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# Negotiating individual and collective narratives in a contested urban space

## An investigation of storytelling dynamics in contemporary Bradford

Melanie C. C. ROHSE

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**Department of Peace Studies**

**University of Bradford**

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**Melanie C. C. ROHSE**

**Negotiating individual and collective narratives in a contested urban space: an investigation of storytelling dynamics in contemporary Bradford**

**Key words**

Individual stories; collective stories; contested urban space; storytelling dynamics; lived experience; Bradford; identity; community relations; dominant stories

**Abstract**

This thesis explores the dynamics of narrative production and contestation within individuals' stories and the collective stories of the communities in which they live. The research is focused on trying to understand the relationship between public stories constructed about place and community, and the stories told by the inhabitants of those places.

A case study in the city of Bradford provides a focus for inquiry. A qualitative research design is utilised, combining theory with primary data collection and analysis. A narrative analysis of national, academic and local stories about Bradford is used to disaggregate collective narratives of the city and explore the relationship between popular, political and academic discourses. It provides a context for the analysis of in-depth interviews with a range of inhabitants from a selected geographic area within Bradford, centred on how their individual stories relate to the identified collective stories of Bradford.

Analysis of the fieldwork data shows that individuals are often engaged in complex negotiations of public discourse in ways that may reinforce and contest existing stories, but also complement them with parallel stories that neither reinforce nor contest but construct a different narrative. It reveals and reflects on apparent contradictions within everyday storytelling, for example, how nostalgia can be displayed about harsh times of socio-economic decline, or how attitudes to change over time can be variably positive and negative depending both on the speakers' positioning of themselves and of the interviewer, and the speakers' purpose in the interaction.

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# Thesis Introduction

## 1 – Overview of the thesis

This thesis explores the dynamics of narrative production and contestation within individuals' stories and the collective stories of the communities they live in. Stories are an integral part of our human lives. We use to them every day, in personal acts of communication. Through the stories we choose to tell about ourselves, we create, mould and evolve our individual identity. Collectively, stories allow us to remember and formulate the past of a group, and as we recognise and identify with those collective stories, we articulate and experience belonging to the group. Seen in those terms, stories fulfil a range of functions for human beings, from sense-making to remembering, constructing identity and communicating, to cite only a few. Within those functions, individual and collective narratives interact, and it is the subject of this thesis to explore how.

More specifically, the research is focused on trying to understand the relationship between collective stories constructed about place and community, and the stories told by the inhabitants of those places. The context of a contested urban space was chosen for the investigation due to the challenges that it raises in narrative terms. Beyond the constructive side of stories lies a potentially destructive and limiting aspect. Stories are rarely told for their own sake. They are told in a context, to an audience, by a teller who has a purpose. The danger is that power relations can be established and reinforced through stories, especially collective ones. This means they can be used to foster understanding, but they can also be used to lie and manipulate. They can carry and communicate a range of opinions or crystallise a single and definitive view of the world. In the words of Chimamanda Adichie, "Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize." (2009) Which collective stories get told, when and by whom constrain the framing and telling of individual stories. But to what extent? Due to its characteristics, a contested urban space appeared to be a relevant location for the exploration of such issues. Urban

spaces qualify as being "contested" on the basis of "objective" or material criteria. For example, cities can be divided along ethnic, racial, religious or economic lines. In some cases, the divisions are such that they can lead to social tensions, even violence (Rafferty, n.d.). However, there is a risk of over-determining the role of material factors as causal explanations of tension or even violence (Megoran, 2013). Without suggesting that stories can by themselves lead to war or peace, there is a need to acknowledge that there is a subjective side to division and contestation. In a conflict situation, stories can be used to reinforce divisions as they are intrinsically linked to power relations. In polarized spaces, a single story can dominate and reinforce the physical divisions, whilst other stories may try and compete with it to establish their own truth about the urban space. Then, the contested urban space is identified as a location in time and space where storytelling tensions are played out. Considering the existence of a relationship between collective and individual stories, what does this mean for individuals' narratives in their everyday urban lives?

The research seeks to answer the following main research question:

- What are the dynamics of individual and collective storytelling in a contested urban space?

And a set of sub-questions:

- Which stories dominate and which are contested in the collective narratives of the city?

- In what terms do individuals narrate their experiences of the city? What does it suggest about the ways in which people create and negotiate meaning in a contested urban space?

- To what extent do individual stories reflect, reinforce or contest existing collective stories about the communities they live in? What does this reveal about the relationship between individual and collective narratives of urban spaces?

A case study in the city of Bradford provides a focus for inquiry (see next section). A qualitative research design is utilised, combining theory with primary data collection and analysis. This research can be qualified as "exploratory," (Robson, 2002: 59) which is reflected in its aims. The first objective is to disaggregate a range of collective narratives of Bradford in order to identify the themes that make it recognisable within the national imagination and to investigate which stories dominate and which are contested. It provides a context for completing the second objective, which is to analyse personal stories of a range of inhabitants from a selected area within Bradford. Doing so, I aim to critically engage with the personal and collective stories to "seek new insights" (Robson, 2002: 59) into the relationship between individual and collective narratives of urban spaces.

## 2 – Research setting

In this section, I investigate the rationale for choosing the city of Bradford as a case study. I look at the history of Bradford to locate the city as the context of this research. Then, I explore how and why Bradford can be constructed as a contested urban space as I consider what the city epitomises in the country.

### a – Industrial rise and fall

Over two centuries, Bradford experienced a phase of rapid industrialisation, followed by a phase of equally quick deindustrialisation, which contributed to shaping the city that Bradford is today. At the onset of the Industrial Revolution, Bradford was already known for the manufacturing of worsted (Firth, 1997), although the production was mainly manual and domestic. Gradually throughout the nineteenth century, the production process was mechanised and although old and new techniques cohabited for a while (Avery, 2008), Bradford mill owners established the supremacy of the city in the production of the worsted cloth, so much so that "it became popularly known as 'Worstedopolis'," (Avery, 2008: 26) or even "the wool capital of the world." (Darlow et al., 2005: 22) But industrialisation came at a cost, and the city also became famous for its poverty, industrial filthy air

and "broken" citizens.[1] A new "working class" emerged with the process of industrialisation and started mobilising against poor working conditions, the introduction of technology (e.g. In 1822, weavers destroyed a power loom that had been secretly installed in a factory in Shipley. There were further uprisings against mechanisation in the late 1830s. (See Fieldhouse, 1978)) and low wages (e.g. In 1825, woolcombers and handloom workers went on strike for six months over wages. In 1837, the working classes rioted in Bradford against the new Poor Law, which provided support only for those in workhouses, widely considered as prisons (See Fieldhouse, 1978).). The mobilisation of the working class led to several political movements in the mid-1800s, such as Chartism, Factory Reform, Owenism and Parliamentary Reform (Firth, 1997).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the industry faced its first challenges, namely foreign competition and a change in fashion favouring a softer cloth (Jowitt, 1986). But the First World War hid this as the immediate period after the war benefitted from a short boom (Avery, 2008). Highs and lows followed, when the city was hit by the late 1920s and 1930s depression (Bujra and Pearce, 2011) due to a lack of investment in new technologies in the mills (an approach that mill owners would take again after the Second World War and which would lead to even more difficulties for the industry) but picked up during the Second World War. In 1940, "the city's mills switched to war production [...][and] there was full employment and high wages as labour became scarce but production reached such a level that there was enough spare capacity to supply the civilian markets and even export to the U.S.A." (Avery, 2008: 43) Post-Second World War however, the industry bosses failed to invest and there was little diversification in the economy of the city, which meant that Bradford was particularly vulnerable when a recession hit the country in the 1970s (Russell, 2003). As industry disappeared in the city, its very identity was threatened, and so was the identity of its working class (Bujra and Pearce, 2011). Successive political parties at the local level tried to attract more business to the

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[1] Injuries were frequent in Victorian mills and children in Bradford often suffered from malformations due to their intensive work in the mills. (Firth, 1997)

city but all seemed to fail, and at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the city was left to deal with soaring unemployment, especially within its growing youth population.

## b – Immigration and ethnic relations

Bradford has a history of attracting migrants, which is closely linked to the industrialisation of the city. In the nineteenth century, workers from Ireland and Europe flocked to the city to power its mills and German merchants came and boosted its trade. The arrival of the Irish in particular created social tensions in the city due to competition for jobs, and controversy as most of them were Catholics, which aroused suspicions and culminated in two anti-Catholic riots in 1853 and 1862 (Schmid, 1997). After the Second World War, a wave of immigration brought Eastern Europeans, mainly Ukrainians, Poles and Yugoslavs, to Bradford to work in the textile industry. In the early 1950s this was followed by a second wave of immigration, from New Commonwealth countries, as well as a small number of African-Caribbean countries (Firth, 1997). They came to fill the shortage of labour, and as the mills started to operate 24 hours a day, they were employed mostly for the night shift. With the strong belief that they were not in Britain to settle down but to accumulate money to then go back to their country of origin, what became known as the myth of return as the majority ended up staying, the migrants found themselves living "in ghettos of the inner city." (Firth, 1997: 137) The 1962 Immigration Act, which imposed restrictions on immigration, led to families coming to the UK to join those who had gone ahead to work in the mills. "By 1971 there were 30,000 workers from Asia, some 10% of the city's population and by 2001 this had grown to 85,465 or 18% of the population." (Avery, 2008: 45) As Bujra and Pearce put it, it turns out that "South Asian migrants arrived to prop up a declining industry." (2011: 103) In 1995, "riots" or street disturbances erupted in the Manningham area of the city, and again in 2001. As a result, "the image of Bradford was badly tarnished [...] and left trails of damage costing millions of pounds and causing hundreds of injuries." (Avery, 2008: 53) Many interpretations of the riots were offered and lists of causes were drawn by commentators, academics,

journalists and others, and the 2001 riots were often dubbed "race riots." (Procter, 2003: 168) However, questions were raised about such interpretations. For example, Bujra and Pearce draw on the history of the City to argue that "we can see the [2001] riot as more than the violence of angry young men. It suggests a collective failure – both local and national – to deal with the social legacy of economic decline within a multicultural urban setting." (2011: 100)

To summarise, Bradford's history points to the emergence of a series of problems towards the end of the twentieth century. Like the rest of the country, Bradford suffered the economic recession of the 1970s. The image of the city has become one of a place struggling to "regenerate." In addition, the city suffers from "the response within sections of the British media and population at large to the emergence of the city's south Asian community, by the end of the twentieth century one of the largest such in Great Britain." (Russell, 2003: 52) A combination of both elements means that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Bradford's story is unique in the UK. As debate about the 2001 riots wears on, and the city faces challenges from deprivation, deindustrialisation, and accommodating new waves of migrants following the expansion of the European Union, Bradford has gradually been constructed as a contested urban space.

## c – Constructing Bradford as a contested urban space – a brief overview

Following on from the brief historical overview of Bradford, I would like to argue that a series of events which resulted in social tensions and sometimes violence in the city have led to Bradford being constructed as a contested urban space. "Objective" factors of ethnicity and religion are at the heart of this construction, and together make the city serve as an "other" place, somewhere that is different to the rest of the country, especially the South.

Bradford's recent history has included social struggle and episodes of violence. Whether they were born from dynamics internal to the city (e.g. the Honeyford

Affair and the 1995 riots) or external threats (e.g. the 2001 riots and the English Defence League demonstration in August 2010), or a combination of local, national and international factors (e.g. in the Rushdie Affair), they were all rationalised in terms of ethnicity and/or religion and put Bradford on the national and international map. In the case of the Honeyford Affair in the 1980s, a group of "Asian" parents mobilised across faiths against the headmaster of a school who had publically made racist remarks. They contested his racist attitude towards themselves and their children. Although the headmaster was forced into early retirement, he was given a platform in national politics as he was invited by the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, to advise on Conservative education policy. In the late 1980s, the Rushdie Affair, a range of demonstrations against Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*, attracted national and international media to Bradford as the book was burnt by a section of the city's Muslim population. Subtly, the contestation moved from an ethnic viewpoint to a religious one, with Muslims across the world denouncing Rushdie's work as a heresy. In terms of Bradford, this is important as previous mobilisation in the city had tended to rally people from a variety of religious backgrounds. This marked a change in the dynamics of mobilisation in the city. In the case of the 1995 disturbances, a group of young Muslim men rioted in the Manningham area of Bradford against what they perceived as unfair and racist treatment by the police, constituting a case of internal contestation within the city. The 2001 riots, however, present a different picture. On that occasion (as in the English Defence League demonstration in 2010 although in 2010 the outcomes were much different), the contestation in the city was provoked by external forces. Groups of Muslim youths took to the street to "defend" their area (Manningham again) against the perceived "threat" of the British National Party. The police force was caught in the middle, but the Muslim youths' perception was that it was defending the BNP members.

Furthermore, national politics contributed to crystallising this view of Bradford as a divided and therefore contested space by locating the cause of the 2001 riots in "segregation" and "self-segregation," with a tendency to solely blame "Asian" and

"Muslim" communities for the situation, and proposing the idea of "community cohesion" to remedy the problem. But this particular construction of community cohesion has proven controversial and many commentators (Burnett, 2004 and 2008; McGhee, 2003; Flint and Robinson, 2008) have criticised the policy for its failure "to fully acknowledge the implications of racism, inequality and wealth disparities as factors behind the disturbances," (Slade, 2010: 2) which pathologises communities "as being responsible for isolation perceived as negative." (Slade, 2010: 2) By articulating the problem in Bradford (and the other cities affected by disturbances in 2001) in those terms, the very discourse of community cohesion constructs the city as divided and contested. According to the critiques, this may be a simplistic interpretation of the complex reality of social relations in the city.

Although the City of Bradford is not a homogenous space wholly determined by external discourses, I would like to argue at this point that in Britain it epitomises a specific image as a contested urban space, which "others" the city. Alam and Husband suggest that "the convergence [in Bradford] of class profile, Asian ethnicity, Muslim faith and demographic concentration has triggered a catalytic mix of anxieties that have found expression in elite and popular discussion." (2006: 2) Further, they state, "A series of government reports have given political weight to the perceived threat to social cohesion" and "Bradford has been the location of a series of political issues around faith and ethnicity that became the focus of national moral panics" (Alam and Husband, 2006: 3). Additionally, "media representation and presentation is an important issue. Bradford is a focus of anti-Muslim media reporting which erroneously and unjustifiably makes negative commentary on the city." (Samad, 2010) These few quotes indicate that there appears to be a dominant story about Bradford in the collective narrative of the UK. However, there is little research into whether this story is representative or not and whether this matters, notably for the inhabitants of Bradford. It seems that recently, only two research projects about community cohesion in Bradford have taken into account the views of the local population (Samad, 2010; Alam and Husband, 2006). Alam and Husband (2006) in particular identify the "external gaze"

(4) as having an impact on the identity of the Pakistani population of Bradford, especially its young people. But how, and in what terms? To what extent are they the recipients of the dominant story? There is an argument to go beyond the dominant story and look at individuals' experiences of the contested urban space to understand the impact of the urban contestation on their lives and on the formation of their identity in relation to the space they live in. Then, there is scope for research in Bradford on the relationship of grassroots stories to the collective story created about the city in the particular context of a contested urban space as described above.

## 3 – Genesis of the research

Considering the importance of context in the study of narratives and of locating narrators and audiences, in this section I explore the story of my personal journey as a researcher by considering the genesis of the research from two angles: first, the origins of the theoretical framework, and second, how this tied in with my personal interest in Bradford.

In terms of the theoretical framework, my decision to pursue a PhD was deeply rooted in an interest in storytelling and reconciliation which I developed whilst carrying out my MA dissertation. Entitled "To what extent is storytelling a praxis of reconciliation in societies emerging from a protracted social conflict?" (Rohse, 2008) it explored the value and power of storytelling in reconciliation, but also raised a set of questions about the ambivalence of storytelling, notably around issues of negative stereotyping, manipulation of stories and unequal power relations. My aim was to look at both the academic and the field literature in order to explore the potential of storytelling as a tool for grassroots peacebuilding. As such, my focus was on specific uses of storytelling, namely as a reconciliation technique in encounter workshops. I observed that systematic evaluation of such storytelling workshops was lacking. Admittedly, measuring the impact of any peacebuilding initiative is a very difficult task. However, I noticed a gap between the theory developed within narrative research and the practical findings from the

field. On the one hand, some studies within narrative research were emphasising the duality of narratives, with their potential to be either constructive or destructive. On the other hand, practitioners' reports on storytelling workshops tended not to deal with issues around agenda setting, manipulation, or re-traumatisation. Therefore, I initially set out to further investigate the practice and potential of storytelling workshops for peacebuilding. However, as I became more familiar with the literature on narratives, my interest shifted from storytelling methods to everyday practices of storytelling. I wanted my focus to be more on individuals' use of stories in context, as opposed to practices within an institutional and to a certain extent artificial setting.

In terms of the case study, I have had a long connection to Bradford, from visiting the area as a teenager with my family to studying and working in the city before starting my PhD. However, I only gradually became aware of how Bradford is represented and perceived by its inhabitants, by visitors, but also by the local and national media. When I worked within the university, I became aware of what is informally called "the Bradford factor," suggesting a handicap that the university has to make up for due to its location when it tries to recruit students. I noticed how polarised people's stories about the city could be – you either loved it or loathed it. I was often told the story that individuals who had chosen to come and live there liked the city better than those who were born there. I heard tales of council meetings where negativity about Bradford was not permitted. Living in the city, it was hard to escape the reactions of people outside of Bradford (at best curious, at worse negative and asking why a Frenchwoman such as myself would want to live there) and the contentious headlines about it. Examples from the national press included "BBC drama about racial tensions anger Bradford" in the Independent in November 2007 (Taylor, 2007), referring to a film about a white family who moves to an all-Muslim community in Bradford, and "Segregation in Bradford" in the Guardian (Rahman, 2009) amidst more positive ones: "In praise of... Bradford." (The Guardian, 2010) Whether in a positive or negative way, Bradford appeared to make the national headlines on a regular basis, which cannot

be said of many places in the UK. My interest in stories, combined with my observations about the city, led me to ask myself a number of questions: where did the stories in the media come from? Who told them and to what effect? Whose experiences did they reflect? Was the city itself suffering because of the narratives circulating about it? How did the inhabitants feel about those stories? Thus, I decided that I wanted to investigate public narratives of the city, and how it affected, if at all, people on the ground, in a more systematic manner.

## 4 – Significance of the research

Theoretically, the thesis contributes to contemporary research on narrative within the social sciences and humanities, with specific emphasis on debates around the determining power of "dominant" stories, and questions about the agency of individuals in creating their own narrative realities. It also explores narrative complexity in the reductive and simplifying context of polarized urban spaces. The thesis is an example of analysis of dominant and counter-narratives in contemporary Britain. It demonstrates how these concepts can be useful to understand the relationship between a range of collective stories. It also shows how this model, as with any dichotomy, can restrict how we interpret stories, especially at the individual level. The thesis introduces the idea of parallel stories to discuss the range of stories that neither reinforce nor contest the culturally dominant storyline, but instead complement it by constructing a different narrative. It adds complexity to the opposition between dominant and counter-narratives and enables us to capture how individuals navigate contradictory narratives in everyday storytelling by raising questions of the purpose of the teller and of the role of the audience in the formation of any personal story.

The thesis also adds to the body of literature on Bradford by surfacing and reflecting on the multiplicity of stories that exist in and about the city, revealing a more complex situation than the ones presented in the arguably negative and reductive culturally dominant national storyline or the overly positive and equally reductive positive local stories. The research does not give a "definitive" or

objectively true story of Bradford. Rather, it offers a socially-situated and complex account of life in a specific geographical area of the city at a particular time in history. Doing so, it offers a subjective construction of the city intrinsically linked to the experiences of its inhabitants. It suggests that beyond the contestation between a negative story of Bradford and a positive story of Bradford, there is scope for celebrating the opportunities that the urban space can create for its inhabitants whilst acknowledging and addressing the challenges the city is confronted with.

## 5 – Structure of the thesis

Eight chapters constitute the thesis, which are organised in three parts. **Part One** sets the scene for the research by establishing a theoretical framework for understanding narratives and by situating the research within the social sciences and humanities. **Chapter One** discusses storytelling dynamics between individual and collective narratives. It introduces a concept central to the thesis: culturally dominant storylines. This concept suggests that some narratives are so rehearsed and accepted within a culture that they gain a normative and dominant status within it, and frame individuals' constructions of their own stories. The extent of the role of culturally dominant storylines is explored through the functions of narratives and the concept of counter-narrative is brought in to examine individuals' retention of agency and the transformatory potential of narratives at individual and collective levels. **Chapter Two** situates the research within narrative inquiry. Theoretically, it justifies the qualitative design of the project in relation to the research question. Practically, it reflects on the realities of fieldwork and the ethical challenges that the research presented before, during and after fieldwork.

**Part Two** presents the findings from the first phase of the research and focuses on the relationships between various collective narratives of Bradford. **Chapter Three** disaggregates national cultural stories about Bradford and argues that there is an identifiable culturally dominant storyline about the city in the national imagination, which is both a negative and reductive story about the city. **Chapter Four**

disaggregates another type of public story: academic tales of Bradford. It uses the findings to examine the relationship between those and the popular culture stories, questioning the extent to which the academic stories reflect, reinforce or contest the culturally dominant storyline. **Chapter Five** explores the interplay of a range of local stories about the city, which have developed as counter-narratives to the culturally dominant storyline and some of the academic stories. It establishes that there can be an identity dissonance created in the city as a result of the tendency of the local counter-narratives to be overly positive, as they contradict another range of local stories that establish the challenges facing Bradford.

**Part Three** exposes the analysis of the fieldwork data and sheds light on the relationship between individual and collective stories. **Chapter Six** shows that individuals are often engaged in complex negotiations of public discourse in ways that may reinforce pre-existing stories. It specifically asks which stories were relevant or meaningful for the participants to the research, interprets what this means in terms of the identity of the case-study area, and questions what this reveals about the relationship between the culturally dominant storyline and the individual stories. **Chapter Seven** investigates how individuals negotiate dominant stories in a way that contests them. It details the various narrative strategies that the participants mobilised and emphasises the individuals' retention of agency as they show awareness and counter the external discourse seemingly imposed on the case-study area. **Chapter Eight** further explores questions of the agency of individuals in creating their own narrative realities, which neither reinforce nor contest the pre-existing stories but complement them with parallel stories that construct a different narrative. It reveals the existence of narrative complexity within the reductive and simplifying context of polarized urban spaces.

The thesis conclusion summarises the findings and contribution of the thesis by referring directly to the research question. In addition, the overall conclusion is an opportunity to consider the limitations to the research and the potential for future research.

# Part One: Establishing a narrative framework for the research

Narrative research is a vast and complex field of inquiry. The current field has its roots in the narrative turn of the 1960s (although different authors locate it in different decades; see Riessman, 2008: 14-18 for an overview, as well as Squire et al., 2013) and in Western thinking. It is flourishing today, although it has also come under criticism in recent years (Bamberg, 2012). In an attempt to move away from the dominant positivist paradigm in the social sciences and humanities, the interest in narrative started to spread to a wide array of disciplines, such as history (White, 1973), sociolinguistics (Labov and Waletzky, 1967), political sciences (Fisher, 1984), psychology (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988) and later to sociology (Richardson, 1990), economics (McCloskey, 1990)[2], health (Frank, 1995) and education (Cortazzi, 1993), to cite only a few.

Narrative research has expanded over the last forty years, and there is now a vast array of literature available, which makes the concept of narrative a difficult one to pin down and means that narrative analysis encompasses a range of practices. For example, the analysis of narratives can focus on narrative syntax (or structure of the events related), narrative semantics (or the content of narratives) or narrative pragmatics (emphasising the context of the narrative) (Squire, 2008).Offering a different perspective, Lieblich et al. (1998) categorise narrative research according to the contribution made to the field, which can be in three different domains (narrative used for the investigation of any research question; narrative as the research object; philosophy and methodology of qualitative approaches to (narrative) research). Equally, narrative can be a mode of knowing (using narratives to make sense of the world) and/or a mode of communication (a means for conveying information or experience) (Czarniawska, 2004). Also, recently, areas of narrative research have expanded their interpretation of narrative to look beyond

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[2] See Czarniawska (2004: 2-3) for further details on these references.

the spoken and written word at visual documents (Riessman, 2008). These are only a sample of studies on narratives, and show how diverse the field is. Trying to review the field in its entirety is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Rather, in Part One, I explore the aspects of narrative that are most relevant to the research question. Considering the scope of narrative research, different studies are based on different assumptions, and I use Chapter One and Two to spell out the theoretical assumptions that I make in relation to the field in the remainder of the thesis. To do so, Chapter One presents the key concepts I use in the thesis. It gives definitions of narratives and culturally dominant storylines, before discussing the terms of the debate on the relationship between individual and collective narratives. Throughout, it sets out key theoretical questions. Chapter Two contributes to unpacking the assumptions that I make from a methodological point of view. Having defined narrative and clarified to what extent I take into account content, language, context of production and societal narratives, I explore how to study narrative both in its collective and individual form. Narrative research is important because narratives are humans. However, with any human research come ethical questions. Then, Chapter Two considers the particular ethical challenges linked with eliciting people's stories.

# Chapter 1: Exploring the theoretical relationship between individual and collective narratives

## Introduction

The overall aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for the thesis by identifying the key concepts that will guide the reflection and analysis throughout my work. Research on stories and narratives is characterised by its diversity, and sometimes also by its contradictory claims (Smith and Sparkes, 2008). Taking this into consideration, my first objective is to provide a working definition of stories – what do I mean when I use the term "story" or the term "narrative"? What makes a story a story? – as this will determine how I conduct the remainder of the research. My second objective is to engage with the debate about the relationship between individual and collective narratives. I introduce the concept of the "culturally dominant storyline" (Jones, 2004) to refer to collective stories that gain a normative cultural status. I question their origins and try and establish their characteristics. My third objective is to consider the determining power of "dominant stories." Narratives play an important part in our everyday interactions, the construction of our identities, sense of place, and relationships. They also impact on the formation of our memories and cultures. I ask how culturally dominant storylines bear upon these multiple functions of narrative and individual and collective storytelling dynamics. My fourth objective is to explore the scope for resistance and contestation of culturally dominant storylines. To do so, I consider the role of agency in the production of narratives and of the transformatory potential of stories. Although individual stories are always told within a cultural context characterised by a set of dominant stories, there can be a two-way relationship between culture and individual in which they both impact on each other. As such, the "tellers' agentive resistance" (De Fina and Georgakopoulo, 2012: 149) must be considered.

# 1 – Defining narratives: What makes a narrative a narrative?

In this section, I consider personal stories (the stories of individuals), as opposed to cultural stories (or collective narratives), which will be the topic of the next section. At its narrowest, a story or a narrative[3] is the spoken or written account of a sequence of connected events. This short definition is useful as a starting point to build on. First, it implies that narratives are framed temporally, through the idea of sequence. One event happens before or after another one. To illustrate this and the importance of temporality, let us consider a simple example, taken from a presentation by Vanessa May (2011), in which she offers two similar narrative instances:

> **Instance one**: My marriage ended. I fell in love with Mark.

> **Instance two**: I fell in love with Mark. My marriage ended.

In instance one, the marriage ends and then the protagonist falls in love with Mark. On the contrary, in instance two, the protagonist falls in love with Mark and then his/her marriage ends. This leads onto a second feature of narrative, which transpires through the idea of connectedness: the coherence of a plot. Although this example is a very minimal narrative, a different plot can be inferred from each example. In the first instance, we may think that the end of the protagonist's marriage allowed him/her to fall in love with a new person. In the second instance, we may conclude that the protagonist's marriage ended because s/he fell in love with Mark. Either way, there appears to be a causal relationship between each event, indicating that causality matters in narrative creation.

However helpful this definition is to start with, it can be limiting in some aspects, so I expand on it by considering some other features of stories. First, I take Patterson (2013) and Squire's view (2013) that personal narratives are not only stories about events, but also "stories of experience." (Squire, 2013: 47) By this, I mean to

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[3] I use the terms "story" and "narrative" interchangeably in this thesis. Some authors argue against doing this, highlighting differences between the two terms. For example, Franck (2010) argues that a narrative is somehow less structured than a story, a view shared by sociolinguists (according to Riessman, 2008: 6). The more common position is that the boundaries between the two concepts are very blurred, so much so that the terms mean the same in practice. Andrews (2007), Denzin (2004), Hinchman and Hinchman (2001) and Riessman (2008) are among those taking this position.

broaden my definition of narrative so that it is not limited to the recounting of past events, but also includes "talk that is not about events but that is nevertheless significant for the narrator's story of 'who they are'." (Squire, 2013: 47) Beyond events, I understand narratives to be about individuals' feelings, emotions, and reasoning. Secondly, narratives are socially situated; they are told within a specific context, to a specific audience. At the micro-level of the storytelling interaction, we need to consider who the author of the story is, what their purpose is, and who the audience is. At the macro-level, every story is told within a wider "cultural locus." (Denzin 1989: 73 as cited in Andrews, Sclater, Rustin, Squire and Treacher, 2004: 5) It exists within a unique time and space that bears upon it. "Stories are never told in a vacuum," (Andrews, 2007: 3) they are always told in relation to other pre-existing stories.

To summarise, personal narratives are the written or spoken accounts of a sequence of connected events and/or personal experiences. As they are told to an audience in a specific time and place itself characterised by a range of stories, personal narratives are socially-situated. I now turn my attention to collective narratives, to be able to explore their relationship with personal stories.

## 2 – Introducing the concept of culturally dominant storyline

In this section, I explore the concept of the culturally dominant storyline, which has gained currency in narrative research literature.[4] It is complex and has been attributed with several meanings, so I look at its origins, characteristics, and the debate surrounding it.

A distinction can be made between narratives constructed and told by specific individuals, as described in the first section, and those that are shared among

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[4] There is a vast array of literature that uses the concept, whether it is referred to as dominant cultural narratives (Andrews, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c), master narratives (Bamberg, 2004; Mishler, 1995; Somers, 1994; Talbot et al., 1996), canonical narratives (Bruner, 1990), public narratives (Somers, 1994) or dominant cultural storyline (Jones, 2004). I will use some of those terms interchangeably.

groups of people and become part of a culture. Arguably, these narratives have a different status and significance, being vehicles for the transmission and reproduction of cultural norms and beliefs. Collective narratives play an important function in the creation and definition of shared identity, in the process of collective remembering and in the process of social differentiation.

Among the narratives that become part of a group's culture, some are thought to achieve a different level of recognition or social influence to become socially dominant. But the reasons why those stories are more enduring are unclear. One aspect of socially dominant stories is that they reflect widely accepted truths about the past or the present, about identity and belonging. They are those narratives that are beyond question, taken-for-granted because they encapsulate the "commonly held assumptions about the nature of reality." (Andrews, 2004b: 10) In other words, a story becomes culturally dominant when it is widely accepted, repeated, reproduced and uncontested within a given culture. For instance, despite the recent legal advances on gay marriage, the culturally dominant storyline in the UK is that marriage is a heterosexual institution, and that it comes with its own set of expectations such as having children and bringing them up.

This example leads onto another possible origin of culturally dominant storylines: tradition (Talbot et al., 1996). Riessman's (2008) research on women's fertility in India provides an interesting culturally specific example. She observes that despite current changes within Indian society, a traditional master narrative exists according to which women have a "sacred duty" to have children after they marry (2008: 27). She adds that this master narrative is so potent it is "enshrined in religious laws" across religions (27). In this case, a traditional attitude towards motherhood has become so accepted and widespread within the Indian culture that its status as a dominant story is sanctioned in the religious legal framework and thus imparts rights and duties upon individuals.

Another explanation for why narratives become canonical within a culture is found in the power relations within that culture. Several authors put this theoretical argument forward (e.g. Czarniawska, 2004; Jabri, 1996), which is best summed up by Margaret Somers:

> Although social action may be only intelligible through the construction, enactment, and appropriation of narratives, this does not mean that social actors are free to fabricate narratives at will. Rather, there is only a limited repertoire of available representations and stories. Which kinds of narratives will socially predominate is contested politically and will depend in large part on the distribution of power. (1994: 629)

Dominant storylines are entwined with social relations of power in two ways, which reinforce each other. On the one hand, they become dominant as they reflect power relationships: a dominant group has the power to circulate their preferred narrative within the society they dominate. For instance, in Andrews' research (2004b), it transpires that "the story of mothering" (8) which set standards for the "good mother" has been disseminated in Western patriarchal societies since the Industrial Revolution. It infers that such standards were set by middle-class men, producing a vision of "the idealized mother" (8) that mothers themselves or children had no part in modelling, despite being directly affected by them. On the other hand, culturally dominant narratives can also be used to maintain social relations of power. They can provide legitimation for inequality or maintain or reinforce an unequal status quo. Theoretically, this argument is put forth by Shelley Day Sclater, who writes: "Discursive structures [...] act to express, legitimate and maintain particular power relations." (2004: 131) Practically, Tamara Shefer's analysis of South African White narrators talking about "their relationship with Black domestic workers in their memories of apartheid" (2012: 307) illustrate this point. There, she "examine[s] stories that reflect the foundational nature of the institution of domestic work for the reproduction of White and middle-class privilege and power." (307) Through the stories, "White privilege and authority" is constructed, reaffirmed, and perpetuated.

Having established that narratives can become culturally dominant through the power relations and cultural production of a given society, I would now like to explore their characteristics. First, these narratives are normative. They contain prescriptive ideas about the functioning of a society; how "things" are and should be. In Talbot et al.'s words, "master narratives [...] typically constrain narratives of personal experience, because they hold the narrator to culturally given standards, to taken-for-granted notions of what is good and what is wrong." (1996: 225) We can look back at some of the examples already cited to illustrate this point. In Riessman's research (2008), the normative aspect of the fertility narrative is fairly obvious: women must have children after marriage. In Andrews' study (2004b), the normative standard is that a good mother is caring, "nurturant and provident," "selflessly loving," (Pope et al., 1990: 441 as cited in Andrews, 2004b: 8) and the so-called maternal instinct is natural. Secondly, culturally dominant narratives render alternative discourses less visible or acceptable. Another of Molly Andrews' studies (2007) on the stories of East Germans after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the Stasi files helps with understanding this claim. Andrews (2007) explains how the dominant story in western media and academia after the fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the triumph of Capitalism and of the liberation of East Germans. However, in her interviews, she found a very different interpretation of the events, a story in which people did not see themselves "as newly liberated," (128) coupled with images of individuals rushing back to East Germany rather than pouring into West Germany as according to the dominant storyline of wanting to "escape" from East Germany (2). But the story she found amongst certain East Germans did not exist within western media and academia. The liberation storyline was so powerful that it eclipsed individual experiences that did not conform to it.

The concept of "culturally dominant storylines" is useful in that it allows us to recognise the storied nature of the processes of cultural reproduction. In other words, culture is passed on and group identification maintained primarily through narrative processes, through stories that define what is symbolically significant, but

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also what acceptable behaviour and desirable outcomes in one's life might be, within a specific culture. At the same time, there are important questions to ask about the idea and realities of "culturally dominant storylines," particularly with regard to the relationship between individual and collective stories. As we start looking more closely, it becomes problematic to treat culturally dominant narratives as simple social facts, or to assign them a degree of influence or continuity they do not possess. Equally, stories do not always become dominant through some kind of "conspiracy" or explicit intentions; rather, the process is more subtle and "messy," so much so that dominant narratives are always "less stable and unified than they appear." (Squire, 2004: 235 as cited in Andrews, 2004a: 4-5). The degree of determinism of culturally dominant storylines on personal stories is linked to the level of agency one believes the individual retains, and there is a range of ontological positions on the matter, as exposed by Smith and Sparkes (2008). They establish the existence of a consensus on the role of the "socio-cultural matrix" (6) in shaping identities and selves, as I have described above. However, they argue that the "degree of emphasis placed on the sociocultural along with individual factors" (6) is debated. As a result, they draw a spectrum, starting with a psychosocial perspective on narrative identity, in which the self is "more situated in the person than the social situation," (13) thus affording a minimal role to culturally dominant narrative, and ending with a performative perspective on narrative identity, "in which social relatedness completely precedes individuality, interiority and lived experiences." (24) Here, we need to be aware of the various theoretical positions that exist, but also to situate our research within a particular frame. In this thesis, as I explore the relationship between individual and collective narratives, I want to be able to take into account the subjectivity of individuals and avoid over-determinism by favouring too much structure over agency. Thus, I situate myself within the "storied resource perspective" (16) of Smith and Sparkes' spectrum. I see individuals as "largely culturally immersed," and selves and identities as "conferred and actively claimed and contested," (16) suggesting a limited but existing agency and affording an important role to culturally dominant storylines.

A methodological question remains. How do we establish the very existence of culturally dominant narratives? I suggest there are two aspects to this question. First, there is the task of trying to establish whether a narrative is indeed dominant at a collective level, within a given culture. In order to address this facet, Kölbl (2004) proposes to examine which narratives or discourses are carried by "cultural artefacts such as books, newspaper articles, films etc." (32) This goes some way towards offering a method to investigate culturally dominant narratives at a collective level. However, "culture" is produced and lived at a range of levels within society, and so will be the collective narratives of that culture. Indeed, Vanessa May reminds us that "these cultural narratives of course vary from one society to another, but also within a country there are different narratives available for women and men, for the working-classes and the middle-classes and for people of various ethnic or cultural background." (2004) As such, the selection of cultural artefacts to be examined should be accompanied by specifying the culture observed. This links to the second aspect of our original question: for whom is the culturally dominant narrative actually dominant? An exploration of the collective narrative should be coupled with an investigation of first-person accounts to look at "which narratives [...] the subjects themselves regard (explicitly or implicitly) as the dominant cultural narratives." (Kölbl, 2004: 32) Indeed, if dominant narratives are culturally specific, they can only be

> ...relative rather than absolute, contingent on the individuals or
> purposes involved and varying with the situation. The realisation
> of 'power' or of 'function' is surely related to people and
> situations rather than monolithic or permanent qualities in
> particular narratives. What counts is thus not some absolute
> sense of equality, hegemony or power, but which stories *and
> their telling* are dominant or meaningful for particular
> participants. (Finnegan, 1998: 169)

For example, in her research into older women's sexuality, Jones (2004) found that the liberal storyline simply put as "of course older people have sex too" (173) and which presents itself as a counter-story to the dominant cultural storyline "older

people are expected to have lost interest in sex" (172) was sometimes used by her participants as a dominant cultural storyline, warning her reader that "one storyline cannot be argued to be exclusively dominant and the other to be associated exclusively with counter-narratives." (174) We must always ask which stories are relevant or meaningful and therefore dominant for the teller. A story will only ever be dominant or countering in relation to the teller, the audience, and their purposes for the story.

In this section, I considered collective narratives and introduced the concept of culturally dominant storylines. I explored their origins and links with cultural production and power relations. Doing so, I established that they are normative and have a propensity to hide alternative or different stories. Due to their nature, I noted the potential difficulty in identifying them and tackled the methodological questions that this raises. Having mostly focused on definitional issues and on the features and characteristics of narratives, the next section explores the functions of narratives. As I ask what narratives do in our human lives and investigate their social and cultural functions, I consider the tension between the functions of narratives at both an individual and collective level and the impact on those functions of the culturally dominant narratives.

## 3 – The functions of narrative

The aim of this section is to explore the narrative fabric of our social and cultural lives through the tension that I argue exists between the "constructive powers of narrative" (Squire, 2013: 66) and the limiting, restrictive or sometimes destructive powers of narratives. To do so, I look at four main functions of narratives: the cognitive function, the communicating function, the remembering function, and the identity production function, and consider the role of culturally dominant narrative in each of those to highlight the inherent ambivalence of narratives within these functions.

