applied to OFCOM for a license, over the years various approaches had been made to the local council for a legal Moss Side radio station. The most that had been achieved were short-term restricted service licenses (RSL) lasting a maximum of 3 months but usually only a month and used during various public campaigns by the voluntary sector, be that the carnival or a gun amnesty. During these months the pirate station would cease, mainly as many of the presenters were working on the RSL. One local councillor who has been a Labour councillor for Moss Side for around 20 years, had used Radio as a central part of his campaign for many years, seeing that the issue of having a legally recognised radio station was at the heart of the social group identifying themselves as the Black community in Moss Side, he himself being Black. It was generally felt residents that radio was “central” and it was somehow “the council” that was intentionally preventing a legal station.

### **2004 and the ERDF**

In 2004, through work in the voluntary sector and contact with the Regeneration team, I came to hear of £60,000 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) money being allocated for Community Radio. The allocation was being organized, unofficially, through Manchester City Council, since they informed the individual groups to put bids in. The Moss Side Community Forum members (in the organisation’s infancy) arranged a meeting to discuss this allocation. In my naivety to regeneration practices, I simply booked a room, invited everyone; ward co-ordination, anti-violence mothers groups in the voluntary sector, MCC’s Cultural strategy team, the head of regeneration *and* everyone I knew involved in Moss Side radio. Although I invited the head of regeneration I did not expect him to attend. The invitation was more a matter of courtesy – he would have expected an invitation to refuse.<sup>130</sup> However the head of regeneration and 3 others from the “regen team” in addition to the Cultural Strategy Team all attended the meeting. I cannot say exactly why so many regeneration team members came. However, I had

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<sup>130</sup> Refer to chapter two for the power relations between regeneration team workers to other council workers and the voluntary sector.

noticed that when a meeting was problematic or disruptive to the aims of regenerations they were more likely to attend. At the time I was new to regeneration practises and unaware of the importance of consultations for validity rather than actual reformation of policy.<sup>131</sup> I was equally unaware of the depth and history behind rival radio groups and the relationship to other conflicts in the area, nor how much individual and collective identity centered around the radio.<sup>132</sup>

The meeting had around 50 people attending. This was very large numbers for a meeting of this type in Moss Side. I set chairs and tables around the room, but inevitably the asymmetrical power conflict was expressed spatially. The MCC representatives sat on one side of the room and the people involved in Radio in Moss Side sat on the other. During the meeting it emerged that a multicultural radio station from a neighbouring ward, Multi FM, had been earmarked to extend their broadcasting area to include Moss Side and be awarded the £60,000 to improve the existing station and create training programmes; Moss Side would be allocated 5 hours of air time a week. The head of Multi FM clearly saw the meeting as a chance to validate allocating this money. People began to shout at each other, this was not enough air time, “why was this shit station getting money for something we can do better”, “we don't need them to do it for us, we speak for ourselves”, “it's the same old crap over and over again, what's it got to do with them”, “if that money is for Moss Side, it should go to Moss Side, not this multicultural station in a neighbouring ward”, “they do not represent us”; tensions were high, fists slammed on tables, arms were waved towards MCC workers. Trying to mediate meant I just ‘got it in the neck’ from both sides. Eventually (after 3 and a half hours of chaotic jostling ending at 10pm) I called the meeting to an end, not really sure what had been decided or what to write in the minutes. After the meeting the head of regeneration said to me:

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<sup>131</sup> See second chapter

<sup>132</sup> The discussions that took place during the later regeneration of the radio station are not discussions that would have taken place in my presence in 2003. It has took a lot of time to gain the level of trust and friendships that I have in Moss Side and I'm grateful to all of the people who gave me their trust.

“You see, this is why we just don’t go through this process in this way. I know you’re trying to do things here and it’s admirable, but it’s a very different ward to Rusholme (where I was working as a Community Development worker).”<sup>133</sup>

As I left the building, Roman and Ian stopped me and said they had better walk me out. I jokingly said, “Why? Do you think Roshoun’s going to be waiting for me in the car park?”<sup>134</sup> When I got into the car park a group of people was actually waiting for me. Accompanied with Roman and Ian I went over. More shouting ensued, people were pushing each other around, but things stayed *relatively* calm. It was explained to me that it was not me they were angry at, just the situation – a situation that I did not understand.

Roshoun: “You don’t get it T, I’m not having a go at you. It’s just we been doing this for years now. Them thinking we stupid, like we know nothing on what’s really going down, like we gonna keep ‘em nose clean and do what ‘em they say”

T: “Ok, but what I don’t get is, why not just take the 5 hours for now and see what comes up later on, it can’t hurt showing that we’ve got some experience when something comes up later.”

R: [really angry at this point] “We already got years and years experience. We know more about running a station than any of them. You want me do them 5 hours free, them rating go up, and then them say later down the road,

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<sup>133</sup> The meeting resulted in adding confusion, making legible opposing views, disrupting the process of regeneration. To regeneration workers, I was merely causing unnecessary conflict. In this instance I believe that the importance people from Moss Side placed on achieving their own station meant that the issue of a Moss Side station was in practical terms too difficult to deal or ‘engage’ with. Furthermore, in the Head of Regenerations’ statement there is the implication that it would be better if the residents of Moss Side were more like those of Rusholme. Also that whilst it was ‘admirable’ (something I found incredibly patronising) to think that there may be a dialogue between ‘the council’ and ‘us’ it was not in practicality feasible.

<sup>134</sup> I had had a particular argument with Roshoun during the meeting when he invoked racist language to claim that no White person could represent Moss Side, they cannot understand Black Music, and that neither could any Somali, as he believed the greed of this race meant that would probably try to sell them back into slavery.

we not needing no separate station for Moss Side, look me station rating high enough.”

Roshaun of course was right. He was frustrated that his skills were not being recognised by the MCC. This frustration echoed in many other spheres of life in Moss Side. At the time, whilst I felt strongly opposed to the regeneration process in general and engaged in a very cynical participation, I still believed that consultations were a sign of the “Bottom-up” intentions of Manchester’s historic Labour City Council. Roshaun, with more experience than I, realised that there was little point in attending the meeting and said to me he only came because it was me this time, not someone from the council. My raising of false hopes, unintentional as it was, is of course ethically ambiguous. The meeting had ultimately only served to increase fragmentary differences amongst DJs who fought over jobs that did not exist. I also served to endorse MCC Regeneration teams’ views, which, over the years, became more and more apparent through a variety of informal statements and exclusion practices: the underlying assumption, it seemed, was that working with the Black community in Moss Side was too difficult and risky. Too many views were exposed, even under the controls of the carefully constructed consultation process. By law, consultations need to be done. There are guidelines for how this must be done and over how long a period of time. As I discussed in the second chapter, this is done under very careful circumstances and orchestrated with great care. During these consultation events, local governing structures (be that public, voluntary or private) must delicately balance between: working on behalf of ‘the community’ taking in their views and accounts; not appearing as though they have no professional ideas of their own or no role to play (as they maintain their positions of power); find ways to convince ‘the (often very suspicious) community’ that what is in the interests of private companies is also what is in the best interest for them; try to make ‘self-governing’ individuals whilst still holding onto their roles in governance; carefully construct means by which favourable views can be expressed but controversy is less likely to be created allowing an agreement to be easily made; try to convince people that a retracting welfare state requiring volunteers to take up the positions of previously paid posts is in the best interests of ‘the community’ and so forth.

The task is clearly not an easy one, yet it is one that often falls to the unpaid voluntary sector; perhaps so if the in the likelihood that the process does break down, the culpability does not lie with the public sector. As the head of regeneration said, with all these difficulties “this is why we just don’t go through this process in this way”; particularly since favourable views had not been expressed and controversy had been created. Although Atkinson and Bridge request not seeing the process as an ‘a priori’ bad thing (Atkinson and Bridge 2005) and suspending my presumptions and value judgments in a grounded theory anthropological approach, trying to see multiple sides and angles, avoiding the dichotomous chasm of “us and them” camps which have arisen from being in the same structural position as the participants of my project and my consequently ambivalent position of researcher and researched – my temporary faith in at least the consultation aspect of regeneration dissolved, I became a cynical participant of regeneration practices due to the way situations repeatedly played themselves out. It seems little wonder then, that people such as Roshaun lost their tempers at the repeated claims of ‘consultation’ in asymmetric power relations which meant that such consultations were better thought of as letting people know what is expected of them.<sup>135</sup>

The record of this regular Moss Side Forum meeting re-appeared, transformed, made legible to be included into Manchester City Council documents as a successful consultation event where many DJs and residents of Moss Side were present. The high attendance was in itself taken as support of the plans to have Multi FM extend its broadcasting remit to the Moss Side ward. I became aware of this transformed form of the meeting through a document leaked to me by someone who I worked with in Rusholme Forum. The organisation SCCN<sup>136</sup> tried to oppose this transformation by pointing out that this one event held by the forum could not be used as a consultation event and did not fulfill the criteria of a consultation process. I pointed out that on every consultation event

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<sup>135</sup> Indeed, I often thought that the work of regeneration that indirect regenerators, or “community development workers” (as I was at the time) do would be easier if this were the publicly stated aim, rather than the pretence of ‘consulting the community’.

<sup>136</sup> See chapter 2

I had done up to this point, there had been a written document evaluating the event – there was none for this meeting as it was not a consultation but simply the regular fortnightly forum meeting. Attempts to oppose the misuse of the event were futile; plans had already gone too far to change. The award to Multi FM was made before the meeting took place. Furthermore, the negative views of the meeting were irrelevant to the high numbers of attendance. And so life carried on. No one was really surprised the money went to Multi FM. And my naivety was forgiven, obviously aware of the uneven playing field, I was absolved for having some faith in at least the intentions of the 'bottom up' process, if not the success. It was understood as another example of how 'the council' operated, another sign of the overwhelming oppression that made it completely pointless getting involved. I would argue that it was situations like this, in part informed by a prior assumption that Moss Side will inevitably be 'difficult', that leads to the crushing apathy (one could call it alienation) which follows the anger expressed towards what "the council" is doing. This leads to that often-repeated phrase in the area "who knows what they're doing now, better not say too much or they'll move you out to Moston"<sup>137</sup>. But amidst all this apathy and disillusionment, the hope of a legally recognised Moss Side<sup>138</sup> station continued to struggle against the general frustrations, strengthened resolve to continue making Pirate FM work. At the launch of the regenerated and legitimate JoyFM in 2009, this same meeting was invoked as a shared memory by a local councillor who said to me "you see, you remember at the meeting, with all that fighting, I told you, you could do it, you just had to keep trying, from all that mess, and fighting you see, it happened in the end didn't it". Actually what I remember was that he was incredibly oppositional to us and dismissed us as a bunch of pirates.

### **The OFCOM bid to get legit: Negotiating conditions of "Moss Side" and "legit".**

Three years passed, when in 2007, I learned that the state regulatory group, OFCOM (office of communications) was allocating five "community broadcast

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<sup>137</sup> The saying combines the apathy with the fear of repercussions, in this case the threat of displacement to another area of Manchester (an area that is also undergoing significant regeneration).

<sup>138</sup> See the previous chapter for a discussion on recognition politics

station” radio frequencies for the North West region. This included Liverpool, North Wales, Chester, the whole of Manchester and other areas. Equipped with a greater familiarity of rivalries and their origins, histories between individuals involved and relationships to wider social situations in Moss Side, and, on the other hand, much more experience in the regeneration process, I tried again. Since the application had to be made OFCOM, a central regulating body, we could (to some extent at least) bypass local government structures by exploiting the ambiguity of new governing networks.<sup>139</sup> As I was still in touch with Multi FM’s station manager, I asked him about the process of applying. He informed me that the bids took a couple of years, whereas we had three months. I found him incredibly helpful, particularly in explaining the application process of which I had had no previous knowledge or experience. I never felt as though he was set out to prevent the success of the bid, quite the contrary. However, my involvement with him, even to receive advice for success was taken to be a problematic sign of me becoming a ‘turncoat’. The accusation was made directly (although I am sure others may have felt it privately) by someone who had done short RSLs (restricted service license) for the Moss Side carnival. It seemed I had changed ‘sides’ to the legitimate world of the state or ‘the council’ versus everyday Moss Side ‘us’.<sup>140</sup> Preparing for another argumentative session, I held another meeting that expressed the many fragmentary views. During heated discussions, ideas emerged on how ideally a Moss Side station would be; who would be in charge, who would get jobs and so forth. The emerging tensions were the results of over 30 years of personal conflicts between members, concentrated through the lack of agency to be recognised legally. I explained to the group that nobody’s job would be secure. Furthermore, even people not currently involved would be able to apply. Inevitably the response to this was complete uproar – the station was for Moss Side, only people from Moss Side should be on it, otherwise it is just another takeover where 'the council' is cashing in on the ideas of Moss Side and so forth the arguments went. I explained that there is not even a station yet and was completely independent of Manchester City Council. I explained that *if* (and it

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<sup>139</sup> Discussed in chapter 2

<sup>140</sup> See previous chapter.



was a huge if) if the bid was successful they would have to do the work; there were no handouts to get the license. And so the jostling continued.

From the confusion and conflict, two groups emerged; Gloria against Devon, (both of whom were in the third chapter). I stated that I/MSCF (the Moss Side Forum) would equally support both bids (as if the fence is ever an option in these suspicious social sphere). I organised two meetings a week for both groups and supported the early development of the projects for both equally hoping that reconciliation may be possible. The chances of being awarded an OFCOM license were slim; since the award would depend upon a singular “cohesive” concept of a united Black Community (as discussed in the previous chapter, and as Fraser warns of, the politics of recognition often involves such a reification and hypostatizing culture (Fraser 2000)). Two separate bids both claiming to represent the politicised and fantastical homogeneous entity of “the Black Community of Moss Side” would not help. It became increasingly apparent that I would not be able to negotiate between groups. People on Gloria’s team openly stated that there was absolutely no possibility that they would work with Devon; reasons included their opinion on his reputation of being greedy and dishonest, his only true aim being his own self development, and that he had an OFCOM record to do with broadcasting homophobic content on a previous RSL (although this last point of exclusion was perhaps more to do with winning my support than any actual disapproval of homophobia by the group). Devon’s team would not work with Gloria as she was seen to be just a longer arm of “the council”. They said she had forgotten what it meant to be Black and did not really care about the Black struggle anymore, only the development of her own organisation. In their opinion, any attempts at alliances would ultimately be used for her own gains, to monopolise the station promoting her own organisation. It became apparent I was going to have to decide one group to support *and* that both groups intended to utilise me instrumentally for the bid – there was to be no neutrality, or “sitting on the fence”. The suspicious rivalries reached paranoid levels. There was a complete lack of trust between members of each group.

Discussing the radio station's future, expressed views that normally went unsaid, either as there was no need to state them or because they were the unsaid presumptions that are supposed to remain invisible. DJs described themselves, without confusion and without exception, as Black. "Black" to them, usually referred to their belief in biological races. Their belonging to 'the Black Race' was self-evident. Whilst I often pointed out the socio historical production of race as a category (which is inhabited and contested (Omi and Winant 1986)), but to the DJs race was still usually considered a self-evident truth.<sup>141</sup> However during discussions and arguments about the station (what sort of music should be played, who would be allowed to perform and who should be employed and so forth) it became clear that it was not simply a biological 'Black Race' that the DJs invoked as their identity but actually a cultural and complex ethnicity. To both Gloria and Devon's groups, multiculturalism was just a rhetorical device that had to be implemented to get the license. When multiculturalism was evoked during the course of putting the bid together, it was always with a cynical "we'll have to put a bit in about..." or "I guess we should say something about...". Multiculturalism was approached as a device that could be used or a 'hoop to jump' in order to get the license. For those who knew the regeneration phrases of cohesion, diversity and integration, they would be used when MCC people were present. I never heard my DJ friends speak about the importance of integration in other contexts.

I believe that Devon initially utilised 'Blackness'<sup>142</sup> to set in opposition to Gloria<sup>143</sup> and her 'being legit' and 'the council'.<sup>144</sup> However, Devon's desire to exclude all non-Black people<sup>145</sup> became increasingly difficult for me to work

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<sup>141</sup> This chapter aims to give an ethnographic example of the regeneration process and unfortunately does not have the scope to review existing literature on Race.

<sup>142</sup> 'Blackness' as in, what this category represented and meant to the people involved with getting the radio station bid together, rather than an analytical category.

<sup>143</sup> Who's views on African identity were seen by many people saw as inauthentic as described in chapter 3

<sup>144</sup> See previous chapter for 'legit' and chapter one for 'the council'.

<sup>145</sup> In this case his idea of Black referred to anyone with a history of slavery to be able to exclude Africans such as Somali people. Due to the OFCOM bid requirements of clarifications, numbers of target audiences in specific ethnicities and the 'boxing up' that occurred, detailed discussions that took place around ethnicity and it was possible to get clarifications on peoples flexible, ambivalent, context dependant and malleable views on race, ethnicity and their roles in identity.

with – not least of all due the hypocrisy of using an Asian women to create a station which seemed to be entirely made for and of Black men. In an argumentative session, I decided I could not continue supporting Devon. Devon, over the years, learned to moderate his views on race in public meeting settings of ‘regulated freedom’.<sup>146</sup> Our familiarity meant there was little point changing his story to fit mine even if solely to utilise my skills (clearly the aim of both groups). As I described in the third chapter, for Devon, (in an inversion of scientific racism, but driven by concepts of biological racism nonetheless) Black is a separate and superior race with roots in Africa. Devon utilised biological idioms to explain the view that Black genes are stronger than White, the more dominant in comparison to the weak and recessive White alleles. For Devon; Black culture was superior to any other culture since all civilisations emanated from Africa. For him, all religions of today follow five main characteristics that came from an African religion and Africa is an homogenous entity that was divided purposefully to weaken the “Black Race”. This division was done politically as politics is a skill of white man's cunning, whereas actual strength is the Black *man's* gift. His intolerance of Somalis contradicts these beliefs, since according to his theory, Somalis ought to be considered more racially pure and therefore superior to Caribbeans. However, he had an alternate explanation prepared of what ‘Black’ meant (which is shared by Gloria and Vered Amit) that “Black” Describes the constituency of those who have suffered anti-black racial discrimination and who accordingly employ it as a term of political self-description and cultural counter-assertion” (Amit 1996: 163). According to Devon, without slavery in their history, “Somalis did not count”. And, collaborations with ‘the council’ (other than his own) were “still dancing to the slave master’s tune”. It was also, always ‘Blackman’, “the Blackman will defeat these binding shackles”. ‘The Black Woman’ (which he contradictorily saw fit to describe me as on occasions that required my help) to Devon was the “Earth Mother”: the universal carer, lover and giver – to be respected and worshipped (but of course at home). Wherever Devon saw appropriate (or advantageous) he would evoke these various reifications. During the argument that lead to ending my support, I demanded they were

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<sup>146</sup> See Rose 1999 and second chapter.

“more inclusive<sup>147</sup> to Somalis who may like to get involved”. As Downing points out with regard to community broadcasts; “Just because people think their voice is not represented does not mean they are interested in other voices than their own” (Downing 2003: 623). There was a complicated and problematic relationship between African (particularly Somali) and Black (African Caribbean) people in the area. People gave me various local explanations; that Somalis sold the Black community to slavery, they create litter in alleys and make the area smell, bring everyone Black down by their ignorance, they get preferential treatment from the council. Conversely, Somalis often say that Black people are ‘unclean’ in the sense of morally impure, they are all on drugs, they are dangerous and thieves and so forth. Given these conflicts, and particularly Devon’s views, I knew he would not want Somalis on the station. However much I argued with various residents of Moss Side, there was little shifting in opposition from African Caribbean and West Indians to including Somalis living in the area. Opposition to Somalis can be quite serious, such as when a Somali in the local pub stabbed a young African-Caribbean boy. Over 20 African-Caribbean young men surrounded the pub and a whole sequence of retaliations (often on random young Somali men not involved) occurred through the area. The response was exaggerated, much heavier than usual and involved people that were not gangsters. With the increasing time constraints on me to complete the bid, the lack of reconciliation and my differences with Devon’s regarding race, I decided to continue supporting Gloria. Although Devon and I had even managed to negotiate our way through the Abolition of Slavery commemoration work<sup>148</sup> this project seemed central to alleviating senses of social exclusion<sup>149</sup> and I was running out of time to complete the application.

### **Legal Pirates: Maintaining belonging and legitimacy.**

During the many late sessions that followed in order to complete the application bid, I learned many interesting views on what sort of music would

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<sup>147</sup> At the time I was simply using the regeneration term, not questioning what may lie behind it, such as inclusive to what?

<sup>148</sup> as described in Chapter two

<sup>149</sup> Again, I use these terms in the way I did then, representing myself ethnographically – rather than employing them as theoretical terms, but rather how they appear in regeneration.

be used on the radio station. In Maureen Mahon's "right to rock" she explores how a "race based genre separation" is created by musical genres becoming racialised (Mahon 2004). By following the group BRC (Black rockers coalition) she describes the way in which music "was not simply an artistic form...it was a site of ideological and social struggle over the categories and conditions that defined them as African Americans" (Ibid. p16). Mahon describes how although early rock and roll developed from primarily Black American artists in the U.S, by the 1980s record companies began to consider black rock and roll as implausible. Through this framework, she also explores the way in which music that has been racialised as black, is also class based as poor and black. Members of the BRC were in the main part "middle-class" and "college educated" and part of what she describes as "post-liberated generation" (i.e. growing up immediately after the civil rights movement in the 1960s) (ibid. p27). Although Mahon does not describe this in terms of articulation, the combined descriptions of race, class and generation successfully illustrates the way in which race works as an axis of power in articulation with others.

Mahon describes the various ways in which BRC attempted to reconstitute what was considered "authentic" black music. By using Bourdieu's theory on aesthetics and taste groups she explains that "a taste for rock music classifies an African American as someone who has either misunderstood which music is appropriate for his or her consumption or a has deliberately abandoned black culture by investing in what is perceived as a white music form" (Mahon 2000:285). These ideas of "authentic" black music played a large part in the discussions around what shape the radio station would take. Genres such as soca, calypso, reggae, dancehall and so forth were taken as a given. An inter-generational argument surrounded hip-hop and rap where older members said that these genres would not be suitable on a community radio station. It was pointed out that actually many rap artists such as "Public Enemy" had very politically minded lyrics that served as a means to articulate frustrations that young people identified with.

Mahon describes how record companies do not see rock and roll as plausible black music. Although DJs expressed the racialised genre separation that Mahon describes, her focus upon how the BRC attempted to overcome this, sidelines how black people maintained them. The DJs of the radio station, having in the majority come from pirate DJ backgrounds, all expressed what resonates with Paul Gilroy's description of "cultural protectionism" (Gilroy 1993). Situations such as the 2004 ERDF had repeatedly occurred over the 40 years of radio station history in Moss Side. This combined with the exclusion DJs experienced meant that trust within the group may have been brittle, but trust to people outside the group was practically non-existent without individuals bridging the differences. As such, a discussion over which musical genres could be allowed on the station led to heated arguments – not only because of representation and recognition issues (discussed in the previous chapter) but also because the radio station had to be "ours" (rather than "theirs") which meant it had to play "our" music.

For some reason, DJ Bug was particularly opposed to folk music, perhaps due to being a soca (a particular genre of Caribbean music) fan or perhaps because his show on MultiFM was followed by a folk program. A hypothetical question arose on what they would do if a Black person wanted to play folk music or if an Irish person wanted to play reggae. Interpreting my defence for the right for someone to play folk music if they wanted to and despite his dislike for the genre, DJ Bug conceded that I could play my "weird folky nonsense" even though it is not music of Black origin nor am I Black (and not that I even wanted to play folk music) and so fulfilling neither criteria previously discussed. The condition of involvement that was most important to everyone was that the station 'belonged' and so even a non-black Asian person playing 'weird folky nonsense' could be accepted so long as other criteria of belonging were fulfilled, some of which were explored in the previous chapter. Hall's description of hybridity (amongst other authors e.g. (Baumann 1996)) explains how a 'black identity' as a politically and socially constructed category can work to be inclusive through a variety of means of belonging rather than conditions of exclusion (Hall 1992). The 'purity of origins' for the emerging radio station was not of biological races, but of a shared involvement

with pirate radio stations, from Moss Side. But the bid application required something more concrete than this. In the end it was decided that the station was based on Black music which could act as a vehicle of cohesion between different ethnicities helping community integration, and yes that is just what I put on the forms, except using even more multicultural rhetorical devices in every sentence I wrote on the lengthy application that was completed by TheHeadMaster, JewelBee and Myself.