## a – The cognitive function: making sense of the world

First, narratives allow us to make sense of the world at a personal level. Sarbin (1986) explains that as an "organising principle," narratives "impose a structure on our flow of experiences." (9) There is an assumption that the human self needs a degree of coherence and that storying one's experience is a way of achieving this (Sarbin, 1986). But individual coherence is relative to the self's social context and thus, the process of meaning-making draws widely on cultural knowledge. As Bruner (1990) argues, we create meaning within a cultural context. As we are socialized within a culture, we learn this stock of culturally resonant stories and learn to construct stories about ourselves and our own experience. For example, I interpret my own experience of studying for a PhD in those terms. Within the specific culture of professional academia in the social and human sciences, there are culturally resonant stories about doctoral research. The process is often understood as a quest, with the expectations that it will be a long and challenging test, which will result in "giving birth" to a thesis. As I was socialised within the academic culture, I learnt to construct my experience in terms of the heroic struggle of completing a PhD.

Then, our worldviews are moulded by culturally dominant storylines. Through myths and culturally available stories, values are communicated to us, ideas of what is "normal," "good" or "bad." It provides guides to behaviour, tools for interpretation of our own and others' experiences, as we have already seen when addressing the issue of the normativity of culturally dominant stories. A piece of research on lone motherhood in the nineteenth century by Carabine (2001) shows how a "discourse of bastardy" constructed unmarried mothers in a specific way – "as immoral and as undeserving of poor relief" (269) – conveying a message about good and bad, moral or immoral behaviours, notably in terms of sexuality. Thus, we live "storied lives," (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992) as narrative thinking allows us to organise our experiences and to understand them in relation to our own actions and to those of others by linking between individual narratives and societal ones.

## b – The communicating function: Interacting with others

Not only do we create meaning through stories, we also "communicate meaning" (Riessman, 2008: 11) through them. According to Riessman, narratives can be used to "argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain, and even mislead an audience," (2008: 8) all of which aim to communicate a message. From this short list, the positive-negative duality of narratives transpires. On the one hand, the art of storytelling has entertained generation after generation. On the other hand, stories have been used to disseminate ideas that may serve one group and discredit another. For example, Jacobs writes about the "narrative struggles" in public communication:

> Public actors engage in competitive and conflictual narrative struggles, trying to circulate stories that 'purify' themselves and their allies, and 'pollute' their enemies. In order to narrate themselves as powerful and heroic, they describe their enemies as dangerous, foolish, weak, irrational, deceitful or antiheroic in some other way; by contrast, they describe themselves and their allies as rational, reasoned and straightforward. (Jacobs, 2004: 24)

In turn, this raises the issue of "truth" and narratives. Indeed, "truth" is deeply subjective as an individual or a group's experience depends on their cultural reality and historical narrative. Interestingly, "the truth" can be manipulated through narratives to serve a political agenda. Stories can be used in the interest of those in power and narratives can be a potent tool of propaganda, as illustrated by Zipes (2009) in his review of Christian Salmon's 2007 book *Storytelling: La machine à fabriquer des histoires et à former les esprits*.[5] According to Zipes, Salmon's argument is that contemporary politicians such as Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and France's Nicolas Sarkozy "have employed spin doctors to control the media, and [...] storytelling and propaganda have become key to obtaining and maintaining power." (Zipes, 2009: 138) In addition, Riessman uses the case of the Iraq war to

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[5] My translation: "Storytelling: the machine to create stories and form minds"

demonstrate the potential of stories to mislead. According to her, the justification for invading Iraq in 2003 is an example of a misleading story used by those in power to persuade their audience: "the Bush and Blair governments cobbled together a storylines from problematic 'facts' that persuaded a fearful population – for a time." (2008: 9)

## c – The remembering function: Accessing and organising experience

At the individual level, narratives facilitate our remembering. Indeed, they allow us to access our memories, make sense of the past, and also of the present, but also constitute the past. Theoretically, Riessman observes that "There is [...] a complicated relationship between narrative, time, and memory for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present. In a dynamic way then, narrative constitutes past experience at the same time as it provides ways for individuals to make sense of the past." (2008: 8) For example, in life writing and therapeutic settings (Riessman, 2008), individuals organise their experience and tell the story of their life to others and to themselves. Thus, they reconstitute in the present a version of their past. Doing so, what we remember has an impact on our identity formation. Indeed, Misztal claims that "in sociology it is commonly assumed that telling stories about our past and making sense of that past is the main source of the self." (2003: 133)

At this point, it is important to note that just as we do not tell stories in a vacuum, we do not remember in a vacuum. There is a "social dimension of human memory" (Misztal, 2003: 5), that is, "we remember as members of social groups, and this means assuming and internalising the common traditions and social representation shared by our collectivities." (Misztal, 2003: 12) This observation puts forth again the importance of culture, this time in our remembering. Here, we may draw on the myths and traditions that permeate our culture to frame our memories, an illustration of how culturally dominant narratives impact on this function of narrative. For example, in her study of narratives of patriotism in the United States, Andrews (2007) discusses the framework created by the Bush administration, at the

same time ahistorical and influenced by collective memories, within which people would remember and interpret the events of 9/11. She argues that on the one hand, there was no effort made to contextualise historically the motivations of the terrorists. She states, "oral histories of that day typically begin the chronicle with accounts of bystanders observing the planes travelling unusually low in Manhattan as they made their way towards the towers," (2007: 198) which impacts on individuals' understanding of the event. On the other hand, an analogy was made with the December 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor, drawing on the collective memories of the American people. This was highly significant, as Andrews explains: "The choice of Pearl Harbor as the key memory referent for the processing of the events of 9/11 meant that the patriotism and heroism associated with the Second World War were immediately galvanised as part of the national artillery, and helped significantly in preparing the country for war." (2007: 110) Again, this element of collective memory, mobilised at the particular time of the 9/11 attacks, would have framed individuals' experiences and stories.

The previous paragraph goes some way towards establishing that there is a relationship between individual and collective memories, and that they can be expressed through stories, between individual and collective stories. I would now like to explore this further, starting with Misztal's statement that "remembering is more than just a personal act." (2003: 6) It is also a collective act. At the collective level, the stories we tell in the present shape the past we remember as communities. Doing so, it shapes our collective identities. This raises again the question of truth and narratives, in that as some stories are chosen and remembered, and others are not, history can be viewed as a social construct, and one version of many possible truths. Once again, Andrews' research (2007) illuminates this point. In post-apartheid South Africa, Andrews observes that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a bid to "remake national identity through gathering and weaving together individual stories," (148) highlighting the relationship between individual and collective stories. In addition, it shows that at a collective level, the South African state had an agenda to transform the national

identity, from the "truth" in the country during apartheid of White supremacy to a new "truth" of reconciliation post-apartheid, encapsulated in the political narrative of "the birth of the new South Africa." (Andrews, 2007: 151) Through individual and collective stories, a new collective identity and collective memory were being made.

## d – Identity production function: Creating individual and social identity

First of all, the relationship between narrative and identity is of a dynamic nature. We become who we are through the stories we tell, and our narrative identity evolves with each version of our personal story that gets told. Theoretical examples supporting this claim include writing by Andrews et al. (2004), Crossley (2002), Hinchman and Hinchman (2001), Mayer (2006), and perhaps is best summed up in this quote from Yuval-Davis' research: "Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). [...] [Identity is] always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. This duality is often reflected in narratives of identity." (2006: 201, as cited in Andrews, 2007: 9) But how much control the individual has over this process is debated. Going back to Smith and Sparkes' spectrum of narrative identity (2008) can help here. At one end of the spectrum, the self is at the centre of the identity formation process. In this view, "identities are considered to be an internalized life story that develops over time through self-reflection" (8) and narratives are a means to access our selves and identities. At the other end of the spectrum, "social relatedness completely precedes individuality" (24) and the individual is far from coherent and unified. Instead, "narrative identities are viewed as multiple, fragmentary unfinished, always changing," (24) and the constitution of selves and identities relational, which affords less agency to the individual.

Beyond the individual level, at the collective level, our storied self is also "embedded in social networks." (Seale, 2004: 41) Then, narratives serve as an organising principle to situate our selves within a community and collective identity.

Collective narratives make possible our belonging to a community by imagination. Indeed, we will never meet everyone in our community but we share collective myths and stories with them, which allows us to identify with an imagined community (Anderson, 2006). We gain membership into a community through identifying to its master narrative. However, there are more complex mechanisms at play than personal narratives merely reproducing and being produced by the collective narrative. There can be a two-way interaction in which "personal stories impact back on the culture." (Andrews et al., 2004: 5) I will illustrate this argument only briefly at this point as it is at the heart of the third section on the contestation of the culturally dominant narrative. Riessman (2008) provides us with an interesting example. According to her, individual stories have the power to mobilize groups into action as they generate group belonging. She cites the examples of civil rights, feminist, and gay and lesbian movements as being "born as individuals sat together and told stories about small moments of discrimination." (9) More concretely, she writes that "oral *testimonies* got facts out in Latin American contexts regarding state-sponsored violence, helping to form revolutionary movements." (9)


## e – Ambivalence within the functions of narratives

Having emphasised the constructive power of narratives in human lives, I now turn towards the potentially destructive side of narratives and consider the role of culturally dominant storylines within it.

I start with examining this ambivalence regarding the cognitive function of narratives. Culturally dominant storylines may be negative in their meaning making function, thereby limiting and constraining our individual stories in a damaging way. This argument is supported theoretically by Freeman: "Narrative [...] is not only a vehicle of articulation and expression; it is potentially stifling as well, serving to constrict and delimit the scope of meaning." (2004: 91) For example, it does so through processes of stereotyping or simplifying and dehumanising the other. Indeed, if a dominant narrative articulates a stereotype or a simplified story about

something or someone, due to the nature of dominant narratives, individuals are very likely to reduce this something or someone to the stereotype and not be able to consider the complexity of it or their being. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie encapsulates this with her idea of "the danger of the single story." (2009) She says: "To insist on only [my] negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." (2009) Thus, narratives can enable the production of negative meaning and its dissemination with stereotypes that exaggerate and exacerbate differences (Andrews et al., 2004). Adichie also relates her own experience with the simplified narratives that are present in our daily lives. She tells of how, on a visit to Mexico from the United States where she lives, she walked around Guadalajara and "I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrants." (2009)

Picking up on the issue of truth, the remembering function of narrative can also have a darker, more restrictive side than some of the positive examples detailed above. Already with Andrews' study of narratives of patriotism, there is a sense that collective memories and stories can be selective. In the same way as in the communicating function certain narratives can be chosen to assert power and justify wrong doings, establishing a historical truth that can be a potent weapon to justify violence and maintain power. There is a risk that history, through the narratives that disseminate it, becomes restrictive and even destructive. For instance, in the case of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, research found that Israeli history textbooks were rife with polarized stories of Jews and Arabs, which the authors argue may contribute to fuelling the conflict (Hammack and Pilecki, 2012).

In addition, the restrictive powers of narrative can be at play within the identity production function of narratives. Here, narrative identity, especially at a collective

level, can be used to create a system of insiders (those who belong to a group) and outsiders (those who do not), a dichotomised view of a population opposing "us" and "them." Jabri conceptualises this idea with her notion of "discourse of exclusion" based on "exclusionist identities" (1996: 131) constructed on strong oppositions between the self and the other. Although Jabri's research is mainly about violent conflicts, she emphasises that exclusionist discourses are not found exclusively in context of direct violence. Rather, they are also characteristic of contexts of structural violence expressed against such groups as refugees, immigrants and foreign workers (Jabri, 1996). A problem arises when the insider/outsider categories become legitimate and institutionalised, and can be used to discriminate against the outsiders on the basis of identities. An exclusionist discourse reifies "a singular way of knowing," (Jabri, 1996: 140), "an asymmetry in the production of dominant discourses on social identity formations" (Jabri, 1996: 133) and narratives become part of the domination process.

In this section, I have highlighted the role of narratives in our individual and collective lives through meaning-making, communicating, remembering and producing identity. Whereas for the presentation of the argument, it was useful to distinguish between those functions, in reality, we must recognise that they overlap and influence each other. When it was relevant, I have also sketched out the impact of culturally dominant narratives within the various functions. I closed the section with a consideration of the negative or ambivalent side of narratives by highlighting the potential of culturally dominant narratives to limit individual narratives in such a way that situations of inequality or violence are perpetuated. In the next section, I intend to question the determining power of culturally dominant narratives by exploring conceptualisation and examples of the resistance of master narratives.

## 4 – Contesting culturally dominant storylines

In this section, I investigate the scope for resisting culturally dominant narratives by unpacking a number of claims about how individuals manage to retain agency, the role that memory can play in contesting dominant stories, and the affirmation of

the transformative potential of stories. I end the section with a consideration of the challenges of exploring narratives and individual and social change.

First, there is an argument in the narrative research literature that dominant narratives do not entirely determine our individual stories, and that although they may constrain our individual stories, they can be resisted because individuals retain a certain amount of agency.[6] I turn back to Smith and Sparkes' spectrum of perspective on narrative identity (2008) to illustrate this claim theoretically. Writing about a specific position on their spectrum, the storied resource perspective, they state:

> Within the limits of relationally framed contexts, joint actions, narrative resources, body materiality and micro and macro structures, people may edit their stories, and have some 'say' as to which type of story gets told, what story they wish to live, whom the stories are about and to whom the stories are told. Further, there can be slippage and discontinuities between the received public or meta cultural narratives and the way those storylines are narratively applied by the individual, thus signalling the moments when narrative, social structure and active storytellers meet. (20)

To illustrate this point, I will use the case presented by Talbot et al. (1996)[7] about the affirmation and resistance of the dominant discourse on pregnancy. Here, Talbot et al. draw up a picture of the master narrative on pregnancy in which parents, especially mothers, are held responsible as individuals for their well-being and that of their children. In turn, this has led to the emergence of a moral discourse "in which agents must justify their conduct because they can influence

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[6] The argument is found throughout volumes such as Bamberg and Andrews' collection (2004), Scott (1990), De Fina and Georgakopoulo (2012), Riessman (2008) and chapters and papers such as May's (2004), Manojlovic (2010), Watson (2008), Chase (2011) and the special issue of *Storytelling, Self, Society* on Storytelling and Social Change (2009), to cite only a few.

[7] Further examples can be found in Bamberg and Andrews' volume (2004), especially in the chapters by Andrews, Squire, Jones and Throsby.

and be held accountable for outcomes." (227) In this context, the authors analyse their interviews with two women, Mary and Sue, who are pregnant and considered at risk due to their health condition. They show how the expectant mothers employ discursive strategies in order to resist the master narratives, justify their choice of going ahead with pregnancy and position themselves in such a way as to counter the dominant story. There is a space for master and counter narratives to meet, a contested site in which individuals, through narratives, gain "the power to subvert social norms." (Watson, 2008: 334) Thus, culturally dominant narratives, far from being monolithic and static are unstable.

Secondly, we saw in the previous section how culturally dominant narratives play a part in what we remember. In memory studies however, the popular memory approach supports the claim detailed above and put forth in narrative research that individuals may resist, individually and collectively, the dominant story, here specifically the "dominant memory" with "counter memories, as discursive practices through which memories are continuously revised." (Misztal, 2003: 65) Individuals, then, are not simply the recipients of memory; they can agentively interpret it and reformulate it. For example, an "official" memory of the events of Bloody Sunday emerged in the aftermath of the events from the British State. In its story, British soldiers had acted in self-defence only against armed protesters, a version sanctioned by a Public Inquiry. However, a "survivor memory of Bloody Sunday" (Dawson, 2007: 90) emerged from Irish nationalism to contest the official memory created from above. In this memory from below, or counter-memory of the events, the innocence of the victims was asserted and reasserted every year in the public space through Bloody Sunday commemorations, which challenged the official British memory. (Dawson, 2007)

Thirdly, some authors go further and affirm the transformative potential of stories, with an underlying assumption that they can bring about a positive change. One of the ideas behind this is that if narratives can serve a dominant group, they can also serve the groups that are oppressed (Bradbury and Sclater, 2004). For example,

James Scott (1990) explains how dominating groups dictate a public transcript by which they and the "subordinate groups" must live their lives, leaving apparently little opportunity for the subordinate groups to produce their own transcript. However, he also sheds light on the many subtle ways that subordinate groups have to resist the public transcript and create their own hidden transcript. Squire puts it quite simply:

> Stories operate within 'interpretive communities' of speakers and hearers that are political as well as cultural actors. They build collective identities that can lead, albeit slowly and discontinuously, to cultural shifts and political change. Personal stories thus often operate as bids for representation and power from the disenfranchised. (2013: 62)

Polletta (1998) gives an example of the potential of individual stories for collective social change. In a piece of research about black students' sit-ins in 1960, she argues that personal stories prompted the mobilization effort of the students. She shows how sharing individual stories in more or less public settings before the movement was properly established, helped to create a collective identity for the students. It was instrumental in making them take action. Through stories and "story-telling *as* activism," (154; emphasis in original) the Black students started to take part in a movement which would result in equal rights and thus social change. If this is an example at the collective level, the transformative potential of stories can also exist at the individual level, as believed by narrative therapists. Indeed, "the process of narrative therapy is built on the existential view that people have a capacity to revise and re-author the narratives in which they have been acculturated." (Polkinghorne, 2004: 65) Here, narrative therapists have an intrinsic belief that personal transformation is possible through our own individual reworking of our personal stories.

Finally, a challenge remains to the transformative potential of narratives, located in the material reality of life. Narrative resources in themselves may not be enough to

lead to change in individual and collective lives and the impact of material realities on life cannot be underestimated:

> At its limit, however, this line of reasoning [simple equation between stories and social realm] can be taken to support the notion that social life counts for nothing outside of discourse. On this tack the improvement of life can be accomplished if one tells a better story about it. But life is not merely talk; inequalities of opportunity, for example, are not redressed if individuals, or even whole classes, tell more 'agentic,' optimistic autobiographies. (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992: 7, as cited in Finnegan, 1998: 167).

In other words, although narratives can contribute to social change on a subjective level, social change is also dependent on practical or "objective" factors, such as "economic redistribution, legal reform, political activism or neighborhood reconstruction." (Squire, 2012: 54)

## Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have defined personal narratives as socially situated temporal accounts about the events and/or experiences in a set of characters' lives, organised into a more or less coherent plot. I have investigated the concept of culturally dominant narratives, including their origins, characteristics and crucially their relationship with individual stories. I have illustrated this relationship by looking at some of the functions of narratives in human lives, and the role of master narratives within those functions. Finally, I have argued for an understanding of the dynamics between individual and collective narratives within which culturally dominant narratives determine individuals' stories to a certain extent, with some room for resisting and contesting them. As Andrews (2004d) writes, "personal narratives are constructed within a wider social context, they both reproduce and are produced by dominant cultural meta-narratives. While the scripts which individuals live by may resist or conform to these 'institutionalized master storylines' (Ochs and Capps, 1996: 33), they will always be influenced by them."

(78) This sets out the theoretical framework within which my research operates and ultimately makes a contribution.

# Chapter 2: A research methodology and methods journey

## Introduction

The objectives of this thesis are threefold. My first aim is to explore the relationship between various collective stories of Bradford to understand whether and why some dominate and some are contesting. My second aim is to provide a contextualised narrative based on emerging demotic voices of the social world as it appears to inhabitants of Bradford. My third aim is to explore the relationship between individual and collective stories within the city. In order to fulfil those objectives, I conducted a piece of situated qualitative research. In this chapter, I look at how I discovered what type of research I wanted to use by giving an overview and justification of my methodological approach. Next, I explore the methods of data collection and data analysis that I used. As this is also an exploration of my journey as a researcher, I then offer some methodological reflections from the field. Finally, I end the chapter by considering the ethical challenges that arose before, during and after the fieldwork phase of my research.

## 1 – Overview of the methodological approach: Choosing narrative research

In this first section, I give an overview of the methodological approach I chose for this research project, namely narrative inquiry. I explain where it sits, what its assumptions are and why it is relevant here.

Narrative research is a type of qualitative inquiry. It is diverse, complex, and at times contradictory (Andrews et al., 2013). At its heart is the assumption that stories matter in human lives. As such, narrative research "revolves around an interest in life experiences as narrated by those who live them." (Chase, 2011: 421) Beyond this basic assumption, various strands of narrative research make different assumptions about aspects of the research such as narrative itself, agency and the

role of the social world (as seen in Chapter One), and language. Rather than discussing the various positions on each of these (see Andrews et al., 2013 for a detailed review), my aim here is to situate myself and spell out my own assumptions in relation to the field of narrative research, and explore how this methodology is relevant for this research.

My first assumption, about narrative itself, is that personal narratives are about events and experiences. My main interest is in the content of narratives, in "what" is said. However, I also recognise the importance of language in narratives and although not the central focus of the research, the question of "how" stories are told will form part of the inquiry. In addition, a thematic approach has to address the context of narratives (Andrews et al., 2013). Then, another of my assumptions is that narratives do not pre-exist the interaction in which they are told. Here, the local context of the telling of the narrative is relevant. In the specific context of a research interview, the narrator and the interviewer co-construct the narrative through their interaction due to several factors such as the agenda that the researcher brings to the interview; the way the researcher is positioned as the audience of the story; the purpose of the narrator in the interaction. These assumptions are reflected in questions such as "who is telling the story?" "To whom?" and "For what purpose?" Concerning context, I also take a socially-oriented view of narratives (Andrews et al., 2013), in which personal narratives exist in relation to pre-existing cultural stories and "larger social patterns of social and cultural storytelling." (Andrews et al., 2013: 6) Having said that, I take the view that narratives are also related to individual agency, and although personal narratives are determined by widely available cultural stories, the extent to which they are can be questioned.

Having clarified my assumptions, I now turn to exploring the relevance of narrative research for the inquiry of this thesis. First, it is relevant because it takes narrative as the object of the inquiry, and thus validates taking personal and collective narratives as the topic of the thesis. In particular, it values everyday narratives of

"ordinary" people (Chase, 2005), which it seeks to elicit. Second, narrative research is relevant for this project due to the analytical questions it raises as a method of inquiry. Based on my assumptions, narrative research questions the authorship of stories, the purpose of stories both in relation to the author and the audience, the content of stories, but also their location in time and space. All are central to my research and thus make narrative research.

## 2 – Research Design: Narrative research in practice

In this second part of the chapter, I explain how I used narrative research practically to fulfil my research objectives. In a first phase, I collected and analysed documents that represented views of Bradford articulated at various cultural levels. I asked what story they were carrying, in what terms, who was telling the story, and what the purpose of the story was. In a second phase, I conducted in-depth interviews based on a life story model to collect individual stories of life in Bradford. I narratively analysed those stories which allowed me in a third phase to compare them with the collective stories I drew out of the document analysis.

### a – Document collection and analysis

This phase of my research was designed to address the first sub-research question, "Which stories dominate and which are contested in the collective narratives of the city?" to create a context in which the individual stories could be examined. To answer this question, I identified several collective levels at which stories about Bradford have been produced, and collected documents for each of those levels. Then, I narratively analysed the documents by asking whether there was a dominant story about the city, and if so in what terms it was told and by whom. Doing so, I also asked whether the stories that were emerging as dominant were ever contested, in what terms, and by whom.

### Locating stories about Bradford in the public domain

I started this phase of the research with a reflection on the different sites of production of cultural collective stories. As we saw in Chapter One, culture is created at various levels of society and can be subtly different depending on which

level is investigated. My main research hypothesis was that a collective narrative of Bradford exists at the national level. Therefore, I would seek national public stories of Bradford as found in popular culture, national political and media discourses. However, I emitted a second hypothesis, which is that the local culture may have developed its own story of Bradford. Local government, local media and local organisations are story-producing institutions and I saw it as an important step to look at exactly what stories they were presenting in order to consider the storytelling dynamics between a range of public stories. Finally, I am aware of the great body of academic literature which has developed about Bradford over the years and I wondered whether this specific culture had storied Bradford in a recognisable way or not, and how this related to the other levels of storytelling.

To begin with, I needed to gain an understanding of where stories about Bradford may be located. To situate those stories, I started with drawing an inventory of as many sources as I could find about Bradford in the public domain, be it in the media, in popular culture, in academia or in political discourse. Faced with an incredible amount of data after a preliminary search, I used various selection criteria to decide which documents would qualify for inclusion in the databases I was creating. First, I selected sources based on their content. The documents included would have to either take Bradford as their main topic of investigation and discussion or as the setting for their story as the core of my analysis would consider in which ways they represented the city. Second, I selected documents that had been produced post-World War Two, as the focus of my inquiry was on contemporary Bradford in the context of its recent history. Third, I looked at the types of the documents. Following Kölbl (2004), I decided to explore cultural narratives through "cultural artefacts" as carriers of discourse. In this study, I chose to focus on "cultural artefacts" as cultural products which could be written (e.g. works of fiction; travel writing; newspaper articles; history books) or visual (e.g. films; documentaries).[8]

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[8] I considered including popular music as another type of cultural artefact that would carry discourse. However, in the preliminary search I carried out, there was little if no indication of

As my searches still returned a great number of varied sources, I had to design a way to keep a record of all the results. I created databases (see Appendix 2 for three samples) that would allow me to organise the documents according to their type and date of publication. For each decade since the 1970s,[9] I classified written sources according to the following categories, which would help when considering their audience in the further selection process: travel writing, other non-fiction, academic articles and books, reports and fiction. I created a separate database for the visual documents, which I organised by decade using the following categories: Films and TV series (Fiction), documentary, online videos. This gave me an overall picture of where stories of Bradford may be located in the public domain, but the amount of data it represented was still too big for a detailed narrative analysis and I had to carry out a second selection phase for analysis, which I now turn to.

**A strategy to further select and analyse the documents**

In this second phase of selection, the criteria of site of production of the documents and audience became more prominent as I prepared for a narrative analysis in terms of different levels of culture. Then, although I differentiated between written and visual sources for the purpose of recording documents that represent Bradford in the public domain, I used all the databases to select documents in terms of which level of culture they seemed to belong to, which was not always straightforward (see Appendix 1 for a list of the documents selected in each case). The chronological element of the databases was retained as, in each case, I tried to select documents from each decade since the 1970s to see if there was an evolution in the narratives about Bradford, although this was not always possible.

Bradford being represented in popular music, so at this point I excluded popular music from my systematic search for texts, although the theme of music would be raised when looking at the local stories.

[9] In the post-World War Two context, the "oldest" document I selected dated back to 1972.

In terms of the national popular stories, I selected documents within the written and visual databases which had been "widely disseminated and achieved a common currency" (Milestone, 2008: 1165) for a national audience. This meant investigating not only the intended audience of the documents but also their reception and evidence of their influence in Britain. To do so, I took into consideration the credibility and status of the authors. I would incorporate sources that carried weight because they had been produced by individuals presenting themselves as experts (e.g. travel writers who had visited the city in their capacity as journalists, writers or social commentators and who used their experience of the city to speak/write from a position of authority on the subject) or by eminent political figures acting in an official capacity (e.g. The Cantle report). I also used sources because they appealed to credibility in the way they were constructed (e.g. TV documentaries such as Channel 4's *Make Bradford British* who uses the voice over throughout the documentary in an authoritative manner) or were likely to have reached a wide UK audience due to where they were being diffused (e.g. mainstream TV channels). Considering the national distribution of these documents, their site of production could be anywhere in the UK, including, as we will see in Chapter 4, in Bradford, provided that the document had received a national platform (e.g. *Rita, Sue, and Bob too*). However, it is also worth noting that the document selection was also limited by which documents I could get hold of. I questioned each document following the same format, and produced analysis sheets organised into three sections (refer to Appendix 3 for examples). In the first section, I aimed to record the information I had about the document and its context. It included the document title, the author(s) and a biographical note, the publication date and a note on the context of that year, the publisher and a note on it, and the document type. The second section was designed to question the text in a narrative manner by using the features of narratives from the theoretical framework. I tried to answer in each case the following: who is telling the story? Who is the audience? What is the plot? Who are the characters? Who is absent from the story? The third section consisted of the thematic analysis of the document. Having filled in such a form for each of the selected documents, I

examined the content of the stories to see if I could identify any common narrative tropes. Then I questioned in what terms the stories were told and what that meant in terms of the creation of an identity and (hi)story for Bradford at the national level. I analysed the content and the terms of the stories in relation to the authors of the stories, and of their intended audiences. A final step in the analysis was to look at other pieces of academic research which had analysed similar source to discuss my findings.

In terms of selection of documents to explore the local stories, "site of production" and "audience" were again used as criteria. I applied a similar logic as I did to the selection of documents for exploration of the national stories, except this time the site of production was restricted to documents that had been produced within Bradford and who would have been disseminated primarily locally although it was not excluded that some documents may have reached a national audience. As a result, the documents selected reflect their localised production within Bradford, often with a local intended audience in mind. For example, I looked at several council reports and some local organisations' websites. Visual documents were found mainly online, and included short documentaries created by local organisations and local artists. The analysis strategy was the same as for the national and academic stories, and also included a critical review of academic writing on the topic of local stories to triangulate the findings from my own analysis.

At this point, it is worth noting that, as a cultural medium, I originally intended to analyse samples from the press, be it local or national. I started with a survey of national broadsheet newspapers,[10] searching for the articles that merely had "Bradford" in their title. The amount of data these searches produced was huge, and it became apparent that a systematic discourse analysis of newspaper articles

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[10] I used the Lexis Library database, and the national broadsheet newspaper category included the following: The Guardian, The Observer, The Independent, The Independent on Sunday, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Telegraph.

was beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I used samples of newspaper articles to help me build a picture of how significant an event (e.g. the 2001 riots) or a document I had selected for analysis (e.g. *Make Bradford British*) may have been nationally based on its subsequent media coverage. Doing so, it helped me to test the plausibility of the idea that there is an identifiable collective story about Bradford nationally, characterised by influential representations of Bradford, and to start to understand how and why this is.

Concerning the academic stories, the body of literature was vast and the databases built a comprehensive picture of the research that had been conducted in and the city in the post-war period. So I designed a more elaborate selection strategy. First, I used the database to code the articles' titles, using both the actual title and the abstract when available. This allowed me to gain an overview of the themes addressed for each decade and how they changed through time, and became the basis for the selection of articles to analyse in depth. Indeed, five themes came out as being the most treated, thus I selected a range of documents that I had coded under each theme. Within each theme, I selected documents across the various decades (when possible). The selection process was as random as possible, although this was limited by some of the documents not being easily accessible or out of print. Once I had selected the documents, I produced analysis sheets based on the same model as described for the popular discourse stories. They were uploaded onto NVivo to allow for a comparison within each theme for each decade (when applicable). As I was in search of the most identifiable collective stories about Bradford in the academic literature and therefore recognisable to an academic audience, I produced tables that compared codes according to how frequent they were. Having done so, I analysed the most frequent codes and compared them within each decade and between decades to gain a picture of the collective narrative of the city in those written documents.

## b – In-depth interviews

### Using the life story interview model

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, my second aim is to explore emerging demotic narratives that inhabitants of Bradford articulate about the place they live in, in order to investigate their relationship with the dominant cultural narratives that exist in and about the city. Researching potential qualitative methodologies to get to this, it struck me that life stories would be a fitting method, as several specialists write about the ability of life stories to capture both the subject's story and collective narratives. From Hatch and Wisniewski (1995), Bloom and Munro (1995), Goodson and Sikes (2001) to Chaitin (2003; 2004) and Plummer (2001), to name only a few, all write about the potential in life stories to connect the life of the individual to the wider social context and the individual's understanding of this very context. Bloom and Munro put it simply when they state: "They [life story narratives] illustrate the relationship between the individual and society" (1995: 100). Moreover, Plummer discusses the uses of life stories specifically for research and writes: "[Life stories] will be at their most helpful when what you want to understand are people's direct understandings of the social worlds in which they live" (2001: 130). As I am interested in the intrinsic subjectivity of people's ways of making sense of the world, life story seems like a useful tool as this method "attempts to get at the understandings and significance that people give to the stories that they tell of their lives" (Chaitin, 2002: 4).

Additionally, life stories as a method can contribute to the aim of investigating people's notions of identity in relation to place. According to Chaitin (2004), the life story method allows the researcher to capture the complexity of the individual's multilayered identity. As we saw in Chapter One, stories help us to construct our identities. Asking participants to narrate their life in relation to the place they live gives the researcher an opportunity to explore the role of place in the formation of said identity. Goodson and Sikes cite insight into negotiation of identity as one of three reasons to use the life story method: "It provides evidence to show how individuals negotiate their identities and, consequently, experience, create and

make sense of the rules and roles of the social worlds in which they live." (2001: 2) They also write of the great potential of life stories in challenging "the normal assumptions of what is 'known' by intellectuals" (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 7), which, again, fits in with my aim of unpacking the widely disseminated collective stories about Bradford to offer a more complex understanding of identity and social relations as expressed by inhabitants of the city.

Finally, life story would help me to conduct reflexive research. Life history's development in sociology is linked to the historical development of the discipline. Although earlier thinking around historicism can be traced back to the nineteenth century (Goodson and Sikes, 2001), it is widely acknowledged that Thomas and Znaniecki's seminal work *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918 – 1920) demonstrated the potential and strengths of the method, serving to establish it as a respectable research technique (Plummer, 2001; Goodson and Sikes, 2001). However, despite "enjoy[ing] a brief flowering period" (Plummer, 2001: 106) in the 1920s and 1930s thanks mainly to the work of the Chicago School, it fell into decline with the rise of positivism, which exposed it as weak in terms of objectivity, validity, reliability and ability to lead to abstract theories. As Goodson and Sikes put it, "In the historical aspiration to be a social 'science', life history failed its membership test." (2001: 14) But this was to change with the postmodern turn. In particular, the life history method is becoming once again popular as it allows an exploration of subjectivities and of the researcher's voice within the research, both important themes in postmodernism and arguments for a more reflexive research. Thus, using life stories, "researchers have to be reflexive in accounting for their own biases, and reflexive and enquiring in identifying possible biases in their informants' stories." (Goodson and Sikes, 2001: 25) Whichever interpretation we offer, as researchers, it will only ever be a socially-situated one, influenced by our own location in time and space, as well as the one of the participants to our research. Accounting for these biases is an intrinsic part of using the life story method.

It is worth pointing out that I did not intend to collect comprehensive life stories from people, but stories focused on a theme or "topical life document[s]," (Plummer, 2001: 26) that of the experiences of living in a particular area. What I collected can then be called life story narratives, snippets of lives as "human documents," "account[s] of individual experience which reveal the individual's actions as a human agent and as a participant in social life." (Blumer, 1979: 29 as cited in Plummer, 2001: 3) Equally, Plummer (2001) distinguishes between naturalistic and researched and solicited stories, between everyday stories that occur "naturally" and stories elicited for the purpose of research. The stories I collected clearly fall into the second category, which I will endeavour to reflect upon in my analysis as asking people for stories for use in research has an impact on what participants may choose to say or not say depending on their understanding of what it means to take part in research (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

## Sampling and life story

This phase of the research was interested in the unique individual stories of the inhabitants of a specific area. As such, although I interpreted the stories and looked for similarities and differences within them, they were anchored within a unique socio-cultural location. Thus, my research was not so much concerned with generalisation as it is with showing how specific stories emanated from a specific locality. The choice of using life stories is coherent with this approach. Both Plummer (2001) and Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue that life stories are seldom concerned with generalising and consequently, large random and representative samples are not required. My focus was much more on revealing the complexity of demotic narratives that exist within the same place, namely Bradford, than on proposing a representative story of what it means to be a "Bradfordian" and to live in Bradford.

It means that my sampling strategy was at the same time purposive – participants were selected because they met the criterion of living or having lived in a selected geographic area of Bradford; convenient – I anticipated I would have an easy access to informants as I lived in Bradford and had several contacts within the area; and

snowballing – I planned on asking informants for contact details of other people who would fit the criterion and may be interested in participating.

## Transcription of the interviews

I considered transcription to be the first step of my analysis. It tends to be overlooked as an important phase of the research process (Davidson, 2009). Here, I would like to reflect on its part in my research as it is not as straightforward as it might seem, and reporting on processes of transcription within the research contributes to making the case for the trustworthiness of a study (Davidson, 2009). First, I argue that there are "theoretical, methodological, [and] practical issues pertaining to transcription." (Davidson, 2009: 43) It is a selective process highly dependent on the subjectivity of the researcher. As a result, the transcripts produced are constructions (Davidson, 2009), which has an impact on the second phase of interpretation of the data. Then, I will describe my own transcription practice and consider its implications for my research.

First, transcription is not a neutral act as it entails a series of choices on the part of the researcher, which depend on his or her positioning, but also on the aims of the research. For example, "Researchers need to decide which level of transcription detail is required for a particular project and how data are to be represented in written form. Transcribing is an interpretive act rather than simply a technical procedure." (Bailey, 2008: 130) Davidson (2009) compares transcription to a translation, and effectively, transcription is about translating an oral recording into a written text. Every translation is a unique interpretation of the oral interview as the choice of a type of transcription is "deeply interpretive." (Riessman, 2008: 36) Thus, we must avoid the temptation to "reify our 'holy transcripts'," (Riessman, 2008: 26) and reflect on their production to emphasise their situatedness. Through transcription, we are fixing in time and space a discourse that was itself situated in a certain time and space, which means a transcript is always subjective and situated.

In practical terms, I had to decide what to record and how to record it before starting to transcribe, which was a crucial first step of my analysis as the transcripts I would produce would be the stories that I would then analyse. The transcription, therefore, would bear on the rest of the research process. The transcripts reflect the fact that the main focus of the research is on the "what is said" or the content of the interviews. Due to this and for the ease of reading, I did not include physical or nonverbal indications within the transcripts themselves, although I made a note of them in my research diary. I recorded observations on the interaction itself, how I felt the interview had gone, if the participant had seemed relaxed or tense by writing down notes on body language and general exchanges before, during and after the interview. Then, I proceeded with the transcription itself. In a first phase, I conducted a verbatim transcription in which I included everything that the participants said and that I said (be it questions or acknowledgements). I decided not to correct grammar and to keep false starts and repetition, as at the time it seemed easier than to try and "polish" the transcripts. I did not consider that correcting grammar or transforming colloquial language would aid the analysis.

In keeping with the understanding of stories as co-constructed in the interview interaction, I made a conscious decision of writing myself into the transcripts and I reproduced my questions and comments to show my role in the production of the stories. How I asked questions and what I decided to share about myself with the participants impacted on their replies and what they decided to share. However, following Finnegan's practice (1998), I cut out certain lengthy descriptions which I deemed less relevant to the process of answering the research questions (a common occurrence was to delete accounts of what grandchildren had gone onto do, unless it was linked to the area). I did write a summary in parentheses of what I had deleted to keep a sense of how the conversation had evolved. In addition, I did not use any specific transcription convention. As a result, I produced transcripts that would "convey something of their narrators' art and storied experiences," bearing in mind that "the transcripts cannot give a definitive or neutral

representation nor fully match the original occasion, subtlety and form of the original delivery." (Finnegan, 1998: 78)

**Interpretation of the data**

The first phase of the interpretation of the data concerned what had been said in order to understand what topics were meaningful for the interviewees. Having transcribed the interviews, I uploaded them onto NVivo and proceeded to thematically analyse them. To do so, I coded them a first time, noting any themes that were sociologically relevant based on my analysis of the culturally dominant stories. This helped me to familiarise myself with the data, thus allowing me to conduct secondary coding in which I tried to make sense of the themes together. It allowed me to gain an understanding of the social world as described by the participants.