As Myles (and his participant) point out in his study of an RSL (short term restricted service license) radio in Moss Side, the power of the radio authority OFCOM decrees whether a radio station is legal or illegal (i.e. giving or restricting a license) which places “considerable pressure” to comply with an idea of “quality in radio”. And so the short RSL was “under pressure to comply with authoritarian views of quality over local perceptions” (Myles 2000:96). Myles rightly points out that “organisers were very conscious of having to prove themselves capable of pursuing the venture in a businesslike and efficient manner” (Myles 2000: 96) I wonder if he realised that this very consciousness for the need to impress also affected the stated views of the interviewee to the researcher. When I came across the article, I suspected I knew the interviewee quoted in Myles’s study. And (perhaps ethically ambiguously, but curiosity got the better of me) I asked him. He said yes, and asked me if I thought he had done a good job. This desire to “do a good job” indicated to me that the attention from the ‘legit’ sphere was a chance to be recognised.<sup>150</sup> Although “Hugh’s” view expressed in Myles’ to “turn the radio on at 1pm and hear the music we want to hear” made me realise who it was, his other comments did not seem fitting with his usual views. In Myles’s article “Hugh” appears to politically utilise what Ginsburg describes as the rhetoric of self-determination (Ginsburg 1994) or the political value placed upon ‘to have voice’ (to see as an example of this political utilization see Tacchi 2008) to be able to ‘speak for ourselves’<sup>151</sup>.

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<sup>150</sup> See previous chapter

<sup>151</sup> The organisers of the particular RSL to which the article refers, actually received a prohibition for broadcasting unsuitable content and not adhering to the legal requirement of recording all outgoing broadcasting which is required for accountability in case of such

During the process of developing the idea of how the station would be established, various power struggles occurred. The main interest in how things played out (aside from individual differences from past personal conflicts or the ingenious political ways in which Gloria manipulated situations to ensure that she retained power) came from two different (and previously oppositional) spheres merging; that of the illegal pirate radio station and that of regeneration. There was a delicate balance to be played between maintaining conditions of recognition in Moss Side whilst gaining it in the realm of the 'legit'.<sup>152</sup> Forms of social capital (Following (Bourdieu 1977), rather than Putnam's (Putnam 2000 (1995)) or the large amount of literature which followed him into confusing political categories with analytical ones e.g. (Field 2003a, Field 2003b, Herreros 2004)) valid in one sphere were a sort of 'negative equity' in the other. Whereas for Pirate FM it was accepted (and actually *expected*) for people to present themselves as very anti-establishment, underground and illegal; now this could go against their ability to participate. However, to present themselves as clean cut and 'legit' would risk losing status as 'Pirates'. An example was the question of criminal records and deciding board of directors. Everyone seemed to want to be a director, but none publically admitted it. We had awkward discussions to decide. I said one influencing factor could be criminal records. Although it would not rule anyone out, it would be better not to have too many records on the board. Criminal records, far from being a stigma, were in some ways a requirement of being a Pirate DJ. There was joking as people said that most of them had criminal records. TheHeadMaster, who we implicitly knew would be on the board of directors due to his dedication, high involvement and experience, said rather embarrassingly that he had no record. People laughed in the room. Another respected member, who knew TheHeadMaster from his childhood said, he was just good at what he did and so never to got caught, since "he had the fastest ickle legs around" (referring to carrying the transmitter). The two spheres

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situations – so they were not overly concerned with impressing OFCOMs ideas of quality (although this mistake was by one particular DJ, not the group as a whole).

<sup>152</sup> As the previous chapter considered, these differences are various, but social mobility was a significant one.



conflicted, but had to be resolved, and this was done primarily through the powerful tool of collective memory (a term first coined by Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs 1980(1951))). By remembering past involvements through the particular lens of humour, senses of belonging in the group were re-secured. Shared re-collections of ‘the good old days’ proved equally useful negotiating prospects of paid roles. Resources (and legal recognition) were on offer; individuals competed for roles before we even had a license. This shared memory may have helped, but did not always overcome the increasingly individualistic competition between DJs for resources; many of the DJs were eventually pushed out while others got more ‘airtime’ due to personal relationships. The emphasis turned rapidly from what the station provided for the audience to what each individual could get out of the station.

But, after weeks of paper work, filling in forms with the expected stock phrases, from articles and memoranda codifying personal relationships, to registering as a corporation limited by guarantee, to getting evidence of demand and support ranging from Tony Blair to the local corner shop owner, to securing promises of funding, finding a suitable venue, ensuring all decisions made could be said to come “from the community, for the community and by the community” Pirate FM transformed to a legally recognised and sanctioned station, “Joy FM”. News of the licence spread quickly; not least due to the jubilant announcement on Pirate FM.<sup>153</sup> I was stopped on the street on several occasions with congratulations. The group of residents who saw themselves as the community told me they felt not that they were finally being recognised, but that they had finally “got it to them good” and had beaten council opposition. This idea of “despite the council” continued even when I asked people, if there had been no previous applications, how had “they” have been refusing the license all these years? Admittedly, during the collection of letters for evidence of demand and support, I was surprised that workers for Manchester City Council that I had contacted were not replying. I had worked with many of them on a variety of events and projects. After I heatedly questioned a local

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<sup>153</sup> I did point out that it may not be such a great idea to make the link between stations so public as any criminal offence could mean losing the license, but this was seen as my paranoia and did not affect my friends.

councillor why he would not write a simple letter after years of using Moss Side Radio station as central election campaign, he informed me that all MCC workers had been told not to get involved with the Radio bid. When I questioned this further it emerged that Devon had circulated an e-mail stating that Gloria's group was not representative of 'The Black Community'; the email insisted that whilst there were Black people involved, they were puppets of white institutions and that supporting this was the support of further subjugation by MCC of the Black people in Moss Side. Without actual naming, but by writing in such a way, the email ridiculed two particular individuals, inferring specifically to Gloria and another member who worked at a MCC youth facility. MCC was to hold a meeting in a month's time to decide what to do. I explained that the deadline for the application was in two days. I continued that it seemed to me to be ridiculous to withhold support since the particular worker the email referred to worked in a council building set aside for 'youth provision'.<sup>154</sup> Surely they would want more participation at no cost to themselves. Of course they did, but of course there are procedures. The lack of immediate support from the Council was understood by the group as a form of oppression, one of the battles that we would have to win.

"You know they're going to try every old trick in the book, it's up to us to keep going, we have to keep trying even under the pressures from those without, and those within [referring to the white world without and Devon from within]. Of course they're not going to help us; of course we're going to get conflicts from people like him. But we have to do it this time, we have to beat it this time, it's a battle, it's an old battle, but the time is now. We have not drawn these battle lines, they have drawn them not us, but if they want us to, we can fight, it is no problem for us,

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<sup>154</sup> The centre was unpopular amongst local young people as well as being financially unviable – it made sense for the council to help it by supporting a scheme which would attract young people at no cost to them.

and we're strong – They a big tree, and we a small axe, but  
we ready to chop dem down<sup>155</sup>".

Another enigmatic speech from Rian (the illusionist from chapter three)

The political messiness, the invocation of institutional racism, the problematic intricacy of defining what a Black radio station would be were too much; MCC's "Black Minority Ethnic (BME)" category could not deal with these complexities.<sup>156</sup> But as always in these situations, there were ways around this. Most individuals I had worked with agreed the situation was ridiculous and simply gave their support anyway.<sup>157</sup> Unlike the views of residents in the area, MCC was not malevolently suppressing development. As a governing structure, it could not help. It could not find a central policy of support or not support given the complexity of the situation. The consequences of getting it wrong when dealing with something as sensitive as race on an issue as important as the radio were too big. Whilst the presence of a pirate station was a challenge to their legitimacy, the council's involvement with a failed attempt at a legal station or backing the 'wrong side' would have been too much of a political risk. The interpersonal relationships between council workers and voluntary sector workers meant that whilst there may have been doubts, particularly due to Devon's email we found ways to get the "evidence of support" from legitimate organisations. However, it still seemed unreasonable that we had a letter of support from the then Prime Minister Tony Blair yet we could not get a letter of support from a local Labour councillor, until a meeting had been held sanctioning the support of local government. And whilst we had promises of funding from the Home Office, we could not get one from local Respect Agenda workers of MCC.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> This is a line from a Bob Marley song "Small Axe". "If you are a big tree, we are the small axe, sharpened to cut you down, ready to cut you down" (Marley 1973).

<sup>156</sup> Spears considers the term minority, questioning how this creates pan-whiteness as the norm, and so minorities are always in a position of subordination "one might say it offers a carrot and a stick, but the carrot is a mirage based as it is on false democratic ideology that works in tandem with ideologies of race, class, gender, and sexuality." (Spears 2000:51)

<sup>157</sup> And the extent of support from the council now that the license has been granted (and the complexity of ethnicity has been 'tidied' into reified categories) is resounding, to the extent of promising the radio station a building from which to broadcast, giving funding in exchange for air time (or buying adverts, depending upon ones point of view) and so forth.

<sup>158</sup> The Respect Agenda, as explained in the third chapter, is from the Home Office and relied upon in regeneration strategies as the means to justify social regeneration. MCC had banned

My role in the regeneration of Pirate FM to Joy FM was integral. Without my input, I doubt the conversion to a legitimate legal station could have been possible. I placed myself in a difficult position of being between rival individuals (and continue to do so) to maintain a legitimate legal station because, achieving a politically recognised legal station lay at the hearts of many people I knew in Moss Side. In 2010, following an incident at the station, faced with anger and violence I felt like ‘the biggest gangster’ there. During an argument I was asked, “what you think you gwan do about it?” and I answered, “I’m going to tell OFCOM to pull the license as I do not feel the station is safe or representative”; the entire room went quiet. The role of anthropologists in the field has been debated for some time now (see for example (Asad 1973, Wade 1996)). The question I suppose is whether anthropology is about improving or understanding the world; and whether achieving one excludes the other. Ervin reminds us that participants usually want information that will help them in some way (Ervin 2000:129). Anthropologists enter dangerous (but familiar territory given the relationship to colonialism) if they think they know better than participants what is good for them. Certainly I can see that from the point of view of other people involved with the radio bid, my involvement was purely instrumental. I agree to some extent that if it is possible to improve the circumstances of those involved in research it should be done (e.g. Bourgois 2006). And I can recognise various things I did that may have improved residents’ circumstances. However, disagreeing with Kirsch, I do not agree that this should be actively sought after with activism as a means to reciprocate research (Kirsch 2002). Such help should only be done *when asked by participants to do so*. I also agree that *when asked to do so*, anthropologists should act as intermediaries as Wade describes in the context of Columbia, anthropologists can often ‘speed up’ a reflexive process in which groups can understand one another (Wade 1996). Hastrup and Ellass, describing experiences with Arhuaco people, argued that advocacy is not compatible with anthropological scholarship (Hastrup and

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any support to the bid, thus preventing local Respect Agenda workers, yet we had been promised funding from the Home Office from which the Agenda came.

Elass 1990). But this may come from the implicit hierarchy within anthropology described by Stewart and Strathern, that places theoretical analysis over applied anthropology (Stewart and Strathern 2005). During an online discussion questioning whether anthropology has shifted from discovery and explanation (i.e. of mysterious un-touched natives) to moralism and advocacy (Salzman 2009), McCreery uses Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Benedict 2005(1946)) to illustrate that anthropological work with very political aims does not have to abandon scientific objectivity (McCreery 2009). Neutral objectivity, not affecting field areas, preserving evidence and so forth have never been realistic (given the constantly moving, responsive and transforming way culture exists) objectives of mine (also see (Carrithers 1990)). However, a particular problem arises regarding the status of this fieldwork, is from my ambiguous position between researched and researcher. Perhaps it is this ambiguity that makes me less concerned by Scheper-Hughes demand for morality to take central relevance on decisions made during fieldwork and analysis (Schepper-Hughes 1995). One could argue using the 'primacy of the ethical' that I should have intervened more in certain situations. As the thesis illustrates, in some circumstances I did intervene, in other I did not. I made these decisions from the point of view of myself, with what I saw as the most appropriate course of action in that particular context – perhaps if the ambiguity of researcher and researched was clearer, I could have held onto the primacy of a wider ethics that did not apply to the social contexts I studied. But this returns back to a dangerous area of anthropologists claiming to know what is better for their participants than participants themselves. However, this same ambiguity of researched and researcher meant that I did not experience the situation which Pollard describes, in which PhD students, pressured into achieving their rite of passage, placed 'doing proper research' over their own lives (Pollard 2009). Whilst I clearly experienced many problems and can on retrospect identify many of the negative emotions Pollard describes, the ambiguity of my position between researcher and researched meant I passed a lot of these problems by as 'normal life'. I entered Moss Side with a firm focus upon *understand* over *help*. With the radio station, I felt that given how many residents asked me to help, and sought my intervention that it was the 'right' thing to do for me. My

involvement clearly affected events and shapes my discussion, however, this I believe, does not reduce the value of the anthropology in this account.

**And so...**

Joy FM began broadcasting and DJs competed for slots. New rivalries, problems and conflicts emerged, personal rivalries causing people to be removed were justified by “Station Policy”. The station, in exchange for funding, agreed to broadcast campaigns from the Home Office, Greater Manchester Police and the Regeneration team. These adverts appear in-between programmes and amongst other adverts that have been sold. And so these messages reached further into people in Moss Sides lives. Whilst asymmetric power relations remained, the ambiguity of who is governing increased.<sup>159</sup> And yet, even though Joy FM allows DJs the legitimate political recognition they desired, entering with more ‘voice’ into dominant discourses<sup>160</sup> allowing individuals to feel ‘regenerated’ Pirate FM continues to broadcast – indicating there is still something people want to express that can not be done legitimately. Non-compliance means losing the license and recognition. So, Pirate FM continues alongside Joy FM, which presents a sanitised and sanitising, regulated and regulating, regenerated and regenerating ‘voice’ of ‘Moss Side’s Black Community’. As with the café, someone unfamiliar with the context would not notice a change; individuals involved are the same, musical genres are the same – but everything has moved a few steps towards the Vision. In this ethnographic chapter I wanted to draw together themes from elsewhere in the thesis to illustrate how regeneration efforts are a systemised attempt to transform people and give a practical example of the regeneration; I hoped to illustrate how Moss Side became ‘cleaned up’ through regeneration to reach an unclear Vision which people implicitly understood. My own role in regenerating radio was central in this chapter to illustrate my ambivalent position; as researcher and researched, regenerator and regenerated. Regeneration is a complex process and resulting changes are subtle, requiring a chapter dedicated to ethnography to illustrate how Moss Side approached the

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<sup>159</sup> See second chapter.

<sup>160</sup> Also see discussion in previous chapter regarding recognition politics.

Vision of regeneration policy. The following chapter considers what this Vision was.

**Visions, simulations and green fences: A Glimpse at the ‘un-real’ “Vision” of urban regeneration policy.**

P: “I don’t know what it is – it’s the smiles, I guess it’s just that they don’t look real. I mean who do you know round here walking around with a smile on their face like that, or who wears clothes like that or has a living room like that? I mean, just look at the way she’s holding him; no one sits arm in arm on the sofa really do they? There’s no crap on the floor, or tea mugs or ashtrays, *it’s just not real is it*. And ok, so they’ve used black people because it’s Moss Side, but they’re not even really *that* Black are they – they’re both exactly the same shade of beige, with exactly the same smiles on and not a single skin blemish nothing. It’s probably been totally airbrushed and everything to make it like that with their nice white teeth, and white clothes, in their nice cream rooms... It’s like buy one of these houses and escape.

T: “Escape what?”

P: “Well escape everything really, all this shit we have to deal with, day in day out – like now you can get a decent job, decent wife, decent life, it’s like, saying ... well yeah it is, it’s like live here and you can escape slavery”.<sup>161</sup>

Throughout the thesis, I refer to an unexplained ‘Vision’. I did this, because the Vision of regeneration almost always remained unsaid, implicit and unconcluded. Informed by various phantasms (always slipping beyond the grasps of articulation, and changing upon contact (Agamben 1993)) it existed in imaginations as the result of the “we strive to” or “we aim for” in policy. As such, it is very difficult to present ethnographically, however this chapter takes

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<sup>161</sup> P is 45-year-old man who has lived in Moss Side his whole life. This is an extract from his responses towards an advert for the Maine Road development residents received through the post.



a “glimpse”. It is precisely the unsaid (and so unchallengeable) status that made the Vision so pervasive in regeneration practises. It offered an imagined end point of “well-managed” “civil citizens” all fully “engaged” and “integrated” experiencing “well-being” and “participating” in “social cohesion” the combined positive end of the various implicit values of regeneration practices discussed in chapter 3. This image was set in comparison to the resulting consequences of if regeneration failed — inner city ghettos in lawless anomie on the periphery of civil order. What became particularly interesting in Moss Side was the proximity in which urban regeneration designs planned an urban utopia amidst these images of dystopia. This chapter describes how participating with, implementation of and being targeted by urban regeneration policy often left me feeling ‘a little unreal’.<sup>162</sup> However incongruent the Vision seemed to the lives of Moss Side residents, Moss Side underwent a transformation as a result of sustained implementation of urban regeneration policy endorsing the Vision over experienced reality. The intention of urban regeneration policy in Moss Side was to supersede the lived reality of Moss Side residents with ‘the Vision’ – through a self-fulfilling prophecy if you will. Regeneration policy had the intended plan (rather than accidental consequence) of superseding one ‘real’ with another and this aim was carefully executed. This often felt hallucinatory. But superseding reality with the Vision was not hallucination, or a sur-reality, or accidental transformation – regeneration was the implementation of a plan with intention, a dry run or simulation. The Vision in urban regeneration policy also acted as a simulation, in the senses explored by Baudrillard of the hyper-real in which simulacra upon simulacra create a situation where there is no ‘real’ left, where the precession of images, marketing of commodities and desires leaves a vacuous hyper-reality with nothing that can be thought of as ‘authentic’ remaining (Baudrillard 1994). MacLeod and Ward point out that, carried to conclusion the implementation of such utopian policy would lead to a world that residents would find “abhorrent” (MacLeod and Ward 2002). Indeed throughout my experiences of regeneration contexts I was often reminded of the author George Orwell’s novel 1984

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<sup>162</sup> The speed with which I would travel through different social worlds in close spatial proximity also left me feeling ‘unreal’.

(Orwell 1949 (2004)) depicting a futuristic social dystopia in which the strive towards a particular vision meant the use of various controls and inculcated messages, similar to regeneration strategies.

### **Remarketing Moss Side**

The need to create places which Augé would describe as non-places of super-modernity<sup>163</sup> (Auge 1995) without particular local character, repeatable and familiar in a variety of locations from airports to supermarkets and therefore offering non-threatening places to attract the widest possible market, was not the ultimate goal of regeneration in Moss Side (even if this may end up the unintended outcome). This was perhaps due to the lack of success this approach had in the regeneration of neighbouring Hulme where the demolition of previous architecture in favour of Corbusier influenced designs of high modernism failed to attract much interest. Although Le Corbusier's architecture was designed for more social solidarity (Gans 2006) (or 'social cohesion' in regeneration policy terms) these designs, and particularly Robert Moses' application of High Modernism to New York's street planning faced the criticism of "functional homogeneity" (Sandercock 1998). Instead regeneration policy on Moss Side aimed to re-market local character by 'refining' it, transforming it towards the Vision.<sup>164</sup> This negotiation was often expressed physically such as commemorating the centre spot of Maine Road with a sculpture of a concrete sphere. Or, another example is the old Bathhouse on Broadfield Rd. Remembered fondly by older residents who had their weekly baths there to younger ones who recalled the social activity of laundry, the bathhouse was a communal place used by residents of Moss Side. In 2007 it was converted to social housing flats. To represent the previous bathhouse, blue and green tiles were incorporated into a wave design. When I asked people what they thought of the new Broadfield Rd, rather than talk about the new site, they recounted their tales of using the old bathhouse. Whenever I asked

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<sup>163</sup> Although Augé's work is useful to a point here, his claim that these non-places such as motorways are devoid of any social meaning or construction is pushing the point too far. Even the most seemingly empty of spaces usually has some social convention placed upon it, certainly his example of motorways is a good example of just how many unspoken and un-codified conventions occur over the most seemingly non-place.

<sup>164</sup> As the previous chapter illustrated

specifically about the waves, I was always met with responses like “oh, is that what they’re meant to be...” No one spontaneously made a connection between the contemporary design to memories of the Bathhouse. The speed with which ‘modern buildings’ appeared and replaced predecessors contributed to the simulation. From 2002 to 2010 there were vast physical changes in the area. In addition to demolishing the stadium, pubs were converted, textile mills were demolished, whole rows of terraces bulldozed and entire street fronts transformed with neat green lawns<sup>165</sup> all with an appearance of happening “over night” (see (Fishman 2002) for a discussion on how ‘City Gardens’ came to be part of urban utopian vision and how ‘suburbia’ developed). For nearly five years after the demolition of Maine Road football club, a green fence surrounded the site on all sides. The fence was around 8ft tall and prevented people from seeing the vast empty space with a newly formed lake in the middle. Vehicles mysteriously entered and left. After the period of site decontamination, construction began at an earnest pace in 2008 and by 2010 the school had opened and the houses and flats could be seen. Local residents found it difficult keeping up with the rapid physical changes; a common response to my questions would be “Oh who knows what they’re doing now, who can keep up?” However the site re-entered imaginations with a magical “ta – dah!” effect when the fence was suddenly removed. Such fences around developments are found across Britain and often have slogans like “building your futures” or “Improving the Face of Regeneration”. But the green fence did not improve the face of Moss Side’s regeneration. It contributed to the situation where for most residents, regeneration had no face and held a ‘who knows’ position in peoples conceptions. The results of “buildings appearing over night” contributed to the Vision superseding lived experiences. But this imagined, unsaid end point, with an ambiguous un-seeable status meant I could not say who created the Vision. But as Navaro-Yashin illustrated, the fantasy of the state is reproduced in everyday actions, even by those who are cynical (Navaro-Yashin 2002). Whilst those working in regeneration were skeptical and highly cynical about ‘the Vision’ they nonetheless worked to implement it and so endorsed the various sources it emerged from.

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<sup>165</sup> Whilst inside they remain in the usual poor conditions of rot and damp.

## **Engaging with the Vision**

Instructive terminology of regeneration, such as participation and engagement, can be thought of not only in terms of participating with new structures of government as identified in previous chapters, but also superseding lived experiences of ‘reality’ with ‘the vision’. Furthermore, agency could be rethought of as the ability to affect the Vision and power as control of it. For the majority of residents the “who knows, who cares and don’t complain or they’ll move you out to Moston” experiences of alienation led to limiting their future aspirations. Residents often simply existed between finding ways to pay one unexpected bill to the next. This seemed in stark comparison to regeneration policies with 10-year strategic plans for the area. Regeneration policy depended upon particular stock concepts (which were taken as self-evident such as social cohesion, community engagement, empowerment and so forth) glossy images (found in residential post at least once a week in pamphlets from various members of partnerships or daily on billboards or even vehicles with billboards attached to them driving around the neighbourhood), unusual legislation such as “the Mancunian Agreement”, distant deadlines by which racism would be overcome (such as Agenda 2010), slogans inculcated desires of self-development – “Happy healthier and wealthier Manchester”, “your city, your say”<sup>166</sup> litter clearing machines re-named “street scene services”. All of this felt ‘unreal’ or simulated, and felt reminiscent with Orwell’s 1984 dystopia. This made the Vision of regeneration practices ‘slippery’ and impermeable, it was always difficult to get beyond the inculcated messages even if “by creating opportunities for skill development through new regeneration techniques of participation, the social exclusion experienced by young BME’s is alleviated allowing a more inclusive means of expressing discontent in positive and creative ways...”. And whilst other workers were as cynical as I was, we all contributed to maintaining the simulation.

I also found it strange which ideas gained momentum. Of course for a district to run smoothly, councils have to be concerned with seemingly trivial details.

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<sup>166</sup> These are both Manchester Partnership Slogans.

However, some issues seemed to gain attention far more than seemed necessary, as was the case for the cycle paths discussed in an earlier chapter. One may think of this as political representation working at its best, even the voices of the smallest individuals were heard in governing structures, an examples of the “bottom-up” approach celebrated by so-many governance theorists today. However, only issues that were in keeping with regeneration policy directives were acted upon. And again, a feeling of hallucination overwhelmed me; we discussed the benefits of one design of bin lid over the other, for literally hours over months. I was expected as a “representative of the community” to have an impassioned opinion. “BME youth issues” discussions were also tempered to fit the Vision. Certain “social problems” were discussed and others were not. It was perfectly in keeping with the simulacrum of “gangster” to discuss guns and then (when the strategy had been completed and so apparently the issue was solved) knife crime. However in all my involvement, not once did I encounter a discussion in regeneration contexts about the incredible prevalence of sexual violence against young girls and women or the staggering violence towards homosexuals. I listened as people who I knew were better informed on gangs than one might think listening to them in urban regeneration contexts, making preposterous claims such as “its because there aren’t any youth clubs anymore” as though this was a solution to everything. This sort of display from individuals I knew personally reminded me of someone who induces symptoms of madness and so must be a bit mad in order to want to induce the symptoms in the first place. This is not simple copying, nor even a complex mimetic process of embodying certain belief systems to appropriate them (e.g. Taussig 1992), rather a confusion created by inducing symptoms. Most of the people I worked with began from a cynical point of view, filling in forms to get resources they wanted. But it increasingly became unclear what we had asked for and what we were coerced into. Whilst Roman made a decision to go ‘legit’ he took on certain implicit values. From inducing the symptoms of regeneration as a source of legitimacy by using these stock phrases, he (quite accidentally I’m sure) became regenerated.