In a second phase, I wanted my analysis to try and capture how people negotiate meaning of their urban environment. Having a sense of what was talked about, I needed to gain an idea of how it was talked about to be able to understand what was relevant to the narrators and determine whether a particular topic was dominant or being countered. To do so, I analysed to an extent the language that was used by noting rhetoric strategies such as use of positively or negatively connoted language to describe or evaluate situations, phrases that indicated overt agreement or disagreement with a particular story, and comparative strategies of evaluation. This allowed me to investigate whether a narrator was "orienting" (Jones, 2004: 174) to telling a dominant story or a counter-story. At this point, I want to emphasise that although my definition of narrative is not narrow, and certainly wider than Jones (2004),[11] I do recognise that not everything is narrative and some of the talk within an interview is commentary rather than narrative. However, as commentary (for example in the form of relating experiences of others or of opinions) is relevant to narratives, it will form part of the analysis.

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[11] She defines narratives "narrowly to be consequentially ordered talk which predominantly relates past events, and which is to some degree distinct and separable from the surrounding talk." (2004: 171)

Finally, how a particular topic is talked about also depends on the local context of the interview interaction. Thus, my interpretation was guided by my knowledge of what had happened in every specific interview and consideration of how I may have been positioned by the participants. For each interview, I made a note of how I had been introduced to the participants (which organisation were they connected to), what they knew from the outset about me and the project (which consisted generally of what they had been told by the gatekeeper) and whether they had been given the information sheet and consent form ahead of the interview. Going through the transcripts, I looked at the language I used in the questions I asked and whether there was any evidence of it having any impacted on the answers. I also made a note of every time it seemed that the participants had made an assumption about me or my prior knowledge of a situation. Having done so, I hope to understand how I had been positioned by the participants, how that had influenced what they had said, and what that meant in terms of the formation and negotiation of their stories.

## Issue of trustworthiness

The positivist paradigm in the social sciences inherited a concern for the trustworthiness of a piece of research from the natural sciences. According to Robson, trustworthiness in this context is linked to quantitative research and measured through three criteria: validity ("whether the findings are 'really' about what they appear to be about"), generalizability ("the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied") and reliability ("the consistency or stability of a measure") (Robson, 2002: 93). With the postmodern turn though, there has been much debate about the relevance of such criteria (Robson, 2002). The argument is not that they be abandoned altogether, but adapted to new types of qualitative studies (Robson, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). My concern here is with discussing trustworthiness or validity within the specific discipline of narrative research, bearing in mind that "there is no canon, that is formal rules or standardized

technical procedure for validation [...] Narrative truths are always partial – committed and incomplete." (Riessman, 2008: 186)

Riessman writes, "When applied to narrative projects, two levels of validity are important – the story told by a research participant and the validity of the analysis, or the story told by the researcher." (2008: 184) First, concerning the stories told by research participants, I am not interested in the accurate "truth" of those accounts. Rather, I am more concerned with meaning making and the sense that individuals attach to specific events (Chase, 2011; Riessman, 2008). Narrators offer the researcher a situated interpretation of their lives or of events, and that is what we should be concerned with, not testing out "the truth" of their accounts. Indeed, "a first person narrative [...] reports past events that undoubtedly happened, but all we have is the reflection [...]. Going back to verify the precise and accurate 'truth' of the events he or she [narrator] reports may be impossible and not necessarily important. It is the analyst's interpretive work with the document and others like it that can be interrogated." (Riessman, 2008: 188)  Second, then, the analytical process bears on the validity of the narrative inquiry. Like Riessman, Chase (2011), citing Polkinghorne (2007), argues that "Narrative researchers do not need to claim that their interpretation is the only possibility, but they do 'need to cogently argue that theirs is a viable interpretation grounded in the assembled texts." (424) To do so, the researcher should document their evidence and be transparent and reflexive about their data collection and analysis, which I have endeavoured to do in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

# 3 – Practical realities: methodological reflections from the field

## a – Describing the local context

### Choosing a fieldwork location

The issue of the location of my field research became pressing as soon as I chose "Bradford." For a start, what does the name "Bradford" represent? Throughout my study, would I mean the city of Bradford or the Bradford Metropolitan District? It is

striking that the understanding of what the name of the city means is spatially and historically situated. The Bradford Metropolitan District boundaries in 2012 have little to do with those of the rural market town that was on the cusp of industrialisation at the start of the Nineteenth century. In particular, the establishment of the Metropolitan District in 1974, which made areas on the outskirts of Bradford such as Keighley, Haworth and Ilkley part of the District, make it necessary to pay attention to denomination. For example, as I attended an event looking back at the city's response to the English Defence League demonstration in August 2010, I observed that the public figures who addressed the audience, including an elected councillor and the chief executive of the council, kept referring to "the District," whereas group discussions I took part in brought up challenges facing the city centre. However, all were still talking about "Bradford." Considering the wide range of meanings of "Bradford," I realised that it would be difficult to produce research that would equally represent inhabitants of Ilkley and of the City Centre, respectively one of the richest and one of the poorest wards in the District (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010) and which are also 15 miles apart.

Consequently, I decided to focus my research on one much smaller area of Bradford, which I will refer to as Billesley to ensure the data I use remains anonymous. I picked this area for three reasons. First, it played a prominent part in the history of the city. A township at the start of the nineteenth century, it was geographically very close to the city itself. It became part of the Incorporation of the Borough in 1947 (Hird, 1966). It played a great part in the iron and worsted industry in the city and has a rich industrial heritage. Second, it is near the city centre, but preliminary observations showed that it has not been researched as much as other inner-city areas of Bradford. Indeed, the potential of going into an area that had been over-researched was an ethical concern for me, which I will explain further in the next section. Since starting my research in Billesley, other research projects have taken place there, but I am confident that the people I approached through gatekeepers were given the opportunity to decline taking part

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in my research or to choose to leave the research process at any time, which, I believe, was an appropriate safeguard to exposing inhabitants to too much research. And third, it is characterised by a mixed population. The white population is dominant, with around 46%,[12] which is below the District average, whereas Asian residents represent another 43% of the population, above the District average. The Black population and Other Groupings respectively account for 5% and 6% of the population, both above the District average. It is also worth noting that the area is classified as deprived and rates high on the Vulnerable Localities Index, and can be qualified as a "less affluent inner urban ward." (Richardson, 2002: 149)

## b – Being in the field: Challenges of researching within a "community"

### Negotiating access and impact on sampling

Being in the field was a learning curve and several aspects of the fieldwork put to the test the theory that I had learnt from books, none less so than establishing and managing a relationship with gatekeepers. Theoretically, a recommended step in fieldwork is to identify, get in touch with and meet gatekeepers. Having no contacts or prior knowledge other than from books or newspapers of Billesley, this seemed like a sensible step to take. I may have been under the impression that it was all about convincing the gatekeeper of the worthiness of my project and that the research process would fall into place thereafter. I was introduced by a friend who works in Bradford to Gatekeeper A, a public sector worker in one of the many community organisations of Billesley. Gatekeeper A was very interested in my project and in our first meeting agreed to help me with recruiting participants. I left this meeting reassured that I had successfully passed the gatekeeper test. In a sense, I had; but our next meeting highlighted that "gaining access" is not just about convincing one gatekeeper of the worthiness of one's research.

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[12] Statistics are indicative only to minimise the chances of identifying the exact location of the fieldwork and thus protect the identity of the participants.

Our second meeting presented some challenges that I would have to deal with in the remainder of the fieldwork. Gatekeeper A was a lot more hands on than I expected, making phone calls on my behalf to their contacts, giving them their own interpretation of what my project was about and setting up times and locations for interviews. I recorded my reaction in my research diary:

> A second concern is that although Gatekeeper A has very kindly started setting up some interviews for me, it means that I miss out on an initial first contact with the people I will interview and I lose ownership of what I am doing.

The first concern was that of "giving back," which I will mention here briefly but will look at in more detail later. As I will explain, I have always been concerned with trying to give back to the participants and generally to the people who helped me with my research. Gatekeeper A was taking a lot more time helping me than I had anticipated, which made me feel even more indebted to them. The second concern, encapsulated in the above quote, was that I was missing out on an introductory contact with the participants, in which I had intended to explain my research and the life story method so that participants would know what to expect when I came to see them. However, I was aware that not being able to introduce myself would impact on the stories I collected as it transpired participants only had a vague idea of why they were meeting me. I had to spend some time at the beginning of each interview explaining in more detail what the project was about, which was not always conducive to people sharing their life stories. In particular, I had hoped to put people in the position of experts, but several felt put off by the fact that I did not have a list of set questions and I was often told "If you had questions, that would help." In my first interviews, even when I was asking questions, I felt people had a certain agenda and were not actually answering the questions I had asked, but telling me about what they had anticipated I wanted to hear before they had met me, based on what the gatekeeper had told them (and I guess previous experiences of having been interviewed). I learnt that if I could not explain to participants in an introductory phone call that I would like them to talk freely about their life stories, I needed to have some relevant prompting questions to help them

with their reflection. Also, I decided to spend more time at the beginning of each interview going over the purpose of what I was doing.

Circumstances also helped me to adapt to the situation. The time of year (Christmas was just around the corner) and life events (I had to take on part-time work to carry on funding my studies, which delayed doing more interviews, although I carried on being involved in the area; Gatekeeper A took time off work due to ill health) gave me the opportunity to renegotiate my relationship with Gatekeeper A. As Gatekeeper A was stepping back due to their health, I was able to suggest I could organise the interviews myself, to which Gatekeeper A agreed. Following on from this change in the process of recruitment, I noticed an improvement in the way people behaved towards me and in the progress of the interviews. In addition, after several unsuccessful attempts at making my own contacts with other organisations in Billesley, I finally got a positive response from a faith organisation. I was able to recruit a different type of people and also to learn from previous experience and be much clearer about what I needed from gatekeeper B.

## Impact on sampling

As I only managed to establish a relationship with two organisations, most of the people I interviewed are related to either one of them, be it the church or the community organisation. This has implications in terms of analysis and I recorded in my transcript to which organisations participants were linked and in what way (for example, volunteer, attendant, or trustee) to be able to put their comments into context.

In reality, my attempts at recruiting participants through snowballing were marginally successful. Several people promised to mention my research to their friends, saying they would rather give their friends my number than pass on their friends' contact details, but despite chasing people up, few called back. In the end, only two of the interviews I conducted were with participants who had been recommended to me by another interviewee.

Overall, I conducted interviews with 18 participants. 12 were linked to the community organisation whilst the remaining 6 were introduced to me through faith organisation. I interviewed all but 3 of them once, and each interview typically lasted 90 minutes (although the shortest was just 30 minutes and the longest two and a half hours). In the three cases[13] where I was able to carry out a follow-up interview, the second meeting took place within two weeks of the first one and only after I had transcribed the first interview to be able to ask clarification and expansion on certain points and ensure I was not going to repeat questions. In terms of demographic profile, I interviewed eight women and ten men. Ten participants were "White British" (six women; four men), three were "Pakistani first generation" (one woman; two men), four "Pakistani second generation" (one woman; three men) and one man was "British Afro-Caribbean." Their ages varied considerably, with the youngest interviewee being 28 at the time of recording and the oldest 92. However, it is noticeable that the "White British" participants tended to be older (e.g. two were 82; three were 73) than the "Pakistani second generation" (all in late 20s and early 30s). At the time of the narration, eleven of the participants were living in Billesley. All of the participants had however spent most of or all of their childhood in the area. Further biographical notes on each participant can be found in Appendix 4.

## Process of interviewing

The literature on research interviews makes it very clear that interviewing is a skill and that it can improve with reflective practice. After each interview, I created an entry in my research diary to reflect on what went well and what I could have improved. It appeared that eliciting life stories is not always straightforward and people reacted to it in different ways. Some people felt very comfortable with the idea of sharing their lives, whereas others were put off by the lack of structure of the interview. Riessman (2008) warns that "some participants may not want to develop lengthy accounts of experiences with a stranger; the assumption that there is a story wanting to be told can put pressure on participants." (25) It is something

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[13] I was able to interview Elizabeth, Ilham and Mahmoud twice.

that I became gradually aware of and that I had to develop mechanisms to adapt to. For example, I had to acknowledge that asking people "Tell me your life story," which I had hoped would put them in the position of experts about the topic, could be daunting and I developed a series of more detailed questions that I started using to begin the interviews. I began by asking people to tell me when and where they were born and to then tell me anything they wanted about their childhood in the area. I told them they could talk as little or as much as they wanted. I warned them that I would be jotting down some notes if any questions came to my mind about the topics they raised. In this sense, most of the interviews developed as a conversation between the participants and me, with an emphasis on the participants' stories. If it did not come up in the conversation or if the participants explicitly required that I asked questions, I prompted people to describe Billesley as it was when they were growing up there and whether/how it has changed over the years. After they had finished telling me their story as they wanted to and I had asked follow-up questions, I systematically encouraged them to describe the area now and asked them what they thought of it today.[14] Depending on whether they still lived in the area or not, I tried to find out how long they had lived in Billesley and if there was a specific reason why they had left or stayed. I typically closed the interviews with three questions: do you have any hopes for the future of Billesley? And any concerns? Is there anything I have not asked about that you would like to add?

At this point, I also want to reflect on how people seemed to perceive and position me during the interviews, as this undoubtedly shaped what they told me. First, having detected my unusual accent when we conversed, people were curious about my origins and tended to ask me about where I was from in France, what I was doing in the UK and how I liked it here. Thus, they were aware that I was an "outsider," although I was also very clear about the fact that I had lived in Bradford

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[14] To do so, I asked such question as: Is there anything different or unique about Billesley? What are the good points about the area? And, if any, the negative ones? Do you feel attached to the area or not?

for a while. As a result, people made a number of assumptions about what I knew not so much about Billesley, but about Bradford itself. This was an issue and I tried to follow-up on the assumptions they were making as I specifically wanted them to talk about how they understood the city. Considering we were talking about areas within Bradford, I was also asked whereabouts in Bradford I lived (in the outskirts) and this also prompted a series of interesting comments. The area where I lived at the time has a "good" reputation within the city and participants showed signs of this common understanding, as this person did: "So you've got used to Bradford, and you know... And you're on the... sort of...nice side of Bradford really, well on the more open side going towards the moors..." It clearly contributed to how they positioned me. In sum, I believe I was perceived as a foreign student (I was asked about the PhD and university on a regularly basis) with a strong interest in the UK (I was also quizzed about my "good" English accent, which made me share my own story of settling into this country and my interest for its language and culture), who lived in a "nice" area of Bradford. Although an outsider, most people knew I had lived in Bradford for several years and they assumed I had a certain knowledge of the city, although perhaps not of Billesley. Occasionally, I believe I was positioned differently, which I will flag up in the analysis.

Finally, in several interviews, there were signs that how I perceived them mattered to the participants, a clear aspect of the co-construction of narratives. For example, as "ethnicity" came up in conversations, some participants were keen to ensure I did not think they were racist with comments such as "They just didn't have immigration then, and they were just, I don't like saying this, it makes you feel racist, but there were just our people, " "The area then was not like it is now, and I don't mean it in any sort of prejudicial way, but the area has changed quite a lot" or "Unfortunately you don't see anything like that. I'm not racist, I'm not prejudiced or anything. But since the Eastern Europeans came in, it changed a lot." Thus, how the participants perceived me mattered in the construction of the narrative, but also in how they thought I perceived them.

# 4 – Ethical considerations

Just like the challenges of fieldwork seemed to reveal themselves during fieldwork, ethical dilemmas seemed more acute whilst I was in the field, dealing with people on a daily basis. Here, I want to explore how my ethical considerations evolved from the safety of the literature to the reality of the field, before, during and after fieldwork.

## a – Ethical considerations before fieldwork

As I prepared for my application to the ethics committee, before starting my fieldwork, I familiarised myself with the University's guidance on ethical issues (University of Bradford, 2008a and 2008b) as well as with the professional code of conduct of the British Sociological Association (2002). I became sensitive to issues such as the voluntary participation and consent of the subjects of research and their privacy, and to concepts of 'do no harm' and beneficence.

### Voluntary participation

From the literature, I understood I had to ensure the voluntary participation of potential participants, and this implied thinking carefully of how to gain access to the participants, to recruit them and to provide them with information on the research project. I planned to investigate which would be relevant organisations for me to get in touch with and to negotiate access with the people in charge of these organisations or gatekeepers (Oliver, 2003). I anticipated I would discuss my study outline and go through the potentially sensitive points of my design with them (Robson, 1999) and also use this opportunity to ensure that the potential participants had not already been involved in too many studies in order to avoid over-exposure to research. Indeed, I was very aware that Bradford had already been researched to a great extent, as is evident in Darlow et al.'s report *Researching Bradford: A Review of Social Research on Bradford District* (2005). Their paper is based on a review of nearly 200 different sources, from books to articles, on Bradford, attesting of the breadth and depth of research conducted in and on the city between 1995 and 2005. Such a great amount of localised research has led

to a certain "research fatigue" (Samad, 2010: 12), particularly within the Pakistani Muslim communities (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert, 2008) and especially within the context of the War on Terror (Samad, 2010) and the "climate of fear and suspicion" (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert, 2008: 546) that developed after 9/11. Thus, I saw developing good working relationships with gatekeepers as an opportunity to reflect on my research design and to take on board any emergent issues they would bring up, reflecting the idea that ethics is an ongoing issue throughout the research.

Concerning the free participation, I considered my nationality to be an advantage, and saw little potential for coercion of the participants into taking part in the research as I would be an outsider. Although I did not see myself as an authority figure, I understood that there may be socio-economic inequalities between me and the potential participants (Benatar, 2002), which could create power imbalances. To avoid influencing the potential participants in their decision, I decided to seek the gatekeepers' assistance for giving them a preliminary introduction to my research and be wary of power relationships whilst conducting my research and analysing my data.

**Privacy**

Next, I focused on privacy of both the researcher and the participants, a key requirement of research ethics (University of Bradford, 2008b). To protect my privacy, I decided to only communicate my email address to potential participants to start with and to then review this and decide whether I would give participants my mobile number. It is my responsibility to offer confidentiality and anonymity to the participants. According to Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2008), participants increasingly want to be identified in research reports, which raises ethical issues and was more likely in my research as I decided to use life stories. I had to consider how I would ensure participants had thought about the implications of disclosure if they wished to be identified. Additionally, I understood  guaranteeing privacy involves more than just choosing pseudonyms and that if necessary, I may have to change participants' age, gender or profession although I was aware of the

problems it raises in terms of integrity of the research (Wiles et al., 2008) and that I would have to ensure it would not alter the data. I planned to discuss privacy with the participants at the consent stage.

**Do no harm**

According to the British Sociological Association (2002), "wherever possible [researchers] should attempt to anticipate, and to guard against, consequences for research participants that can be predicted to be harmful." Similarly, the University of Bradford (2008b) requires its researchers to question themselves on the potential harm to participants. I did not anticipate any physical harm, but was aware that some psychological distress may arise in the interviews and planned on flagging it up with interviewees before any interview started.

The literature focuses mainly on the safety of the participants. However, the well-being of the researchers is also at stake (Bloor et al., 2007). Bloor, Fincham and Sampson (2007) warn against the physical, emotional and social dangers for the qualitative researcher. I had been living in Bradford for 5 years by the start of the fieldwork and knew my way around and I believed the physical risk for me would be low. Still, I decided I would make sure that I met up with participants in neutral spaces. As I would be interviewing people about past and present experiences of living in the city, I did not think the research would be emotionally dangerous for me. However, I planned to have regular debriefs with my supervisor to make sure I could talk any arising issue through with him.

**Beneficence**

Researchers are also expected to do "good" and participants should benefit from taking part in a research project. I knew I would rely on people's good will to give up some of their time to my research and share their insider's knowledge. Thus, I wanted to ensure that they would gain something from this experience (Robson, 1999). I wrestled with the fact that benefits might not be tangible (Oliver,2003) as I was aware my research may have little impact on their personal situation. However, I vowed to try and make them feel valued by reminding them how much I

appreciate their help and by listening to them actively. I also hoped that they may find the particular technique of life story interviews helpful for their personal development.

All in all, it seemed very straightforward and I was granted ethical approval without any difficulties. I was not so naive as to think I had it all covered, but with hindsight, I still was underprepared to deal with the realities of negotiating ethics that seemed to constantly come up in the field. I came to realise that not much is written about ethics in practice and that the focus tends to still be on "procedural ethics" (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) and not so much on the practical realities of being in the field.

## b – Negotiating ethics in the field

I will now explore again the four concepts I have looked at from a more theoretical point of view to share and reflect on the difficulties that I was faced with in the field, relating them with other researchers' experiences.

### Voluntary participation

I first stated how I was going to shortlist relevant organisations to get in touch with to try and gain access to potential participants. And I did just that. I researched community and faith organisations based in Billesley, drafted an email introducing my research and offered to send more detailed information if it sounded of interest. I sent around 10 emails and only two people got back to me, suggesting that emailing was not the right way of contacting people, or that the organisations in question were not interested. Despite follow-up emails, the reply rate did not improve. The two people who got back to me agreed to meet up and I ended up interviewing both of them after they had shown me around the area. Interestingly, one of them explicitly said he agreed to take part because of the focus of the research on the area itself. Also, it seemed to be a perfect opportunity to use snowballing to recruit more participants, as both respondents had talked about their strong connections to "the community," but neither of those leads provided

me with more interviews. The first one never got back to me again and the second one asked a colleague who worked with the Eastern European migrant community if they would be able to help me, and got back to me saying the colleague was too busy and did not have time to be involved in my study. Eventually, it was through personal contacts at the university that I got introduced directly to two organisations, a church and a youth club, that I managed to meet two community workers and get their support as gatekeepers for the rest of my fieldwork. This determined who I had access to, and fits with my purposive sampling strategy.

Trying to avoid over-exposure to research was a little more complicated than I had anticipated. Indeed, I have already explained how I picked Billesley because of its historical links to Bradford, but also because of the paucity of research material I could find either directly on it or that had involved people who lived in the area. A check with my gatekeepers reassured me about how much research had been done in the area and I was happy to stick with it and proceed with trying to find participants. However, as I made more connections and started talking to people in the area, I noticed a general sense of wariness. There were a lot of questions about why I had chosen Billesley and why Bradford, and I often felt quizzed about what my aims were. It might have been just curiousness on my interlocutors' part, and I may have been myself aware of the sensitivity around doing research in Bradford. Still, a particular occasion revealed that even though I had not found evidence of it prior to going in the field, Billesley had been more researched than I had anticipated.

A gatekeeper had given me the contact details of someone who had lived in the area for a long time and still did. I phoned them and they arranged to meet me the following week at the church. When I turned up, unbeknown to me, two other people were also there. It threw me a little but I proceeded with explaining what my research was about and if they felt they could contribute. Half an hour of personal recollections followed, which differed from stories I had heard before so I felt very pleased they had all agreed to talk to me. However, other people started

coming into the room and asking questions and just chatting. I soon realised they were all having a regular meeting and prepared to leave, but not before asking if they would agree to one-to-one interviews. Embarrassed silence. One then said "oh, I don't think I have anything to add," which the woman who had organised the meeting concurred with and they both proceeded to reading their Bibles and ignoring me. I was left astounded and wondering what I had said that had put them off so drastically when they had happily been chatting away for the previous 30 minutes. As I related the whole affair to the gatekeeper, they sounded surprised. But I recorded in my research diary that Gatekeeper B had added: "It could be that people are tired of getting asked questions, you know. They always get asked questions for consultations by the Council and things like that... And they always get asked how they get on with their neighbours and so on... So it's important they see you as something different." Later on that same month, I recorded a similar comment from Ellie, another community worker, after I had explained how some people needed more prompting than others in interviews: "You know, it could be like that because in the past, people, outsiders, have come in the area, promised a lot of things, and left and nothing ever happened – I'm not saying that's what you're doing – and it happened again and again and people just get fed up." Thus, ensuring people have not been over exposed to research is not as easy as just checking that no or little research was done in the area. It is a first step but I have learnt that there could be added exposure to non-academic research, such as council or charity consultation exercises.

As far as free participation is concerned, I found that when I followed some leads to find new participants that were not related to the two organisations, some people agreed to be interviewed and some others turned me down. So I felt reassured that I had put in place an appropriate process for people to get the information about the project, think about taking part and then make an informed decision. Things got a little more complicated when I went through the gatekeepers and I was not able to prevent a certain covert coercion. I soon realised that in one organisation in particular, my gatekeeper was calling on favours from friends to provide me with

participants. This resonates with other researchers' experiences. Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert observe: "Gatekeepers sometimes attempt to control who does research on what topic, who you speak to, and the research findings. They may [...] direct researchers to a narrow selection of individuals (for example, friends)" (2008: 549 – 550). I found myself in that exact situation. Although Gatekeeper A did not try and influence the topic or the research findings, they definitely controlled who I was talking to, for how long and I soon realised I was talking mainly to their friends. Admittedly, they seemed to have become friends due to their work. Still, it was quite a small sample of people.

As I had planned, I relied on Gatekeeper A to introduce me to people and see whether they would be happy to take part. In reality, it transpired that Gatekeeper A had asked them to do the interviews without giving them much background or even sharing the information sheet as Gatekeeper A had said they would. This created some challenging moments for me, when I met with people who did not really know why they were there. I tried my best to go through the content of the information sheet without giving it out straightaway, as I was conscious of the formality this would introduce and worried it would discourage people to talk openly about their lives. Most people seemed happy enough to talk to me, but in a couple of instances I felt the participants were reluctant to share their experiences and had a 'get it over and done with' attitude. Ethically, it was a difficult situation to manage as I had struggled to establish a relationship with the gatekeeper and had had to work hard to gain their trust and have them on board, but I also felt a duty to the respondents. I would have never managed to gain access without the mediation and good will of the gatekeeper, yet I did not want to force people to take part. Again, Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert put forth that "the failure on the part of gatekeepers to provide opportunities for potential participants to exercise choice in deciding to participate in research also raises important ethical questions," like "the question of who the researcher is obligated to" (2008: 550): the participants or the gatekeepers. I resolved this by trying to take it one interview at a time and to be sensitive to the mood of the conversation. When I felt it

appropriate, I asked people for more time and a follow-up. But when I felt people had already gone beyond what they were happy to contribute, I simply thanked them and left it there.

**Privacy**

Due to the nature of life stories, I had thought I may encounter some difficult situations with people explicitly asking to have their real names used in the research and having to make sure they understood the stakes of such a decision. As it turned out, everyone I interviewed wanted to remain anonymous and several people sought extra reassurance, wanting to make sure their names would not be used and their comments not attributable.

**Do no harm**

As I chose to use life stories, which can contain any manner of experience, I had foreseen there may be cases of psychological distress during the interviews. I recognise I was particularly influenced by the very stories I am aiming at deconstructing in this thesis, and I expected difficult issues to be raised around "race relations" and racism mostly, and prepared accordingly. Although race relations and racism were indeed a topic of many of the conversations with participants, they did not appear to raise the emotional challenges I had expected. However, I encountered psychological distress twice, when two different interviewees related losing a loved one. Both times, I was taken by surprise but proceeded to pause the interview. I let the participants carry on, as they both seemed to want to talk about the events rather than move onto a different topic. So I listened and let the conversation move on naturally. I verbally checked they were alright as I left, but felt uncomfortable that I had caused them to remember traumatic events.

Another facet of the "do no harm" concept is to protect the researcher from any potential harm. In order to be safe, I planned on meeting people in neutral spaces. Yet, this is a contradiction with my chosen method of data collection. Indeed, every book on life story or oral history method recommends to interview the participants

in their own homes as this would help them with feeling comfortable with the interview and with the recollecting exercise (for example, Chaitin, 2003, Herbert, 2008, Plummer, 2001). Still, I felt it was difficult to ask people to invite me into their homes when they had never met me before, and left it up to them to decide where to meet me. Most people chose public spaces or asked me to come to their workplace, although I did occasionally get invited to their house for a follow-up interview. Most of the time meeting people at their workplace was fine, especially if there was a room where we could proceed with the interview more privately. However, twice this was not possible and I felt it impacted on the interview. It may not be a coincidence that the two interviews I did at people's workplaces that were in open plan spaces were also the shortest (just over 30 minutes when most people talked to me for 90 minutes) and the more challenging one in terms of eliciting stories. The location may have only been a small factor in determining the progress of the interview, but I believe it was a significant one.

**Beneficence**

This was certainly the most difficult idea to put in practice for me. Although I had previously reflected on the concept of "giving back" and was very much aware, as I wrote above, of the limited impact my research would have, and on my hopes that active listening would be enough, I became anxious about making sure that people did not feel like I was using them. This feeling was largely accentuated by comments such as Ellie's, which I reported above, and the sense that negative research precedents had been set by people going into the field, taking what they needed and then leaving without showing the appropriate concern for their participants or the communities they had entered. I was conscious this had been the case in Bradford and previous research reports (e.g. Samad, 2010) had emphasised how their respondents had expressed their desire to see research making a difference in their lives and having a more concrete impact on their experiences. I was very clear that my research was unlikely to provide that for people. So I wrestled with ideas of how I could show people I cared and was not just there to take advantage. My research diary is full of interrogations on the topic.

Eventually, I took opportunities to "give back" as they presented themselves. A gatekeeper introduced me to the cook at a weekly elderly lunch club, thinking I could make contacts there and ask people for interviews. I ended up volunteering there every week for thirteen months, both before and after I conducted interviews, and actually not getting any interviews from the people attending the lunch club. It felt very positive to be able to contribute in that way, and there was some surprise from the gatekeeper who, 8 months in, remarked "I never thought this would become a permanent fixture for you." Equally, I was able to contribute in small part with the church's English Heritage bid for a restoration project. The architect's project included historical background about the area, which I looked over and contributed to. I also planned to facilitate a storytelling event as part of a family fun day for the church, but due to unforeseen circumstances the event never took place.

Although the effect of it may not be as obvious as I would have wanted or imagined research's impact should be, I tried to be respectful of people's stories and to listen intently and actively to what they were telling me. Being thankful was another way to try and show people how much I appreciated their time, especially as I was unable to give even the smallest compensation for their efforts as is commonly done in funded research due to my lack of funds. Thus, I always felt relieved when people commented on the unusualness of talking about themselves, and on how they had enjoyed it, which happened more often than not. A particularly good day was when a participant said he "really respect[ed]" what I was doing.

## c – Ongoing ethics after fieldwork

Leaving the field was a challenging experience, all the more so as due to personal circumstances, I moved away from Bradford first on a part-time basis in September 2012, and on a permanent basis in January 2013. In a sense, having to move away made it easier, as I was physically moving away and having a conversation with gatekeeper A about the move allowed me to explain I was not going to be doing further interviews and would be writing up my thesis in the following months.

However, my experience with gatekeeper B was not as straightforward as I did not manage to get hold of them before I left. I emailed Gatekeeper B but I did not receive an answer, and did not chase her up either. Thus, whereas there was a sense of closure with Gatekeeper A, I cannot say the same of Gatekeeper B. As far as the participants are concerned, I closed the interviews by checking they understood what I was going to do with the interviews, asking if they had any questions and if they wished to receive a copy of the transcript. I tried not to make promises or say I would do things that I could not do so that when I left the encounter, there was no expectation from the participant that I would meet them again or be in touch again.

A second ethical challenge after leaving the field concerns ensuring confidentiality in the writing-up phase of the research. In the transcripts, I changed the names of people and places, but also some details that could make the area recognisable. It raised some questions for my analysis, especially as some of those details had to do with the transformation of Billesley itself, which is relevant for my argument. However, ethically, I could not compromise the identity of the participants as they all wanted confidentiality so indications of where the area might be had to be removed. In addition, I omitted life events that were so specific to the participants that they could have been recognised. Again, this appears to be contradictory with my research method. Nevertheless, I was able to use the omitted passages as background information and context when interpreting the interviews as a whole, even if I could not refer to them.

A final ethical challenge after leaving the field was about interpreting the interviews in the writing-up phase and avoiding misrepresentation. It was especially salient for me as participants showed little interest or had little time to do follow-up interviews, let alone read and comment on the transcript of their interviews. At least, follow-up interviews, when they happened, allowed me to ask for clarification or precision on certain points that had been raised in the first interview. However, this only had a limited bearing on the interpretation phase of the research. Thus, I

had to reflect on how I would ensure my interpretations were adequate and how to do justice to the complexity of the stories that people entrusted me with. Relating complexity is especially challenging within narrative research as the written word of the transcript can never fully represent the spoken word and the context of the live interaction. So I endeavoured to make notes on the context of each interview, and record my perception of how it went to use in my analysis. Secondly, although I looked for similarities in people's stories, I also made an effort to relate experiences that had been relevant for only the speakers themselves, or that contradicted some of my other findings. Doing so, I tried to reveal the complexity and nuances within people's narratives. It remains that the findings presented in Part Three are my own and situated interpretation. I do not claim that they are "the" truth about the participants' experiences of life in Billesley and Bradford. Rather, they present a truth of such experiences as seen through my eyes and my specific social position.

## Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have further clarified my theoretical and methodological assumptions in relation to narrative research as I situated it within qualitative inquiry. I have explained why and how my research will focus both on what is said but also on how it is said, to be able to explore the content of dominant narratives and to interpret how individuals relate and negotiate these dominant stories. As part of ensuring the validity of my research, I gave a detailed account of my methods of data collection and analysis and reflected throughout on my choices and my positionality as a researcher. In this enquiry, the process of research was necessarily practical and I also reflected on the realities, challenges and learnings that occurred during my fieldwork. Finally, I took ethical considerations before, during and after fieldwork to be an intrinsic part of my methodology. I explored the various challenges that the literature raises and compared them with my experiences of fieldwork. Doing so, I considered the impact of ethical concerns on my data collection and analysis.

# Conclusion to Part One

The two chapters of Part One have established a theoretical and methodological framework for the exploration of the dynamics of narrative production and negotiation within individual stories and the collective stories of the communities they belong to. Within this framework, the relationship between collective and individual stories and between various collective stories will be explored. What we remember and identify with, how we make sense of the world and how we communicate are intrinsically linked to the storytelling dynamics of our worlds – how our individual stories intersect in time and space with the stories of others, the stories of our communities and the stories of other groups and communities. Questioning what this means for individuals and for communities will be a running concern through Part Two and Part Three.

A related red thread throughout the thesis is that stories, even dominant ones, only exist in relation to other stories and to the people who mobilise them for a specific purpose. As a result, questions emerge such as: who is telling the story and who is not? What is the purpose of the teller? Who is the audience? Who and what is talked about and is not? Interrogating stories in such a way allows us to explore which stories are relevant and meaningful for tellers in the specific context of the interaction within which the story is constructed. In the case of research interviews, this means that the role of the interviewer as a co-constructer of the stories can be taken into account.

# Part Two: Disaggregating collective narratives in and about Bradford: Sources of knowledge about the city and their various storylines

The objective of Part Two is to explore the dynamics of collective storytelling within and about the contested urban space of Bradford. It seeks to address the first sub-research question: Which stories dominate and which are contested in the collective narratives of the city? Doing so, it also questions the processes through which stories become dominant and the implications this may have for the collective identity of the city. As it is exclusively concerned with collective narratives, Part Two presents the findings from the document analysis phase of the research. Throughout, the language used tends to reflect the language that was employed within the documents themselves. To draw attention to this, especially when contested categories and terms such as "Asian," "Whites" or "community" have been mobilised, I used quotation marks.

Chapter Three explores a range of documents from the national popular culture to question what, if any, are the dominant storylines about Bradford in the national imagination. In this phase of the research, I argue that there is a reductive and pessimistic story of Bradford in popular culture. I start with looking at the themes of this story, questioning what the content of the apparent dominant narrative is. Then, I move onto the question of the processes through which the specific narrative tropes about the city have become established. To do so, I take a range of examples from films, documentaries, and writing about the city. A challenge in understanding and disaggregating the national collective story of the city was to distinguish between some of the "objective" realities such as the material conditions of the inner city and the processes that create narrative truths. An exploration of the political and historical context of production of the narratives helps to question why a specific image of Bradford had taken hold and been reproduced, and what the implications of that may be for the city.

In Chapter Four, I aim at disaggregating another public source of knowledge on Bradford: academic tales of the city. From the 1970s onwards, researchers have chosen Bradford as a research destination. In this chapter, I question how the academic stories have contributed to the public story of Bradford. As in Chapter Three, I look at the "what" of the stories and establish what the most common themes in research on Bradford have been. I also look at how those themes became established in the academic sphere, which meant exploring how Bradford has been constructed as a research site throughout the years. Having done so, I move onto questioning the relationship between the academic collective stories of the city and the popular culture ones. I chose a range of examples to investigate how academic tales can reinforce and challenge the culturally dominant storyline.

Chapter Five is the final chapter of Part Two. After having focused on mostly "outsider" stories of the city, this chapter seeks to disaggregate the local cultural narratives as produced by "insider" local organisations. It explores both systematic efforts at creating a coherent identity for the city through tourism campaigns run by the city council, but also a range of disparate initiatives that have developed in the local public sphere. Throughout, it explores that relationship between the local stories and the culturally dominant storyline of the city as it gradually transpired that the former grew out of a concern to counter the latter. Having highlighted the effort to produce counter-narratives to the reductive and pessimistic story of Bradford, I also emphasise the existence of a local story which acknowledged the material challenges facing the city. As I turn to the implication of the relationship between local and national collective stories, I consider the problem of identity dissonance this may create in Bradford.

# Chapter 3: Culturally dominant storylines about Bradford in the national imagination

## Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explore the processes through which a specific narrative truth may be established as dominant in the national imagination. To do so, I explore which elements of the city's identity are represented within the national culture, in what terms, and by whom. Without denying the complex material realities at play in the urban space that is Bradford, I argue that specific elements about the city have been recurrently represented over others, and these representations have been articulated together over the years into a reductive and negative storyline of the city. Without denying that no national culture is monolithic or that no audience receives a story passively, I focus here on the themes of the stories, the establishment of specific symbols through films, documentaries, books, and the coverage of key events, and the consequences of a dominant narrative for the image and identity of the city. In the first section, I explore the terms of the overarching pessimistic and reductive national story about Bradford. In the second section, I collect and analyse evidence from cultural narratives showing the establishment throughout the years of the specific narrative tropes about Bradford. The context of the stories is the topic of the third section, as I seek a range of explanations for a specific image of Bradford taking hold and being reproduced. Finally, the fourth section investigates the impacts of a dominant narrative on the identity of the city.

## 1 – An overarching pessimistic and reductive story

The aim of this section is to outline the themes that characterise culturally dominant storylines about Bradford, or the "what" of the dominant narratives. Although Bradford is a complex and heterogeneous space and not solely constructed through an external discourse, I argue that a national and mainly (but

not only) externally constructed story exists about the city. In this overall story, Bradford is characterised as a depressed northern city, the victim of deindustrialisation and crime but also the location of a comparatively large "Asian" population, which generates fears of "Asianisation" of the city. It creates a pessimistic story of Bradford as an unlucky, problematic and depressing place and contributes to an external perception of the city as a contested urban space.

There are ample references to the existence of this particular dominant story both in the media and in academia. For example, Saima Mir wrote for The Guardian "Ask most people who have never visited Bradford what they know about it and they usually think riots, racism, and deprived communities," (2013) a view reaffirmed by Manzoor also in The Guardian: "Bradford has come to symbolise the bruised state of race relations in this country." (2003) In the academic literature, Schmid suggests that Bradford, which used to be famous for its wealth in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, has become famous for social tensions in the second half of the twentieth century. Similarly, Russell discusses the role of tourism in shaping the identity of northern cities and remarks about Bradford's tourism strategy that "it appears to have had only a marginal impact on changing external perceptions of the city and, indeed, in some sense may have even reinforced certain negative images," (2003: 56) thus affirming the existence of a recognisable external story of the city. Beyond the existence of such a story, we need to examine it more closely. Indeed, narrative research encourages us to be wary of taking such narratives at face value as they can conceal as much as they can reveal.