### **The Jessie James incident**

The biggest predicament for the successful implementation of the Vision for Moss Side was the gangs: to be successful, gangs had to appear eradicated. Headlines appeared such as “All 11 gang members have now been found guilty...” (Telegraph 2009)<sup>167</sup> as though there were only 11 members of this social network known as the Gooch Close Gang (who including the Young Gooch, had at least 500 members). All of them were now safely confined behind bars, bringing the “murder and mayhem” of Moss Side to simply come to an end. The power void left by the 11 was quickly filled since GCG were quite used to members spending stretches in prison. This is reminiscent of Baudrillard’s discussion on crises. Baudrillard sees this discourse of crises as a need for power to re-assert meaning by interjecting simulations of crises, he goes so far as to say that “power can stage its own murder to rediscover a glimmer of existence and legitimacy” (Baudrillard 1994 :19). Preceding this simulated end of gangs in Moss Side, there was mass reporting of the shooting of Jessie James by a semi-automatic weapon in Moss Side on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006, which resulted in his death. For those of us living in the area and involved with gangs, the massive amount of reporting seemed at first bizarre.<sup>168</sup> We were at the time accustomed to a death at least every few months. At that time, shootings and stabbings were commonplace occurrences and as I have mentioned elsewhere, these deaths were a normalised parts of our existence on this cultural landscape. But over Jessie there was a media frenzy that seemed out of place for many people living in Moss Side, at least those with the common “get on with it” and “show no weakness” approach to life mentioned in chapter three. But the response from the media and in consequence all those whose opinions and social knowledge were informed by that media of communication i.e. most of British society, was not overly surprising. Here was Jessie and ‘the spilling of innocent blood’ of a young

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<sup>167</sup> The 11 individuals were charged for 27 crimes of which they were found guilty. The arrest was a result of regeneration partnership (LAP local area partnership) information and increased policing in the area.

<sup>168</sup> This was even though this was not the first time such a siege by publicity and press had occurred, and many parallels can be drawn to the attention placed on Benji Stanley, the 14 year old murdered in the local Pattie shop in 1992.

victim. But a victim of what? Mistaken identity to be sure<sup>169</sup> but also a victim of becoming transformed into what Baudrillard would describe as a simulation of himself (Baudrillard 1994). He became a replica, an image or simulation of innocence, free from fault, sin and responsibility. And the media coverage began to inform people in Moss Side of how they were ‘supposed’ to react – devastated and in moral outrage. People began to write on internet forums about how upset they were, news reporters asked “representatives of the community” how we felt. People involved learnt a political economy of grief. The death of the intended mark (whom Jessie was mistaken for) went un-noted. Following the media frenzy of the murder of innocence with the Jessie James affair, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair came to visit Moss Side. This was to ‘show his support’ but support of what? Perhaps support to “the Community” (another simulation) at a time of grief – but also supporting a media frenzy and a hyper-real (to borrow again from Baudrillard) situation which could be easily identified as crisis. During the visit he was surrounded by masses of security. A friend joked that it was unnecessary: “He’s not important enough to bother shooting”. ‘Tony Blair PM’ could be considered as another hyper-real sign in a procession of simulacra (the situation where simulation on simulation creates a situation where the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ becomes meaningless (Baudrillard 1994)). In this case, that of political parties of left and right, Ministers, Parliament, local government, the cabinet, etc all interpreted and understood by residents as part of the single symbol of control, “the council”. Regeneration policy relied upon imagery of both the dangerous consequences of failure (victims of innocence such as Jessie) as well as the Vision of an urban utopia (the results of the “we aim to”).

### **Visionaries**

However, whilst one reality superseded another, regeneration practices never achieved the ultimate end point. The Vision remained the *possible* positive outcome of the “we strive to”, “we aim to” and “we must”s of regeneration

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<sup>169</sup> A report had actually been made to the police by anonymous informants that a shooting was to take place in the park that day – and everyone who knew the gangs in the area were aware of the person that was the intended target. It was nothing new, it was nothing particularly unusual. All that had happened differently on this occasion was that the bullet reached an unintended victim and one that could be represented as a victim and make good headlines.

policy (in comparison to the terrible consequences of “or else what?”). People can always be “happier, healthier and wealthier”. This is the ambiguity of the never defined Vision. Just as Žižek explains that the Real must not enter the fantasy, that we do not want to or we can not accept it (Žižek 2002); if the Vision had been achieved, would it feel like an urban utopia or would it be an enforced smile? For the purposes of regeneration strategies, the Vision is better as an imagined end point, never to be fully articulated or realised. For Baudrillard there is no real anymore, just the endless additions of simulacra to the simulations of reality in the hyper-real world (Baudrillard 1994). But this is not to say that people in Moss Side are not experiencing an authentic reality that they believe is real. Whether this means that they are drawing on simulations such as ‘Jamaican’ or ‘football fan’ or even ‘Moss Side’ they experience this as their lived reality. And urban regeneration processes (in all their complexity) create a situation where a search for their own authenticity creates a frustration which becomes an ‘inarticulatable anger’ which the final chapter ‘in search of the real: you get me?’ attempts to articulate... ‘you get me?’



## Chapter Seven

### **“Keeping it real, you get me?”: Recognising violence as violence**

In the previous chapter, I explored the feeling of simulation that pervaded the endeavour to reach the Vision through regeneration practices. There was a stark contrast between this vision and the lives of people I knew in Moss Side. This chapter considers the very real role of violence amongst GCG members and their extended families. Through Kamelia’s experience, I consider in particular sexual violence. The material I use raised many ethical issues on whether to include this chapter or not. I suspect GCG members expected my silence on this but like Bourgois “I feel, however, that a failure to address sexual violence in street culture would be colluding with the sexist status quo. Rape runs rampant around us, and it is as if society maintains a terrifying conspiracy of silence that enforces this painful dimension of the oppression of women in everyday life” (Bourgois 2002(2nd ed): 208). After a violent incident at the radio station in July 2010 (six months after I left Moss Side), I was asked to intervene in a situation. Going through experiences that were once everyday experiences, made me tense and nervous. I had to check who was in the room before entering, remember not to sit with my back to the doorway, members who I knew were armed made me nervous, when knives were brought out during an argument, I considered calling the police – I realised how much stress I was under during the research period and the extent that ordinary affects (Stewart 2007) of Moss Side shaped my previous experiences. At the time however, I shut down a lot of my emotions. In this final chapter I have chosen to write from a very personal point of view. Suspending feelings of shock, distress and on occasion unmistakable disgust, whilst trying to look at the situation analytically, proved difficult, and, I do not think it is possible; to separate the emotional from the analytical in a false separation that would give an inaccurate account. This chapter is written from a unique position, trying to understand something that I clearly found abhorrent, and the only way to achieve the purpose of this chapter, is to simply say what happened.

Clearly, my research meant I gained a lot of access to a particular social sphere. But, I found it difficult to gain trust from women. Women often questioned my relationship to various GCG members. They did not know where to place me. Without children but with a man (who was white and with a job) I chose to be financially independent, even living in a separate house; I went to university but was not “student”; not White but not Black; Asian but drank, smoked, went out and listened to the same music; I had a car, but used a bike and so on – I was difficult to classify and so (despite my best attempts, which even included going to hair dressing salons and allowing ‘sew ins’ to be put into my hair and braids done, hoping that entering this female gendered space may help develop relationships) continued to be considered a threat as out of place (Douglas 1966) (also see Briggs 1970). The following example illustrates the gender hierarchy that shaped relationships. Sat in the kitchen with Totts<sup>170</sup> one summer, I heard screaming at the bars of my front door. A woman threatened me with her high-heeled shoe whilst calling me a variety of disapproving names. She said she knew Totts was in the house and to send him out. As he approached the bars, the woman stopped screaming immediately and began smiling coyly asking why he did not come to see her if he needed sex. Totts, a high-ranking GCG member, made a disapproving kissing sound with his teeth and criticised his “baby’s mother” for making such a cheap show of herself. He said that he was involved in “an important piece of business” and asked “what the hell” she was doing following him and if her “piece of shit sister” was driving her around. The woman, placid considering her aggression towards me, asked flirtatiously, (adhering to the prescriptive gendered expectation upon her behaviour towards men) for Totts to let her in. This expectation of flirtation between men and women was a difficult stumbling block for me to overcome. Word play was often used for sexual innuendo over simple things. I often feigned not understanding the double entendres to avoid offending people. Suspicions that Roman and I had a “special thing going on” also helped to stop the constant sexual expectations more than me reiterating I was in a relationship with my long-term partner who was White. Totts met the flirtation with a barrage of insults. He demanded she leave, but then said “I’ll come see

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<sup>170</sup> Totts was killed in 2008 by rivals within GCG

to you Thursday” with a smile the woman left and Totts shut the door.<sup>171</sup> When I said Totts should have let her in to see there was nothing going on, he simply laughed saying she would have “torn you to pieces”. He was amused that of all the compromising situations he could have been caught in, he was only with me. He was highly amused that she would be embarrassed after enquiring about who I was, to find out he was telling the truth, that he was seeing someone about doctoral research in Moss Side however unlikely that seemed given the exclusion most residents faced. He was glad he could bring this incident up every time she suspected him. Given this suspicion towards me from other women, I cannot say how women as adults later reflected upon their experiences. Although I worked with many women from Moss Side in my work as a regenerator, sexual violence is not something we ever discussed. It is a piece of research that I believe would add a lot to this account. If this account is dominated by the views of men, it is unfortunately because these were the views to which I had most access. I made no attempt to hide my disgust when these issues were discussed in my presence, and over the years people spoke less about them to me. Older members would demand younger ones to “have some respect” and not mention “these things” in my presence. This respect was unfortunately not extended to the young girls involved.

Peggy Reeves Sanday’s ethnography “Fraternity Gang Rape” (Sanday 2007 (2nd ed)) provides a detailed account which followed a public case of gang rape in an American university. She considers “rape inductive and reductive” environments and argues against the ‘rape myth’ of the “naturalness” of rape by stating it is not a universal practice. “Rape Myth” is a term from sociological literature on rapes (See for examples Chapleau et al 2008, Frese et al 2004, Mahon 2007). It refers to ‘general understandings’ (although the context dependency seems little considered) of rape that do not necessarily (and often are not) ‘true’ (but statistical prevalence does little to illustrate the affect of such myths on constructing truth). Burt (1980) invented the RMAS – the rape

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<sup>171</sup> To “see to someone” often refers to having consensual (and sometimes non-consensual) sexual intercourse with someone. It is also used to refer to causing someone physical harm (sometimes even to killing the person). The use of this same phrase for violence and sex, and the confusion of the two, illustrates how related these themes often become and how these searches for different kinds of power become intertwined.

myth acceptance scale – claiming that the more accepted the rape myth, the more ‘rape prone’ the community. This seems to be confirmed in Mahon’s work, which identifies how these myths function to create “general culture as supportive of rape” (Mahon 2007: 357). A ‘rape myth’ is a mythical but common idea such as that since a prostitute is in the profession of selling sexual gratification she cannot be raped; a particular myth that has been disproved, although not dispelled by Sophie Day. As Day (1994) points out and successfully illustrates, a person working as a prostitute will often differentiate between types of sexual relations with a man, those for profit, and those for emotions. Day illustrates how this is often also related to whether they use ‘protection’ from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, and whether this protects the prostitute or her lover, from her clients. There are also interesting accounts of militarised strategies of rape during wartime, particularly in the Bosnian and Serbian contexts (e.g. Snyder et al. 2006). Psychology, counselling and self-help literature (little of which is concerned with gang rape) begin with a premise that a victim accepts their position as ‘victim’. This is something few people involved in this chapter would have accepted. For Jamelia (whose particular experience this chapter draws upon) it was becoming the victim of pregnancy not rape, which affected her the most. Criminology literature on rape considers psychological pathologies of individuals and has limited concern for social contexts. Existing literature outside anthropology rarely explores the social importance of rape and only considers a vague notion of power. Power is reduced to individual desires for an undefined power – as though the desire for sexual power is independent from systems of power and social contexts. Most of this literature is also Eurocentric and class biased, limited to the United States of America or the United Kingdom. Furthermore, a particular silence surrounds the British context of Black women. Black women, according to Collins, exist at the intersection of various categories of oppression – as women and furthermore as Black women (Collins 2000a). Collin argues they are too often omitted from feminist discourse. There is an eerie anthropological silence on sexual violence, which reminded me again of Bourgois’ statement. There are of course, remarkable exceptions such as Cathy Winkler’s auto-ethnographic account of “...a crime against my body and my being which in its public pronouncement contains an embarrassing horror that I felt and that I now

feel again as you read this” (Winkler 1991 :14). My biggest worry about this chapter has been that those involved will have to relive experiences of loss, however, I do not wish to be complicit in the silence (see also Agrier 1998).

There is a practice in Moss Side that is not classed as rape, that I considered sexual violence. A girl between the ages 12 and 15 would perform oral sex on a group of boys (up to 8, between the ages 14 to around 21) standing in a circle as the girl, on her knees moves around the group. This was filmed on mobile phone technology and sent as messages across a network. Filming was also common for mutual masturbation over a young naked girl who knelt in the centre of the circle. It echoes the phenomenon of “happy slapping” that was common across the UK, in which teenagers filmed a random act of violence they commit.<sup>172</sup> The role of new technologies in these practices seems little explored. It seems from conversations with the Wyke lads that it was a desire for fame and the ease provided through the videophones that made this relatively new, but very common, phenomenon possible. When new clips emerged the young GCG members measured clips according to humour, quality of recording, how violent the clip was, how the girls looked and so forth. However, the dissemination of the clip was the most important issue. It was always considered a good sign when someone had their own clip sent back to them, indicating a wide dispersal and it coming back to the source. I spoke to some young girls about their participation in this practice. They told me they were proud to have been involved. Although a variety of girls accompanied young GCG members over the years, they were quickly replaced and I rarely got to know them in depth. They were never members. As such, sexual participation allowed some access. If we accept the idea that GCG (and gangs like them) offer an alternative means to material benefits, recognition and power to those that are unavailable (due to structural inequalities) to many living in Moss Side, then “finishing with” a sexual relationship also meant an end of access to these benefits. Although over the years some of the girls became more frequently seen as part of the group, emerging to have roles in

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<sup>172</sup> “Tramp wars” are also very common, which involves offering two homeless people money (usually a small amount £5 or alcohol) to fight one another whilst being filmed.

GCG, it was never the same level of stability offered to boys. Whilst some girls went on to have individual relationships (often through conceiving a child with a member) most were eventually considered too “nasty” (sexually polluted). If a girl was not “finished with” she was often “wiped”. This meant the girl had lost the protection of one member and was available to others. Graffiti in the area would say for example “Damon wipes Chantelle”. Whether she would find someone else from the group would depend on if she was polluted or “nasty”, “dirty” or whether she was “a slag”. Girls often attempted to invert these hierarchical gender relationships, with insults about incapable men to their sex drives. These ideas of pollution also meant that the young GCG members thought that raping a virgin was worse than raping someone sexually promiscuous (see also Goldstein 2003:262). Donna Goldstein (2003) describes a situation in Brazil of girls being labeled “street girls”; spending too much time in the public realm creates implications on a girl’s behaviour, particularly presumed sexual activity levels. There was a similar implication amongst GCG regarding how much “chilling” (spending time with members) a girl did. The fear which women experience in the ‘urban outdoors’ is often constructed in comparison to the safety of indoors the home (see for example, (Valentine 1989) (Wesley and Gaardner 2004) or (Gordon and Riger 1989) who found that the most dangerous in conception was streets and alleys)). GCG members took being in these seemingly dangerous places as an invitation. If a girl attended too many places with one particular member, or tried to “interfere”, the individual was ridiculed for always having his girlfriend with him and being “pussy whipped” (under the sexual control of the girl) or a woman coming “bling<sup>173</sup> wrapped” (a word play on gift wrapped). This common enforcement of norms through ridicule and humiliation of non-conformists who threatened group solidarity, made Wyke lads particularly cruel to girls in the presence of the other Wyke lads. There was a clear distinction between “girls that you can take home” (potential girlfriends who could become part of the social network) and girls who were seen as sexual objects. This is reminiscent of the situation described by Dann, regarding the Barbadian man’s need to maintain a balance between respect and reputation. Whilst

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<sup>173</sup> Bling refers to status symbols such as chains, rings, bracelets or expensive watches

respect may be gained by sexual conquests, this had to be balanced by maintaining a good reputation, which would often be through having a ‘good’ (and respectable) wife (Dann 1987). Paul Willis also made a similar observation with working class white boys (Willis 1982(1977):35). Wyke lads tended to joke about women who were too “nasty” to continue a sexual relationship with, saying that they could not “do her” without “serious protection” (to use a condom). When I asked some girls why they did not insist on using condoms they were offended saying they were “clean”. The boys (in such gender hierarchies) were never considered ‘nasty’ or sexually polluted, however many partners they had. The use of condoms was almost always thought of in terms of protecting the man from the girl/woman’s pollution. The girl was always the pollutant, never vice-versa. Fears often lead girls to stay with partners. As one girl put it when I asked her why she did not just end her relationship<sup>174</sup> “can you imagine what they’d do to me?” One girl I spoke to was desperate to try and stay as the girlfriend of one of her sexual aggressors. She was worried that he was going to “finish with” her. It seemed that to stay with their attacker denied the status of rape, maintaining it as an ordinary sexual event and also possibly in an attempt to regain chastity and become the sort of “girl you can take home”. Although in a very different context, Luo (Luo 2000) describes how Chinese women attempt to regain their chastity (which is what the rape has stolen from the woman) through marrying the perpetrator. She explains how courts often advocate marriage as a preferred settlement, as this will somehow regain the woman’s chastity. Although a different context, I believe that girls staying with attackers, not accepting the event as an attack, coming under their ‘protection’ and avoiding getting ‘wiped’ or ‘finished with’ were all strategies to try to preserve a sense of chastity, normality and not being labelled ‘nasty’ or sexually polluted.

On a Thursday in November in 2006 just after a Forum meeting, my friend’s sister called us urgently, asking if we could we come back straight away.<sup>175</sup> The

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<sup>174</sup> The GCG member involved had multiple partners

<sup>175</sup> I know the date not because of fieldwork notes but from my diary. For many ways I regret how embedded I had become, as this subject could have been looked at further – but then, if I had not been as embedded as I was, I would have been totally unaware rape was so prevalent.

day before, his niece, Jamelia 15, had been raped by 6 young LSC members. LSC were rivals of GCG (which her brother “Tyrone” was a member). Jamelia knew me well as a member of extended family due to my close friendship with her uncle and by extension many members of her family. I had been to their home countless times and knew Tyrone also. Their mother and I went out together numerous times over a period of four to five years on family occasions and music parties where her brother often DJ’d. Entering the house, we were met by eleven shouting angry young men of which four were members that I knew particularly well; all were GCG and known by myself and my friend. They were planning what they would do as retaliation; whose girlfriend, whose sister, who to stab, or who to shoot. The mother of Jamelia (with the difficult task of raising her four children on a small single wage<sup>176</sup> with the support of her family) was terrified of what would happen if retaliations occurred: where would it stop?<sup>177</sup> This fear was compounded by the death of her nephew from a shooting, which occurred in her kitchen. Although ‘going legit’ my friend seemed to be finding it hard not considering retaliation killings in this situation. He kept swearing under his breath, pacing the room and glaring at Jamelia’s brother accusatorily, asking him what had he been doing, who had he attacked, why hadn’t he seen this coming, he must have done something to create such an attack, even LSC have some rules – and so forth. My friend’s generation believed that GCG as an organisation had begun to lose “the rules” but LSC was even worse. This view is not surprising since LSC were the main competitors of GCG for status, resources and place. They were a much smaller organisation and conflict occurred at street level.<sup>178</sup> Although my friend was ‘going legit’ his previous ranking meant his authority was clear. He was not sanctioning retaliation, so none could go ahead – even if his desires for revenge were obvious. It took an hour to calm the situation down and for me to finally be able to see how Jamelia was. I found her resigned. She spoke a little, but mostly shrugged her shoulders saying, “I’m fine, it’s no big deal” and insisted

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<sup>176</sup> It is the size of this wage, not the single mother status that has had the greatest impact on her ability to raise her children.

<sup>177</sup> Whereas the rapes they perpetrated were considered ‘a bit of fun’, a rival gang raping a sister was a serious matter. This continues to set up a particular gendered hierarchy.

<sup>178</sup> As the request to paint my bike senior GCG colours to avoid further confusions such as the mugging described in chapter four illustrated.



“I don’t need a doctor, please, I’m fine”. And she kept repeating “I shouldn’t have said anything” supporting the silence surrounding rape. This was by no means the only occasion of rape I came across with GCG, but it was the person with whom I was closest.<sup>179</sup> Jamelia and her uncle were very close. Jamelia’s father was killed when she was 10. Her father and uncle were best friends, and this is how he came to meet her mother. The story goes that her father came for dinner when they were very young and had his eye on his sister from then on.<sup>180</sup> This meant my friend had a particular relationship with the older two of his sister’s four children.<sup>181</sup> I do not want to portray Jamelia as an innocent victim of a dark inner-city life in another simulation like ‘Jessie James’ described in the previous chapter. But, she was intelligent doing reasonably well at school (although with poor attendance). She planned to try and do her GCSE’s and was expected to pass eight subjects the following year (a much higher attainment than most people in the area). She took on a lot of responsibilities in the home as her mother worked long irregular shifts as a cleaner in a nearby hospital and refused money from Tyrone (her older son) since in her words she has “seen the cost of GCG money and it is too expensive”. Jamelia’s two younger siblings were three and four-years-old at the time of her attack. This position of responsibilities and duties of care for

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<sup>179</sup> After this retaliation meeting, I got back into my unreliable 1976 Mini Austin to drive home. At this time I had begun working from my house (which I later moved into permanently and stayed in until 2010) but still often stayed at my partner’s home two streets away where I had lived for the two previous years. We had friends from Yorkshire coming over that night and I was meant to make my usual curry in preparation to drink significant quantities of red wine and play our instruments - as we usually would do. After leaving the house I sat in my car for a moment, realising the halal butcher would be shut by the time I got home and rang my partner to get the chicken. I drove home and when I arrived a friend opened the door with a joke pretending to welcome me to his house asking why I was late to his dinner party and saying my partner had just gone to the shop. I smiled, laughing that I knew as I had sent him there. Lighting a cigarette I entered the kitchen to say hello to another friend, telling him to start chopping onions, as I was hungry. I was acting normal, on a ‘normal’ night with old friends who were not confused as participants. But when I saw a particular friend John, I began crying. He seemed shocked (I wonder if he had ever even see me cry before this date, although he certainly has since). It was on this night that I really experienced the meaning behind Doreen Massey’s work (2005) that one geographic location can have many places within it. Although physically, I had not moved very far, I had to travel a huge social distance to re-enter the same place as my friends. Although I had many secrets from my partner and friends throughout my fieldwork years, this night was one of the worst for me as I felt that there was a lie between me and these friends.

<sup>180</sup> It is very possible that similar to Donna Goldstein’s work (2003) this use of humour of a family story is to diffuse the problematic situation of crossing the taboo relations that the status of ‘sister’ to GCG members holds.

<sup>181</sup> The younger two are from a different father who is no longer in the family’s life.

younger siblings was common in Moss Side. Jamelia often used to say she did not understand why so many of her friends wanted kids, she didn't see the point.