Importantly, I do not deny that Bradford has faced and is facing some very real challenges. The city was hit particularly hard by the economic recession of the late 1970s and 1980s, partly due to the lack of diversification in its industry. Russell writes, "As an early industrial town wedded for longer than most to manufacturing, it was especially ill-equipped to face the challenge of post-industrial society" and around 23,000 jobs were lost in the city between 1978 and 1981 (Russell, 2003). Similarly, the 2001 riots, whatever their causes, had at the very least a great

financial cost for the city (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005). Equally, I recognise that Bradford was not the only northern town, or British, for that matter, that was going through a phase of deindustrialisation at the time. Rather, I draw attention to the terms of the narratives that tell the story of the deindustrialisation of the northern town and how Bradford is constructed as an impoverished city in long-term decline. For example, the current phase of decline in the city is often contrasted with the wealthy past of the city, generally referring to the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. However, the choice of representing the wealthy past is a construction in itself and there is seldom mention of the industrial poverty in Victorian Bradford or of the challenges that the textile industry faced towards the end of the nineteenth century. Reality may have been more nuanced than the opposition currently constructed between wealthy past and declining recent past and present. I argue, then, that Bradford holds a unique role in the national imagination as the symbol of a depressed northern city – in other words, it serves an important symbolic function in the wider cultural politics of the UK, deriving its meaning and significance from broader and ongoing struggles and processes around identity, class and social inclusion.

Another aspect of the external story of Bradford concerns the "Asian" population of Bradford. According to the story of the "Asianisation" of Bradford (McLoughlin, 2006a: 126), the city has become the recipient of a large community of "South Asian" migrants, so much so that the perception is that the population of the city is predominantly "South Asian." In this story, "South Asians" have taken over the city by opening shops, building mosques, and campaigning successfully for more rights and recognition of their specific cultural needs, so much so that they may represent a threat for the "host" community. In this story too, "South Asians" are seen to be taking resources away from "the White community," and to be living separate lives from "the White community," leading to a sub-storyline of Bradford as a racially polarised city where tensions between communities run high, encapsulated in a narrative of the failure of multiculturalism.

I also want to argue that the stories I have described so far are reductive. For instance, Bradford is often physically reduced to a few key sites (Russell, 2003) such as the Victorian town hall, Manningham and Lumb Lane (associated with the red light district of the city and later with the 1995 and 2001 riots), or Haworth (linked to the Brontë tourism) and Saltaire (the model industrial village). Bradford is also often reduced to a set of dichotomies such as "Asian" versus "White" and inner-city versus countryside. They may denote real opposition within the city, but they fail to encapsulate the range of backgrounds and experiences of its inhabitants. My observations concur with Russell's argument, which aptly links the position of the city in the national psyche with the stories that situate it within the national culture and contrasts issues of grassroots experiences with pre-existing discourse:

> The city was placed at the core of a new discourse that drew on long established notions of the north as bleak and harsh and added to it a distinctive admixture of current economic crisis and Asian 'otherness.' Bradford became the focus for a modified northern 'place-image' – in Rob Shield's words, 'the discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality' – that shunted it into the nation's margins almost as forcefully as the economic realities that beset it." (2003: 58)

Then, the material or objective realities faced by the city were only reinforced by the stories about the city.


## 2 – Evidence from cultural narratives

In this section, I explore the processes that led to specific tropes and symbols becoming established. I show how Bradford is chosen time and time again (presumably over other cities) to illustrate issues of (difficult) community relations, poverty, and the current demise of the white working class in various texts which have established visual and written references to working class estates, prostitution, and "Asians" and which constitutes a partial imagination of Bradford. In the first sub-section, I look at general media portrayal of Bradford through travel

writing, journalism, films and documentaries. In the next sub-section, I investigate specific events (such as high profile murders and episodes of rioting) and their coverage. In a final sub-section, I note and reflect on the absence of counter-stories at the national level.

## a – General media portrayal

### A story of decline as Bradford comes to epitomise deindustrialisation in the North of England

First, I want to explore how a negative story of Bradford has emerged around the theme of the decline of the city, which has been reinforced by the long-standing aspect of identity politics in England that is the North South divide.

In the 1980s, Bradford was seen as a microcosm of British multicultural society (Kureishi, 1986), a place where changes in demographics and culture could be visible and therefore attracted journalists, commentators, and travel writers, who mainly came from the South of England to investigate the social and economic condition of Bradford. Stories of deindustrialisation and poverty in Bradford can be found in their writings. For example, travel writer Hanif Kureishi, a London-born and based author, comments on the economic situation of the city when he visits it. Although his purpose is primarily to look at issues of race and culture, he puts unemployment high on his agenda too by announcing it as one of the themes he will cover on the very first page of his article. Considering the economic situation of the city, he typically alludes to Bradford's wealthy past by quoting a phrase from T.S. Eliot: "silk hat on a Bradford millionaire" (1986: 151) and contrasts it with the demise of the city: "the town hall was a monument to Bradford's long-gone splendour and pride." (162) He gives a first-hand account of the poverty, which plagues all communities, with observations of unemployed "White" and "Asian" youths, overcrowded and poorly maintained housing, and scruffy and poor (White) estates. Beryl Bainbridge is another writer who visits Bradford in the 1980s. Her description of the city is not flattering. She writes "all the houses looked derelict," (1984: 107) the market "full of the usual trash" (108) and she is not impressed by

the National Photographic Museum. Kureishi (1986) disagrees with this particular point, but constructs Bradford as a place different from others. His opening sentence reads "Some time ago, I noticed that there was something unusual about the city of Bradford, something that distinguished it from other northern industrial cities." (1986: 149) Reading his piece, it transpires that this difference is mostly negative for the inhabitants of Bradford. There are some elements of a positive experience related by the authors, but it is clear upon reading the texts that they are largely outweighed by the negative image the authors convey. When he visits the city in the 1990s, Bill Bryson makes observations that are equally negative to Bainbridge's and Kureishi's. He writes of the empty shops in a city in decline, which may have had a great and wealthy past but has a bleak future. Like Kureishi, the idea that the city is doomed comes through in his narrative, with images of "irreversible decline" (1995: 197) and "misguided meddling by planners," (1995: 197) whose ideas of modernisation have made the city suffer (Bryson, 1995). He writes, "Bradford's role in life is to make every place else in the world look better in comparison, and it does this very well. Nowhere on this trip would I see a city more palpably forflorn." (1995: 197) Overall, his story echoes others', describing Bradford as an unlucky and depressing place.

Similar observations can be made about the visual sources in which Bradford is taken as a subject or appears. Still in the 1980s, Bradfordian Andrea Dunbar's portrayal of her home town in her screenplay of *Rita, Sue and Bob too* (1986) contributed to the national perception of Bradford as a poor place in decline.[15] In the film, the city is the setting for showing the demise of the out-of-work white working-class in the Thatcher years. For instance, the opening scene of a drunken man stumbling out of a pub in the middle of the day and walking home to a flat on a "rough" estate with boarded up flats encapsulates the background for the film, one of a struggling White working-class stigmatised by unemployment. According to

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[15] Although produced by a Bradfordian, I chose to treat Dunbar's screenplay here as it became a "key feature" (Milestone, 2008: 1166) in the national cultural landscape, unlike other texts from Bradford that I will explore in Chapter 5.

Russell, the film's "sexual explicitness, bad language and apparently bleak view of what the nation was learning to call the 'underclass', made Bradford once again epitomise the nation's social and economic problems." (2003: 59) In his history of modern Bradford, Jim Greenhalf, a Telegraph and Argus[16] journalist, recalls another example of Bradford being presented to the country as a city in decline: "The city at large was less thrilled in 1985 when they saw the result of a visit by a production team from BBC2's Newsnight current affairs programme. Virtually an entire programme was devoted to exposing Bradford as Northern England's poorest, unhealthiest, least likely to succeed conurbation." (2003: 73-74) Recently, Bradford was one of the locations chosen to investigate child poverty in the UK by the BBC (*Poor Kids*, 2011), showing how the story of poverty in the city endures. Although the documentary itself is not about Bradford, it is the fact that the city was chosen amongst many other possible ones in the country to be a case study of poverty which is of interest. This, along with some chosen key statistics about the city given at the beginning of the programme, only reiterates the storyline of poverty associated with Bradford.

General images of Bradford as a negative place fill dramas and documentaries in which the city appears. For example, over the years, Bradford has been chosen as a site to explore issues of prostitution. In *Dummy* (1977), and again in the 1990s with *Band of Gold* (1995 – 1997), *Manningham Diaries* (1995), and a Close Up North documentary entitled "The Lane" (n.d.), the life and challenges in Bradford's red light district were exposed to the nation. The lack of opportunities in the city, especially for young people has also been emphasised. In Channel 4 drama *Britz* (2007), Bradford is chosen as the place of birth and residence of main characters Sohail and Nasima. Asked about his law degree, Sohail is heard to say he is doing it so he can "get out of this dump," referring to Bradford. It encapsulates the idea that there is nothing to do in Bradford. The same characterisation of Bradford is also present in *Bradford Riots* (2006), a Channel 4 dramatisation of the 2001

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[16] The Telegraph and Argus is the local newspaper of the Bradford District.

Bradford riots, as exemplified in the following dialogue between Karim, the main character who is a University student, and his friend Aki, who has stayed behind in Bradford.

> **Aki**: When you get your degree, are you gonna come back here to work in Manningham?
> **Karim**: I don't know... Maybe...
> **Aki**: Bullshit... Cos you've got prospects now... Education, contacts, white friends. You're not gonna come back here and work like Shahid on £100 a week.

My own observations concur with that of others who have studied Bradford (e.g. Bühler et al., 2002; Russell, 2003) and point towards the existence of a story in which Bradford is regularly used as an illustration of economic decline linked to deindustrialisation in the national imagination.

The story of decline, deindustrialisation and general negativity is articulated against the backdrop of a prolonged and ongoing process of differentiation between regions in the UK, within which Bradford has become an easy target. With the industrial revolution, but with origins that can be traced back to the fourteenth century (Russell, 2003), a culturally dominant storyline about the North of England as a bleak place has emerged. It is constructed from and in opposition to the more refined South (Russell, 2003) and is especially centred around class dynamics. Bradford was not always a typical example of this storyline, and Russell (2003) describes how it escaped the jokes and rejection that other places such as Wigan and Sheffield were victims of in the first half of the twentieth century. Rather, he explains how for a while Bradford was famous for its very good choirs and at the beginning of the twentieth century the work of Bradford-born and Bradford "advocate" J.B. Priestley contributed to giving the city a good press. However, the recession and deindustrialisation at the end of the 1970s was a turning point in attitudes towards Bradford. Russell observes, "'the decline of the north was a leitmotiv of the writing of the 1980s'[17] and Bradford was so often taken as *the* paradigm case for the social and economic decline of industrial England." (2003: 57)

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[17] Samuel, 1998: 166, as cited by Russell.

This has contributed to creating a story of Bradford as inherently bleak, grim, and dirty, and inescapable due to its Northernness.

Evidence of this story in popular culture is harder to come by than for the previous storyline, as the stereotypes about the North of England have permeated British culture for a long time (Russell, 2003). But some of the materials already cited can help us here. For example, *Rita, Sue and Bob too* is not only about the white working-class, it is about the Northern white working-class. The setting for the film is unmistakably the North of England as the accent of the characters is clearly a Yorkshire accent. In his article, Kureishi (1986) uses the common dichotomy between the North and South several times, as he gives an image of a North stuck in the past and comments on Bradford not being London. According to Schmid (1997), this view is repeated by another travel writer, Charles Jennings, who writes about Bradford in 1995 and reproduces the construction of Bradford as Northern and industrial as found in the media. About the same book, Russell writes that "Bradford features [...] extensively in Jennings' book, serving as the Holy Grail 'of filthy northerness' that the London-based writer so desperately searches for." (2003: 64) To sum up, although it has not always been true through time, it transpires that in the later part of the twentieth century, Bradford has become associated with the negative aspects and stereotypes of the North of England, which contributes to the contemporary reductive and negative story of the city.

**"Asianisation" of Bradford and the "failure" of multiculturalism**

Due to the wide and increasing coverage over the years of the "South Asian" community in Bradford, evidence of this dominant storyline was easier to come by than for other culturally dominant narratives. According to McLoughlin, Bradford's association with "South Asian" immigration has been affirmed and reaffirmed through time, which he demonstrates by citing a couple of newspaper headlines describing Bradford as: "'A miniature Lahore' (*Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, 9 July 1964) and a 'Black Coronation Street' (*Sunday Mirror*, 4 June 1978)" (2006a: 110) and referring the reader to the many journalists, commentators and travel writers who came to the city. In his chapter, he looks at Kureishi's work and at another

travel writer's account of Bradford, Dervla Murphy's *Tales From Two Cities: Travels of Another Sort* (1987). He argues that both authors reproduce the narrative of "'institutional completeness' of Asian Bradford." (2006: 126) For example, Kureishi observes how the Pakistani community displays a "Pakistani habitus" and reproduces traditions from "back home" with women covering their heads, men wearing shalwar kameez and being forced to marry Pakistani women out of family pressure. He writes: "If I ignored the dark Victorian buildings around me, I could imagine that everyone was back in their village in Pakistan." (Kureishi, 1986: 152) The visibility of the "South Asian" population in the city brought negative coverage to Bradford from early on in the research sample, as Mawby and Batta (1980) note how the national press were eager to associate immigration with threat. Following the publication by the Council of a report on the state of the District in 1979, they observe: "A number of national newspapers selected from the Report references to the growing Asian population and proceeded to quote out of context (and outside of the boundaries of mathematical principles) such as to create an image of the Bradford population as under threat or, in the hackneyed phraseology of the *Daily Telegraph,* living on an 'immigration time-bomb'." (4) The idea of threat to the host community was to persist throughout the years, as we shall see throughout the rest of the sub-section. In the meantime, Bryson (1995) also rehearsed the story of the "Asianisation" of Bradford to a certain extent, when he narrows down his positive experience of Bradford to its curry houses (and the Alhambra and the Media Museum, but mainly the curry houses). In *The Last White Kids* (2003, Channel 4), a Channel 4 documentary about a white family living as a minority in an "Asian" area of Bradford, the focus is still on "Asianisation" but religion, especially Islam, takes a more important place. Difference is marked by skin colour, but also by religious practice, and the two are often amalgamated. The BBC drama *White Girl* about a young white girl (Leah) whose family moves to an exclusively Asian area and who takes an interest in Islam aired in 2008 as part of the BBC's White Season,[18] can be

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[18] In 2007, the BBC announced it would be running a "White Season" in the following year, constituted by "a series of films that shine the spotlight on the white working-class in Britain today. It examines why some feel increasingly marginalised, and explores possible reasons behind the rise in popularity of far-right politics in some sections of this community." (BBC, 2007)

seen as using the narrative of "Asianisation" (nearly "Islamisation" in this case) of the city. Indeed, there is no doubt where the action is located, as a shot at the beginning of the film shows the protagonists in a van travelling on the M606 towards Bradford. Soon after, we see them driving through the city, but a specific image of the city is portrayed. Shot after shot, we see Pakistani men in the traditional shalwar kameez and women wearing the niqab, with pictures of a mosque in the vicinity of the typical terraced houses. As the family moves into their new house, the muezzin's call to prayer can be heard. Throughout the film, Leah's family are the only white faces we encounter (apart from the minor character of the headmistress at the school). The motion's aim after all is to "explore[s] the hope as well as the tension that can arise when two very different cultures collide." (BBC, 2007) What is interesting in terms of the story of Bradford though, is that the city was chosen because of what it represents within the national imagination, a place of difference, as evident in the opening shots of the location and then subtly throughout the film.

An aspect of "Asianisation" is how the immigrant communities became more settled, more established, and ultimately more politically assertive. In Bainbridge's account, this is evident in her description of a scene during a meeting about single-sex education at the town hall. Her team is allowed entrance to the council-chamber to film the meeting and she describes how "a continuous stream of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus filed into the chamber, at least two hundred of them" to support "the Asian councillor" who makes an impassionate speech opposing the idea of merging a boy-school and girl-school together (1984: 110). After some hours and a vote, it was decided that the schools should stay separate.

Another aspect of the "Asianisation" story is that multiculturalism is failing, encapsulated in simplistic stories of non-British cultures and lack of integration. Those very stories were presented in the Channel 4 dramatisation of the Bradford riots. Although at the beginning of the film, Karim is seen hanging out at university with White friends, a picture of multiculturalism, as soon as he gets back to

Bradford for the summer break, it is all about "them and us," as one of his friends says. The rest of the film is about the lives of young "Asian" men and to some extent their families, with the only white faces being those of the police and in the scene where a Muslim and "Asian" mother picks up her child at nursery, of the other mothers who seem to be avoiding her in the aftermath of the riots. Bradford, then, is a place of divisions. Stories of social exclusion and criminality are also portrayed in the film. Although Karim is at university in another city, his friends at home at best do not do much, and at worst are involved in gangs and criminal activities. In the scene about the early afternoon when youths gathered in Centenary Square, some of them are represented as actively "looking for trouble." The image of young "Asian" and Muslim men as criminals and belonging to gangs is compounded by "the growth of Islamophobia in the media and popular culture." (Alexander, 2004: 530) In the wake of 9/11 and 7/7, they are not only criminals, but a popular story playing on the fears of the "host" society, tells us that they have been radicalised and that despite being born and bred in the UK, the new generation of "Asian" and Muslim men is one of terrorists. Nowhere is this clearer than in another Channel 4 drama, *Britz* (2007), in which Bradford is loosely associated with the 7/7 bombings in London, with Islamic radicalisation and with home-grown terrorism. Admittedly, the lead character Sohail is the antithesis of this image. He sees himself as British (others in the film do not), "fits in," and ends up working for MI5 in their anti-terrorist cell. However, his enquiry leads him straight back to Bradford and to people he has grown up with. Throughout the film, the story of radicalisation of young Muslim men is repeated, be it in Bradford when Sohail pokes fun at his friends for wearing "over-the-top" traditional clothing at mosque, or at university in London with a radical cleric preaching to a crowd of young people. With references to home-grown terrorism and Sohail's memories of being beaten up at school or his brother's experience of racism, the portrayal of British society in this drama is one of dysfunctional multiculturalism.

Another sub-storyline within the wider story of the failure of multiculturalism, and one which was frequently used to explain the 2001 riots is that of the tendency of

"Asian" communities to prefer to live together in close-knit communities, a phenomenon which has come to be known as self-segregation. It is particularly obvious in TV documentary *The Last White Kids* and drama *White Girl*, but also in BBC 2 documentary *Last Orders* (2009) about Bradford's white working class and Channel 4 TV-reality experiment about citizenship and "Britishness" *Make Bradford British* (2012). The latter in particular defines Bradford as polarised and segregated, with the inner-city almost exclusively Asian and the suburbs predominantly white. Generally, segregation and self-segregation are deemed negative phenomena, due to them being identified as one of the causes of the 2001 riots, and the blame lies with the "Asian" communities for "wanting" to live apart. However, it is interesting that in *Make Bradford British*, the voice over refers to exclusively white areas like Haworth and Ilkley as segregated, which is uncommon. In 2010, Bradford-born Zaiba Malik[19] wrote a piece of travel writing, which was published online, and is as much a memoir piece as a reflection on Bradford. She left the city in 1989 at 20, but kept visiting and writes here about her past and one of her visits. In her opinion, segregation and self-segregation have always existed in Bradford and there is no doubt in her mind that they still exist in 2010. But in her opinion, it has not stopped the city from thriving. Then, she asks, what is the place of the debate on segregation in the Bradford narrative? The story of segregation and self-segregation in Bradford has a heavily negative connotation, and fulfils the role of reaffirming the overall negative story of the city for people inside and outside Bradford. It contributes to "othering" the "Asian" communities and presenting them as a threat to the host community by their reluctance to "integrate." Here, it is much easier to blame the "Asian" communities and to make the solutions to the failure of multiculturalism lie with them, than to challenge both "White" and "Asian" communities on their separatist life styles. After all, as shown in *Make Bradford British*, white areas can also be called segregated. Then, it seems that the focus on, and in particular the interpretation of the process of "Asianisation" cannot be easily separated from wider stories of multiculturalism. As the meanings of

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[19]Although it is arguable that Malik's piece is a "key feature" of popular culture like Dunbar's, I treat it here rather than in Chapter 5 due to its publication in a national magazine.

multiculturalism have shifted and government policy has endorsed the concept of "community cohesion," which focuses on the idea of shared values and a share culture, popular renderings of places like Bradford can subtly re-affirm certain ideas or prejudices about "immigrant" playing on the fears of the "host society."

To sum up, I would like to re-emphasise that it is the story these films, documentaries and travel accounts tell about Bradford which is of particular interest to me. Bradford tends to be represented as a conflictual place, a contested urban space where multicultural relations are dysfunctional (for example, Channel 4 documentary *Edge of the City* tackles the problem of the grooming of young girls by groups of young men, explicitly making it a race issue (BBC, 2004); in *Make Bradford British*, within the first minutes of the first episode, the voice over "informs" the viewer that British cities "are becoming increasingly divided. Nowhere is the problem clearer than in Bradford."), except in the very recent BBC2 *Bradford: City of Dreams* (see sub-section c) on counter-stories). In *Bradford Riots*, *Britz*, *White Girl*, and more recently *Poor Kids*, the city's economic struggle is either in the background or centre stage, with the sense that there is nothing to do in Bradford, and that the only way out of poverty may be to escape the city. Finally, in several of those, the white working class tends to be represented as dysfunctional and marginalised, perhaps even forgotten (see *Edge of the City*, *White Girl*, and *Last Orders*), and often holding of racist views. All contribute to the overall negative and reductive story of Bradford by using the city as a regular case study for social ills and challenges that are actual realities in other places in the UK.

## b – Specific events and their coverage

In this sub-section, I look at specific events and their coverage, that is stories which in themselves may not have been sufficient to create or sustain a singular image of Bradford, but because they have been numerous and have connected with an already-established idea of Bradford as seen in the previous sub-section, may have played a part in confirming and reaffirming the image of Bradford. For example, in 1985 the Bradford City Football Club ground caught fire, leaving 56 dead and many more injured. The story made national and international headlines and attracted

much sympathy for the local community. However, "it added to the sense of Bradford being an unlucky place, a site where tragic events unfolded." (Russell, 2003: 56) In the remainder of the sub-section, I first look at the coverage of crime stories in Bradford that made the headlines and secondly at the coverage of a range of "race" issues.

**"It's a mean old scene:"[20] Crime on the streets of Bradford**

Stories of crime, prostitution, drug dealing and murder in Bradford have been numerous over the years, and I argue here that short of constructing an identity for Bradford as a problematic place, they reinforced the pre-existing stereotypes about the city established through such processes as those observed in the previous sub-section. To start with, Bradford became synonymous with murder in the mid-1970s and early 1980s as the place of residence of Donald Neilson, also known as the "Black Panther," but even more so of Peter Sutcliffe, better known as the "Yorkshire Ripper." Neilson committed around 400 burglaries over 10 years, killed three postmasters, and kidnapped and killed 17-year-old Lesley Whittle (Kendall, 2012), but it is Sutcliffe's story which really captured the nation's imagination and put Bradford on the "crime" map. He killed thirteen women and wounded seven others (Russell, 2003), most of them prostitutes, between 1975 and 1981. After he was arrested, Jim Greenhalf (2003) recalls how his address in Heaton in Bradford became famous and attracted tourists. Russell explains how the story became part of the popular culture with "a Yorkshire Ripper publishing industry [which] flourished into the 1990s and has never quite disappeared," (2003: 58) making it perhaps one of the more permanent features in the culturally dominant story of Bradford. In the 1990s, Bradford was back in the national headlines with murder cases within its Asian community over forced marriages, domestic violence and sexual abuse, putting a so-called "Asian way of life" in the spotlight.[21] In 2005, the murder of PC Sharon Beshenivsky, who was shot dead in Bradford whilst

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[20] See Greenhalf's (2003) title.

[21] See for example the Zoora Shah trial. Zoora Shah was convicted of murdering Mohammed Azam by poisoning him in 1993 for the motive of "greed." Years later, her story revealed a more complex situation of sexual abuse and drug dealing. (See Campbell, 1998 ; Olden, 1998; Wynne-Jones, 1998)

responding to an emergency call, "shocked the nation" (Yorkshire Post, 2009) and brought Bradford back to the front pages of newspapers. Then in 2010, Bradford found itself at the heart of another serial killing inquiry in which victims were prostitutes. Stephen Griffiths, who resided on Thornton Road in Bradford, called himself the crossbow cannibal and was charged with the murder of three women who had all been working as prostitutes in Bradford (BBC, 2010).

In addition to being at the heart of murder enquiries in the 1980s and later in 2010, the issue of prostitution grew to be associated with Bradford within popular culture, notably with the TV series *Band of Gold* (1995 – 1997) by Leeds scriptwriter Kay Mellor, which portrays the lives of a group of sex workers in Bradford's red-light district, and which was "extremely successful" according to Dave Russell (2003: 58). In 1995, the "drama documentary" *Manningham Diaries* hit the British public's screens on Channel 4. It documented the lives of prostitutes working in Manningham, the then red light district of Bradford. At the same time, or perhaps prompted by the television series and documentary, a campaign started in Manningham to clear the streets from prostitution and received national attention, either as the subject itself of an article as in *Bradford's Moral Guardians; A peaceful campaign to clear prostitutes from the red-light district of Lumb Lane has become a war of attrition* (Moore, 1995) and *There's too much life on the streets; The man who polices Bradford's notorious red-light district has asked the Government to consider legalising brothels* (Boggan and Arlidge, 1995) or within articles that looked at the 1995 street disturbances (for example, Bennetto, 1995; Burns, Davison and Syal, 1995; Cohn, 1995; The Times, 13 June 1995). The vigilante campaign achieved what it had set out for – Manningham became prostitute-free for at least 12 years after the campaign (Greenhalf, 2010), but the problem was only displaced to another part of Bradford and the TV series and documentary, the anti-prostitution campaign, and their coverage in the national press has resulted in connecting prostitution with the pre-existing negative identity of Bradford, especially in the 1990s but recently rehearsed again with the Griffiths murders and the current debates in the city about prostitution (Telegraph and Argus, 2013a and 2013b).

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The problem of prostitution in Bradford often raises another crime issue in the city: drugs and drug dealing. For example, there have been suggestions in the media that women become sex workers in order to be able to pay for drugs. But beyond the link between prostitution and drugs, which is not specific to Bradford, there are more associations between Bradford and drugs in popular culture. In *Bradford Riots*, one of the young Asian characters uses drugs and there is a hint that he may be dealing drugs too. As he talks to a friend, he explains that there are only two options in Bradford – leaving or drug dealing. Less obvious perhaps, drugs are also present in *White Girl*, as the character of the step-father uses the children as carriers for his drugs. Although not necessarily in the headlines, Bradford also became associated with drugs in the national press in the 1990s. For example, in the wake of the 1995 disturbances, several articles painted a picture of Manningham as afflicted by drugs:

- "The Manningham district is now plagued with open drug dealing conducted by gangs of aggressive youths" (The Independent, 12 June 1995)

- "Hussein's lodger, Liaquat La, works with the Inner City Drugs agency and he too is concerned about the explosion in hard drug use among young Asian men in the area. They make up 30 per cent of the workload for on GP in Manningham area." (Alibhai-Brown, 1995)

This trend carried on and grew in the 2000s with dozens of references to drug dealing in the national press, especially following the 2001 riots. Here are a few examples:

- 22 April 2001 headline in The Observer: *Focus: The race card: While the politicians argue, the violent turf wars continue...: Drugs, gangs and mean streets... Paul Harris visits the Bradford suburb where Asians rose up in revolt* (The Observer, 2001)

- 15 July 2001: Ayub Laher, vice president of Bradford's Council of Mosques gives this description to the Independent on Sunday: "Some 15 to 20 per cent of young Muslim males are far from the teachings of Islam. If you try to

tell them anything they gang up on you. They participate in drug-dealing, wanton violence and hooliganism." (Campbell, 2001)

- 14 July 2002 headline in The Observer: *News: Special Investigation: Deadly Asian heroin gangs carve up lucrative new trade: A furious row followed an MP's claim last week that the drug trade was destroying Asian communities. Paul Harris and Burhan Wazir report from Bradford, where young men fight for a share of the spoils – and crack is a growing menace* (Harris and Wazir, 2002)

Again, I am aware that crime, murder and prostitution do not happen only in Bradford, and there have been other high profile cases in other cities in the UK (for instance, the murder of five prostitutes in Ipswich in 2006 (Morris and Muir, 2006) or the murder of PC Fiona Bone and PC Nicola Hughes in Manchester in 2012 (BBC, 2013)). However, in the particular case of Bradford, those stories are the main ones that receive national attention, and therefore, short of visiting the city, are what people rely on for their knowledge of the place. Through their repetition, they have become part of the story of the city in the national imagination.

**Specific events linked to the story of "Asianisation"**

There have been a series of high profile "race issues" in Bradford, and their coverage has contributed to the story of the "Asianisation" of Bradford and the failure of multiculturalism. The Honeyford Affair is an illustration of the political mobilisation aspect of the story of "Asianisation." Kureishi (1986) and Murphy (1987) discuss it at length and it was widely covered in the national press.[22] Ray Honeyford was the headmaster of Drummond Middle School. Between November 1982 and January 1984, he published a series of articles in the *Times Educational Supplement* and the *Salisbury Review* (a conservative magazine) about multicultural education, expressing views easily qualified as racist. The second article published in the *Salisbury Review* was noticed in the education department of Bradford

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[22] See for example Davenport, 1985a; Davenport, 1985b; The Guardian, 1984a; The Guardian, 1984b; The Guardian, 1984c; The Times, 1985a; The Times, 1985b; The Times, 1985c; Travis, 1984.

Council, and it was publicised and started a local affair which received national coverage and was not resolved until the end of 1985. In terms of the story of "Asianisation," it is interesting to see how Bradford's Asian community mobilised and protested against the headmaster. During a prolonged conflict between the school governors and parents' pressure groups, the headmaster was in turn supported by the governors, suspended by the council, and reinstated by the governors. But on his return to the school, he faced boycott and demonstrations. He eventually offered to resign in November 1985. Far from being over, the national interest in Bradford due to conflictual race issues was only sustained at the end of the 1980s with what became known as the Rushdie Affair. The publication of Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* led to tensions within the Muslim community, both in the UK and abroad, especially in Bradford where the book was actually burnt in January 1989. Perhaps because of the book burning, Bradford, once again, became the prime example to illustrate the problem despite the national character of the affair.

National coverage of the 1995 disturbances and the 2001 riots, which included claims of "self-segregation," added to the story of the failure of multiculturalism in Bradford, which had been growing over the years in popular discourse. Compared to the 2001 riots, the 1995 street disturbances do not appear to have marked the national psyche so much. There was national coverage of the events at the time, but in the later film documentaries that I have inventoried and watched, there are few if no references to June 1995 in Bradford. However, in the wake of the Honeyford Affair and the Rushdie Affair in the mid- and late 1980s, the national coverage of the 1995 riots in Bradford started rehearsing such ideas as cultural clash and racial tension, specifically with the Muslim community, although the term "Asian" was still widely used to characterise the rioting groups. Headlines included *Asian youths in battles with police; Petrol bombs and burning barricades during second night of riots in Bradford* (Victor and Pepinster, 1995), *Bradford's culture clash; Violent confrontations between police and Asian youths at the weekend provoked widespread shock* (Parekh, 1995), *'Volcano of tension' was ready to erupt;*

*Bradford riots: violence involving 'westernised' Asian youths had roots in strained community relations with police* (Bennetto, 1995) and *Inside story: Aftershock; The Bradford riots came as a surprise to outsiders. The city was once seen as a blueprint for multi-racial harmony. Then industry collapsed and 'Paki-bashing' began. Now more than half of Asian youth is out of work. And there's a sore still festering* (Cohn, 1995). In the article *Broken bargains in Bradford* (The Independent, 1995), an Independent journalist writes of the shock of the nation at the riots in Bradford, all the stronger as he mobilises images of Muslims "as better citizens than most of their neighbours" and that of Bradford as an advanced city in terms of multicultural relations ("The city has had a Muslim mayor; its schools serve Halal meat and observe the Muslim holidays.") In the Times on 13 June 1995 (The Times, 1995), a journalist calls for reflection. As s/he tries to understand the causes of the riots, s/he paints this picture of the city: "Bradford has a higher proportion of Asians in its population than any other British city. The majority is Muslim, and one in every three is unemployed. Most Bradford Asians belong to families which immigrated to this country from rural Pakistan, and their cultural traditions especially their attitude to the family, higher education, religion and worship are quite different from those found among the many Asians in this country who now belong to a prosperous, integrated middle class." Although this goes some way towards trying to comprehend the background to the riots, it also characterises the immigrant population of Bradford as unique and distinct to the rest of the country's, and in doing so engages in a process of "othering" the city. Overall, the coverage of the 1995 riots was to be a prelude to the coverage of and reactions to the 2001 riots.

In the summer of 2001, riots broke out in Oldham, Burnley and then in Bradford on 7 July. In one of the worst riots in the UK for 20 years, Muslim young men of Pakistani origin confronted the police in the streets of Bradford following provocations from the National Front from late in the afternoon until early the next morning. Bricks, stones and petrol bombs amongst other things were thrown, vehicles set on fire and buildings damaged. But beyond the description of the events that unfolded (for a detailed account see Bujra and Pearce, 2011), here I

want to look at the popular discourse that surrounded the riots themselves and the story of Bradford that was told through coverage of the events. To do so, Alexander's (2004) exploration of the discourses on the 2001 riots in the press is particularly helpful. She observed that there were typically two narratives explaining the riots. On the one hand, a liberal story would claim the causes of the events were located in "social exclusion and disadvantage," an "inevitable response to racial discrimination and disadvantage." (528) On the other hand, a conservative story held that the rioters were culturally dysfunctional, engaged in drugs, gangs and violence, and interpreted the riots in terms of criminality, law and order (Alexander, 2004). In this story, Alexander writes, "The image of the 'riots' [...] is of generational conflict and identity crisis potently fused with criminality and hooliganism." (529) It is striking that in both stories, the notion of "culture" is present and part of the problem. In that sense, multiculturalism becomes the root of the problem, as "the riots are constructed as being about recalcitrant foreign cultures and failed integration as much as about social exclusion and discrimination." (530)[23] As Bühler et al. (2002) argue, these stories are simplistic and may only represent some aspects of a very complex situation.

## c – Absence of counter-stories

Considering the spread of the reductive and negative story of Bradford in the national consciousness, it is difficult to see and find an alternative or counter-story of the realities of life in Bradford. Within the sources I have inventoried, only three, along with the occasional news story in the national newspapers, appear to tell a story different from the culturally dominant storylines explored above and it must be noted that two of those come from Bradfordians (whereas so far, most of the

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[23]On this point, Alexander further comments on the national reporting of the riots, as illustrated here: "The reporting of the riots in even a traditionally liberal newspaper such as the *Guardian* shows the currency of culturalist arguments, which suffuse and underpin the discussion of socio-economic marginalization, so that the two explanations – what might be termed loosely the 'class' (socio-economic) and 'underclass' (culturalist) debates – become effectively inseparable." (2004: 530)

evidence I have presented has been articulated by "outsiders" or non-Bradfordians).

One is *Hand on the Sun* (1983), the semi-autobiographical novel by Tariq Mehmood, who was one of the "Bradford 12," a group of young "Asian" men who were charged and later acquitted of making petrol bombs in 1981. The novel depicts the rising political consciousness of a group of "Asian" youth in 1970s Bradford. We saw in the previous sub-sections how political mobilisation has grown to be justified along religious lines. In *Hand on the Sun* however, Mehmood reminds the reader of other types of mobilisation and solidarities (McLoughlin, 2006a). McLoughlin writes, "Mehmood's narrative establishes clear relationships between the lives of his characters and the social, economic and political structures of capitalism and colonialism. While *Hand on the Sun* is often polemical, it is sufficiently well crafted to give agency and voice to the complex dilemmas and contradictions of 'real people'" (2006a: 121) – a trend somehow lacking in the negative and reductive dominant story of Bradford.

Another counter-story is articulated in M.Y. Alam's 2002 novel *Kilo*. Again, McLoughlin's reading is helpful here. He argues it "illuminate[s] that beyond the dominant discourse of ethnicity, 'race', culture and religion, 'Brad-istan' today continues to be a city of highly differentiated, pluralised and competing interests." (2006a: 140) There are two interesting aspects to this quote. First, McLoughlin affirms the existence of a dominant story about Bradford. Second, he suggests there is space for counter-stories to emerge, such as the one presented in *Kilo,* set in Bradford. As I started reading the book, it seemed it was rehearsing the familiar story of a young Asian man who strayed from the "right" path and got involved in drug dealing. However, there is more to the book than this familiar story, and "the novel touches upon a wide range of complex issues: everyday acculturation and segregation; gangsters, drug smuggling and street violence; families, marriage and Pakistan; good cops and bad cops; religiosity, transgression, hypocrisy and morality; racism and the 'fantasy world' of community relations." (McLoughlin, 2006a: 140)

*Kilo* is a much more complex story than meets the eye, and to some extent encapsulates the complexity of life in Bradford for young "Asian" and Muslim men, a complexity that is not acknowledged or reflected in the dominant storylines.

Finally, in the 2013 BBC documentary *Bradford City of Dreams*, a more nuanced story of Bradford is presented. It acknowledges the current challenges that the city faces in the wake of deindustrialisation, and although it repeats some familiar tropes (for example, the wealthy past and the large "Asian" population), it also offers some facts about Bradford that other stories have forgotten, such as Bradford as a place which has attracted migrants since Victorian times. It does not dwell on segregation, but showcases individuals from a multiplicity of backgrounds working together. Over the two episodes, the 2001 riots are mentioned once, by builder Graham, and then it is only to say it has fostered better relations between the "Asian" and "White" communities. As anthropologist Irna Qureshi blogged after the first episode, the documentary shows that "Life is not all doom and gloom in Bradford, it would seem. Despite Bradford's economic and social problems, it is still a land of opportunity for economic migrants with a willingness to graft. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well and multiculturalism appears to be working." (2013) Clearly, the story of Bradford in *Bradford City of Dreams* is that of a place of opportunity.

Despite those (sparse) examples, some questions must be raised here. If it is fair to assume that *Bradford City of Dreams* enjoyed a similar audience to the other films and documentaries I have cited and explored in this chapter, it is more difficult to judge how big a readership the books have had. *Hand on the Sun* was deemed "significant enough" to get published by Penguin in the early 1980s (McLoughlin, 2006a) and to become a "'set text' for literature examinations in English schools and colleges" (120), but is now out of print and *Kilo* was published by a smaller, Northern publishing house and has not benefitted from the publicity that bigger publishing houses can provide. It is thus very difficult to tell how much audience the books have had and how widespread the stories they tell have been. Even *Bradford*

*City of Dreams*, shown on primetime TV on the BBC did not get the pre- and post-showing newspaper coverage that a more controversial show like *Make Bradford British* did just a year before. It may have been trending on Twitter, but it appears that in the national press, only The Guardian covered the programme (and that was online, in their blog section – not a main news story) (Mir, 2013). In terms of the culturally dominant storylines about Bradford in the British popular culture, the above begs the question of whether a counter-story actually exists or if the sources I have mentioned are "isolated, individual, localised acts of rupture." (Bamberg, 2005)

## 3 – Explanations for the formation of a dominant narrative

In this section, I look for clues as to why a specific image of Bradford has taken hold and been reproduced. I explore North-South cultural politics, which make it easy for the population to find confirming evidence of the negativity of Bradford. I then look at the politics of multiculturalism, which form part of the context in which a story about Bradford has been created. Finally, I consider the power of the media in defining newsworthiness and creating an agenda of what is a compelling story.

## a – North-South cultural politics and prejudice against the North

Here, I explore how a "matrix of attitudes" (Russell, 2003: 50) towards the North has formed over centuries and how this forms a context for the development of a story of Bradford. According to Helen Jewell's work (as cited in Russell, 2003), "representations of the North as bleak, damp, grimy, ungrateful and uncivilised are easy to find and [...] have been present from at least the fourteenth century and possibly earlier." (Russell, 2003: 51) More positive images of the North, linked to its scenery and pre-industrial times especially, can be found (Russell, 2004). However, with the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, the image of the North was overwhelmingly negative and crystallised as such. It has endured since then and notably has been reinforced by jokes about the North used both by insiders and outsiders (for a detailed study of representations and place of the North in national culture since 1840, see Russell, 2004), despite occasional emphases on more

positive elements of Northern British identity (for example, hard-working, funny, welcoming, and committed to politics (Russell, 2003; Bainbridge, 1984).).

Attitudes towards the North are also informed by a class identity and prejudice as the North has become associated with the working classes, whose harsh living conditions in the industrial North have been portrayed in such works as Gaskells' *North and South* (1855) and Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). According to Shields, the North as the land of the working class became defined as an "Other" from the South. He writes about the "North" that it is "an invention cast as the foreign 'Other' of the socially constructed orderliness of the British nation centred around London." (1991: 218) Again, this sense of otherness has persisted from the industrial revolution to more recent times. For example, although the "riots" or disturbances in 2001 happened in only a few locations, they became dubbed the "northern riots," thus defining "racial tension as a northern problem" (Russell, 2003: 50) and in the process stigmatising and othering the North as the prime location of Britain's contemporary social ills.

It is in this context of specific national attitudes towards the North that the national storying of Bradford must be understood, and the city's othering can be located in the continuation of long-term cultural politics in the UK linked to phases of industrialisation and deindustrialisation. Within a story of the North defined from the South, Bradford was not always used as a symbol for the North, and cities like Wigan, Sheffield and Liverpool were more often the target of Southern prejudice (Russell, 2003). However, this changed with the wave of deindustrialisation of the late 1970s and 1980s, which quashed the working-classes and their way of life. It was then that Bradford was singled out amongst Northern cities and stigmatised as a bleaker place within the bleak North (Russell, 2003) and started attracting writers and journalists. The accounts they produced tended to repeat "the Southerner's prejudices about the gloomy and unhealthy North of England." (Schmid, 1997: 173) Through such constant reporting, Bradford became the convenient symbol of Northern and class struggle and stories about Bradford that confirmed stereotypes

of "grim Northern city," mobilising long-established cultural ideas of the grim North spread. Easy to mobilise stories affirming the decline of the city provided confirming evidence of the condition of the North.

## b – Politics of multiculturalism and prejudice against ethnic minorities

Bradford became singled out amongst other cities also due to its large "Asian" population (Russell, 2003; Schmid, 1997). Here, I investigate the influence of politics and national discourse about multiculturalism on the national story about Bradford.

According to Gould and Qureshi (2009), there is a British historical narrative within which a national identity is defined by and closely linked to issues of national and international power of the UK. They write "an official collective sense of national identity [was] forged over the period of colonisation, and surviving into the post-colonial era" has set "the standard paradigms of identity and power" in Britain (2009: 12). However, this mainstream British historical narrative does not sit comfortably with local histories of "Asian" migration and settlement in the UK, which challenges the idea of shared values and national identity attached to the nation state. Thus, a tension emerges between the idea of multiculturalism "as a vision of peaceful coexistence, where members from different ethnic backgrounds accept each other's value systems and ways of life" (Schmid, 1997: 164) and the reality of the integration demands that the idea of Britishness is linked to the official British narrative, as it relies on unity around a mythical white culture associating Britishness with whiteness, "understatement, civilized discourse and respect for reason." (Kureishi, 1986: 166) Such attitudes have been particularly dominant in the "New Right" movement (Kureishi, 1986), which took hold in the 1980s of Margaret Thatcher and endured, and stories around the Honeyford affair and the Rushdie affair can be understood in relation with this discourse. They reveal the changing relationship between "host" and "immigrant" communities, as the latter become more settled and established, and more politically assertive. As such, they are remembered not necessarily for the specific facts of the case, but more as symbolic markers of a cultural change, specifically a cultural change that

threatens the "host" community. It is in this context that journalists and commentators travelled to Bradford and assessed the situation in the city against this myth of a national identity. As Schmid writes, "When English travellers through England describe their country they usually consciously or unconsciously present a specific construction of Englishness, some sort of belief in a national identity. The realities of the England that a travel writer finds are structured around the England for which he is looking. In this context, a foreign community necessarily serves as a contrast," (1997: 176) which is why Bradford tends to be othered due to its large "Asian population." With the spread of the New Right discourse, "discourses of otherness coincide with discourses of Englishness." (Schmid, 1997: 164)

If the focus was already on the nation-state before the 2001 riots, it became even more so after the summer of 2001, especially as this was closely followed by the attacks of 9/11. The riots surfaced fears that cities like Bradford had been "taken over" by an ethnic minority, which played into wider fears about changing demographics and identity in the UK. In terms of discourse, this translated into the idea of failure of multiculturalism and the agenda of community cohesion. In the political sphere, for example, the Cantle report (2001)[24] speaks of the level of segregation as being higher than the authors had imagined, so much so that they claim people in the cities affected by the rioting in 2001 live "parallel lives." (9) They observed poverty, unemployment, and resentment between communities. To a certain extent, they framed the riots (in Burnley more than Bradford) as a drug crime (Alexander, 2004). But they also framed them in terms of deprivation and disaffection. However, their suggested solutions focused more on "community cohesion" through interaction between communities, than on dealing with other underlying issues such as unemployment, thus locating the reasons for the riots in the failure of communities to live together. According to Alexander (2004), the

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[24] The Cantle Report is the result of an investigation by the Community Cohesion Review Team, led by Ted Cantle and established by the Home Secretary at the time of the 2001 riots. The task of the review team was "to seek the views of local residents and community leaders in the affected towns and in other parts of England on the issues which need to be addressed to bring about social cohesion" (Cantle, 2001: 1) in the wake of the disturbances.

Cantle Report and the Denham Report (2001), another Home Office report following the "Northern" disturbances, put the emphasis on young men, and present them as criminals, which "reflects the ongoing process of the criminalization of Asian youth and their increased visibility in the criminal justice system." (542) As such, the official reports into the riots also sanctioned the conservative story of young Muslim and Asian men as pathological and culturally dysfunctional (Alexander, 2004), which to a certain extent shows that the blame for discord between communities lies with them. From this analysis, the community cohesion agenda was created, which was heralded as the solution to finding a national identity that all citizens could identify with in the UK (Burnett, 2008). Rather than advocating the inclusion of various cultures, the concept of community cohesion moves away from the idea of multiculturalism towards a more exclusive way (Bleich et al. 2010) of dealing with ethnic minorities. This is evident, for example, in Norman Tebbit's comments following the London bombings in July 2005. In 1990, Margaret Thatcher's cabinet minister claimed that "A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? ... Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are?" (Tebbit, as cited in Andrews, 2007: 202) Following the 7/7 attacks on London, he claimed that multiculturalism was undermining British society and that "a multicultural society is an impossibility." (Tebbit, 2005 as cited in Andrews, 2007: 203) More recently, the British Prime Minister David Cameron criticised state multiculturalism for preventing the creation of a strong British national identity (BBC, 2011). In this context, Bradford became a prime site for rolling out community cohesion as it appeared its "Asian" population needed "fixing." Thus, not only was the city othered, but it was also recruited symbolically in support of the political discursive position on the failure of multiculturalism, which reinforced the image of the city as contested.

## c – Newsworthiness and power relations in popular media

Considering that violence (Spare, 1998), negativity (Galtung and Ruge, 1965), conflict and relevance (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001) are amongst the news values that can determine whether a story is going to make the headlines, it is perhaps

unsurprising that these elements characterise the coverage of events in Bradford over the years. The city has suffered from the general tendency towards reductionism and sensationalism in the popular media. Indeed, in its recent inquiry on press standards and practices, Lord Leveson has criticised the practice of "sensational and unbalanced reporting in relation to ethnic minorities, immigrants and/or asylum seekers" (EIN, 2012) in parts of the press. Bradford, with its large "Asian" and immigrant population, has certainly experienced such sensationalist reporting in which the representation of events such as the riots in the media become more significant than the events themselves (Russell, 2003).

In addition, the stories about Bradford are often constructed by outsiders occupying various social positions who come in for a short period of time, leave the city and report to other outsiders on what they have seen. The profile of the travel writers who came to Bradford and confirmed stereotypes of northernness and otherness is telling in this respect. Beryl Bainbridge was a prolific and award-winning author, Hanif Kureishi a "cosmopolitan Londoner" (McLoughlin, 2006a: 126), Dervla Murphy a "white, bourgeois, middle-aged, Irish woman" (McLoughlin, 2006a: 126) and Bill Bryson a best-selling American author. Nowadays, it is the "essentially middle-class industry" (Manzoor, n.d.) of television, with decision-making powers located in the South of the country, which sends cameras and journalists to Bradford to document the life in the city and perpetuate a similar story to that of the travel writers. This necessarily impacts on the story of Bradford told at the national level.

## 4 – Implications of the existence of a dominant narrative

Before considering the implications of the existence of a dominant narrative about Bradford, I would like to remind the reader that beyond the stories and images of the city, the realities of living in the city are complex and multiple, and include real challenges of living in a place that has faced a great loss of industry. Although Dunbar's portrayal of the city reached a wider audience and as such became part of the popular culture, I want to highlight that contrary to many of the other stories I

explored in the chapter, her voice is that of an insider. As such, she reminds us of the very challenges that the city faces. Malik's tale (2010) was also an insider story, in which she shares her own experience of racism and segregation in the city, again affirming the complex issues confronting Bradford. The stories and discourses about Bradford are therefore not "simply distortions." (Munck, 2003: 14) Rather they can reflect some of the conditions of life in the city. Then, we need to go further than just looking at popular culture and explore the resonance of these dominant stories within individuals' stories. This will be the focus of Part Two. For now though, I would like to focus on a range of implications of these dominant stories for Bradford specifically in the national imagination.

The first implication of the existence of a dominant narrative is that there is a readily available recognisable story about Bradford in the national imagination. It is a simple story in which complexities tend to have been ironed out. As it "sticks" in the national imagination, it is easily summoned to interpret future events. Also, it leaves little room for alternative stories to develop. This is especially so as there may be little interest for alternative stories, as the seemingly low national interest in the BBC programme *Bradford City of dreams* indicates. In the case of the image of the North, Russell (2004) has noted that there was little interest on the part of outsiders and insiders in believing that the region may have changed.

A second implication, as pointed out throughout the chapter, is that the stories construct Bradford in terms of its distinctiveness from other cities in the country (McLoughlin, 2006b). The city is othered in many ways due to its characteristics, and this process of othering is reinforced by the stereotypes in the readily available national story of Bradford (Russell, 2003). In particular, the orientalisation of Bradford's "Asian" population is common (Schmid, 1997) and contributes to creating an idea of Bradford as an "exotic" place (Schmid, 1997: 177). Nowhere is this more visible than in the volume in which Kureishi's travel account is published, in which Bradford stands as a subject of travel writing along with faraway places such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba and China. But the city is also othered in

relation to its loss of industry. The identity of Bradfordians themselves seems limited to an unemployed, unsuccessful underclass destined to failure. This is not to deny that Bradford as a city and Bradfordians as its inhabitants have not faced or are not facing some serious economic challenges due to deindustrialisation. Rather, it is the choice of Bradford as epitomising this story for the nation which is interesting.

Thirdly, in the dominant story, Bradford's identity tends to be constructed negatively as a place of struggle. For example, the city is constructed as a contested urban space in relation to its "Asianisation." As other cities in the UK like Leicester are synonymous with successful multiculturalism (Herbert, 2008) and pride within the community (Cantle, 2001), Bradford has become over the years the symbol of tense and conflictual "race relations." It is telling that a TV show like *Make Bradford British*, although broadcast in 2012, mentioned the segregation and division of communities, and the 2001 riots but failed to draw attention to the successful peaceful protests against the English Defence League, which took place in the city centre in 2010. Like in other dominant storylines about the city, the narrative of "Asianisation" constructs Bradford as a place of difference, resulting in an "othering" of the city. Through this narrative, the complexities behind immigration are ironed out and the "Asian" group tends to be homogenized (Schmid, 1997), which means that stereotypes, simplification and amalgamation, notably between ethnicity and religion, are rife. The story has also fuelled the resentment within White working-class communities, whose identity seems threatened by the settlement of immigrants, reinforcing the identity of the city as a contested urban space.

## Chapter Conclusion

To conclude, I first want to highlight that there is no "definitive" dominant storyline, and remind the reader that this chapter is the result of my analysis and interpretation of a small selection of documents and sources amongst the many available about Bradford. Although my own observations concur with those of

others in the academic literature, it is possible that presented with the same evidence, different interpretations could be offered. Indeed, this has been the case about Bradford before as I will explore in the next chapter. In addition, although I have argued that the sources I chose belonged to British national popular culture, "It is [...] impossible to measure the exact impact of these representations upon the city's image – not all will have reached large audiences – or to gauge how a visit to the city or a little critical reading might challenge or defuse them" (Russell, 2003: 66) or for that matter reinforce them. There can also be debate about what gets included under the contested term of "popular culture."

Overall, we have seen in this chapter that it can be argued that there is a set of familiar narrative tropes which when weaved together form a culturally dominant storyline about Bradford in British culture, which has emerged and grown in the national consciousness mainly since the 1970s. But what is the place of the negative story of Bradford in the national imagination and in the story that the UK tells itself? Each aspect of this storyline reinforces the others in telling a negative story about Bradford, portrayed as a city of difference and division, othering and problematising the city for the rest of the country in the process. There was little evidence of counter-stories emerging within the national culture. The ones that did emerge, as in *Bradford City of Dreams*, did not seem to attract the same level of attention as the negative stories and gain their currency, except perhaps amongst Bradfordians themselves.

# Chapter 4: Academic tales: Storying Bradford in academia

## Introduction

There is a vast body of academic literature on Bradford, spanning several decades (at least since the 1970s) and many academic disciplines (from ethnography to sociology, economics and health studies for example). Accordingly, academic research is another public source of knowledge on Bradford and as such deserves some attention here. As research interest in the city has increased over the years, academic research has become an intrinsic part of the city, so much so that certain areas are considered to be over-researched (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert, 2008). Academics have the power to tell stories about Bradford, so how do they story the city? What are the academic stories of Bradford? What do they mean for representations of the city and for its identity? In addition, theoretically, there is an argument that academic stories feed into popular culture (see for example Alexander, 2004) but also that as researchers, culturally dominant storylines frame how we can think about the issues that we research (see for example Andrews, 2004b). Another reason to look at academic stories is that we might expect them to be more objective and detailed, freer of some of the influences that shape other forms of knowledge (as discussed in the previous chapter). So, not only has there been a lot of research conducted in Bradford, but we can hypothesise that the nature of this research might generate a different view. What knowledge is academically produced about Bradford? What is the relationship between the academic and popular stories? To what extent do the academic stories about Bradford concur with or challenge the common sense stories? The objective of this chapter is to address these questions. In the first section, I look at academic stories as a source of knowledge about Bradford and argue that they have contributed to the story of Bradford in a specific way. In the second section, I explore some examples of academic stories that either concur with or reinforce the culturally dominant storyline, but also complicate and challenge it.

# 1 – Academic stories as a source of knowledge about Bradford

## a – Overview of research in and on Bradford

First of all, I argue that academic stories have contributed to the story of Bradford. There has been academic research conducted in Bradford since as early as the 1970s, with five documents published on the city. It increased gradually in the 1980s with eleven noted publications, before augmenting rapidly in the 1990s and 2000s with over two hundred publications about the city by then.

In terms of the themes treated, all but one of the academic papers published in the 1970s (Cater and Jones, 1979; Dahya, 1974; Le Lohé; 1979 and Saifullah Khan, 1977) are concerned with the "Asian communities," in particular the Pakistanis that have migrated to Bradford. They generally concern patterns of settlement of the migrants and their way of life in the "host country," with Le Lohé's chapter (1979) looking at a political aspect of the settlement of immigrants. This trend is carried through in the 1980s, with ten out of the eleven academic sources presenting research on the "Asian communities," be it at large (Mawby and Batta, 1980; Batta and McCulloch, 1981; Cater, 1981; Campbell and Jones, 1982) or specific groups (e.g. Pakistani women in Afshar, 1989; Muslim women in Mirza, 1989 and Bengali Muslims in Barton, 1986). Within this focus on "Asians," three themes dominate: crime, housing, and young people. In addition, two studies are concerned specifically with two events that marked Bradford in the 1980s: the Honeyford Affair (Halstead, 1988) and the Rushdie Affair (Appignanesi and Maitland, 1989). By the 1990s, Bradford appears to be a fairly highly researched area, with no less than 53 academic articles or books and 26 reports looking at it. The main themes are multicultural relations (a notable change in language as previously, academic and political writing had talked of "race relations"), health, housing and young people. Again, most of the research still focuses on ethnic minorities, in particular those from "Asia."Interestingly, a religious approach complements the so far dominant ethnic one, and within research on "Asian" communities, the theme of Islam comes through strongly. In addition, the research on the "Asian community" is mainly around health, drugs, housing, crime and domestic violence, with apparently little

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research on similar topics within the white community. This is not to say that there is a hidden agenda on the part of researchers. Admittedly, the "Asian" population of Bradford is large and faced with some specific challenges. However, I would like to draw attention to the apparent lack of comparative dimension of the research on the city. Other minorities like Ukrainian immigrants and the Jewish community that have settled down in the city only attracted a limited attention and the "white" majority population has not been researched much either. Clearly, there are other topics of interest in the city too as some pieces of research investigated issues such as food consumption (Jamal, 1998) and Bradford as a city of peace (Rank, 1997). Even more research was carried out in the city and District in the 2000s, with over 200 academic articles, chapters, reports and books being published that used the city as their topic or case study. The main themes are the 2001 riots, community cohesion (with another notable change in language as the term "multiculturalism" is used less), young people (with a third of the documents on youths concerning Muslim youths), the economy (including regeneration and unemployment), housing (with a focus on segregation), crime (with half of the sources on crime concerning the "Asian communities") and health (with, again, a third of the research on health conducted within the "Asian communities"). Less researched but occasional topics were Eastern European migrants, British Asian women, community participation and accounts of lived experience.

To sum up, research on Bradford has increased so much over the years that there is now a large body of literature about the city. Within this corpus, there has been an overwhelming and prolonged focus on "Asian communities," with more or less attention to deconstructing this homogenizing category. As a result, ethnic and, with a focus on "Asian Muslims" since the 1990s, religious approaches tend to dominate the literature to the detriment perhaps of gender, class and other possible analyses. In addition, although the focus on the "Asian communities" is justified to an extent as it is the largest ethnic minority within the city, it is to the detriment of research on the majority "white" population but also other migrant

communities. It gives us an idea that Bradford tends to be constructed in a specific way within academia, which is what I will explore in the next sub-section.

## b – Constructions of Bradford in academia

To explore how Bradford has been constructed in academia, I first turned my attention to issues of authorship and audience of the academic stories. Then, I looked at the terms of the academic stories themselves with regards to their portrayal of the city.

First, in trying to understand the academic constructions of Bradford, I questioned who researches the city. Having seen that there is a tendency in the national popular culture for outsiders to come to Bradford and write or communicate about it, I hypothesised that a similar situation may be found in academia. However, my observations were inconclusive. Generally, there is not enough biographical information available about researchers in academic publications, especially in terms of their positioning in relation to the city, to draw conclusions in terms of an insider/outsider framework. Academic affiliations are generally acknowledged, but they often change and do not provide any consequential information for my purpose. In addition, although I knew some background information about some of the authors who wrote from within Bradford, it was still not enough to infer that there may be insider and outsider academic stories of Bradford. My conclusions on academic authorship about Bradford are limited but still useful, in that it is clear that there is both a local and national interest in Bradford, which has led to much academic debate about the city. Bradford, then, is on the academic agenda and perhaps it suffices to note that academics, as authors of stories, have taken an interest in the city.

In terms of audience, I used the documents I analysed in depth to question who the academic stories were directed at. The audience tends to be a national academic and specialist one, with most research being published in discipline specific journals or in academic books. As evident from the databases though, over the years local

organisations have commissioned more and more research about the city. The outcomes in form of reports can be seen to have perhaps both a national and local audience, but also a less academic one and to be directed for example towards practitioners in the various fields concerned and local authorities beyond Bradford. However, beyond these audiences, it is difficult to know how much readership academic research receives, and to what extent it is disseminated into mainstream society and impacts on it. It remains that within the academic storytelling arena, knowledge on Bradford has been produced by academics, at least for other academics and potentially for a wider audience.

Concerning the terms of the stories, I sought to investigate how Bradford has been constructed in academia. I observed that in the research published in the 1970s, 1980s and to a certain extent 1990s, Bradford tends to be chosen as a case study for research, without an emphasis on the uniqueness of the city. Rather, it is often studied alongside other cities such as Birmingham (e.g. Dahya, 1974 and Rex and Samad, 1996) and Leeds (e.g. Rees et al., 1995). Then, how is the city represented when it is chosen as a case study? It is striking that academics tend to extensively use some of the same narrative tropes as the culturally dominant storyline to describe Bradford in their research. There are frequent comparisons between the rich industrial past and the contemporary decline of the city, and to the large "Asian" community, regularly presented in problematic terms. Perhaps the prejudices against the North of England do not transpire as much, although this changes after the 2001 riots when the term "northern disturbances" is commonly used in academia, like in the national dominant story, to refer to the street disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford. In the wake of the riots too, Bradford "the case study" becomes more often Bradford "the site of research in and for itself."[25] It seems that following the 1995 and 2001 riots, the premise for research in Bradford is that the city can be constructed as a contested urban space,

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[25] See for example, Bolognani, 2007; Bühler et al., 2002; Burnett, 2008; Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Kundnani, 2001; Webster, 2003. In some cases, this is due to research being commissioned from within the city, for example by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. See Athwal et al., 2011; Gill, 2008 and Hudson et al., 2011

which is affirmed and reaffirmed regularly when research is conducted there, as admittedly in my own research. Although this is justified to an extent, it is limiting to understand Bradford only in those terms. As research dwells on the social tensions in the city, there is a risk that it stigmatises the city and its inhabitants in the process (Jezierski, 2004), as for example with the "Asian" communities that are the focus of so much research in Bradford, notably around segregation and the criminalisation of "Pakistani" and "Bangladeshi" youths. As Burnett writes, following the 2001 riots Bradford became the "archetype of the 'parallel lives' theory" (2008: 41) and the research destination of choice for exploring related issues. Admittedly, much research rehearses the culturally dominant storyline as a starting point for investigations in Bradford, thus establishing it as a common idea. However, not all research then goes on to confirm the dominant narrative. Some research does, but some goes beyond and positions itself as counter to the dominant storyline. I will explore this further in the next section.

## 2 – Elements of relationship between academic and popular culture: Tension between reinforcing and contesting the culturally dominant storylines

Having established in the previous section that the academic stories have contributed to knowledge on Bradford over the years, the objective of this section is to explore how they have done so. I question how the academic stories have evolved over the years and how they have concurred or contested various elements of the culturally dominant story. As we have seen in the previous section, there are many themes of the academic stories that resonate with the national dominant story of Bradford and looking at them all would be beyond the scope of the thesis. Instead, I explore three examples which illustrate various aspects of the dynamic interplay between academic tales and popular stories: tales of deindustrialisation; research on the 2001 riots; and stories of segregation and self-segregation.

## a – Academic tales of deindustrialisation

In the 1970s, the story of deindustrialisation is only in its infancy. Dahya (1974) and Saifullah Khan (1977) paint a picture of an industrial Bradford, still considered at the time Dahya writes as "the centre of the wool textiles industry." (1974: 78) Both focus on the economic migrants who have settled in the city. In particular, Saifullah Khan (1977) points out how they have replaced the indigenous workers in the low-skilled jobs of a declining industry and adds that due to their employment profile, they are particularly vulnerable to "economic cut-backs, inflation, and unemployment." (76) In addition, she argues that the economic crisis at the time had an impact on community relations, as she writes that the recession, "as always in times of unemployment and restricted growth, increased resentment against easily identifiable minorities." (73) This is a significant story as it rehearses some familiar narrative tropes: unemployment affecting the minority communities, white resentment, and industrial decline, all fuelling social tensions.

The story that emerged in the 1970s seems to solidify and crystallize over time. Mawby and Batta (1980) emphasise the lack of investment in modernising the textile industry and how that led to transforming the state of unemployment in the city. In particular, there is an observation that unemployment will touch young people, especially from the migrant communities, more. As in the 1970s, the authors comment on the high vulnerability of the migrant communities to the recession and deindustrialisation. Mawby and Batta note the "general economic disadvantages faced by the Asian communities" (1980: 51) and "their vulnerability in times of recession" (1980: 57) due to the types of employment they held, which led to precarious self-employment. Cater (1981) adds that the position of high unemployment or under-employment places the "Asian community" in a certain position in the local housing market. According to him, "White communities" who could afford it have left the inner city housing market, and "the overall picture presented by the sample is of Asians occupying and purchasing the lowest priced property even within the inner wards." (1981: 173)

Just as in the previous decades, there are references in several documents I analysed for the 1990s of the industrial grandeur of Bradford, but compared to perhaps the previous decades and the popular culture discourse, there is also a recognition of the complexity of the situation in Bradford. Interestingly, Lewis (1997) and Schmid (1997) remind us that the industrial past of Bradford is intrinsically linked with immigration, and that therefore the phenomenon is not new. This is a story seldom remembered in the wider story of Bradford, especially in the culturally dominant discourse, which tends to focus on the post-Second World War immigration that came from the New Commonwealth countries. In Lewis and Schmid's narrative, immigration to Bradford is a constant throughout the years since the Industrial Revolution, with a change in the location of origin of the immigrants (Irish and German-Jewish during the 19th century, as opposed to South Asian in the second half of the 20th century). Still, deindustrialisation and its consequences in unemployment, poverty and deprivation in the city dominate the economic references in the documents I have used here. Generally, unemployment is seen as disproportionately affecting the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities who live in the inner-city (Bowes et al., 1998; Ratcliffe, 1999; Rees et al., 1995; Lewis, 1997; Rex and Samad, 1996) for now familiar reasons: racial discrimination (Ratcliffe, 1997 and 1999), vulnerability to recession due to the nature of employment (Ratcliffe, 1997; Samad, 1992), and high rates of long-term illness and disability (Ratcliffe, 1999). Some of the consequences of this trend in unemployment include a lack of mobility for the population concerned. As the middle-class leave the deprived-inner areas, the concentration of deprivation in those areas becomes greater (Burlet and Reid, 1998). Another potential consequence advanced by author Marie Macey (1999a) is an increase in violence due to unemployment, poverty and deprivation. Then, Samad (1992) and Ratcliffe (1997) draw attention to the increase in hostility and resentment against ethnic minorities due to deindustrialisation and thus an increase in the competition for jobs and resources. Beyond these broad trends, a number of researchers remind us of the complexity behind the presented reality, especially in terms of a non-homogenous "Asian" community (Lewis, 1997; Rees et al., 1995). Amidst a great

emphasis on the various "Asian" communities, only Ratcliffe (1997) mentions the poverty within White households and suggests that issues in the District may have more to do with poverty than ethnicity.

In the 2000s, with the 2001 riots in particular, the issue of ethnic deprivation became more pressing (Amin, 2002; Husband, 2000). In a number of the documents I analysed, the idea that "Bradford is one of Britain's most deprived areas" (Dwyer et al., 2006: 10) is repeated time and time again, and though it is occasionally acknowledged that "white communities" also suffer from it (Bühler et al., 2002; Webster, 2003), the emphasis is largely on the "Asian communities" being deprived, especially "Pakistanis" and "Bangladeshis" due to specific vulnerabilities linked to deindustrialisation in the city (Burnett, 2008; Carling, 2008; Kundnani, 2001;Phillips, Davis and Ratcliffe, 2007; Singh, 2002). Links between deprivation and "segregation" and between deprivation and low cohesion in relation to the "Asian" communities were frequent too (for example: Dwyer et al., 2006; Hudson et al., 2011; Phillips, Davis and Ratcliffe, 2007; Singh, 2002). Overall, the storyline of deindustrialisation since 2000s is very much the same as before and continues to contrast the present state of deprivation and deindustrialisation of the city of Bradford with its wealthier past (for example, Kitchen, 2007).

In summary, I would argue that generally, the academic tales of Bradford tend to concur and reinforce the emphasis of deindustrialisation found in the national dominant story. It has done so over the years in several ways. First, reminiscence about the wealthy past of the city without mentioning the challenges that may nuance this story are frequent, resulting in a sharp contrast being made between "rich past" and "poor and declining present." Second, although as with the culturally dominant story I recognise that these narratives are not just fictions, they emphasise deindustrialisation, lack of investment and deprivation so much that they leave no room for any alternative stories, which as we will see in the next chapter, may exist. As a quick example, before the current recession, Hunter (2005) described the economy of the District in more nuanced terms than commonly done

in the academic literature, as he acknowledged some of the unemployment challenges but also noted a rise in national and international investment in the city. Finally, although I do not challenge the "truth" of poverty and deprivation within the "Asian communities," I suggest the deindustrialisation storyline in academia reinforces the culturally dominant storyline as it focuses almost exclusively on the "Asian communities" at the detriment of "white communities" and other migrant communities. Doing so, it makes the "Asian" population more visible than the other ones, which contributes to problematising this particular section of the Bradford population.

## b – Challenging the dominant discourse? Academic perspectives on the 2001 riots

Throughout Chapter Three, I highlighted elements of the national popular and political stories that were articulated to make sense of the 2001 riots not only in Bradford, but also in Oldham and Burnley. Briefly, the events were explained in cultural terms, where any "culture" other than the "mainstream white culture" was problematic. The "identity" of "Asian-Muslim" was deemed "in crisis," especially that of the younger generation considered to be "torn" between the "culture" of their parents and that of their country. Young "Pakistani" men were placed at the heart of the riots (and sometimes as the cause of them), and in the process were largely criminalized as a group. The solution articulated nationally resided in the promotion of the community cohesion agenda, which focused on interactions between estranged communities. In this context, Bradford became a case in point for the analysis of the riots and the local implementation of community cohesion policies, especially as the Ouseley Report came out just after the street disturbances in 2001 and painted a negative picture of community relations in the District.

However, a number of academics challenged the national interpretation of the riots, often taking Bradford as a case study. Providing their own analysis of the situation or of the implementation of the community cohesion agenda, they

constructed counter-stories to the culturally dominant interpretation of the riots and events that ensued. In order to demonstrate this, I will look at a couple of examples. First, Webster (2003) and Burnett (2008) have been particularly critical of the neo-liberal application of community cohesion. Burnett in particular investigated what this had meant for Bradford specifically. He criticises the "(racialised) emphasis on culture and identity" (2008: 37) in the analysis of the riots at the detriment of the structural constraints which led not to "self-segregation" but "forced segregation." In the case of Bradford, he argues that the community cohesion agenda was merged with "neoliberal visions of regeneration" (2008: 43) focused on improving the city centre through promoting an image of diversity reliant on cultural stereotyping and a set of values coherent with community cohesion. As a result, activities demonstrating "integration" were valued and encouraged but other social and religious activities rejected (Burnett, 2008). It meant that community cohesion was more of a façade used to improve the external image of the city but fell short of dealing with the daily realities of life in the multicultural city. Secondly, academics also questioned the focus on identity linked to the nation-state as articulated in the concept of community cohesion. In the wake of the riots, there was "unashamed questioning of the cultural and national allegiances of British Muslims," (Amin, 2002: 959) implying that the "Asian Muslim" identity was somehow at odds with the "desired" (white) British identity. In their research on citizenship and identity amongst Bradford Pakistanis after the riots, Hussain and Bagguley (2005) actually found a strong identification with Britain amongst this section of the population, especially the younger generation. They emphasised the various layers of identity that individuals mobilise and argued that Britishness can encapsulate a range of experiences. Overall, they found that the realities of citizenship and belonging they encountered in Bradford differed from the political responses to the riots and the articulation of citizenship as conceptualised in the community cohesion agenda. Importantly, they also point out that such articulations of citizenship and belonging are not specific to Bradford, despite the spotlight the city finds itself in. It reminds us that despite the unique

place that the city has come to occupy in the national psyche, some of the situations it faces are not specific to it – an assertion rarely made about the city.

Moreover, some alternative stories have also been constructed in the academic sphere. Alexander (2004) argues that the "Asian" and "Muslim" presence in Britain is marginalised and silenced. In the wake of the riots, at least two studies in Bradford (Alam and Husband, 2006; Gill, 2008) contributed to rectifying this by setting out to "give a voice" to British Pakistani Muslim men. For example, Gill's report starts as follows: "There is a great deal of media and policy attention given to Muslim communities in Britain. Yet the debates about community cohesion, citizenship and belonging within policy often fail to address the complexities of male Muslim identities and their everyday experiences. *Lessons from West Bowling Youth Initiative* addresses this." (2008: 1) Hence, from the very beginning, he identifies a pitfall of the dominant story and positions his research in contrast to it. Similarly, in the introduction to a book based on his research with Husband, Alam (2006) writes of the "absence of the normal, everyday voices of those who are usually talked about" (20) in the national debate. As a result, he suggests that the stories in the book "may function as alternatives, possibly even counter-narratives, to the prevailing direction of current debates." (2006: 20) Like Hussain and Bagguley, Gill (2008) emphasises the various layers of identity of the young men he worked with, including aspects seldom mentioned such as artists and sportsmen. His interest is in the negotiation of these various identities by the young people. Interestingly, he shows how his participants told stories of deprivation, social exclusion, crime and conflict, but also of belonging and attachment to their locality. As a result, he shows how the various aspects of life in Bradford can co-habit in its inhabitants' narratives. Like Alam, Gill reveals an alternative story of life in Bradford: "While the changing nature of local communities and issues of diversity do present challenges, these are often negotiated as a normal part of everyday life." (2008: 32) Then, this is an interesting example of how academic work can provide a more critical and nuanced perspective on the story of Bradford.

Considering the stories explored in the previous chapter though, the question of the extent of the influence of these more critical voices remains.

## c – Competing academic storylines: The case of segregation in Bradford

Research into ethnicity and housing has been high on the academic agenda since the 1970s. At first, recurrent themes concerned housing generally, more precisely the quality of housing, housing tenure, and the locations in which people lived. However, a closer analysis revealed a complex relationship between the academic discourse and the public discourse and the prominence of the "segregation debate" in both, which raises the question of its place "in the Bradford narrative." (Malik, 2010) I investigate the evolution of this discourse throughout the decades and consider the academic contribution to the story of Bradford in relation to this storyline.

I analysed two documents published in the 1970s (Dahya, 1974 and Saifullah Khan, 1977). They belong to a corpus of sociological research published in the late 1960s and early 1970s on community, "race relations" and housing (Rex and Moore, 1967; Burney, 1967; Daniel, 1968; Krausz, 1971), which tends to privilege racial discrimination as an explanation for the characteristics of settlement of new migrants in the United Kingdom. Generally, there was an observation of the segregated nature of the pattern of settlement and there was debate about the causes of this pattern. Strikingly, Dahya (1974) puts a great emphasis on the importance of ethnic and cultural preferences in the decision-making process of Pakistani migrants. In doing so, he highlights agency in their choice of where to live, both in terms of location and type of housing. Although he does not use the term itself, it could be said that his thesis is one of "self-segregation" of the Pakistani community, as particularly visible in this quote from the conclusion of his chapter: "during the early stages of their settlement, the immigrants voluntarily segregated themselves because they realized that their economic goals were more likely to be

achieved through conformity to group norms, by means of mutual aid and under austere living conditions than through dispersal into wider society" (1974: 111).

Saifullah Khan's account may be "a more nuanced account of Pakistani 'ethnicity' than Dahya's" (McLoughlin, 2006a: 114), issues of structural constraints and agency are still central to her argument. Interestingly, at this point in the history of academic stories, segregation is accepted as a "reality" (Saifullah Khan writes of "the geographical concentrations and relative social encapsulation of the Mirpuri population" (1977: 72) and Dahya of "the immigrants' concentration in the inner wards of towns and cities." (1974: 78)), not just in Bradford but across the country in the cities where the migrants settle, and there is no negative normative judgement attached to it. Another central characteristic of the writings of both authors is the emphasis on the heterogeneity of the migrant population, despite the fact that they both chose to focus on the Pakistani community. Doing so, they warn of the dangers of simplifying the situation and of reification of culture, and demonstrate the complexity in researching migrant communities.

Published in 1981, John Cater's chapter presents the author's findings on "the impact of Asian estate agents on patterns of ethnic residence" in Bradford (163). It is noticeable straightaway that this research lacks the degree of complexity regarding the diversity of the "Asian communities" that was emphasised in the previous two papers. However, the author situates this piece within the same line of research on "West Indian and Asian residential segregation in several British cities" (163), and also in the "choice/constraint framework" (163). Like in the 1970s, segregation is accepted as a reality, and the author aims to give his own take on the choice/constraint debate by investigating the role of estate agents in the access to property. Structural constraints, discrimination, inequality and unemployment are important themes that come up throughout the article, and so are concentration, segregation and cultural preference. In the end though, the author concludes to the

predominance of structural constraints on the choices of the "Asian community."[26] Finally, despite not coining the term "white flight," the author describes the phenomenon. The originality of the document is that it compares the work of Asian estate agents to the one of white estate agents, and raises the issue, although briefly, of the patterns of movement of the white population. It may not have been a great concern in the 1980s story, but was to become one later on.

In the 1990s, the overwhelming focus in the analysed documents (Bowes et al., 1998; Ratcliffe, 1997 and 1999; Rees et al. 1995; Simpson, 1993 and 1997) is on unemployment, poor quality housing, overcrowding and deprivation amongst ethnic minorities rather than with segregation and motivations or constraints in settlement patterns. These themes are still present, and the debate between structure and agency is still underlying much of the writing, but generally they are much more in the background than what we have seen so far. Analyses in terms of poverty, economic constraints, social exclusion and areas of stress dominate the academic tales. Carrying on the trend from the 1970s and 1980s, the focus is mainly on ethnic minorities. Admittedly, white communities are mentioned. However, the main emphasis is on the "South Asian communities," even if other ethnic minorities are mentioned by some of the authors, like the Chinese community, and the Black African-Caribbean communities. There are variations in the attention to language and the recognition of the complexity within the "Asian communities" too. Beyond ethnicity, the category "Muslim community," denoting the recognition of a religious identity, appears for the first time in the readings I focused on. Interestingly, only the Muslim identity is mentioned here, when we could have expected to read about the Hindu or Sikh communities, or even the various Christian communities. For the first time too, the setting for the research is often described as the "District," as opposed to the city with its pre-1974 boundaries. The City of Bradford Metropolitan

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[26]"Although they [Bradford's Asians] may exercise some degree of choice, they do so within a severely constrained physical and financial framework. In the past the resulting patterns may have accorded with the desire of the Asian household to minimize expenditure on housing resources to facilitate remittances or savings. However, the decreasing significance of the homeland, linked with the rapid emergence of a second generation of residents, is progressively increasing the desire of Asian households to participate freely in a wider housing market." (181)

District is much bigger than the county Borough of Bradford, and this has consequences on the research conducted in the area, especially that which relies on statistics and figures. It makes it all the more important to be sure of what the authors talk about when they use the term "Bradford" by itself. As in the previous decades though, the inner city is still high on the list of preoccupations of researchers.