A few days later she came to me and said she wanted to do an interview. This in itself was not uncommon; people often asked to do an interview or told me to "get your pad" out "this needs to go in". Sitting on the sofa in "my office"<sup>182</sup> Jamelia told me all the details of the rape. She had been dragged down an alley. It happened in a house in Rusholme. She knew three of the attackers as older people in her school. She proceeded to list every terrible detail of the attack. Adjectives seem insufficient in explaining how the experience sounded to me. Yet she spoke in a resigned tone of voice, simply narrating facts – not warranting emotional engagement. It was as though, by preventing emotional response, the event could not have the status of being traumatic. The technique of not accepting the status of certain phenomenon as trauma inducing was "not letting them get to you" i.e. not allowing rivals to have succeeded in their aims. But she felt as though she wanted to tell me/the thesis/you. After going through what was done to her in total detail, she told me that after a while, she was not afraid. She just lay still waiting for it to end and said to me "I guess that means I'm easy," questioning me on whether I thought that it was rape even if she had stopped struggling and just lay still. During the 'interview' (which was more akin to a counselling session) she made little eye contact with me, tended to speak for long periods without addressing me and tended to suddenly turn to me and ask me a question on whether it counted as rape, or if I knew about any planned retaliations. I only made a few questions to help her continue with what seemed like a much-needed outpour. When I asked her, she could not remember how many times she had been raped but remembered there were six men in the room, and two held her arms down at any one time, but they swapped.<sup>183</sup> She told me that after a while of just laying still waiting for the end, she could not really tell where she was or what was happening and had lost

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<sup>182</sup> See chapter four

<sup>183</sup> I have been unsure how much to include in this chapter. Not wanting to silence Jamelia's account, but also not wishing to put in the terrible details, I chose to only write what seemed important for the chapter itself.

her temporal senses (she again questioned whether that would still be rape) she said it was “like I was just watching something gross on telly, you know, just going on and on and on. I mean I knew it was me and I knew it was happening, but I was just somewhere else”. I understood this as disassociation. Winkler (1991) describes this disassociation as where the raped person tries to help the mind survive, keeping control of it, where the body may be lost (for a discussion on rape and embodiment see (Winkler 1994)). Given the relationship of GCG (and so by extension Jamelia) to the police it is unsurprising that she did not want to go to the authorities. I never heard any of the girls go to the police.<sup>184</sup>

Damon (aged 17) explained to me that whenever he has been involved in “doing a girl” he knew they secretly wanted him to rape them, since he could not have had an erection otherwise. When younger, he did not like others watching him, fearing the ridicule of “doing it wrong”. His first sexual experience was at 14 during the gang rape of a 13-year-old girl. Whereas Damon and others spoke about these practices, I never heard older members mention them. Curious about whether this sexual violence was a new phenomenon, I spoke to Jamelia’s uncle about it.

‘I’m not proud T. We all did it. We was all doin it me, name1 (Age 48), name2 (46), name3 (38), all of us, Maan (shakes head and looks at the ground), you know, some of em still doin’ it T. We had to. You get me? If you didn’t, you get fucked up. They wouldn’t let you off man (looks concernedly at his lighter which he fiddles with – then faces back to me), you get me, it was like, me knew what would happen if me not doing something fa join in. Me not saying me proud, me done a plenty bad ting back then, you get me, I’m not proud o’ any-ting man. But this now, it like she (Jamelia) be paying for what we be doing back

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<sup>184</sup> Although I had come across 8 girls who directly brought up their gang-rapes of their own accord and had heard of many other instances with other girls and different practices which I would class as rape but were not considered rape by those involved.

then. When it be your own, you thinking she in to it, she liking it, and you start liking it too. Me knows dem never liking it now, but back then, me convince meself, you get me, just so me can get through. (Pauses for a while playing with lighter again). You can't let dem know you not into it, so you can't let *yourself* know you not into it. Back then, you thinking them know everything, them can see in we skulls (points towards his head), them looking to see me slip so ya man can take me out fa real, you understand me, you feel like there be no choice, ya understanding me?'

I was faced with the stark reality that not only did the older generation of GCG (many of whom were my friends) participated (and were still participating) in sexual practices with young girls, but here was one of my closest friends in the area, admitting to me he was (albeit in the past) a serial gang rapist. However desensitised I had become, this sexual violence and the involvement of my close friend in it, still shocked me. His fear of the gang 'seeing into his skull' (reading his mind) or understanding his private thought processes and the fear of being 'taken out' (killed or replaced in ranking), is not his justification for the act. It is simply his explanation. His fears (and Damon's) lead to self-delusion that the girl must be enjoying her own rape in order to be able to continue and avoid the consequences non-participation. Not all GCG boys participated in sexually violent acts or sexually exploitative acts involving underage girls.<sup>185</sup> Some such as Zacc<sup>186</sup> openly rejected sexual practices and refused to participate. The consequence was ridicule. To be accused of not "having the balls" or to be gay in the homophobic context of the Wyke lads and GCG was a dangerous problem.<sup>187</sup> Contradictorily, such accusations and sexual taunting often led to groping the boy being accused of "not being man enough"

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<sup>185</sup> And it should be reminded that not all boys in Moss Side are members of GCG.

<sup>186</sup> Also mentioned in chapter 4

<sup>187</sup> Unfortunately, due to my relationships to girls only through the boys, I did not have the chance to see if the same was true about accusations of lesbianism. Although, I did see amongst the girls I knew, that if a girl did not pay attention to her appearance (for example not 'relaxing' her hair (a technique of making curls straight) or wearing the 'correct' clothes) that joked that they may get mistaken for a 'lezzie'. However, this was within a group of friends in a joking warning of not taking care of appearance. I am fairly certain that it would be a very different accusation outside this context.

or being a “battye boy”. Although Zacc never mentioned a direct situation, he alluded to his fears of experiencing something “like what they did to Ants” which I had heard mentioned by others, and suspected may have been a sexual attack, but given Zacc’s difficulty to speak about it I did not want to push the issue. In 2008 a 17 year old was stabbed to death because he had apparently been seen with another man. Although who had seen him, where and doing what, no one was quite sure about afterwards, everyone seemed sure he was a ‘battye boy’ i.e. that he must be gay. The boy was stabbed repeatedly and left to die in a small park in Moss Side. This is by no means the only example of violent attack against a person due to their presumed sexuality that I knew of. This homophobia is not only restricted to the gangs but is prevalent amongst Black people living in Moss Side. Similar homophobic situations have been discussed in the US context (Constantine-Simms 2001, Lemelle 2004a, Lemelle 2004b) but there seems little discussion in UK contexts. The only time I involved Social Services<sup>188</sup> in any of the many problematic situations I learned of during my fieldwork, was after a Pentecostal church service. The parents of a boy suspected that he might be gay.<sup>189</sup> An exorcism was performed on the fourteen-year-old to ‘cure him’ of his homosexuality. He was hit with branches by three people. They shouted and demanded he admit that the devil had taken him and he was possessed explaining was the cause of his homosexuality. When I saw him on another day, I asked him if he was ok. He said he was not and asked me for help so we involved Social Services. Homophobia is common in Moss Side. Whilst ‘queer theory’ may be gaining momentum, there is a relegation of importance upon Black identity, particularly in the UK context. Zacc initially found excuses such as the girls were ‘nasty’ but eventually members did not believe these excuses and so Zacc said it was due to his personal moral reasoning. Considering all the threats, very little action was taken against Zacc; just some jokes about how he had always been “soft” or being “chicken” and even too much “hanging with two toke T”. Having compatible views to dominant discourses, or views in keeping with what the

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<sup>188</sup> Which is a particular state body for regulating social norms of kinship or the ‘kinship police’ as the third chapter described.

<sup>189</sup> The boy was in fact gay, but this is not to say that all such suspicions or accusations in these circumstances are correct.

Wyke lads considered too ‘student’ or too ‘legit’ (as explored in previous chapters) was the main referential condition of non-belonging for Wyke lads. Similarly, proving opposite values made belong more likely. Acceptance of homosexuality was one such value. Non-acceptance of sexual violence is another. Zacc’s refusal to participate in sexual violence was considered part of a wider concern of him ‘going legit’.

Although some literature aims to seek out, locate, isolate as independent un-connected events, label and pathologise “defective urban cultures that espouse perverse ideals of masculinity” (Bourke 2007:121)<sup>190</sup> that is certainly not the aim of this chapter. In this chapter I wanted to express the ‘reality’ many people from Moss Side faced in comparison to simulations of the urban utopian Vision of regeneration contexts, although the gender hierarchy was maintained in both. The day after we had been called to Jamelia’s home following the attack, my friend and I were at a regeneration meeting. We were present as recognised “members of the community”<sup>191</sup> talking about problems “the youth of Moss Side” face. The usual images of frightening “hoodies” with problems of gun and knife crime were evoked, along with identifying the standard causation of poverty and social alienation and the customary solutions were suggested to achieve the New Labour panacea “social cohesion”.<sup>192</sup> I looked at my friend, wondering if he would say anything about the problems of sexually threatening and sexually aggressive behaviour, particularly the problem of gang-rape. Whilst I certainly knew of more shootings and stabbings than instances of rape, the fact that I knew about many amongst the few girls I knew, indicated to me that this private problem must be very common. Gendered regeneration policies meant that problems perceived of as male, such as gun and knife crime were considered appropriate problems to discuss. This problem of everyday sexual aggression alongside the more serious cases of

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<sup>190</sup> Although this is clearly not the only intention of Bourke’s work which successfully traces rape through different periods, looking at its relation to different cultural movements through history, such as the temperance movement.

<sup>191</sup> As chapters 2 and 3 considered, this was someone who gained sufficient knowledge of new governance structures (such as the voluntary sector community forums, regeneration consultation processes and so forth) to be able to engage in a way that makes their views legible and legitimate (in minutes of meetings and policies etc) and so are recognised in simulations of the Vision as “Members of the Community”.

<sup>192</sup> As explored in chapters 1

multiple rapes was considered a female and private problem not to be discussed. Despite the ‘real’ threat of sexual violence, I never (on any occasion of the *many* regeneration contexts with which I was involved) heard anything mentioned on sexual aggression or rape. I was also guilty of colluding with the silence on the matter, as I never brought it up either. I believed it was not my place to talk about it to ‘outsiders’. This was clearly a Moss Side secret; one which conditions of private/public and inside/outside meant this was not to be spoken about publicly to people outside (wherever the boundaries of these lies).

Although other practices were about recognition from political forces outside gang contexts (such as pirate stations), the violence GCG members perpetrated was not a search for recognition or respect from ‘legitimate’ spheres. And, unlike other practices considered as resistance against ‘the system’ violence was not a ‘weapon of the weak’ (Scott 1985). Wyke lads and GCG members were also aware of discourses interpreting their actions as acting out disempowerment and disagreed with that interpretation. Their violence was about “keeping it real” or being “Fa Real” (for real) (both phrases were used regularly). These phrases were often used with “you understand me?” or “you get me?” (hence the title of this chapter). The fear of being misunderstood may come from the negative portrayals of groups such as GCG in mass media. It may be as other theorists have illustrated, that their behavioural codes and body language is misinterpreted as aggressive, leading to their continued suppression, containment in inner cities and given a lack of opportunity in society. It may be that the “you get me?” is from the fear that they are mistakenly being identified as a ‘black dangerous other’ when all they want is a fair chance. However, in the case of GCG members, to interpret this violence as resistance to suppressing racist structures of society through an ideology in which ‘they know not what they do,’ is to do to them the very thing they refuse to accept – place them in a position of weakness and subordination. It is not that they did not know what their actions were considered morally reprehensible, or that the violence they committed was continuing to create their disadvantages. It was precisely that they knew that the rest of society

(perhaps even the rest of the envisioned global world<sup>193</sup> which urban regeneration seeks to make Moss Side part of – which in turn requires residents know their position within) thought that their actions were wrong, bad, morally unjust, it is precisely this that made them act in violent ways. The violence GCG members express is as Žižek describes, an “unarticulated resentment” (Žižek 2008:65). “The sad fact that opposition to the system cannot articulate itself in the guise of a realistic alternative, or at least a meaningful utopian project, but only take the shape of a meaningless outburst, is a grave illustration of our predicament” ((Žižek 2008:64). Although Žižek is describing Parisien riots, a similarity can be drawn here with GCG members and the Vision of regeneration policy. GCG members would consider it a misinterpretation to describe their violence as an attempt to articulate anger towards and resistance to what Žižek calls “systemic violence, or the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems” (Žižek 2008:1). Interpreting their violence as resistance to subjugated positions requires their acceptance of being in a position of weakness. It requires accepting as real, a social order in which they are victims. To accept this social order as real would be to participate in their own victimization. This was not something GCG members were willing to accept. They refused a relationship between systemic violence and their own acts of violence, since they could not accept the position of being victims of any violence. They refused their positions as victims and refused the social order, which identified them as sufferers.<sup>194</sup> They were, in their view, destroying structures and the ideology that accompanied them by claiming they do not exist. They did this by committing violent acts that were “keeping it real” – ‘realer’ than the systemic violence done to them. An alternative interpretation may be; justifying this violence as a resistance movement, by considering that they must utilise bodies to act out political resistance since this is the last site available for them to do so, particularly to use female bodies since this is the only group who (in a social order which makes them victims) they can be the victimizers of, leaving