As for the 2000s, I explored eight documents and found that segregation was back at the top of the agenda, being tackled in all eight pieces of research, along with self-segregation (a concern in five of the documents), concentration or clustering (in four documents), with issues of terminology, measurement, and causality being dealt with. A first observation is that there is a great emphasis on statistical studies of segregation, with all studies but Phillips, Butt and Davis (2002) and Phillips, Davis and Ratcliffe (2007)[27] defining segregation in quantitative terms. However, the authors draw our attention to the multiple ways of defining segregation, even in quantitative terms, which raises the issue of definition and emphasises the importance of terminology in this debate. Indeed Burgess et al. (2005) measure segregation with the Dissimilarity Index and the Isolation Index, and so does McEvoy (2009). However, Johnston et al. (2005) draw our attention to the multiple aspects of segregation: unevenness, isolation, clustering, concentration, and centralisation. Crucially then, they highlight the question of the agenda of the researcher. Indeed, in their article, they used the same data as Simpson (2004), who focused on the Dissimilarity Index, and analysed it using a different index, the index of isolation. They state: "Neither index is right and neither is wrong: it depends on what you want to measure" (1223) and, after coming to a very different conclusion to Simpson's on segregation in Bradford, argue that "[in] almost all areas of social science, the results of a piece of research depend on how the questions were phrased and how the relevant concepts were defined and measured. This is certainly the case with ethnic residential segregation, a concept that has a number

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[27] It is unclear from the text of the papers whether they are both based on the same piece of research.

of (at least implicit) definitions and a series of quantitative measures linked to them." (1226-1227) This contributes to showing that statistics are not neutral and that terminology is key. Using the same set of data, one study concludes that there is no segregation in Bradford (Simpson, 2004; 2005) and the other that there is (Johnston et al., 2005).

The issue of definition is all the more important that in the 2000s, the term "self-segregation" becomes preponderant and a key component in the arguments over racial segregation. In the debate, there tends to be an assumption that segregation and self-segregation exist, and that they are negative phenomena, which has led to the formulation of policies in order to deal with this matter (see the community cohesion agenda in official reports: Cantle, 2001; Denham, 2001). However, in his article, Carling (2008) warns that the two phenomena are not comparable (he states that one is a statistical concept and the other a social process) and argues we must ask whether self-segregation is a good or a bad thing. He continues, "to the extent that it is deemed a bad thing, what steps might be taken (by the public authorities or other agencies) to alleviate it." (2008: 555) But this implies that self-segregation is not intrinsically negative, as has been portrayed in the public discourse post-2001 riots. A similar observation can be applied to segregation, and echoes Phillips, Butt and Davis' case (2002:10): "Segregation is not a bad thing. It is the continuing association between black and minority ethnic segregation and deprivation that needs to be broken." In their paper, they use the less negatively connoted word "clustering" to talk about the phenomenon, and finish their argument with this point: "Clustering has many positive attributes, which are evident through extended social and cultural relations, social support, a sense of belonging and well developed community infrastructures. Indeed, research has shown that South Asian populations have strong communities, and exhibit many of the attributes of social cohesion that the Government has sought to promote in the aftermath of last summer's riots." (2002: 10) Equally, Carling (2008: 560), commenting on Phillips et al.'s research (2002), states "that the preferences for remaining with members of the South Asian group among South Asian respondents

[...] derive from both positive factors – "community links, traditions and a sense of ethnic identity" – and negative factors, especially perceptions of external hostility," shedding light on the complexity of the concept. It is interesting at this point to reflect on what we have seen so far. Indeed, the theme of segregation is recurrent throughout the decades. However, it is only really in the 2000s that a strong negative connotation seems to appear, which is worth highlighting as it has had implications in terms of policy making. As Phillips et al. (2007: 219) argue, "Representations of minority ethnic clustering as a problem were evident in some academic and policy analyses in the 1990s [...], but they emerged as a central tenet of the reports into the northern disturbances and policy initiatives on community cohesion."

There are two aspects to this particular academic storyline. On the one hand, there is a storyline within the research on housing and ethnicity which concurs with and reinforces the culturally dominant storyline that makes a negative normative judgement on segregation. This side of the academic debate tends to affirm the existence and worsening of segregation and self-segregation of "Asian" communities in Bradford, emphasising the agency of those communities in their decision-making processes. Especially in the 2000s, it is in line with the political discourse post-2001 riots in the UK as segregation is considered normatively "bad." In this version of the story, "bridging capital" or interaction with others is privileged to the detriment of "bonding capital" or support networks within communities. Bridging capital is hailed as "good" and bonding capital dismissed as "bad" and detrimental to the good functioning of society (Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera, 2010). On the other hand, there is another storyline which positions itself as counter to the first one, as exemplified in Simpson's writing (2004). He specifically uses the word "myth" (2004: 668; also see Simpson, 2005) to describe the academic story closest to the culturally dominant storyline. In the structural constraints against agency debate in relation with settlement patterns, the segregation counter-story supporters such as Phillips et al. (2002) and Simpson (2004; 2005) Simpson et al. (2009) remind us that self-segregation in particular implies a choice,

and does not take into account "historical context, structural inequalities, deindustrialisation, racial discrimination, far right political activism, racist attacks and police harassment" (McEvoy, 2009: 15). In terms of the quantitative measures of segregation, Simpson denounces that "self-segregation refers to individuals' residential choice, but the overall measures make no distinction between voluntary and enforced segregation. It may be that what is observed for a group is the result of another group's actions, of the economics of the housing market or indeed of the institutional framework of estate agents and social housing through which the housing market operates." (2004: 668) In addition, there are calls for more nuances and inclusion of alternative viewpoints in the understanding of segregation and self-segregation. Simpson et al. (2009) denounce the overemphasis of the academic and popular stories on ethnic and religious segregation. They suggest that using a class analysis may be just as appropriate. According to them, "To focus on ethnicity and faith, and propose that they are something inherently dangerous and damaging, arguably says more about contemporary politics than it does about those who live within and across contemporary social spaces." (2009: 2000) It remains that despite such critique, the terms of the various storylines of segregation and self-segregation are rooted in ethnic differences and focus yet again almost solely on the "Asian" communities.

## Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have established that academic stories are undeniably a source of knowledge about Bradford. It transpired that the main themes that were of concern for researchers in relation to Bradford were health, multiculturalism and race relations, crime, youths and deindustrialisation and the economy of the city and District. Within those themes, I observed a tendency to focus on "Asians" at the detriment of other communities. Still, I also saw how Bradford is a terrain of academic contestation. With some of the academic themes and focus on the "Asian" communities overlapping with the culturally dominant storyline, some of the narrative truths established through research seemed to reinforce the image and story of Bradford as a contested and negative urban space. However,

alternative stories were also articulated, thus complicating and challenging the images of division of the city. Still, with reinforcing and countering stories both constructing Bradford as a contested urban space, and through academic stories countering each other, there is little room left for alternative constructions of the city that focus on other aspects such as Bradford as a city of peace (Rank, 1997) or the city's "rich history of community action." (Darlow et al, 2005: 35)

# Chapter 5: Local stories as a site for contestation?

## Introduction

In Chapter One, I drew attention to the fact that "culture" is not just the national culture and is a fluid concept. Having looked at the national stories about Bradford, I noticed a number of stories emerging from a more local level, and which seemed to be telling a different story. In this chapter, I explore local stories of Bradford which tried to reach a national audience and have an impact on the national cultural story of Bradford. In a first section, I investigate how a local story of Bradford has been produced both systematically through several tourism campaigns sponsored by the council and disparately through punctual efforts by various organisations across the District. I question the terms of a local story and its relationship with the national dominant story. It transpired that some of the local stories surfaced as a reaction to the reductive and negative national story of Bradford. However, the second section looks at the local context within which the stories were developed and acknowledges the range of challenges faced by the district. In section three, I consider the tensions between promoting a positive image of the city and dealing with the more challenging sides of life in Bradford, and the implications of this on the city.

## 1 – Local stories: In search of a different identity

Upon examining stories that have been produced locally over the years, it became evident that a positive collective story emerged as a reaction to the long-established and continually reinforced negative and reductive story of Bradford.

### a – Tourism

Over the years, the council's tourism campaigns have been one of the most systematic and sustained initiatives which has created and promoted a positive collective story of Bradford. With the decline in manufacturing in the 1970s,

promoting Bradford as a tourist destination was first seen as a regeneration project. In the early 1980s, the council launched its "Bradford. A Surprising place" campaign and started offering themed short breaks to the city (e.g. "In the Footsteps of the Brontës;" "Industrial Heritage;" and later "Flavours of India" (See Russell, 2003).), for which it won a number of tourism awards in the early 1980s. Beyond regeneration, the idea was also to promote the city as a place of culture and heritage to counter the widespread image associated with the North of England of grim and industrial cities (Trueman et al., 2004) and to celebrate the cultural richness brought by the diverse communities who lived in the city.

The next council-led campaign, "Bradford Bouncing Back," was especially commissioned to tackle the "image crisis" of Bradford in the 1980s, as recalled by Tom Clinton who headed up the campaign. In an interview for the local radio (Archer, 2011), he explains that the campaign came on the back of the fire at Bradford City Football Club and the debate around Ray Honeyford's remarks. He assesses the situation as follows:

> I think Bradford... At the time we did Bradford Bouncing Back it was an image problem. At the time I set up this campaign and got it organised, there were people who were ashamed to say they were from Bradford. There were more criticisms of the campaign in the T&A when it launched than anybody saying 'yeah go for it.' [...] That image is all over the UK. Bradford had this connotation, of the most negative things in many, many ways.

For the council, Bradford needed a different image and this new image would come from the locality but it would be addressed to both a local and national audience. The campaign was launched in 1986 in an attempt to both regenerate the economy of the District and produce a different story of Bradford. The emphasis was again on culture and heritage, and a bear was chosen as the symbol of the campaign, specifically because it had nothing to do with Bradford (Archer, 2011), implying an attempt at breaking away from the old stereotypes of the city. But the campaign was put to an end in 1988 due to funding cuts. It was followed by a range of other

initiatives in the 1990s, including "Shout for Bradford" and "Bradford Breakthrough," which was backed by the Chamber of Commerce (Greenhalf, 2003). They were all trying to deal with the negative image of the city and to attract investment to the city. It is difficult to judge how successful they were in terms of changing people's attitude towards Bradford. Despite facing much cynicism, Bradford Bouncing Back was deemed to have had a positive impact on the city and it was estimated that it generated over £1 million worth of publicity having spent £142.000 (Clinton, 1991). In terms of stories, they contributed to limiting the negative press about Bradford. For example,

> During the 'Bouncing back' programme, the National Bus Company was persuaded to drop an item in a brochure that read 'from the surrounding hills one can look out over the rooftops of hundreds of Victorian slum dwellings', and a leading charity to remove the caption 'Bradford, 10th March 1985' from a full page newspaper poster highlighting child poverty via a haunting picture of chronically deprived two year old. (Russell, 2003: 55)

There were certainly some "victories" in terms of promoting the rich industrial past of the city, with the classification of Saltaire as a World Heritage Site in 2001 and the cultural heritage of the area, with Brontë-related tourism being particularly successful (Russell, 2003). Such a systematic approach allowed the council to contribute to articulating a positive collective story of Bradford centred on the city's rich industrial heritage and cultural landscape. However, how far-reaching the positive counter-story has been is uncertain.


## b –Dispelling myths and creating alternative stories

Along with the sustained effort from the council to put together a tourism strategy to attract investment and change the image of the city, there have been a number of disparate efforts, or specific campaigns and work which can be seen as a reaction to the national negative story and/or the articulation of a more complex story than the reductive dominant story, whether consciously or unconsciously. Here, I look at

a range of cases relating to different domains: community work; arts and culture; and business.

A first example of an alternative story being created in terms of community relations, and with a local audience in mind, is paradoxically linked to the 1995 riots. Researcher Kirsten Sparre (1998) argues that contrary to the expected position taken in the press in relation notably to news values, the *Telegraph and Argus* can be seen to have contributed to a peacemaking effort through its coverage of the events of June 1995, and then, I argue, to the production of a different story about Bradfordians. Amidst the national and regional coverage focused on the "simple formula of police against youths," (12) Sparre argues that the *Telegraph and Argus* took the view of calling for peace through its headlines rather than subjectively fuel the conflict with polarising articles (Sparre, 1998). In particular, there was a conscious effort from the editor to "avoid reporting in a manner that could set White people and people of Asian-heritage against one another." (1998: 13) In addition, rather than repeating and disseminating a narrative similar to the regional and national newspapers of devastation in the city and loss of trade, the *Telegraph and Argus* developed a story of "overcoming the riots." (16) This meant that locally, an alternative story emerged – one of a city pulling through despite the damaging events, which was different to the doom-laden story as told in the national newspapers.

A second example in the domain of community relations can be found in the body of work produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). Since 2004, it has pledged millions of pounds to development work in Bradford to improve communities across the District (JRF, n.d.). From the onset, the JRF has not had the improvement of Bradford's story in its objectives, nor the intention to counter the dominant narratives. Rather, the Foundation's work tends to be more concerned with understanding and dealing with material factors linked with poverty. However, I argue that a by-product of their work has been the creation, conscious or not, of a more complex story of Bradford than the one found in the pre-existing dominant

narratives. With the projects they carried out in the District, they state they have had a range of outcomes, two of which particularly interest me. First they have "highlighted the common hopes and experiences of people with different ethnicities, religions and cultures living in Bradford." And second, they have "showcased the voices of people who are not usually heard, including Muslim women, young Muslim men, people from different backgrounds living on traditionally white working class estates."(JRF, n.d.) I suggest that in the process of reaching those outcomes, the JRF has contributed to putting forward an alternative narrative to the dominant story, especially because it has surfaced stories of hope and stories of groups that tend to escape the public and academic gaze. I will illustrate this point through looking at some of the films they have produced over the nine years they have been involved in Bradford. First, I consider the "Women working towards excellence: OurLives" project, which "used digital media to explore the views and experiences of Muslim women in Bradford." (JRF, 2009) A series of films came out of this (as well as a book and a website), which explore the women's identities, work, education relationship and seeks out their experiences and opinions. Through the project, the women had a space to express themselves and talk about what is meaningful to them. Bearing in mind the context of the filmed interviews they took part in which was necessarily influenced by the agenda of the JRF project, subjects such as families, work, faith, connection to Britain and media representation appeared to be relevant to them. In particular, the women expressed a deep attachment to Bradford despite its challenges (JRF, 2009). In terms of a local story of Bradford, the films put forward the voices of a group seldom heard both locally and nationally – Muslim women. In particular, they are represented as articulate, educated, entrepreneurial and successful women, a portrayal that does not match the stereotypical media representation of Muslim women as weak, stay-at-home, and under the control of the men in the family. Although in the films, the women do not talk about Bradford itself, the films still contribute to developing a different story of the city – one in which women have a part to play. Another JRF film worked on the same premises, collecting this time Muslim men's voices (2009). In the film, a handful of Bradfordian Muslim men are

interviewed and discuss their (Muslim) identity, hopes and concerns, but discuss life in Bradford much more than what was shown in the film about the women's voices. Their testimonies reflect a strong connection to the city, as a home that cannot be replaced, as a place that has given them opportunities, a safe place to bring up children. One of the interviewees tells us that "There's a lot of positive things in Bradford. I believe that Bradford truly is a model for a lot of places to look at and see how communities live here, and how communities get on here, and how communities interact here. I'm proud to say I am from Bradford and that is my home." (2009) The idea of Bradford as a model of success is particularly interesting as both in the culturally dominant story and in the academic tales, the city is associated with and studied for its problems. Although there is mention of "Paki-bashing," and "gang culture," the overall story told by the men is a positive one, with narratives of Bradford as a home and a land of opportunity that are otherwise seldom heard. Although there are other films produced by the JRF, I will look here at just one more, *Voices from Holmewood*. It is particularly interesting because it presents the views of the residents on a local estate as they are asked about the ethnic changes in the area, generational differences, feeling connected and the future. There, the residents seem to negotiate both the difficult realities of life on the estate (people not mixing, youth gangs, fear of crime) with its more positive sides (with a range of neighbourliness anecdotes for example and for some a new-found feeling of safety), which reminds us of the complexities of life in the urban space, beyond the negative and reductive storyline. Overall, these three films are important in creating a local story of Bradford as they showcase the voices of a range of communities that are not often heard in the popular and academic discourses.

In the domain of the arts and culture, I analysed a half-hour long Bradford-made documentary entitled *Neighbourhood noise* (2010) available online about the Bradford music scene. It is interesting in two respects. First, it tells the story of Bradford's association with music, which does not resonate with the dominant storyline. In the artists' opinion, Bradford has a small but vibrant music scene. As it

is small, they explain there is a "community spirit" within it, with a support network between the different acts. Although it may not be famous in the mainstream music industry, they talk of a particular venue[28] in Bradford and describe it as nationally famous, even an iconic place, for punk music in the UK. Through their testimonies, the artists establish that there is a tradition of music making in Bradford, and they seem to identify with a certain Bradford music heritage. Second, the artists interviewed appear to negotiate the reductive and negative story of Bradford through showing awareness of it and countering it, notably through their art. Although they generally recognise that the city is facing some very real social challenges, which provides them with material for their work, they are also very critical of outsiders claiming they know the city. For example, an interviewee explains: "Bradford certainly suffers from awful stereotypes, maybe not the music scene but certainly the white community, led by its constant name-dropping by people like Nick Griffin, which really fucks me off, whenever he says 'just go over to Bradford, ask the people there'. We *are* the people of Bradford, and I think we'd all tell him to go fuck himself." As a response, they are keen to denounce this attitude and share the view that Bradford is a "positive place where people get along," as in the lyrics of the song "Stay" by the band La La and the Boo Ya interviewed for the documentary:

> It's a beautiful place
> It's a beautiful place
> So don't believe
> That it's a shit hole
> It know it's hard
> When a nation thinks so
> What do they know?
> They don't know owt...

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[28] They refer to the 1in12, an anarchist club which functions as a social centre and a music venue.

In the business domain, I look at the Positive Bradford initiative, which started in 2011 and has been working to showcase the city's positive attributes mainly in terms of business, but also of community life, for the past three years with a yearly celebration called "Positive Bradford Day." This social enterprise started with a group of Bradford businesses who reacted to a direct experience and "physical" materialisation of the negative and reductive dominant story of the city. In 2011, they wrote to the Social Enterprise Support Centre:[29]

> Positive Bradford came about when a group of business people who were giving their time for free at a Dragons Den type event were greeted on the morning of this event by a news item on GMTV. They stated that Bradford was one of the worst cities to visit based on a Travel Lodge report.
>
> Sick of being constantly pulled to pieces in the media, these individuals decided to do something to make a difference and kick back!
>
> A steering group was formed in June 2010 with people from all sectors invited to help firstly change the perception of the people of Bradford and to start looking at highlighting all the positive aspects of Bradford versus the negatives. (Vincent and Kader, 2010)

In their letter, it is clear how they intend to construct a counter-story to the negative dominant narrative. Their first initiative was to organise a "Positive Bradford Day" in September 2011 at which Bradford businesses would be represented and the city celebrated through dance, music and "positive messages from Bradford people [...] shown on the big screen in Centenary Square." (Vincent and Kader, 2010) The day was a success with around 8,000 people attending (The Bradfordian, 2013) and has been attracting more people every year. In terms of the story the Positive Bradford initiative has been creating since its inception, it is interesting to look at the language on its website. On the first page, we read

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[29]A Leeds-based "organisation delivering support services to the social enterprise sector." (www.sesc.org.uk)

> Positive Bradford are a coalition of people involved with the
> business, arts, community and education sectors across the
> district. We think it's time to stand up and speak up for the
> Bradford we love. We were born here, grew up here, or chose to
> make Bradford our home. (Positive Bradford, n.d.)

This view challenges several of the stereotypes that can be found in the reductive dominant narrative. First of all, the idea that Bradford is place that is "loved" is unusual. In the dominant story, it is a place to be left, and as Clinton noted, that its inhabitants tend to be ashamed of. Rather, here, there is a sense of pride in the city that is striking, and also an implicit claim that contrary to common sense, Bradford attracts people and others in the country have made a conscious choice to settle there. The "About" page is telling too. It is divided into four categories: arts and culture; business; community; and education. The first sentence of the business section reads: "Bradford has a history as a city of opportunity." Again, in terms of Bradford's economic history, that is not the angle generally chosen to describe Bradford. Rather than focusing on the aspect of "wealth" of the city in the nineteenth century, the Positive Bradford website goes beyond that and writes of the innovation that took place in the city, using positive language to describe the city's economy. In addition, although it mentions the disappearance of the wool industry (it is worth noting the neutral language that is chosen to describe it: "Although the wool industry is no longer the city's economic engine"), it also claims that the city "remains a district characterised by a spirit of opportunity and entrepreneurial innovation." In the community section, it includes a statistic seldom used to describe Bradford: "a 2010 survey conducted by Lloyds TSB insurance ranked Bradford as the city with the most neighbourly values in the UK." Others characterise Bradford as a "crap town" (Okolesie, 2013) but Positive Bradford challenges this view by constructing its own story of the city and mobilisation using positive language to talk about the city.

## 2 – A complex context: acknowledging the challenges facing the District past, present and future

Whilst the council has been trying over the years to promote a different image, and perhaps also identity of the city as a touristic destination for its rich industrial heritage and arts and culture, it has also been struggling with some of the very challenges that the city faces and where some of the national dominant story is rooted. In this section, I explore how the council has dealt with these challenges, past, present and future, by tracing the evolution of multicultural policies in the city. Then, I look at various council analyses of the state of the District to draw a picture of the material challenges brought to the city by deindustrialisation. To do so, I look at a range of documents produced by the council, but also at academic analysis of council-related events throughout the years.

### a – Multiculturalism

Undeniably, one of the challenges facing the District has been in the field of "race relations." The academic literature is particularly useful to explore the evolution of "race relations" in the city. Lewis (1997) notes how race relations policy was virtually inexistent until 1981, when the council published a "race relations plan" (132) committing the council to "positive action" (132), whereas the Bradford Commission Report (1996) sums up the evolution of the policy as follows: "we observe a process of initial indifference, followed by official response to agitation, followed by meaningful activity, followed by tokenism, which in turn appears to mask indifference." (98) A rather negative statement. Generally, "race relations" policies in Bradford get mixed reviews. Echoing the Bradford Commission Report, Samad qualifies the Council's policy as "reactive rather than proactive." (1997: 246) Rex and Samad (1996) explain that

> ...despite these various [policy] initiatives over the last decade,
> no effective monitoring of Council policies was established and
> many of them were not implemented. [...] A report [...] found
> that there was no accurate Council wide date covering
> recruitment and selection by ethnic origin, and that it was

difficult to find out what was actually happening in a number of

areas.

Similarly, Samad writes about the All-Party Race Relations Group, the Race Relations Subject Committee and the Multicultural Education Support Group established in the early 1980s, that "These were consultative bodies set up with the aim of transforming ideas into policies, but implementation was still very much dependent on political will. No independent procedure was established to ensure that council practices conformed to policies." (247) In addition, the council was found guilty of racial discrimination on several occasions, "exposing the lack of policy implementation procedures in the areas of multiculturalism, anti-racism and equal opportunities. The council had lost five cases in six years in industrial tribunals, on the grounds of racial discrimination. [...] Bradford City Council was the first ever organisation to be charged with being a persistent discriminator, and it has lost more cases on racial grounds than any other employer in the UK." (Samad, 1997: 252) But racism and racial discrimination were not confined to the council, and several authors noted how it was a problem in employment in the city, in particular for members of the "Asian" community (Bradford Congress, 1996; Taj, 1996), which inevitably would create extra challenges for the council: "Discrimination on racial grounds emerged strongly from people's descriptions of their lives and experiences. That unacceptable fact stands as a daily challenge to all people who influence the decisions and life of this city." (Bradford Metropolitan Faith in the City Forum, 1995: 40) Matters were made more complicated for the council by a white backlash to their race relations policies, which weakened its commitment to "race relations" (Samad, 1997; Bradford Congress, 1996). According to the participants interviewed for the Bradford Commission Report, this led to a fear of discussing racial issues in the city, making the issue taboo.

A particular aspect of policymaking that some of the authors looked at is that of multicultural educational policies, which has been a "field of contention between the local education authority and the different religious and ethnic minorities." (Lewis, 1997: 135) The first issue of contention noted by several authors (Bradford

Congress, 1996; Lewis, 1997; and Samad, 1997) was that of the bussing of "Asian" children in the 1960s. It led "Asian" parents to mobilise along ethnic lines against the policy as they considered it was assimilationist. It was eventually revoked in 1979. In contrast with the negativity and lack of implementation highlighted above, in terms of educational policies, several authors emphasise the areas in which the local authority innovated. According to Samad, after the revocation of the bussing policy, "The local authority experimented in the late 1970s with mother-tongue teaching in the schools and this, along with other activities, brought it acclaim as a leader in multiculturalism." (1997: 246) Lewis adds, the "LEA memoranda, under the new educational banner of 'multiculturalism,' sought to accommodate special needs of religious communities within the framework of a common curriculum." (1997: 135) However, multicultural educational policies also created a white backlash,

> ... polarising race relations and weakening the city council's commitment. The first of these issues was the controversy over providing halal meat to schools. The BCM [Bradford Council for Mosques], led by Sher Azam, had rallied the Muslim population into organising a series of demonstrations and school boycotts on this issue. The granting of this concession provoked a counter-agitation, however, led by animal rights groups infiltrated by National Front activists. (Samad, 1997: 247-248)

The council also got into trouble on grounds of racial discrimination: "Further embarrassment was to arise when the council's Education Department was accused of discrimination for failing to include Manningham in the catchment area of any school. It survived the High Court action but the case left its image tarnished." (Samad, 1997: 252) Finally, both Lewis (1997) and Taj (1996) conclude that despite the multicultural policies, children from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities still underachieved compared to their Indian, white and Afro-Caribbean colleagues in the 1990s.

After the 1995 riots, the Bradford Congress was appointed to carry out an inquiry into the implications of the events for the District. It was "a voluntary organisation of representative Bradford institutions which includes the city council." (Bradford Congress, 1996: 1) and it produced a report highlighting its findings in 1996. It talks of the "fear" and "shock" (1996: 1) that the events had instigated, and several authors pointed out that young men within the "Pakistani community" got blamed (Bradford Congress, 1996; Taj, 1996). Interestingly, the Bradford Commission report (1996) emphasises that it was a minority that had looted. Explanations of the street disturbances mainly focused on the relationship between the "Asian" youths and the police. Although Taj (1996) calls for an acknowledgement of racist behaviours within the police force, Bradford Congress (1996) claims that this was only a superficial cause for the riots. Still, much was written about the mistrust within the "Asian communities" for the police, perceived as harassing, oppressing and racially discriminating against these communities (Bradford Metropolitan Faith in the City Forum, 1995; Rex and Samad, 1996; Samad, 1997). The events of June 1995 increased these feelings, due to the police's handling of the situation. In the light of the above, and considering what we have explored previously in terms of local multicultural policies, especially educational policies, it is perhaps appropriate to conclude here by quoting Taj, who suggests where the causes of the riots may lie:

> The underlying causes, which are in turn the most important ones of all are not allocated in either the 'Asian' communities or in the Police Service. The true underlying cause is the continued and accelerating failure of the city's institutions, services and businesses to meet the reasonable needs and maintain the loyalty of far too large a proportion of the 'Asian' communities. (1996: 7)

In an interesting move to recognise the complexity within "communities," language was explored as an issue in such documents as the Bradford Commission Report and Taj's supplement to it. For example, according to the authors of the Bradford Commission Report (Bradford Congress, 1996),

One of the obstacles to discussion about, and between, people of different ethnicities is the inadequacy of the descriptive language available. [...] The shortcut term, 'Asian', is nowhere more misleading than when it is used in conjunction with the equally short cut term 'culture'. There are many cultures from the Indian subcontinent substantially present in Bradford and many other cultures, too. None is fixed and static, and none is homogenous. (5)

Denouncing the widespread simplification in the descriptions of the different groups of immigrants in Bradford, they provide their own account of the various populations inhabiting the city, according to where they are from (Pakistan, Pathan, Bangladesh, Gujarat, East Africa) and their religions (Hindus, Muslims with an emphasis on the various stands of Islam, and Sikhs). Taj also emphasised the multiplicity of the "Muslim" communities (1996: 7).Similar observations are made about the use of the term "community". The Bradford Commission Report authors deplore the use of the word: "A phrase that has been used so frequently in our investigations that it has become tedious is: '*the* Community'. Its meaning appears to depend entirely on the context, and when the phrase '*the* community' is used it can be difficult to know just what is meant, since most people belong to more than one community." (Bradford Congress, 1996: 92) They add "very rarely do people think of Bradford as one community" (92). However, these observations from the Bradford Commission are in contradiction with some of the strategies adopted by the council itself, which Samad (1997) draws attention to. In exploring the relationship between the District council and the various immigrant communities to the city, he explains,

The city council's strategy of co-opting the religious leadership at the expense of secular organisations was based on an understanding that it was religious institutions that were best placed to control the younger generation and to stop them from rioting on the streets. This rather simplistic understanding of 'the community' was based on a political rationale. Out of all the

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> possible identifications that could be recognised and legitimated,
>
> such as 'black', 'Asian', 'Pakistani' and 'Mirpuri', the council sages
>
> selected Islam,... (248 – 249)

... which would have an impact on community relations in the District.

In tracing the evolution of community relations in the city, I end this sub-section by looking at the Ouseley Report,[30] which was published, by chance, just after the 2001 riots. It had been due to be published some months before, but the release of the review of community relations in Bradford, commissioned by the Council, was delayed. When it came out, it attracted a lot of media attention, partly because it coincided with the 2001 riots in Bradford. In broad terms, the review team observed that relations between communities were deteriorating and that "communities are fragmenting along racial, cultural and faith lines." (Ouseley, 2001: 6) As a consequence, segregation in schools has become visible, and a sense of "us versus them" grown, leading to a lack of understanding between communities, leading in turn to segregation and people retiring to their "comfort zones," (Ouseley, 2001), a polarisation of community life that, post-riots, Ted Cantle would describe as communities living "parallel lives." (2001: 9) The apparent preference for living with people from similar background was labelled by Ouseley and the review team as "self-segregation" (2001) and the term was then widely used in reports following the riots. Adding to this point, the Ouseley report argues that "different communities seek to protect their different identities and cultures, discouraging and avoiding contact with other communities and institutions," (2001: 10) which has led to the district being divided and certain communities not feeling part of "the Bradford identity," (10) suggesting that there can be one identity that all Bradfordians can identify with (unlike the conclusion of the Bradford Congress

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[30] I could have explored the Ouseley report along the Cantle and Denham reports in Chapter 3 as it played a part within the national discourse on multiculturalism at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, I chose to treat it here as contrary to the other two documents, it is solely focused on Bradford and goes into a lot more detail into the specific situation of Bradford. Also, it was commissioned by the council for the local authority to use. Finally, the review team was made of a group of people who were either from Bradford or worked there so with, presumably, a different positioning towards the city than Denham and Cantle.

just five years before). The report identifies resentment between various ethnic communities as a barrier to such identification. Indeed, it observes that "regeneration processes require communities and neighbourhoods to compete on 'deprivation-deficit models' which, in effect, means that to succeed requires arguing that your area is more deprived and dreadful than the next." (2001: 11) This risks creating self-fulfilling prophecies on top of resentment linked to competition for resources between communities. Overall, the report paints a dark picture of the state of multicultural relations in the District. It appears that the various race relations policies put in place by the Council have failed. This conclusion, with the language of "us versus them," resentment, comfort zones, segregation, racial discrimination and divisions reinforces the construction of Bradford as a contested urban space. It is worth noting that the authors of the review make a point to explain that what they write about comes from Bradfordians themselves and that the positive and negative points presented throughout about Bradford were talked about by the people of Bradford themselves (the ones who were interviewed in the process, to be more precise). There is a long list of the people who were invited to contribute, and the process of collecting contributions is detailed in the report. Throughout the review however, it is the authors' interpretations that come through rather than the direct voices of the people interviewed. Thus, although a wide range of people are talked about, their direct voices are missing from the report.

## b – Deindustrialisation and regeneration

In terms of deindustrialisation and regeneration, the section on tourism has already highlighted that the economy was a concern for the council from the 1970s throughout the 1980s and in the 1990s. In his paper, Taj (1996) makes the link between poverty and wider negative image. He points out that a by-product of deindustrialisation and poverty is the negative image from which the city suffers, which in turn makes it more difficult for business to attract investment: "The poor state of the area feeds itself. [...] there is no doubt that the image of neglect and marginality deters both investors and consumers" (4) and he reiterates: "Changes in

industries, technologies, markets and trading relationships have posed immense challenges to local businesses. The problems of recession have been compounded by recurring negative images of the area." (12) The Bradford Commission Report adds to the argument that not only ethnic minorities suffer from poverty in Bradford, but a cross-section of the population does: "Poverty is widespread in Bradford. People from various ethnic backgrounds are poor, unskilled, and unemployed, and the socio-economic outcomes are similar to those which affect so large a proportion of people from some of the ethnic minorities." (75)

In the 2000s, council documents tend to be concerned with describing the economy of the District, and they generally draw a negative picture. For example, the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council 2004 report talks of a "weak economy", "employment rates significantly below the national average", "unemployment above the national average" and a "manufacturing industry [which] has declined sharply." (8) Six years later, another report by the District Council makes the same observation about the competitive weakness of the, admittedly large, Bradford economy (2010). One of the reasons for this is that "low skills impact on the district's economic prospects." (2010: 4) Indeed, one of the problems identified in the same report is the low skills levels that characterise the labour market in the city. In addition, "A closer look at the occupational breakdown reveals that the proportion of the working population who are in elementary occupations [...] is very high by national standards – 14.20% compared to 11.33% nationally. In contrast, the 'higher end' occupations are underrepresented in the district with only 24.10% of the working population employed in managerial and occupational occupations." (2010: 23) Another characteristic of the labour market is the high rate of unemployment, which reached 8.9% in 2009 (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010: 14), and tends to affect the youth disproportionately (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010).

Poverty and deprivation, although they both encompass more than economic poverty or deprivation, are explored in various ways in the documents presented

here. The Council reports (2004 and 2010) focus on the portrayal through statistics of the District's deprivation situation. For example, "a third of its [District] population live in the 10 per cent most deprived wards in the country" (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2004: 3) and "Of the 354 local authority areas ranked, Bradford district is the 32nd most deprived. This puts the district in the 10% most deprived local authority areas. On one particular measure – income deprivation – Bradford was ranked as 4th worst in the country." (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010: 24) The statistics also serve to highlight the disparities within the District, which are not often talked about: "Two of Bradford's 30 wards are ranked in the 15% *least* deprived wards in the country (Wharfedale and Ilkley). Two wards – Bradford Moor and Manningham – fall within the 5% most deprived areas nationally, with Bowling and Barkerend and Little Horton wards falling within the 10% most deprived areas." (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010: 24) Further, the 2010 Council report draws a causality link between experiences of poverty in the inner city of Bradford, characterised by "generations of worklessness and consequently [...] low aspirations and expectations" (31) and low cohesion. The author writes "A consequence of this poverty and structural inequality is low sense of belonging, togetherness, and low cohesion. The results from the Autumn 2009 Place Survey highlight the relationship between satisfaction with services, participation in civic life and cohesion. Those satisfied with the area as a place to live are more likely to say they feel a strong belonging (66%) compared to those who are unhappy with their area (28%)." (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010: 31)

## 3 – Implications for the identity of the city

So far, we have seen that an insider positive story emerged as a counter story to the national culturally dominant storyline. We have also observed how insiders themselves have grappled with the evolving challenges facing the District by looking at council policy and reports on multiculturalism and deindustrialisation as they changed over the years. Considering the real tension between the two, what are the implications for the city? What strategies are used to negotiate the tension

between the local positive story and the acknowledgement of challenges? First, I look at the potential for "identity dissonance" (Trueman et al., 2004) in the city and secondly, I explore the potential pitfalls of the tourism campaigns.

The idea of identity dissonance is perhaps best encapsulated in the observation of Jim Greenhalf in relation to the various tourism campaigns in the city, when he writes of "Bradford's failure to live up to its own propaganda." (2003: 130) Trueman et al. (2004) theorise this in terms of identity dissonance, or a gap between the projected or communicated identity (which is not to say that the projected identity is a fabricated identity. Just like the negative story about Bradford has its roots in material realities, so does the more positive story.) and the actual or experienced identity by inhabitants and visitors alike. A range of examples can help us illustrate this point. First, in their research about the various identities of Bradford, Trueman et al. (2004) found that people tend to have a negative visual experience of the city, with the centre characterised by urban decline and dereliction. This is in opposition to the communicated identity of Bradford as a place of Victorian heritage encapsulated in its imposing town hall, the model village of Saltaire, and further afield in Haworth with the legacy of the Brontës. This gap is all the more pronounced that a "succession of improvement schemes that have not materialised because of policy changes arising from continual shifts in political governance," (Trueman et al., 2004: 324) as is currently obvious with the successful recent transformation of Centenary Square into City Park as opposed to the status quo just a few hundred meters away with "the hole in the ground" in the centre where a Westfield shopping centre was due to be built before the recession hit in 2008, and which is yet to materialise.[31]Another example of identity dissonance regarding the city can be found regarding the work of Andrea Dunbar already explored in Chapter Three. Following the success of the film, she was hailed locally by politicians and tourism officers "as living proof of working-class pride and spirit." (Russell, 2003: 59) But on the national scene, Russell observes that "tensions between official

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[31] It was announced in December 2013 that the completion of the site was now going ahead. (Yorkshire Post, 2013)

aspiration and harsh reality were being opened up for scrutiny." (Russell, 2003: 59)

In sum, the various local stories about Bradford point towards an issue around the identity of the city itself. It seems as though Bradford can be one of two things. On the one hand, Bradford is a positive place, an entrepreneurial and creative city with a rich industrial past and heritage but a multicultural city that celebrates its many communities. On the other hand, it is a place struggling with poverty, racism, and competition between various communities. It is as if the city is pulled between each identity, without any room (or very rarely) to accommodate both sides of the story. As Greenhalf asks, "What was Bradford: the multi-cultural paradise as the image enthusiasts made out, or the deeply-divided series of cultural ghettos discovered by the Riot Commission Report and Lord Ouseley?" (2003: 110) Put this way, both stories seem to be mutually exclusive. But does it have to be either/or? Are both aspects of the city incompatible? And what is the relationship between each aspect? For instance, it seems that the problem the city faces in attracting investment hints at the self-fulfilling and perpetuating nature of certain stories that shape its identity. It may be that negative stories are more enduring and harder to dispel, and so it is not just a case of being pulled in two equal directions between a "positive" and "negative" story, but that it is difficult to change perceptions that are so firmly rooted not just in local culture, but reinforced in public stories.