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<sup>194</sup> I do not see the global as separate to the local, or that the global is somewhere ‘not here’, as the first chapter explores. Here I am referring to Moss Side’s relational position to what is referred to as ‘global’.



girls' bodies as the only available site of contesting order since this is the only group which is below them in the hierarchical society in which they exist. Members of GCG would say that their violence has nothing to do with any of this, that they are simply "keeping it real, you get me?" Whilst I may interpret their acts of violence as resistance to their social position; victims of systemic violence re-inventing themselves as victimisers – this was not their explanation. Their explanation was that they wanted to "keep it real". They wanted to insert some of what they saw as 'reality' into the hyper-reality (or the simulated and unreal utopia of consumer reality discussed in the previous chapter) and the Vision which they are not part of. And they tried to ensure that I understood that this was what they were doing "keeping it real, you get me?" In the same way that the state wishes to govern, by cutting experience in certain ways (Rose 1999:31) so did the violence committed by members. And so, whilst I see that their violence could be understood as resistance, using the only means available to them – that is not the intended message. They were simply "keeping it real". They committed acts in order to remind themselves and others that they do not see these constructs or their status as victims within them as 'real'. Žižek claims people<sup>195</sup> either can not or do not want to enter the "desert of the real" stripped of social norms, conventions and fantasies (Žižek 2002). It is precisely this "desert of the (ugly) real" which GCG members tried to remind us of through acts of violence. It was as though they could not scream at the social order that suppressed them (since this would be to accept the order as real and so therefore participate in their position of weakness in it) and so they simply screamed, through these acts of violence.

For Jamelia, nothing could have felt realer. After the rape, she tried to maintain that she was fine and she had recovered. However, she became increasingly withdrawn and felt physically ill. We finally convinced her to seek help from her doctor. It emerged that she was pregnant (also see McFarlane 2007 for a discussion on how little is known about the effect of pregnancy from rape). It is common amongst Black families in Moss Side, particularly with Christian backgrounds, to oppose abortions. As such, Jamelia was going to continue with

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<sup>195</sup> Although I fear that his 'people' are a universal 'we'

the pregnancy. She had become pregnant from the rape, and it was impossible to know which of the rapists was the father. The paternity of the child was irrelevant anyway since the father would not have anything to do with the upbringing. Jamelia was torn between the fact that she was carrying the child of one of her attackers and the fact that she was opposed to abortion. Although she was given a lot of support from her family, I sensed that her brother Tyrone resented the fact she was having a child to a member of LSC, even if she was an unwilling mother. Whenever the future child was mentioned Tyrone would make an irritated face and leave, or make a sarcastic comment.<sup>196</sup> Unlike the majority of girls experiencing sexual violence, for Jamelia, her pregnancy meant she could not simply signify the event of rape as non-trauma. Life continued until four months later, as the visible signs of her pregnancy emerged and the ‘reality’ of her situation became clearer to her, Jamelia committed suicide. It was an immense shock to us all and I do not think her mother, bereft of her husband, her nephew and now her daughter, has ever recovered.

Through the structure of the thesis, I tried to provide connections between the ‘global’ and the ‘local’, moving further into the ‘reality’ of Moss Side residents targeted by urban regeneration strategies in contrast to the Vision of regeneration policy. I chose to include this chapter at the end of the thesis to express that considering state projects such as urban regeneration cannot be done without knowing the people that they target. Knowing the people involved requires being part of their lives in a variety of contexts. Whilst authority as a “Community Representative” could be achieved through being a victim and an ex-gangster<sup>197</sup> quite the opposite had authority amongst the people I knew. Whilst the state is reproduced by everyone participating with it and in it, (even cynical participants), constantly reconstructing it in the process, for most Moss Side residents ‘the council’<sup>198</sup> is very separate to their lives. The daily concerns and pressures of most residents meant that they did not really know how they experienced urban regeneration – they had much

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<sup>196</sup> But what followed was in no way Tyrone’s fault – it was beyond him. I only state this to illustrate the depths of rivalry between gangs and the pressures members are under

<sup>197</sup> See chapter 3

<sup>198</sup> See first chapter

more to worry about. Violence cycled from one event to the next, from one retaliation to another. Of the friends who I worked with most directly for this project, 12 died as a result of so-called “urban malaise” over the 5 years. Like Jamelia’s death, many will not show up in crime statistics qualifying state intervention projects such as urban regeneration. And so this chapter, like the saying, was “Keeping it real, you get me?”

## **And So Finally...**

Through the chapters of this thesis I moved from global economic changes to the intimate silences of Moss Side. I wanted to move from the macro to the micro to demonstrate the connections between them. The thesis explored the spaces between the state policy of urban regeneration and the individuals that they target. By considering the political context that led up to urban regeneration and exploring further the apparent shift from government to governance I discussed the implementation of urban regeneration policy, arguing that it was as a mechanism of government to promote an idea of “self-government” and self-regulation promoting particular values. I followed this by describing how particular individuals began to implicitly understand the values of urban regeneration policy. These values came from an interstitial position of various other values such as race. I demonstrated how the individuals learnt to gain access to regeneration by utilising a particular Black identity. This was to demonstrate how the people involved internalised the values of regeneration strategies.

Then, moving away from direct regeneration contexts, I discussed how a street gang, the Wyke lads and GCG, came to understand the resulting transformations of Moss Side such as the arrival of “students”. I described the strategies they had in place to gain recognition and how they separated themselves from these “students”. I then considered a moment of transformation, with a detailed example of the regeneration of a radio station in Moss Side that became a sanitized version of the former station; closer to the Vision of urban regeneration policy. I then introduced the Vision itself, describing how the project of urban regeneration was to reach a state of urban utopia. And then I concluded, by reminding the reader that the lives residents lived was a very different reality to the Vision regeneration policy attempted to supersede. And I also described my own experiences of this. Indeed my position between participant and researcher has been central in the thesis. And I have intentionally left my experiences central to the thesis.

Many PhD students experience similar difficulties to mine during their fieldwork. Amy Pollard describes these problems and questions the way PhD fieldwork is seen within Anthropology (Pollard 2009). Barry also questions why, whilst these problems are recognised by informal peer support, they do not appear in writing (Barry 2002). Barry agrees with Pollard, that the expectation to fulfill a rite of passage makes students sideline these aspects of their research (Barry 2009). I see these experiences as an integral part of the research I conducted and so I have included them where appropriate alongside other ethnographic material. It was the amount of access I gained from this ambivalence that allowed an insight into the lives of residents that I would not have gained otherwise.

Trying to end my 'field work' was incredibly difficult. I had to somehow disentangle myself from relationships I had made. I found it very difficult trying to write whilst friends would come round. Before I began my research, I did not realise how many deep relationships I would make and how imbedded I would become in Moss Side. In addition to the footnote in the previous chapter (in which I describe difficulty switching myself to a dinner party after leaving Jamelia's home) a situation I found myself in 2009 seems to sum up these difficulties. In an attempt to disentangle myself, I had bought a new mobile phone and stopped answering the phone I used during my fieldwork. Whilst I still had my old one (and still do) I was only checking my messages every week or so, in an attempt not to be drawn back into the everyday cycles of problems, retaliations, disputes and so forth; the resolution of which had become so much part of my life as an older female kin member. A colleague at the University and I had arranged to meet for a drink in a bar. The colleague was an upper class, blonde woman in her mid thirties. When we arrived there, the bar we had planned to go to was shut. Opposite it, was a pub that I was used to drinking in, with mainly Black clientele. We entered the pub, I said hello to the people I knew in the way that I would ordinarily do so. We bought our drinks and sat down to chat. After an hour or so, my colleague left. As I went to leave our glasses by the bar, someone I knew in passing said "oh, you got time to speak to us now". I replied politely that I had time to speak to him before, but I

happened to be speaking to someone else. I sensed a lot of hostility from him and said bye to everyone and went to leave the pub. I noticed two people get up and follow me out. They followed me as I set off to walk home (it was around 10pm). We had been walking for about 10 minutes and I realised the situation would become serious. I panicked as I realised I had brought the ‘wrong phone’ out with me. All I could do was ring my partner and ask him for a lift home (rather than phone a member of GCG). However I could not speak for long, as the situation would have increased if I had given the two men the chance to try and take my phone from me. The two men closed the distance between us and I knew I was about to be attacked so I turned around and faced the men. I saw that they were holding knives. Regaining my ‘Moss Side head’<sup>199</sup> I said in an angry and authoritative (and seemingly calm) voice – “what the fuck do you think your doing – do you know who I am? If you fuck with me I will have the heads of your whole fucking family”. And then, Roman appeared in a car at high speed, pulled up and got out shouting “you gwan show me your faces then bredren<sup>200</sup>?” and the two men ran off. Someone had phoned Roman from the pub to tell him that “trouble” was brewing.<sup>201</sup>

I had confused my places. Walking into the pub with my colleague meant that my actions were interpreted differently.<sup>202</sup> In retrospect, if I had managed to shift myself between identities quicker, when the person asked if I now had time to speak to him, I should have responded by saying that it was no business of his who I was in with and if I had any desire to speak to him I would, if I didn’t I wouldn’t – and I didn’t. But I had made the mistake of giving a polite response. When I sensed the hostility rising, if my identity had shifted quicker, I would have ordinarily stood my ground, reminding everyone of my social position and the situation would not have developed. Indeed this was the only

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<sup>199</sup> i.e. remembered the social interaction rules that came from being involved in Moss Side’s criminal street gang network and wider contexts of Moss Side also.

<sup>200</sup> A word for brothers or brethren – He said this in a mocking way since to make such a move on me was completely against the ethics of the gang.

<sup>201</sup> Incidentally by the time my partner had arrived at the pub, the pub that had previously been completely full, was empty.

<sup>202</sup> I believe I had behaved in exactly the same way with him as I always would have done. I did not know him very well, and would not have been expected to sit with him if I had come to the pub with someone else. It was that I was with a colleague that had shaped the way he interpreted my actions.

time in the 7 years of my involvement that someone physically threatened me. I did eventually manage to move between identities becoming sufficiently aggressive enough in time to not get stabbed or worse. In 2010, I finally realised it was time to move. I could not write about the people I saw on a day-to-day basis. Others may be able to, but I could not. Indeed, I still find it difficult since I still see many people I have written about regularly as my involvement in the area continues.

It was only once I left that I realised how difficult my research was and the affects it had on my personal relationships. I wanted to include these experiences as part of the thesis because they were a central part of the research itself and give an insight to the experiences of doing ethnographic research in difficult situations. As I sit, comfortably in my new surroundings, looking out of the window into my garden, I realise I am allowed to look – there is nothing that I may accidentally see to have to later answer questions on why I was intentionally watching. As I check the streets before pulling money from the machine to go to the pub, I realise there is no one on the street, neither to rob me nor ignore me. As I walk into the local Yorkshire pub and see if my friends have arrived, I laugh to myself as I still ‘case the place’ and see exactly who is in so I can nod acknowledgement to those who are senior, sit to face the door to see who enters and leaves and ensure my back is not near the toilets so I don’t get stabbed in the back. Walking up the hill from the supermarket carrying too much shopping, I also realise, there are no young lads I know to help me, I am dressed conspicuously and scruffily non-white and people are looking. Whatever I think about moving away from Moss Side, the difference is that I could move – mobility was an option for me. It believe that the daily, lifelong entrapment is what gets to people. Realising “this is it... this is my whole life”. Ironically, I could not have afforded to leave Moss Side without the social mobility doing this PhD has allowed me. Whilst tending vegetables in an allotment I guiltily remember Wyke lads making fun of my attempts to “grow food were only shit grows” in my Moss Side back yard.

**And so ...**

Urban regeneration strategies in Moss Side expected people to transform towards a particular Vision. This Vision was incredibly unlike the lives most people in Moss Side led. This expectation to transform and the promotion of an incongruent vision frustrated many residents, particularly GCG members.

During one of my first experiences of urban regeneration (during the unveiling of the plans for Maine Road in 2003) I was asking the head of regeneration in Manchester City Council some questions when he asked me “What’s wrong with showing them what they should be striving for” – the answer I would give now would be, because they still have no means of achieving it.



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