The second implication I would now like to explore is linked more particularly to the tourism campaigns. First, as I presented a range of successful campaigns (at least whilst they were running) in the first section, there were also some failures. The government helped fund a transport museum which closed after only eighteen months in 1997. Similarly, a project exploring religious faiths survived for only seven months before shutting down in 2001. There were talks of a branch of the V&A museum opening in Lister Mills, but that never materialised (Russell, 2003). Moreover, whereas the aim of the tourism campaigns was to improve the city's image and boost the economy, there was no tangible evidence that this had been the case (Greenhalf, 2003; Russell, 2003). Finally, Russell also suggests that some of the campaigns may have done more harm than good to the image of the city by

simply reinforcing some of the pre-existing stereotypes held nationally about it, and about the North of England. As the tourism campaigns attracted publicity to the city, they also exposed it to the scrutiny of the public gaze, which turned out to be a "double-edged weapon." (Russell, 2003: 50)

## Chapter Conclusion

To conclude, we have seen in this chapter that there is evidence of a counter-story to the negative and reductive culturally dominant story of Bradford, articulated at a local level for both local and national audiences. In it, Bradford is a place of culture, heritage, enterprise and creativity. In contrast with the culturally dominant storyline and some of the more impersonal academic stories, the complex experiences of the city's inhabitants are heard directly from them. However, the local historical context which serves as a backdrop for the local stories emphasises the challenges that the city and District have been facing over the last four decades. Celebrations of the various cultures that can be found in the city have been going hand in hand with local political struggles over race relations, integration and community backlash. Concerted efforts to draw investment to the city and efforts at regeneration have also been hampered by persisting local unemployment, deprivation, and low skills levels of the workforce. As a result, from a local point of view, the identity of the city is pulled in two directions as neither facet leaves much room for the other one.

# Conclusion to Part Two

In Part Two, I have explored a range of collective storytelling processes in and about Bradford. My analysis has been content-focused as I have tried to draw out from the collective narratives the various elements that characterise public and collective representations of Bradford. Doing so, and as much as was possible and relevant, I have considered issues of authorship and audiences of collective stories. I have found that there is a great variety of public authors that story Bradford, such as travel writers, the national visual and written media, national and local government institutions, local media and local artists to name a few. Generally, there is a perception that these authors are either insiders or outsiders, but this does not seem to have much bearing on the collective legitimacy of the stories they tell. In addition, there is not a simple equation in which national stories are articulated by outsiders and local stories by insiders. This tends to be the case but such an interpretation must be nuanced, as we have seen with the cases of Dunbar and Alam for example. In academia, there was not enough information on the background of the researchers and their connections to Bradford to be able to advance that they have different interests, approaches and ultimately articulate different storylines depending on their links to the city. In terms of who the collective stories are for, I interpreted the audience as being mainly a national one, even in the case of the local stories. Some of these may have also had the Bradfordian public in mind, but generally they aimed to reach a wide audience, if sometimes specialised as in the case of many of the academic papers.

I have argued that a reductive and negative national story of Bradford, established through a) processes of identity politics concerning the North-South divide and relying on long-held prejudices against the North of England, b) processes of identity politics focused on ethnicity and religion that put the emphasis on identification with the nation-state at the detriment of ethnic minorities in a context of "failure of multiculturalism" and prejudice and moral panics about immigrants, and c) a tendency towards reductionism and sensationalism widespread in the media. All this combined meant that evidence of alternative or

counter-stories in the national imagination were sparse. Having looked at other sources of public knowledge on Bradford, namely academic and local stories, I observed that there is a dynamic interplay between the national cultural stories and the academic and local stories. In each case, I found examples of academic and local stories that either concurred with and reinforced the national story or countered and/or complexified it. In the academic sphere, there were limitations to the challenges though, in that the "countering" academic stories may have been critical of the culturally dominant stories but with overlapping themes and mainly an overwhelming focus on "Asians" and debating issues such as segregation within the framework of the nation-state, they rarely challenged the terms of the stories themselves. The above has a number of implications for the city. The various stories reflect the various material, cultural and political realities that are at play in Bradford. The city faces some real challenges in the wake of deindustrialisation, but it has also experienced some regeneration. However, the various stories as they oppose each other give a polarised view of the city, with on the one hand the national negative image reinforced by sections of the academic and local discourses, and on the other hand some academic stories that give a more nuanced story and local story "compensating" for the negative story with an overly positive story. As a result, the identity of the city is contested along those lines, with a mainly negative story and a positive one and no established alternative beyond this dichotomy. However, beyond the content of the collective stories, it is how they are used and mobilised by individuals that gives them a sense of dominating or countering. This is what I now turn my attention to in Part Three.

# PART 3: Revealing (aspects of) the relationship between individual and collective narratives in/of the contested urban space

Part Two focused on collective narratives and the relationship between various collective stories, in particular the emergence of culturally dominant storylines and counter-stories. I identified the various collective stories mainly through a content-focused analysis, although observing, when possible, how the range of authors situated their own stories in relation to others' contributed to the inquiry. As a result, Part Two provides the context within which I analysed the in-depth interviews I conducted with a range of inhabitants from a selected geographic area within Bradford.

Then, Part Three is concerned with the social world as it appears to these individuals. It seeks to explore how they narrate their experiences of the city and engage in complex negotiations of collective stories. The premise of Part Three is that no story is dominant in and for itself. Rather, it is only relatively dominant. Investigating the individual narratives allows me to consider the extent of the determining power of dominant stories by asking what stories are relevant and meaningful for inhabitants as they construct their own narratives of urban life. Doing so, I aim to address the final sub-research question: to what extent do individual stories reflect, reinforce or contest existing collective stories about the communities they live in? It leads me to consider the relationship between individual and collective stories of place and community.

Like in Part Two, language was problematic. I was reluctant to use pre-imposed categories such as "Asian," "White" and "community," especially considering some of the findings from the academic literature, which emphasise the complexity of identity and belonging. However, some of the participants used them in an unproblematic way in our conversations and some did not. I tried to reflect that in

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relating the discussions, and like in Part Two, I used inverted commas when I used the terms in my own interpretation and analysis.

Part Three is made of three chapters, which all look at individuals' complex negotiations of public discourse. They explore how at times individuals formulate their experiences of the city in ways that may reinforce and contest existing stories, but also complement them with parallel stories that neither reinforce nor contest but construct a different narrative. Chapter Six looks at the themes that were meaningful for participants in their stories and that resonated with the culturally dominant storyline. Decline, crime and immigration were amongst some of the concerns of the residents of the selected geographical area of Bradford, Billesley, but a close inspection revealed that individuals did not merely repeat the dominant story. Rather, it was negotiated and presented in their own terms. In Chapter Seven, however, I investigate the residents' explicit and overt countering of the culturally dominant storyline. As they exposed outsiders' negative images of Billesley, they also affirmed a positive counter-story of the area, which created an alternative identity for the area. In a move in contradiction with some of the stories from Chapter Six, they emphasised the importance of people over place. Finally, in Chapter Eight, I explore stories that were relevant to the participants but that are not necessarily present in the culturally dominant storyline. They reveal how the so-called contested urban space is experienced in different and creative terms as a "natural setting for human life," (Finnegan, 1998: 206) a world of possibilities and humanity rather than a mere place of conflict and restrictions. Beyond the content and construction of the stories though, I also consider and attempt to qualify the agency that is retained by the narrators.

# Chapter 6: Individual stories: echoes with the cultural narratives

## Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explore which stories the participants themselves regarded, explicitly or implicitly, as dominant (Kölbl, 2004). Looking at individual stories, my aim is to ask when the dominant storyline is relevant and meaningful to individuals and what the implications are in terms of the relationship between micro and macro stories. Doing so, I investigate how individuals negotiate public discourses in ways that I interpreted as reinforcing existing stories. Considering the difficulty in identifying the dominant stories specifically because of their nature, the analysis in this chapter tends to be regarding what was relevant and meaningful for speakers in terms of the content of their stories (or what was said). As much as was possible, I try and note what content seems to be unchallenged.

In the first section, I explore how nostalgic stories of community create a backdrop for a story of decline. In the second section, I see how the story of decline is prolonged by the perception of a rise in crime and violence. In the third section, I question how the residents relate to the phenomenon of movement out of the area, before considering the challenges raised by past and present waves of immigration.

## 1 – "Pessimistic tales:"[32] A story of decline

In this section, I explore the participants' feelings of nostalgia and their perceptions of a negative change over time, which combined amount to a story of decline and deterioration of the area.

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[32] Finnegan, 1998: 155.

## a – Stories of nostalgia: a romantic view of the past

Nostalgia, defined as "a sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past," (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013) characterised the stories of individuals about Billesley, no matter their age, gender or ethnicity. Although the speakers themselves did not identify their stories as nostalgic, the content of the stories led me to interpret the positive description of "the past" as such. The repetition of this story was a sign of its relevance to individuals. In addition, the positive image of "the past" was rarely challenged, which points to a meaningful collective story for the speakers. It raises questions about why this particular story was told to me in the context of the interview interaction, what function it may have served for the speakers and what it meant that it was challenged by some of the participants.

Nostalgia was evident in area-specific memories that described a particular way of being as a "community" in Billesley, characterised by harmony and togetherness. In these stories, Billesley is constructed less as a physical location and more as "the focus for social interaction and support." (Finnegan, 1998: 134) As Sophie, a 46-year-old woman, recalls in several instances:

> **First excerpt:** Growing up in Billesley everybody were there, everybody just got on with everybody, doors open for everybody, yeah, it were just one of them everybody played together, none of this your gangs and my gangs... We'd just play hide and seek or – which you don't hear any more of, do you? Yeah, all played together, all races all played together.

> **Second excerpt:** Hide and seek, skipping, football, anything, we did boxing, we all got involved in it together, and then we ended up in the little youth centre, where the cricket ground is in The Local Park now, and we had discos every week. And went up to Fairfax with the youth club during the week, it were, it were just everybody went everywhere together really. All hung around together.

Her observations are echoed by 57-year-old Issam's positive childhood memories (although the age difference between the two raises the question of whether they are referring to the same period in the past), filled with games on the streets and in Billesley, which he contrasts with not seeing children do the same nowadays:

> Well it was, that time was brilliant, we got to learn English, and you sat with all the rest of the pupils as well, dinner time you sat down, we ate all together and all this, and education is the most important part of your life, when you are young. And then I had my mother, step mother, help me, slowly slowly moving on. You know and we used to play together for football and all this, in the streets and everything, churchyards, and now you don't see anybody.

Ilham (50-year-old woman), too, has fond memories of growing up in Billesley, reflecting partly on the feeling of safety, perhaps a sign of the insouciance of her teenage years in the 1970s, but also on the "strong" community feeling:

> Prior to that, we lived in Wichnor Place which, I don't know if you have come across that, it was blocks of flats, lots of flats and I grew up with very good, nice memories. I remember there was high raised flats, we were in the double storey ones like maisonette, they were really nice. And we, I made loads of friends and I remember growing up at that time and I was still at school, I left school in '81 and we had a lot of African-Caribbean in that community and when I was growing up, 16-17, you didn't hear things like drugs or crime, you're young, you don't think there is danger there, you have no idea but my mum will have obviously a different perception of that time and age.

Participants illustrated the sense of togetherness with experiences of connections between people, be it between children and parents:

> **Sophie:** It's like the street we lived on, I mean, you had parents coming out to play with you in them days when we were growing up,

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play skipping or whatever. Your parents always got involved in your activities really.

Or children and "community" role models, rehearsing the story of an ideal community of "local cooperation and joint interaction with neighbours" (Finnegan, 1998: 153):

**Ilham:** So that was a network. [...] And people were known, they were respected you know, because they were the ones who were actually looking out, either Islamically, or culturally they imbedded that in you and made sure you learned those values and morals and you grew up to know about Islam and that was a good thing for them to pass on to us. Even though we lived with Black, West Indian, White, it was diverse, Wichnor Place! It wasn't segregated at all. There was no such thing as separate community or men separate to women, it was all mixed and everybody live in harmony.

But also by support and friendliness, which the interviewees think do not exist so much anymore:

**Issam:** In those times, I don't know how to say, it was hard, because we didn't know English or nothing, but that time you had plenty of love and caring. [...] So we had a majority of English people as well. That love that they gave us, I don't see anymore. It's changed a lot. In 45 years I've seen a lot changing. Slowly, slowly the families are moving away. There ain't all that love now.

**Issam:** In those days when we came, there was no hatred. Even if you went to shopping and Mr Smith, he used to help us, tuppance he used to say 'this sweet, this sweet, you can buy this, you can buy that.' Slowly slowly. But there's nothing the same now. We've moved so much past where it was.

Elizabeth (73-year-old woman): Thinking about it, everybody was friendly in Billesley, well everybody is friendly now, nearly everybody anyway, as it where in those days, and people visited a lot more.

There were memories and descriptions of idyllic childhoods, as below:

Adil (33-year-old man): When I was growing up, on the side, we had a huge field and several of them and it felt like a wide expanse of greenery and you'd catch beetles and stuff and climb trees and build kites and fly kites and stuff like that, that's how I grew up.

And testimonies of the liveliness of Billesley:

Mark (72-year-old man): When we get on Lode Lane you will see where all the shops were, and there was a clothes shop, a television shop and this shop and that shop and that... And nobody had to go anywhere apart from... unless you wanted something really special or a treat and then they went into Bradford.

The contrast between present-day Billesley or present-day Bradford with past versions of themselves was stark in some of the participants' observations. A comment Mark makes as he takes me on a walk around Billesley encapsulate this apparent decline between past and present: "It was a thriving area, it was bustling. It was throbbing really. My Billesley and this Billesley are two different places you know," as George, a 73-year-old man, draws similar conclusions for the city centre of Bradford: "There's nobody who shop in Bradford, not really, they go elsewhere. And it's a pity really, and it didn't used to be like that, getting back to history, there were Brown Muffs[33] in Bradford." According to the story of nostalgia, Billesley used to be a happy, supportive and lively community, and it was much better in the past. Thus, individuals tend to narrate their present experience of Billesley by using "the past" as a benchmark and a point of comparison. However, it was not always clear

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[33] Famous department store in Bradford, closed 1995.

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which "period of the past" the narrators were nostalgic about. It seemed to be generically about childhood and times of growing up. However, considering the range of ages of the interviewees, they could have been nostalgic about any decade between the 1930s right up to the 1980s, which all presented their own challenges for Bradford and the UK more generally (e.g. WWII; large waves of immigration in the 1960s; energy crises in the 1970s; deindustrialisation from the 1980s onwards). This highlights a potential contradiction between an overly positive description of the past and what we know of these decades and what life may have been like in a heavily industrialised area of a northern British city and harsh times of socio-economic decline. But it is revealing in terms of the present day identity of Billesley. Nostalgia may be about different past periods, but altogether it amounts to a positive image of Billesley throughout the decades up until recently and sets the scene for a contrasting story in the present. It is likely that "the past" may not have been only happy and positive and that participants may have consciously or unconsciously selected positive memories due partly to the interview setting. What function may the story of nostalgia have served for the narrators? My interpretation is that I was positioned as an outsider to Billesley but a resident of Bradford for some years. As such, I would not have much knowledge of the area itself and its history, but enough knowledge of the city as a whole to be familiar with the current reputation of the area as one of the poorer and more rundown areas of Bradford. As they mobilised positive memories of the past and opposed them to a sense of a negative present, inhabitants gave themselves a platform to explore the present decline of the area, explain it, justify it or find reasons for it. I will investigate further the opposition between past and present in the next sub-section, but not before drawing the reader's attention to some comments made by participants that are critical of the story of nostalgia.

Admittedly, a majority of interviewees exhibited a degree of nostalgia, linked to memories of the existence of a strong and supportive community. Yet, some of them demonstrated a degree of awareness of the nostalgic attitude amongst fellow residents and critiqued it. The comments below may not challenge the relevance of

the nostalgic storyline of a happy and integrated past so as to express a counter-story. However, they are critical of the consequences of the common story of nostalgia for the present identity of Billesley. Assil, a 28-year-old man who has lived in Billesley his whole life and now works there, observes:

> I think that what I've picked up from people that I've worked with, the older people in particular, they'll always talk about times past that were better and "we used to do this" and "we used to do that" and it was always good. Fair enough in their era that was good for them but what we've got now is good for us. You know, we're a younger generation and we need different things, do you know what I mean? We're a different era from them so what interested them is not good for us and might not interest us.

Eric, a 53-year-old man, although he makes a non-area specific observation, shows awareness of a common attitude of resistance to change, not dissimilar to Assil's critique of nostalgia:

> And then all of a sudden, you know I think it probably happened when I were in the navy some time, all of a sudden there's things like McDonalds, and pizzas and curries, and things like that, these really exciting things, that are different colours, different smells, different tastes. Some savoury, you know, some strong, and you'd get used to that, and pick things like that up, diverse food. And it shocked a lot of old folks, you know, because a lot of old folk don't like change, they just want what they've always been used to. So "oh no I'm alright with me boiled ham. I'm alright with me carrots thanks. I'm alright." You know.

One final comment by 63-year-old John this time who, interestingly, displayed some nostalgia himself, sums up the issue of opposition between past and present and reminds us that the relevance and meaningfulness of a story is never absolute:

> And even though people hark back to the community spirit, I think there is as much community spirit now as there used to be in Billesley, but in a different way. Yeah, things like, all right, you might not know your neighbours as well, but there's still got that sort of community spirit but in a different way I think.

So far, we have seen that with the exception of a few participants, evidence of nostalgia was extensive in the individual narratives I collected. I recognise that nostalgia is not the Bradfordians' premise though, and is a common phenomenon that others have identified in their research elsewhere in the UK (Finnegan, 1998). What is important here is that sharing positive memories of the past was relevant to the participants. Whether it is true or not that the past was better (and in some cases it may not have been), is irrelevant. But it matters that the perception amongst inhabitants is that it was. In the second sub-section, I explore the story of the decline of Billesley, to which the story of nostalgia is a background, and which ties in more closely with existing stories about Bradford.

## b – A story of deterioration:[34] Negative perceptions of change over time

> So I've kinda watched... For a while it was very, very good and I'm beginning to see it kinda slide a little back down now [...] I'm watching it and the decline's coming again cos you know, we spent millions in Billesley and regenerating it and that was good while it lasted but we need also for local people to become more involved in what goes on. (Matt, 54-year-old man)

This opening quote illustrates some of the elements of the participants' narratives of Billesley that I explore in this sub-section. First, there is a clear temporality to the story, with references to phases of improvement and decline of the area, which are

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[34] See Finnegan (1998: 137): "The deterioration of Fishermead"

not well defined. Expressions of temporality in the narratives of Billesley are typically vague, with words indicating time such as "before" and "now" but no references to specific events or dates. Secondly, it is an example of the dual construction of Billesley both in terms of the physical space (present here in the idea of regeneration) and in terms of the locality as a "community" (see the desire to involve local people). Participants often used either or both aspects of the locality to narrate their experiences of change in Billesley. For instance, the current community life in Billesley was described and assessed in terms of community relations, separation of communities, and more poignantly about an uncontrollable rise in individualism. But issues around the physical appearance of Billesley were also weaved into the stories of local life, with concerns over cleanliness and lack of shops. As a result, the individuals narrated their experiences of Billesley in terms of negative change.

## Decline in the identity of Billesley as the locus of community relations

In terms of the "community," the changes in the population makeup over the years was relevant to the participants, as they observed that Billesley had seen an "influx" of "Asians." Importantly in terms of the identity of Billesley, the interviewees perceive that Billesley is now *predominantly* "Asian." However, if we go back to the overview of Billesley I gave in the methodology chapter, statistics contradict this (with around 46% white and 43% Asian living locally). What is at stake here is not "the objective truth" and that the interviewees were "wrong." Rather, a narrative truth is established, which reflects the perceptions and beliefs of the inhabitants and reveals the story they tell themselves about the place they live in. For instance, amongst elderly white women, there is a concern about integration and the reiteration of the perception of being part of the "minority" within Billesley. 94-year-old Jenny had particularly strong feelings about the changes in terms of population makeup in Billesley:

> It's not the Billesley I've known. No it's not the Billesley I've known.
>
> [...] Well people aren't as friendly and of course, we're in the minority now. Such as me, they're all foreigners. They're all

foreigners. Widespread, you know, all different nationalities. I'd say

it's like the gateway to the Orient, is Billesley.

In her story, the sense of community appears to be linked with Whiteness, and perhaps the lack of a happy and supportive community results from a rise in immigration. Subtly, the break up in communities is linked with immigration. This is echoed by Doris (an 82-year-old woman), who first draws a clear comparison between Billesley as it was when she grew up and the situation as she sees it now, with a concern over "race" and "immigration:"

We didn't have to integrate with different countries, you know, they

just didn't have immigration then, and they were just, I don't like

saying this, it makes you feel racist, but there were just our people.

Everybody knew everybody else, everybody talked to everybody, and

I don't think they're as friendly now as what they used to be. Maybe

it's cos they're busy in their own lives, and have to, cos I suppose

more people have to go to work now than what used to.

Not only does she observe a difference in the population makeup, she also mentions a change in lifestyle linked with people having to go to work and thus potentially with the change in work patterns post-WWII, which I will explore further later. Thus, despite telling a story in "us" and "them" terms, it is uncertain here whether the lack of friendliness within the community is down to ethnicity or to do with the lifestyle change or both. It is hard to tell who "they" in "they're busy in their own lives" refers to and she could have meant anyone, "white" or otherwise. In any case, this leads her to comment on the reputation of Billesley, and advancing a potential explanation for its "bad name" in terms of population makeup:

But to me Billesley's got a bit of a bad name, and I don't know why.

Maybe it's because there are a lot of people from other countries, it

seems to be more of those than what there are of English people. As

I say there's only that man next door who's English on here, and

that's it love.

Interestingly, Eleanor (a 73-year-old woman) raises the issue of integration too, but from a different angle, much more anchored in the present situation as she sees it than in a comparison with what Billesley was like when she was growing up there:

> And I also feel that there could be more interaction between the
> Asian and the White people. You know, more mixing. Now whether
> all sides want that... I think it's sort of six of one and half a dozen of
> the other. I don't think – a lot of the Asians don't want to integrate
> and a lot of the Whites don't want to integrate. They're just ready
> for knocking one another.

In Eleanor's opinion, "good" community is associated with interaction between different ethnicities, and all ethnicities are responsible for "integrating" (or not wanting to), which slightly differs from the nationally dominant storyline of failure of multiculturalism in which "Asians" are blamed for not integrating. It may be that her negative view of the lack of interaction is present more because of her memories of a more supportive past than because of the expectation that diverse communities should be integrated. In her story, she apportions blame for the decline of the area not to immigration, but to deterioration in community relations.

Integration is not a concern exclusively within the White, elderly community. Indeed, Ahmed deplores the lack of mixity in Billesley, and the decision of White families to move out of Billesley, using his story to lay the blame for decline specifically with the "white community."

> A lot of English people have left this area. That's the thing I really
> miss and do not like because you need to have a mixed community.
> A lot of streets you...I mean I can mention many streets where there
> is no English person living in that street. I think that's the thing which
> is missing now. They should have stayed.

This sense of loss due to the movement out of Billesley of certain sections of society is also present in Issam's story, which plainly opposes past and present. Contrary to the White elderly women's stories, the older "Asian" men's expectations of what seems to make a "good" community tend to be more centred on ethnicity and mixity. In their narrative, there can be a correlation between decrease of mixity and decrease of community feeling. Then, it may be that the story of immigration serves different purposes for each individual. In Jenny, Doris and Eleanor's story, immigration can be linked with the breakup of communities. In Ahmed and Issam's narrative though, immigration can be mobilised to shift the blame for poor community relations from their own "community" onto the white community.

Admittedly, the reality described by the interviewees is that there is a variety of ethnicities and nationalities in Billesley. However, their comments point to the lack of interaction between the said ethnicities and nationalities. The identity constructed from within tells a story of division and regression rather than progress in terms of community spirit, and the lack of interaction is made relevant here in individual stories. Strong feelings amongst the inhabitants of Billesley concerning "diversity" are frequent, and best illustrated by some of Ilham's story, which is worth quoting at length:

> **Excerpt 1:** Going back to where I was, Billesley's advice centre, it was just an advice centre. In the last 20 years, what's happened to that advice centre, we've got Asian mums' group, Asian dads' group, mums doing this, dads doing that, it's very segregated. But I remember having one advice centre when I was growing up and it was open to everybody, men, women, Black, Asian, but now, I find it's a lot more segregation than 20 years ago in that area. We have kind of moved on a bit, but then we have taken steps back as well and if you looked at Billesley now, you will see lots of women with [burta – unclear], hijab, hijab's fine, it's a scarf, but the quite, jilbab, which is a whole black outfit with just the eyes showing. So, to see that 30 years later in Billesley, is very different… To see "oh my God, I

thought we were moving forward", and actually we're not, we're backwards… But, I shouldn't really say that, not backwards, but it's different.

**Excerpt 2** (Talking about the local advice centre again): It was for everybody, it was the community centre, everybody came there. Everybody used the centre. And I don't know, I mean, I think to be fair to the community, if you go back thirty years, there was probably a lot more white community, and that shifted, you know, Muslims and Pakistanis have moved in. [...] But the advice centre I remember, it was for everyone. Whereas now if you look at [Community Centre 1], [Community Centre 2], [Community Centre 3], if you look at [Community Centre 4], [Community Centre 5], they are used by different communities, but predominantly Asians, and you'll find the workers tend to be Asians as well when it comes to advice.

**Excerpt 3** (Talking about how there was no separate communities as she was growing up in the 1970s): In fact now, it's worse, thirty years on, later, it's worse now than when we were living in that sort of time, so I don't know how it's changed or what's gone wrong, I'm not sure.

Here, the advice centre seems to stand as a symbol of community relations within Billesley and how they have changed and evolved over the years. Ilham uses particularly strong words to describe a negative change over time in community relations, noting the increase in "segregation" and interpreting it as "going backwards" to conclude that the situation is worse now than it was before.

Even more compelling perhaps is the description from interviewees of a range of ages and a range of ethnic backgrounds of a current tendency towards individualism that did not exist when they were growing up, thus making sense of

and justifying the present situation of a lack of community feeling with the rise in individualism in contemporary society. For example, both Elizabeth and Ilham remember a time when people would look out for each other's children, describing a sense of collective responsibility for the good behaviour of children, and thus defining the locality in terms of a space of interaction. Ilham's conclusion, though, is that this would not happen anymore, and she expresses a sense of loss for those sorts of attitudes. In a similar fashion, Jenny and Issam praise the relationships of help and support between neighbours in the past and lament the lack of it nowadays, again defining the locality in terms of "community:"

> **Jenny:** Ah it were ok you know, you, people spoke to you, and they were sociable you know! And good neighbours, good neighbours. I mean not living in your pocket sort of thing, but if you needed any help, they would help! Nobody today, nobody...

> [**MR**] And do you see it happening in Billesley then? People coming together?
> [**Issam**] It used to be. Unfortunately not now. That's, I don't, I don't seem to see it. You know, say about ten years back, we were all one, but unfortunately now we've all sort of moved away from each other, even the next door neighbour, you don't know. When we were young we could go to the next door neighbour, sit down, talk, eat, when we was young. You don't see that anymore.

> **Issam:** Before all your neighbours used to come together and all for your birthday party, or Christmas you know, all those days sit down together and have a meal and all this. Now it isn't. You know. So it's changed, Bradford has changed a lot. From the first, I think this is the fourth generation. Just keep on changing and changing and changing. You don't feel that love anymore, you don't feel anything like that. You know. The trust has gone too much. It's all the politics and sides.

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Then you see some sort of hatred, as well. In those days when we came, there was no hatred.

Interestingly, a younger interviewee, 33-year-old Mahmoud, describes this generational change, particularly within the "Asian" community, with a strong contrast between *before* and *now*, although his memory is not told in an area-specific way. He talks at length about the traditional "camaraderie" amongst the older "Asian" generation and describes occasions of support, food swapping, open doors, and adults gossiping whilst children play outside. The emphasis in his testimony is about the friendliness that characterised this "community." However, now, he observes that everyone is rushed and does not have time for each other. He also reflects on the impact of the education system on youngsters. On the one hand, he acknowledges how it has allowed a younger generation to improve upon its parents. On the other hand, he associates "going through the schooling system" with distancing from traditional values. There is a great ambiguity expressed in his story between the betterment achieved through education, but also the risk of loss of values. Mahmoud presents the adaptation to the "system," to the "host society" as a downside in the development of attitudes in younger generations.

All this culminates in images from interviewees of a fast-paced society in which the individual comes first to the detriment of the collective, signifying a decline or deterioration in community relations, as evident in Billesley. Mahmoud and others express this, importantly mostly in non-area specific terms showing that although the phenomenon is happening in Billesley, it is more symptomatic of contemporary British society. For example:

> **Issam:** Everything has made change. Everything. You've got unfortunately you know people with their lives either moving too fast or they're not. Society is poisoned. Why? I don't know why. But everybody wants everything for their own selves. They don't want to share.

**Elizabeth:** There has been organisations but it seems to have flittered away in recent years, really. In the last twenty years... But you see there are so many other things for them to do now... You see, and for the grown-ups to do too it isn't just the children. Like mothers now, they are working, aren't they, more? Cos mothers used to help with the Brownies. [...] I think that's one of the things that has changed, there is less voluntary leadership now.

**Matt:** I think some people nowadays, we're becoming a society where it's every man for himself and basically you just look after your own or yourself and you don't care about anybody else. And I think that's happening too much now. I think you know we've all got a little bit that we can offer.

Overall, although there are hints that the sense of community might have diminished because of the dynamics between various ethnic and national groups within Billesley, the story of deterioration, characterised by negative change between "the past" and "the present" is narrated in terms of a loss of support and network, amounting to a negative construction of the identity of Billesley in terms of its community aspect.

## Decline in the physical identity of Billesley

Concerning the physical identity of Billesley, architectural transformations formed part of the story of Billesley, with the various slum clearances and the building of council estates seemingly part of a collective memory:

**82-year-old Clare:** Yes because it was all back-to-back houses that went down, and there further down... They'd actually built a tower of flats there and my sister lived there as well. [...] But they've demolished all that lot. I think they found asbestos or something there. I'm not sure. And the council estates wouldn't have been there when I lived there when I was a child.

**Eric:** Now when I were being brought up in the 60s, Billesley were going through something called a slum clearance, getting rid of a lot of the Victorian slum that had developed, and before Victorian times as well, so they were knocking a lot of those down, so they were building the new council estates in Marshall, there's one of the oldest. The tram shed houses on Hollie Road had already been built, they'd been there a while, in fact me mother were born in one of them houses. So the slum clearance knocked a load of houses down and new developments came up. One of the big new developments, and it became quite a thing, it was Wichnor Place.

And so did recollections of the past industrial identity of Billesley, with its chimneys, mills, dyers' works, back-to-back houses, and its pubs and working men's clubs as places of social interactions. To some, the changes have been so great that Billesley is unrecognizable, again denoting a change in identity between past and present:

**82-year-old Doris:** It's a different world. I always say if me mum was to come back she wouldn't recognise Bradford at all, neither the look of it or the people or anything. It's a different world.

In terms of the link between the identity of Billesley and its construction as a physical space in the present, several participants expressed real concern for the cleanliness of the streets, which impacts on the overall look of Billesley, and on how it is perceived. Ahmed once more compared Billesley now with what it was like when he was growing up, noting the particular role of his "English" neighbours, and with the idea of apportioning as blame central to his thinking:

And one thing I've seen is when these English people were living, the roads were better the council used to sweep, yeah, but I mean I don't know whether to blame council or whether to blame ourselves. A lot of streets I could show you now, there's dirty streets, people just don't bother binning their rubbish in the proper wheelie bin, they just throw them out.

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Eleanor simply noted that she thought "a lot of the in-places it's gone down a lot, it's got untidy" whereas Sophie was more specific. She affirms her story as "the truth," as she highlights the existence of smaller areas within Billesley and contrasts the present with the times she was growing up there:

> Birchley, Birchley estate has become nicer, Billesley has become a dump. It's true, it's the only way you can describe it, it's a disgrace, it's filthy. The more we clean it, the more it gets rubbish thrown out onto it. And the streets are more about the, when we were growing up were the posh streets, Northfield Street, Rowden Grove, they were all posh streets they was, you know in Billesley. They're just the pits of the estate now. Nobody don't like walking down there past 'em, it's like it's awful. It is it's really horrible, to see Billesley go down so, so rapid.

Like in the nostalgic descriptions, the issue of shops in Billesley came up again, with this time a clear opposition between past and present, which applies both to Billesley and to the city centre of Bradford:

> **Doris:** To me it hasn't changed much, other than the fact that there doesn't seem as many people that go to the city centre anymore, and there aren't the shops, there's too many of those, what are they called, discount shops, pound shops, and there's no, no stores as such, especially when T.J. Hughes was the last one and that's closed now. [...] And people say it's they won't go in town at night, cos at one time the shops didn't close while nine o'clock and also it were nice walking up Wagon Lane, because shops were open at night, and there were loads of shops there, and pubs as well.

> **John:** No, you would walk down Wagon Lane and it was totally different. Now they always say Wagon Lane divides the community, what Wagon Lane was [a road] with shops and pubs all the way

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down so it was a magnet so you'd love, I'd love to walk from there into town. And also you got... [...] Town centre was also a good attraction, nice town centre you know. Something to attract... and it was comparable, you know, in those days it had as good shops as Leeds, but now it's just... totally... totally devoid of competitive shops... you now... charity and pound store heaven for me. But not for my wife... She'll go anywhere but Bradford. She'll go to Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, Dewsbury... There's nothing... you know, it isn't a magnet, you know Bradford town centre isn't a magnet anymore. It's rather sad.

To summarise, in this first section, the narrative truth as established by the individuals is characterised by a negative story of change over time, amplified by the contrast with nostalgic and positive images of the past. Although the terms of the stories themselves are specific to the residents of Billesley, the overall story of decline resonates with the culturally dominant storyline about Bradford and therefore reinforces it. That said, we must bear in mind that the interviewees' stories were not devoid of contradictions and ambiguities concerning several of the points raised above, which emphasises the complexity in negotiating experiences of the city.

## 2 – Pessimistic tales of a different kind: Stories of crime and violence in Billesley

In the participants' stories, themes relating to crime and violence were mobilised along the lines of an opposition between past and present. Comparisons of past and present led to portraying a crime-free past and contrasting it with concerns over safety and security in the present. In particular, white elderly narrators told stories of experiences of being a victim of crime in the present. In terms of the "Asian" respondents, there were echoes of the popular and academic generational backlash discourse within their community, centred on the issue of crime.

## a – Crime-free past versus crime in the present

Running along the story of the deterioration of Billesley was the story of a crime-free past, which was opposed to a rise in crime and a lack of safety in the present, a change connoted negatively.

> **Eleanor:** There were occasionally times I used to run home [after the dance]. And I think in all that time there were only two occasions where I can remember anything nasty going on. [...] One was coming home from a dance, a fellow was bringing me home and we found somebody laid out on the pavement. [...] There were another time, lower down Addison street there'd been some fighting with a knife, and that were the only time that I've ever heard of any trouble in Billesley. That were while I were growing up.

> **Jenny:** Because there's been a few shootings in Billesley and several knifings and there never used to, never anything like that, never. Never. And I think what do they want to be carrying knives for, and guns? [...] There's been two shootings, fatalities, you know fatal shootings, and knifings, and burglaries. I've had, I've been broken into three times on me own three times. Never entered your head anything like that when I were younger, nothing like that. I don't know where it all stems from.

> **Doris:** But people didn't lock their doors in those days, you'd no fear of burglary or anything like that. But I had burglars as you might say the other night!

Parents in particular expressed worry about their children, formulating Billesley in a problematic manner. The following quote comes after Adil described his idyllic childhood running around freely in Billesley. He explains how he has come to keep his children indoors, which eventually led him to move out of Billesley:

And my kids they were really insulated and isolated childhood up to
6 and 7 which wasn't really healthy for them, and I didn't want to do
that to them but I couldn't let them out, it wasn't safe, there were
other kids that were stealing of them and stuff, bullying them and...

It must be said that in his interviews, Adil emphasised several times that he had
lived in a particular area within Billesley, which goes back to the idea of small areas
making up Billesley, with each area having its own role within the Billesley micro-
system. Ilham also shared her anxiety over her children's safety, contrasting it with
the insouciance of her childhood, but framing it beyond just Billesley, as a non-area
specific and modern phenomenon. She told me how she drives her children
everywhere, including to the local school due to her own anxieties: "But it's not the
children, it's us because we don't have that security that our parents did," and later
adds:

We are more aware of the world around us now because of TV,
media, Internet, whereas our parents hardly had that. We played out
all day and my mum never bothered… We knew what time to come
in, and eat, and we could go into town on Saturday's all by ourselves,
my mum didn't worry, there was no mobile phones… But I am so
different with my children.

This non-area specific observation echoes the ones from the elderly white women
at the beginning of the section. Although Jenny does talk about her experience of
having been a victim of crime, the speakers' comments tend to be general rather
than anecdotal and personal. It raises the issue of knowing whether the change in
crime is solely linked to Billesley, or if in fact acute awareness of crime is a wider
phenomenon within modern Britain. For instance, George also remarks on the way
Billesley has declined and in particular, on the presence of drugs amongst young
people. However, like Ilham, he puts it in the wider context of contemporary British
society:

Some of Billesley's a bit run down but I think that goes with a lot of

inner cities doesn't it? The other thing is of course, you can't walk

the streets at night like you could in my younger days. But that

applies to every city doesn't it? That is a threat particularly in this

area. And I think others will probably have told you drugs are

particularly rife aren't they, I believe, and I'm not saying there's a big

problem with drugs, but it is something that a lot of the Asian

youths, it's something that they've tried to cut down, tried to stop,

but I think it's just down to people being out of work, they're just

trying to make money.

In this excerpt, it is not so straightforward to interpret George's point as simply

rehearsing the culturally dominant storyline about Bradford. On the one hand, he

links "Asian" youths with being out of work, which leads them to getting involved in

drugs – a familiar story from the academic and popular discourse. On the other

hand, he characterises Billesley as an inner city area, which allows him to advance

that its problems are shared by other inner city areas in the country, thus

downplaying the specificity of the area. Doing so, he appears to negotiate the

public discourse by both reinforcing an existing story and contextualising the case

of Billesley. However he and the other narrators do so, it transpires that the story of

crime and violence can be meaningful for the participants.

It seemed to be particularly meaningful and dominant for white elderly narrators.

For example, in Jenny's story, crime comes out strongly as a reason why Billesley

has a bad reputation. She talks about Billesley in broad terms, contrasting past and

present by lamenting what she sees as a new tendency to carry knives and guns

around, something that she strongly believes did not happen when she was

growing up. But for Jenny, the story of crime and violence is also a personal one, as

she relates several anecdotes to me of being a victim of crime, from being burgled

several times to being conned by a stranger on the street. Also mobilising the

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decline of Billesley story through examples of a rise in crime are Doris, with a personal story:

> But people didn't lock their doors in those days, you'd no fear of burglary or anything like that. But I had 'burglars' as you might say the other night! I'm saying the other night, it was through the day, and for all I was in, I never heard a thing. And they took me hanging baskets and me plants and things.

And Mark, with a nostalgic memory of community life:

> When I was a kid, if there was any, if there was such a thing as a murder in Bradford, never mind Billesley, it was an event. Now there's probably 38 a year. But if there was anything in Billesley, it was unheard of you know, "a murder? In Billesley? Never!" Cos families looked after themselves you know, they didn't... there were no... There was the odd fight, but there was no animosity between families because they were all in the same boat. Nobody had any money. That's why you could go out and leave your back door open because nobody had something worth stealing.

These accounts add to the identity of Billesley by "appeal[ing] to potentially shared memories of a common past" (Finnegan, 1998: 136) and concurring on the deterioration and rise in crime of the area. In particular, the more elderly white participants tend to be united in their memories of the area as peaceful and trouble-free. However, not all testimonies were specifically about the area, and some of the comments that were made in relation to safety were very general and more linked to wider societal change.

## b – "Asians" and crime

A variation on the crime narratives is one found amongst some of the "Asian" respondents, on the theme of generational backlash, as found in the academic literature and in the popular discourse. There may not be much evidence of it in the personal stories I collected, but it is worth accounting for, especially as the voices

heard here are from each side of the generational gap. Interestingly though, the narratives are general and not based on (direct) personal experience, but again tied into stories of decline, or worry about decline of Billesley. On the one hand, Issam deplores the lack of mutual respect between elders and youths: "And where they don't respect the elders, or the elders don't love the youngsters. Well you've got to respect the elders and the youngsters as well" and he himself mobilises a well-worn social myth about youth culture: "They all want to be gangsters! Me the big man, you know. I don't know if it's due to the TV or I don't know what. Why do they want to be gangsters for? Gangs and all this Jazz, it means nothing," which ties into his concerns for the future of Billesley: "My worries for Billesley, you know, you can move all these gangsters out of this area, and all these gangs and all this jazz, you know and all the gangs they've got here. My worry is that with this young generation you know with fighting and all this jazz they've given us a bad name. You know. And I hope all this stops, and try and make a life out of it." But his concerns are also specifically for the "Asian" community within Billesley, as he worries the perceptions of the younger "Asian" generation has led to a bad reputation for the community as a whole.

On the other side of the argument though, Mahmoud reflects on Muslim youths' situation when he was a teenager, which creates an opposition between generations and echoes some of the distinctions made in the culturally dominant storyline, especially as it developed around the 1995 and 2001 riots:

> And there were some other people who looked up to these rebels involved in those criminal activities. And by the way it wasn't many of them, it's the minority that gets the attention and it's the same case here in my interview, the vast majority of them like 95% were fine but one saying is that some of them, a small minority, sometimes got the attention. There were some people who admired them, they liked the fact that there was someone who has the confidence, who has self-respect, and sticking two fingers to those who are trying to subjugate them even though it might have been

distorted way of sticking the fingers... There was a little bit people who looked up, I mean the lads really, not the parents. The parents, they would frown upon this type of stuff because it was like a dishonour, this would bring shame to the community, you're supposed to be civilised, law abiding, you know, that kind of stuff. But some of the lads, their own experiences were such that, that doesn't work, they'll do whatever. But like I say, there were others who looked up to some of those rebels and they'd mention their names and say, oh, so-and-so and talk about them as though they were some sort of role model or idols and I remember that. Some of those, the rebels that I'm talking about, they did some dodgy stuff, violence or whatever, and again there are a minority, and for a while there was a period in where there weren't so much of it, it went out of fashion for a bit, to look at some of these gangsters or whatever but now, recently, I have noticed in the last few years there are some people who have got back to that phase, like the early days, they are starting to look up to those gangsters and criminals because I think that these people, again, they see those rebels challenging the system and sometimes you think it's unfair, we're not getting a chance, being properly educated, low expectations because you're an ethnic minority.

Overall, in this section, it transpires that violence and crime were themes high on the agenda of the residents of Billesley, and considering how they talked about it, their own individual stories resonate with the culturally dominant storyline and some aspects of the academic stories. It is interesting how the themes in the stories overlapped, but also how non-Bradford related common social myths were used frequently and un-problematically, thus reinforcing the dominant stories.

## 3 – Stories of movement: leaving Billesley

Reflections on people leaving Billesley were common in the personal narratives. Here, generally, the narrators related first-hand experiences, but also friends and acquaintances' experiences. There is a sense that inhabitants moved out either by choice, be it for betterment (although the outcome was not always positive), a change in personal circumstances linked to life cycle events (for example marriage or retirement), or due to a change in the ethnic makeup of Billesley, or they were forced out, in the specific case of Billesley due to slum clearances.

The narrators told a range of stories about leaving by choice, whether from a position of having made the decision to stay in Billesley, or occasionally from the position of someone who had left. Matt tells me a story about himself and some fellow residents getting together to prepare a funding bid to try and improve Billesley. He describes how this was very casual and when I ask him who exactly was involved, he has this answer for me: "Oh, it was three, me and three other guys just got together locally. And out of the four, there's only two of us still living in here. [...] So there's only two of us actually still living here. They've moved on as well." He further explains this idea of "moving on" next: "I think when you, some people use these areas as a stepping stone as I say and as soon as their financial circumstances start to improve, they just up and go and they've gone. I think some of it is possibly because of not getting on with the rest of the community and stuff like that. Others are just, just saw the ethnic profile of Billesley changing and decided that they were gonna actually do a flip, you know, runaway from it." This illustrates two of the common reasons mentioned for people living Billesley – a desire for betterment and a change in the makeup of the area, also two reasons very much present in the public discourse. On the theme of betterment, Ilham relates a personal story about Eric, who is in fact a good friend of hers, and explains how he and his wife have moved out of Billesley, possibly due to the schools although she is not sure. The upshot though is that she describes how Eric always gets teased within their group of friends about leaving Billesley, revealing how meaningful it is for them. When I speak to Eric, it does seem that moving out of Billesley was motivated by

betterment in the sense of wanting "to buy a nicer house." However, when he tells me about moving out of Billesley, he is keen to get across that the move was not racially motivated, displaying a great awareness of the public discourse on segregation and white flight and a personal negotiation of the public discourse. He tells me:

> And we sold it [the house in Billesley] for something like £28,000. So we took that and we moved further out of Bradford, again, it's like that talking about the "white flight." We didn't do it because we wanted to get away from Bradford, but it's because we wanted to buy a nicer house – you'd have to go further out, so we bought a house then for 60,000, so it were going up all the time. And then, that were worth a lot of money in them days, 60, that was like 80, 85 when we moved. Yeah, so it's a while ago now isn't it. And when all the mortgage is paid off I still come back to work in Bradford. So it's not far away from where I were brought up.

It is also worth noting how he puts forward his attachment to the City this time by pointing out how he goes back there to work. Other examples of movement out for betterment include Sophie, who explains that none of her family members live in Billesley anymore, and says "I don't know why I moved away from Billesley, my husband's not from Billesley, so I think we just wanted somewhere nicer for us daughters to be brought up in." Here, both marriage and betterment could be reasons for the move. Issam talks in more general terms about people moving out of Billesley, and interestingly points out that contrary to what might be expected if the national storyline is to be believed, "Asians" have been leaving too.

> Sort of like everybody has moved away. Even the Asian community [unclear] but they're not, they've moved away so far that you don't know where they are or what they're doing or anything like that. Before all your neighbours used to come together and all for your birthday party, or Christmas time you know, all those days sit down

together and have a meal and all this. Now it isn't. You know. So it's changed, Bradford has changed a lot.

It is interesting how his story of movement away ties in with the story of decline and change over time, and moves from a story anchored within Billesley to a consideration and generalisation to Bradford has a whole. To him, there is a contradiction in the idea of moving away as betterment, as he explains that all that happens is that people lose their connections with the rest of the "community." It serves as a morality tale, which allows Issam to negotiate and resist the existing story of movement out of Billesley.

> To tell you the truth, when they go back in the outskirts, they get lost themselves, you know. Because if you're not connected here, it's very hard for you to connect over there as well. And they try to move away from society, that's where you're going to get lost. Well that is my opinion. If you stay connected, you'll be much better. [...] It's the children who the parents take away to live in the outskirts or different sorts of areas where nobody's having no one there, it's their kids that who get lost, because they are attracted to all different other things. Like here, my brother's sons, if I've seen something wrong, here, anywhere, then I'm going to have a word with him, then I'm going to tell his dad: sort him out. Then the people living on the outskirts, they haven't got that connection. So they're allowed and free to do anything. That's where they lose their value. That's where they lose everything. When I was on my rounds in St Luke's hospital, specifically one person I saw there, sat down with him and started doing to him and says look, what would you have done, on a voluntary basis, that was like ten to fifteen years ago. He says I moved out of Billesley because I wanted to bring my kids up properly. But he goes I've been in this hospital for three days and none of my kids come and seen me. And that really hurted him. Why hurted him? Because they didn't get that connection. Here we

have got the connection. I went to the Hajj, I took my daughters with me, my daughters came with me. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Six Days. [unclear] see how we are, sit down drink water and if you have that sort of connections, like here you're separate, if you have Christmas parties here, you sit down with them you know we had a tea dance here as well, it was very good. That's what you want.

In terms of life cycle and life turning point, we have already seen how Sophie mentioned marriage as a factor in moving out of Billesley. Elizabeth tells how some of her friends found themselves in a similar situation:

[**MR**] I was going to ask a bit about your friends – when did they leave Billesley?

[**Elizabeth**] Ah well some of them left Billesley when they got married, now one of them went just to live in the terraced houses above Mayo Avenue there, she didn't get married, she moved out of Billesley when she became a headmistress but she left Billesley when she started earning more money [unclear] so she left Billesley then.

[**MR**] So seeing that you have had friends leaving Billesley, did you ever think of leaving yourself?

[**Elizabeth**] No... Well... no because there were jobs available and there was no point in leaving. I had a good home, you know... with... people to look after me.

Strikingly, her reason to remain in Billesley is centred on connections with people, the very element that others worried people would lose when moving away. In terms of another event in the life cycle, both Sophie and John mention movement linked to retirement, although the situation John relates is somehow more complex. Sophie talks about how people she knows have moved out of Billesley: "A lot of them are moving out of Billesley, all the older end at retirement age now they're all moving up like to Vale." John narrates the story of his parents:

Luckily for my mum and dad, a cousin died and left us some money and they were able to move out of Billesley into a bungalow up at Odsal which is not far from here, for them, but the parting gesture, what really capped it all was that my father used to play cricket on the snicket next to us with local kids, mostly Asian kids, and then one of the, we reckon it was one of the neighbours who was rather racist, daubed on the back door of my father's in shit "Paki lover" and so... he wasn't too happy about living there, but fortunately for them they moved out. And so... you know... parents wanted to get out of Billesley really. But it wasn't because, it wasn't the white flight, it was more to do with you know, the general, you know, my mother and father were getting older and they haven't really got friends here, most of their friends... you know, they used to go to the chapel and most of the people going there didn't leave in Billesley.

This story raises a number of issues in terms of the relation between public discourse and individual stories. First, seemingly poor community relations have led to John's parents moving out of Billesley, as they became the victims of abuse. It suggests a lack of connection with other residents of Billesley, which is confirmed at the end of the quote by John saying his parents do not have friends in Billesley anymore. This aspect of the story fits in with the narrative of a diminishing community spirit and a lack of support within Billesley. Secondly, John is evidently aware of the public discourse on movement within the city, as he makes a point of adding that his parents' move is not motivated by "white flight," meaning it is not racially motivated, in line with the picture of his father as someone reaching out to other communities. Thus, John's story reveals a more complex reality behind movement out of the area than that presented in the culturally dominant storyline. By referring to the dominant story, John is able to negotiate it to create his own narrative truth about the story of movement of his parents. Finally, he mentions old age as a reason for moving, but is also conscious that there is a financial aspect to the move, suggesting that wanting to move and having the financial capacity to do

so are two different things and that, because one would need extra money to move out, moving out is an upward trend. In that sense, his story is again closer to the more common ones of movement due to life cycle or betterment.

In terms of culturally dominant storyline, it is hard to tell from John's story what he makes of the theme of "white flight." It is interesting that he feels the need to explain that it was not the reason for his parents moving and what it means about his own positioning. As we already saw, Eric distanced himself from the idea of moving out of Billesley for ethnic reasons. Later in his story, he mentions the "white flight" again and criticises the notion. He suggests that moving out of Bradford was not just a white phenomenon, but transcended ethnicities, which echoes Issam's morality tale. Here, he talks in general terms of a situation that affects the City, rather than just Billesley, but also anchors his story in his own experience of working in Bradford:

> It were after t'riots, after Bradford riots happened, the first ones, were it 2001 or something I can't remember, but Herman Ouseley did a report didn't he, and he talked about the white flight, but the white flight didn't just mean that white people were coming out of the centre of Bradford, you know it were Hindus and Sikhs as well, you know, that would come out of the centre of Bradford, and then Bengalis and Pakistanis would take, you know, would, and that tended to, that's what happened really. [...] And we've always found that the Bengalis have a real tight-knit community. They like to be together and they like shops, and sometimes people from outside, particularly sort of government agencies, see that as sort of ghettoising a particular community, but it's just that people like to live together don't they? People who have things in common tend to want to be together. But that's what happened, Herman Ouseley talked about the white flight, and sometimes people go from Bradford, but more often than not they come back I think. We always see that.

John, Issam and Eric are all working within the local community, and have been for some years. So it makes sense that they would be familiar with the public story of white flight. Without underestimating the significance of their positioning and its impact on their story, it is striking that they have all mobilised the theme of ethnic makeup in their own stories of movement in (and out of) Bradford. It can denote the importance of this collective story for individuals. Ethnicity was also on Ahmed's mind, although his story presents a different viewpoint, his own experience of seeing white neighbours move out of Billesley, as more "Asians" moved in. The ethnic profile of Billesley is at the heart of his understanding of movements out of Billesley, closely linked with his perception of differences in ways of life:

> There were about 3 Asian property in that street. Now, they all belong to Asians. There's only two property I think out of 50 or 60 properties. So that's what happened, because a lot of families...I mean, it happened like this, that if I moved in, my family or my son in laws or whatever, they will try to move into that area as well. So that's what happened I think. White people suddenly tried to move out of this area. There are a few. I mean I won't say that everybody's moved out. But I've seen that they actually moved out. They were good neighbours, nice neighbours, I mean I had no problem with my neighbours. But when they saw that the Asian people are occupying everything I think they sold the houses. Because there is a different life style. You see the English people, they...some of them might have a family life but lot of people they want to live alone, peacefully, nobody interrupts them, nobody like...But our families are different. This is a different way. So I think because of that they sort of moved out of Billesley. There are some streets where there are still English people living there but if you look at some of the streets, they are full of Asian people living there. That's the major thing that happened. We still remember those people who used to be our neighbours and all that stuff. But they gradually, gradually, when they saw that all these people are moving into one area, that's

> why... I don't like that to be honest, I don't like that because I want
> to be... It should be mixed, everybody should be living in harmony
> and peace and what.

The last sentence in particular denotes his expectation, echoing the culturally dominant storyline, that good community relations are dependent on various "communities" interacting.

The examples that I have presented so far have all been about (seemingly) voluntary reasons to move out of Billesley. However, the slum clearance that affected Billesley at the end of the 1970s meant that some inhabitants were effectively forced out of the area around Wichnor Place. I found a great awareness of the slum clearance in the narrators' stories, which shows that it is an event remembered collectively. It was often linked with the loss of community spirit within the area. Ilham lived in Wichnor Place when it was designated for clearance and speaks about it vividly:

> We were quite lucky actually, because we did get a house and we
> moved, but it dispersed the whole community, we had so many
> West Indian, African-Caribbean friends in the area, and we just over
> the last few years, we lost contact with so many of them, and I think
> they didn't just move, in Bradford, people left Bradford, some moved
> to Huddersfield, some Sheffield, some Nottingham, Birmingham, so
> they moved quite far. Some moved on to Birchley Road, there's a
> couple of families there that I know still from the times of Wichnor
> Place. [...] So it broke the community, it really did. I don't know what
> the hidden agenda was, it could have been drugs, or it could have
> been asbestos, as they say, or it could have been that Digs & Digs
> wanted to build, and now we'll never know! We'll never know I
> suppose.

More than any other, Ilham's story reminds us that there were (and maybe still are) external constraints that impact on movements of population, and that they may

have a wider impact on communities than just a redistribution of population. However, the reasons for movement out of Billesley, whether the outcomes were deemed "good" or "bad" were overwhelmingly linked with people's choices, conveying a "sense of individual control." (Finnegan, 1998: 117) Then, as far as individuals are considered to make agentic choices about where they live, this could be considered to echo the dominant story. However, the ranges of reasons for moving go beyond the culturally dominant storyline, another example of how dominant stories can be meaningful for individuals but are also creatively negotiated.

## 4 – Stories of immigration: Challenges for community relations

In terms of immigration, most of the stories tackled the arrival of so-called "new migrants," from Eastern Europe, although some of the older participants also referred to previous waves of immigration from South Asia. In both cases, they contributed to the story of loss of community spirit in Billesley.

First of all, Jenny, one of the older participants, displayed some ambiguous feelings about immigrants. On the one hand, she seemed to lament the fact that there are a lot of immigrants in Billesley, associating the lack of neighbourliness and mutual support with the change in the ethnic makeup of Billesley, as we first saw in the first section of this chapter. For instance, she explains: "There's nothing of that [looking after each other] now love. They're all foreigners. They're all foreigners! [...]I can count 'em on one hand, the white people. They're all foreigners!" On the other hand, when I ask her a little more about her neighbours, she can be complimentary, although her comments are still ambiguous: "They are Asians, they're very nice, and they've had four children since they came here, but they hardly understand what I say, you know. [...] I don't see a lot of them, but they don't seem to understand what I'm talking about, you know." Again, later in our conversation, when I ask her if she has thought of moving, she displays this ambiguity of feelings:

[**Jenny**] But I don't know where I'd go, because most of these foreigners, they're all over the place aren't they, they're everywhere now. They're everywhere! Particularly in Billesley, by jingo. And as I say, all me friends have died, they've died off of dying, you know.

[**MR**] But do you feel attached to Billesley still?

[**Jenny**] Yes, yeah, the people at the post office they're Asian, but they're very nice. They've been there about two year. They're very nice they are, I will say. But they have all the shops round here, yeah, they're all foreigners. So love I don't know. I don't know where it'll all end.

Similarly, Doris comments on the lack of neighbourliness from "immigrants" in several instances. Talking about immigrants without being more specific (although I inferred from the context of the interview that she was specifically talking about new waves of migrants from Eastern Europe), she deplores: "They aren't a bit sociable. You say hello and they just look at you and walk straight past. To me that's not being neighbourly. And because there's so many of them, you, to be quite honest I feel a bit isolated because there's nobody to get friendly with." And " You say hello to them and they just, they don't even smile or anything, there's just no neighbourliness about them, and that's all I have against them, different nationalities don't worry me at all, but they're everywhere on this street." Finally, in her narrative, she also displays a common social myth about immigrants, that of immigrants coming to the UK and benefiting from the social security system: "That's something else that I don't understand, these people who have come from abroad, they've all got cars. Who provides cars for them? Because they don't work, so somebody must have provided the cars for them. Or they must get allowances."

Jenny and Doris' observations are fairly general in nature and mobilise well-known themes from either the academic discourse or common social myths. However, other interviewees talked specifically about their own experience of living and working in an area within Billesley which they thought, faces particular challenges

due to the concentrated settlement of immigrants from Eastern Europe, especially Adil who lived in Billesley and felt he had to move out. He explains why by contextualising the situation:

What you have in Billesley, [this specific area] of Billesley, where I was living, there's a lot of distrust with the new communities, there's a lot of disharmony and a lot of disunity and there are some serious undercurrents that's really, really negative relationships and I think it's just a complete, you've got the existing communities, the established ones like the white elderly and young white communities in Billesley, you've got the South Asian communities mainly Pakistani that live there, and this is the lower end, this is where I moved, for five years and then you've got remnants of an African Caribbean community and you've got others as well so you've got Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, the EEA communities, but where the greatest disconnect exists is between the Eastern European communities, specifically the Roma, Slovakian communities and the rest of the other communities and that's where there is a lot of disunity. That's a huge cultural conflict in ways of living, you know, the mainstream accepted ways of living and that has found a natural organic balance but at the moment there's not really an equilibrium at the moment there is a huge imbalance between the Roma population and the rest of the community. And that's what I have experienced there and have moved since and it's not got any better it's got worse, yeah, there's huge problems there. We just had a meeting yesterday with residents talking about an elderly lady who is 70 and she's in an automated wheelchair and she carries a knife, she conceals a knife because she's, because of the fear of crime, she's frightened to go out, during the day she carries a knife under her cloak you know because she's worried of being attacked by young Roma kids in Billesley. There is another

lady who said she's had kids coming into the garden and urinating on the doorstep and she's worried about going out after dark. There's all sorts of people who have barricaded themselves into their own homes, that have built these really huge fences and pigeon spikes and stuff like that around them, so there are huge issues there which, as a community organisation, we are trying to address. As a resident, I lived there five years and I don't think it's going to be as easily addressed as we think it is. [...] And as a resident I've been really, really frustrated with this because as young and tough as I am I can deal with any issue, but I've seen a lot of people who've been there for 40 or 50 years, they own their homes and they have barricaded themselves in their homes and live in fear… People are scared to leave their house and why I moved was simply that I couldn't live in that community. I just could not live there even though I owned the house that was there, I left it. I've moved on.

I have chosen to reproduce this lengthy excerpt as it encapsulates many of the issues Adil raised about his time living in this area within Billesley, but he gave me more examples of neighbours being intimidated by some members of the "Eastern European community," including attacks on himself and a neighbour who has a disabled daughter, advancing that they had been targeted because of the young woman's disability. He also depicts their way of life as being at odds with the accepted one in the UK (for example they urinate on the streets), and describes the fear the situation has instigated in other residents, which fuels resentment and negative community relations, as this other quote shows:

One of the elderly residents said, I went round to see some elderly residents down there, and to talk to some of my old neighbours as I was passing through, I stopped and she said... This is the kind of thing that has been bred, the hate you know, she's 80 and she said "oh, we are collecting for a cause" and I said "what are you collecting

for?" And she said "we are collecting for a boat with a hole in it to send these guys back in." And I saw another one and he says "you got to just get them to live in a field, and put them all in a field in a huge tent, that's where you need to chuck them". What do you say? You can't blame people for…

John's testimony also explores the difficulties Adil has described within this specific area of Billesley:

If you talk about some of the old people, I mean what you want to do is interview some of the ones on Pendennis Street, Harlow Street, Lucas Street, there where the Eastern Europeans have moved in and they are absolutely scared of the new migrants. Went to a neighbourhood meeting and it was absolute hell. "You don't know what it's like, you don't live down here, you know, they're drinking until 3 in the morning, creating this havoc and so forth." You have real tensions in that area down there. Very real. It's bad. But here,[35] you know, it's not… it's relatively calm.

In Sophie's terms, comparing her experience of growing up in Billesley and the present situation,

**Excerpt 1:** I mean, I'm not digging at Eastern Europeans at all, but they need to, they need to familiarise them with how they live before they give them properties in Billesley that they're giving them in. With how we live and how, how you get rid of your rubbish, not just dump it here there everywhere and stuff like this. Is it's upsetting a lot of elderly people in Billesley, who's lived there for numerous years, it's a lot of, unbelievable what the upset it's causing.

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[35] The interview is taking place in a different area within Billesley than the one being discusses at this point in the interview.

**Excerpt 2:** It's just, yeah it is just a particular area, it is just one big area where the majority of Eastern Europeans live and it's just the pits. It is. They're living like they live in their own country, instead of trying to come to, it's hard, they've been brought up that way. But they've had so many ways of being told, you know we've had letters written telling them to get rid of stuff, it's just a matter of, hopefully, getting them educated, when they want to know.

Like Sophie, Adil considers the work that is being done to try and improve community relations, or at least to try and create more positive relationships with the new migrant communities. He tries to put the social tensions into perspective, by drawing on examples of previous waves of immigration, but seems to have doubts about the potential for success in establishing links with those communities.

So in a short space of time we had a huge influx of that community and there is a lot of [unclear] as well, talking from an organisational perspective, we try to engage them but they are very transient and they don't really stay in one position long and it's a lot to do with their culture and they move from place to place and that's why it's been so difficult and it has been a strain on services as well, trying to deal with it. And there is the counterargument about… All communities, when they first enter an area there will always be issues and there will always be cultural conflicts and the balance will always be established over time… But that can't happen with transiency, so much change. There is no time to establish relationships, there isn't time to, you know, create a mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, there isn't time for meaningful relationships be found and just the whole style of living, it just doesn't connect with what we have the established communities and I'm not trying to be defeatist here but, I don't know, it's really, really difficult.

In this section, fears linked to immigration are a relevant topic in the residents' narrative and clearly a concern for inhabitants of Billesley, translated into "a call to unity against changes and newcomers" (Finnegan, 1998: 136) expressed narratively. But that is the only extent to which it echoes the culturally dominant storyline about Bradford. Looking at the detail of it, the concerns are mainly about new types of immigration from Eastern Europe. In that sense, it resonates with a culturally dominant storyline that is not specific to Bradford but typical of the UK landscape in the wake of the recent expansion of the European Union.

## Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I asked which stories emerging as meaningful for the inhabitants of Billesley also echoed the culturally dominant storyline about Bradford. I found that a range of themes overlapped with the dominant story of the city, including decline of a sense of community and of the physical appearance of the area, rises in crime and violence, movements out of the area, and threats from immigration. However, beyond those generic themes that may reinforce the culturally dominant storyline by virtue of their uses, the detail of the individual stories revealed the creativity and individual negotiation of those stories as residents formulate an experience of the city. Then, the question perhaps is less about which stories dominate and more concerning the functions that the stories fulfil for people locally. It transpired that inhabitants used their stories to make sense of the present situation of the area as they understand it by living and working in Billesley. As common memories were invoked, an identity was created for Billesley, rooted in the local story of deterioration and decline over time.

# Chapter 7: Weaving and contesting collective stories in individual tales

## Introduction

> **Ilham:** And my children both know that, they know how I feel about this area, and sometimes people will say, my own colleagues, who are professionals now, will say "Are you still living in Billesley?" As if it's a real downside, and then they come here [her house], and they say "Oh it's so nice in here, it's really lovely it's a sanctuary, beautiful! I can't believe it's in Billesley!" [...] And I said "Why would I want to change all that for?" Just so that I can look good in front of my friends because I don't want to live in Westwood, maybe? Posh end? You know, there's more burglary there, more crime there. I have the figures from the police, I know what's happening where. But I said "We're fine, where we are. We're happy, we know enough people around us, we're secure, we're safe, we have good jobs, the kids are in a good school. Why would I want to turn everything upside down so that I could feel, 'well actually I live in Guiseley now'?" But people do have those issues. I don't. I don't, because I know this is where I belong.

In Chapter One, I established that culturally dominant storylines, as widely accepted and repeated cultural products, can be indiscernible and therefore difficult to identify within our own stories. In this chapter, I want to explore how narrators explicitly revealed a dominant collective story about Billesley within their personal stories and actively contested it by mobilising a range of narrative strategies. I try and understand what this means in terms of their own identity and positioning, but also in relation to the identity of the area. The introductory quote is typical of the complex negotiations individuals displayed within their stories. Here, Ilham shows her awareness and practical encounter with an external story of Billesley, which

characterises the area as a "bad" place to live. She deals with it in several ways. Her tone, body language and insistence on her state of happiness indicated defensiveness, as a reaction to the negative outlook of her colleagues on Billesley. She also used a narrative strategy of comparing Billesley with another area of Bradford, Westwood, which arguably has a better reputation, suggesting that Billesley is just as good, if not better than the other place. To do so, she presents her own, different "truth" to the accepted one about Westwood. As a result, she frames Billesley as a positive place, characterised by a good school, the opportunity to have a good job and being a place you can become attached to and consider home.

I start by observing how the residents affirmed, and thus revealed, the existence of a collective and external storyline about Billesley in their personal narratives. Then, I look at how they contested the existing story and created an alternative identity of Billesley first by weaving their own, positive story of the area, secondly by comparing Billesley to other places in Bradford, but also situating both the local area and Bradford itself in relation to other locations in the country, and thirdly by disassociating people and place in a contradictory move to what we saw in Chapter Six.

## 1 – Exposing outsiders' negative narratives

The narrators in my research displayed an acute awareness of a story being constructed about Billesley from outside of the neighbourhood. They characterised the tellers of this story as in opposition to themselves, using an "us" and "them" model in which "them" was impersonal (often referred to as "people" and "they"), located outside Billesley and not knowledgeable about the area due to a lack of experience within it. The story produced by this "other" was qualified as negative and also often perceived as a threat by the participants, who located themselves as "insiders." It led them to display a strong sense of belonging and to counter the apparent "attacks" on Billesley.

In revealing and dealing with the negative story, narrators tended to be defensive, as in Assil's narrative:

> Those people that give [Billesley] a bad name don't have their ear to the ground and don't really know what's happening and they just see it as "Oh, there's an Asian group there and there's a White group there and they're probably going to fight..."...not really. They're actually mates and they're picking a football team to play football or whatever. You know, honestly, you can see it for yourself, you can drive through and there'll be groups of kids, young people that are of different ethnicities just hanging out with each other and they're not even causing trouble.

In this passage, Assil's strategy is to present two opposed interpretations of a same fictional situation, but one that could plausibly happen in Billesley. It gives him the opportunity to dismiss the outsider's negative view as misinformed. He then orients to telling a counter-story, as indicated by "not really" and proceeds to offer his own, more plausible, interpretation informed by his experience of a lifetime spent living in Billesley. He even invites me to put "the truth" of his story to the test by carrying out my own observation when he asks me to bear witness and says "you can see it for yourself."

Elizabeth and Ahmed identify a specific and real danger stemming from the external negative story about Billesley, that of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to Ahmed, external regeneration agencies have a strong tendency to construct Billesley as a rundown place and to impose externally articulated problems onto it:

> I mean, you see, they put the case forward saying "oh yes, this area is very, very graded down" and this and that, yeah, they put the picture they're selling you I believe. They're selling you without these people knowing that they're selling you, they sell you their... to the government saying, our people having a lot of unemployment in this

area, a lot of drug dealing, housing needs repairing and all this stuff.

So they basically sell you.

Similarly, Elizabeth criticises the lack of recognition of some of the more positive aspects of Billesley due to the repetition of the negative story of deprivation of the location. In her opinion, the constant repetition may lead to people believing in the external negative story, and starting to act accordingly:

Yeah it's quite a good area… Sometimes I think people actually, I don't know, they don't realise about Billesley people, I mean, the schools are good in Billesley in now, I mean St Michael's is a good school, they don't give us credit sometimes whether it is about what has been produced in the past or [unclear] or what we can achieve. It is this culture you see that if there is ever a poor area, we get more social things happening. [unclear] And that really isn't the right approach. People ought to be given an incentive to work and do their own things. You know like in the papers you see, it's built as Billesley and all, one of the ten most deprived areas in England you see… Well if you are gonna live, if you are gonna be told you live in a deprived area you are going to be deprived, aren't you? You know, you can act deprived.

Individuals, in revealing the external story of Billesley, exhibited a certain amount of defensiveness and even anger towards it. For example, Leila was very protective of Billesley, and equally very defensive, as indicated as much by what she said than by her hostile body language and tone. Throughout her interview, no matter what I was asking her, she repeated "I haven't got a problem," or "I've never had a problem" although I did not suggest she had. I interpreted her defensive behaviour as a sign that she had positioned me as an outsider who had come in with the agenda of undermining Billesley. In this particular interview, I seem to have embodied the impersonal "other" against whom Billesley must be defended. On several occasions, she did not answer my questions and kept getting back to the

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idea that she did not have a problem with Billesley, sticking to her own agenda of telling a positive story of the area. Recognising my role in the construction of her narrative, it is worth reporting how strongly she felt about Billesley, especially as she also refers to other people's negative opinion of Billesley in her testimony:

> Well when we first moved to Billesley it was quiet, we had no family here so we kept ourselves to ourselves and it was a good area. As we grew up, we moved from end of Billesley to the other end of Billesley and it was ok. We never had a problem. I mean I worked in Billesley since I left school, and I've never had a problem. The only problem we've had is other people say "Oh my god you live in Billesley" you know, bad reputation and stuff about drugs and fights and stuff like that. But we, myself personally, I think there's nothing wrong with it. I loved it in Billesley and I still do.

In her story, outsiders are the ones creating and constructing a problem for Billesley, which she denounces and opposes to her direct experience of not having any issues in Billesley. In the second excerpt below, she again shows awareness of other people's criticism, and how Billesley has become a victim of it. Doing so, her story functions as a condemnation of the negativity imposed on Billesley by outsiders. She "fights back" (her tone in the interview was particularly forceful at this point) by comparing Billesley with another area of Bradford, which according to her is not as good:

> [**MR**] And your parents are still in Billesley?
>
> [**Leila**] Yeah.
>
> [**MR**] So could you tell me more about why you think it's a good area and why you are happy to live here?
>
> [**Leila**] Cos I've never had a problem in Billesley. I mean I've got on with everybody and I've never had a problem and I know we've had people looking at us weird and thinking "oh my god you live in Billesley" but we're ok, we've never had a problem.
>
> [**MR**] And so what sort of people would say that?

[**Leila**] Like some relatives used to say it to us and all like oh you live in Billesley don't you ever want to move? And we'd say no, why should we? Cos we've never had a problem.

[**MR**] So where do these relatives live?

[**Leila**] They live in, we've got two of them live in Bartley Green and I've always said to them well we're better off than Bartley Green.

[**MR**] Why's that then?

[**Leila**] Cos they've had problems round there as well. Wherever you go you probably would have problems but there might be a particular area where it might be more than the others and Billesley was one area where people thought oh, you know, didn't want to live there.

In this final extract, she again actively blames the negative reputation of Billesley for having adverse effects on its inhabitants. She then proceeds to share her own experience of "getting on," thus subverting the external story (if you live in Billesley, you must be encountering difficulties or be a "bad" person) with a positive counter-story:

People still say that now as well even the insurance companies if you're asking for a quote of some kind sometimes they'll turn around and say 'oh what area is it?' and if you say [this postcode] you'd have a bit of an impact on them. But or if you went somewhere they'd say, you know, where do you live, Billesley, oh, they'd look at you thinking you might be related to somebody who's one of those drugs or somebody. Other than that, I mean we, I personally or my family, we've never had a problem. I've even been out, I walk home alone on an evening from my mum's house cos my mum lives in Billesley and I live in Billesley. I walk home on a night and I've never had problems. I've got two young children, we've never had a problem. I mean yes, there have been like a couple of riots bottom down,

shootings and stuff, but like if you're not involved, you're not involved.

Similarly, Elizabeth explained how the outsider's negative story made her feel angry, as she also deplores the lack of knowledge and experience of Billesley which leads to such stories. Interestingly, Eric explained that for him and other inhabitants of Billesley, it is acceptable to joke about the area to a certain extent, but criticism coming from outsiders is unacceptable. Eric's comment reveals a certain complexity in the dynamic interplay of the insider and outsider narratives of Billesley. On the one hand, there may be negative elements to Billesley, and as insiders, it is legitimate to talk about them, even joke about them. On the other hand, in the context of a perceived threat from an outsider's negative story, there is almost an impetus to provide an overly positive story about Billesley, as in Leila's story to me, who embodied the negative narrative. The result is two opposed stories, one negative and one positive, with possibly neither of them encapsulating the complex realities of life in Billesley. This reminds us of the role of the audience in the construction of a story and, as a result of an identity, of Billesley. From an insider's point of view, the tell-able story of Billesley to an outsider audience is one characterised by a feeling of protection and defensiveness of Billesley, countering the widely available negative story of Billesley by recounting tales of happiness and "getting on." In contrast, acknowledging the difficulties and more negative sides of the area is permitted with an audience of "insiders."

Due to the emphasis of my research on Billesley, it is not surprising that the stories focused mainly on the area. However, Mahmoud displayed awareness of the national negative image of Bradford as a whole. He argued the city holds a specific place in the national imagination, characterised by a negative image but also by a range of social myths, such as benefit scroungers and the association between the "Asian" population and crime and violence. Although he does not counter the negative story as explicitly as others have done at the micro-level of Billesley, his reflection contributes to exposing the existence of an external negative story and

reveals this sense of an image imposed from outside, especially as he starts with remarking that Bradford's negative reputation is far from exceptional:

> Obviously it's not unique, there are plenty of areas in other parts of the world where they get a bad reputation for something, but I know there's an element of racism in Bradford a long time ago, by certain people it was dubbed 'Bradistan', ok, you hear some Asian countries, Pakistan, ok you've got a lot of Pakistanis there, you've got a lot of Pakistanis in Bradford so it's Bradistan, and jokes, racist jokes like a lot of people who are not from Bradford, you can go to pretty much any part of this country and if you mention Bradford "oh yeah, there's a lot of Asians there isn't there." Now that's not a problem, ok, there has certain bad connotations with any sense, "they're always rioting there" – there have been a few riots in the past, in the city so it's known that ah yeah, Bradford, to some people, not everybody, but to a lot of people it's got a bad image because they know there's a lot of Asians in the area, there has been several riots in the past, Asian people, Pakistanis, hooligans, tend to riot, kick off, and some of them think oh, it's like ah right, a lot of them they're just, erm, they're happy, they're just on benefits, basically they don't want to work, so they scrounge off benefits.

In this section, we have seen how inhabitants of Billesley showed awareness of an external story of Billesley characterised as negative and damaging to the area. They positioned themselves against this story, apportioning blame to outsiders for creating a "problem identity" of Billesley and exposing the dangers it creates for Billesley, in terms of producing a single story that people within Billesley may start believing in, resulting in them acting accordingly to that story. In doing so, they created a story based around an "us" and "them" situation, in which the responsibility for negativity lies with "them" or the external agentic actors, as they are the ones blamed for the negative reputation of the area. Then, the contestation exists but is perhaps limited in that the negative story is denied (its content is

perceived as illegitimate) but at this point there is not a clear alternative. Billesley also appears to fulfil a role within the Bradford micro-system, perhaps just like the city does at the national level, which reminds us of the heterogeneity of the city.

## 2 – Affirming a positive counter-story to create an alternative identity of Billesley

A common narrative strategy to challenge the dominant story of negativity associated with Billesley was to weave within the personal stories experiences and observations that constructed Billesley as a nice and safe place to live, a place one could be proud of. In the following example from Assil's story, there is a sense that outsiders have created a negative narrative about Billesley without knowing the area, which renders their story illegitimate, even more so as Assil affirms that it is a nice and safe place to live.

> I mean obviously it's got a bad reputation with other places in Bradford like "Oh Billesley we're not going down there". But there's no race issue in Billesley, you can drive through Billesley. People say "oh there's a race issue," but them people are those who don't have their ear to the ground and they kinda, they drive through, they might not even live in Billesley...they don't come out of their house, they don't walk around the streets or... you know, I'd feel safe to have me, my wife and my kid just walking through Billesley at 12 o'clock at night, I just wouldn't have an issue with it because I know it's not that type of place where you're going to get mugged or something like that is going to happen.

Contrary to some of the stories that I looked at in Chapter Six, Assil's story is of an improvement of Billesley over time. By telling it, he negotiates the story of decline by contesting it with an alternative truth, which results in a narrative shedding a positive light on the area. In another passage, his narrative strategy consists of shifting the responsibility for crime in Billesley onto outsiders who come into Billesley to cause trouble, and on reaffirming his feeling of safety when he is in

Billesley, both for himself and his family. In doing so, he apportions blame for negative events within Billesley to external forces, which reinforces the trends we observed in the first section:

> Local people never committed burglaries within Billesley, it were never heard of. People could trust each other and stuff and they still can you know. You know that your neighbours keep an eye on your house, somebody up the road is looking out for your house. They know you're away... You know, never heard of. If there's been burglaries in Billesley, it's been from professional criminals. There was some recent example of somebody who had a metal detecting machine for precious metal, come into their house, found their gold and leave everything else at it is you know TVs, DVDs, just professional picking up that stuff...local people don't have the brain to do that sort of stuff. So it's always been a safe kinda place to live in... I've always felt safe living there. But obviously when I got married you think about your child, and you think about the kind of people that you hang out with, so you think about that kind of situation a bit differently. You know you're safe, that your wife will probably be able to look after herself as well if it comes to it but your child is a child and you always want to be protective of them and stuff. You know I'd happily let my child play in Billesley. I don't have an issue with it. I know there's good people around and as soon as they know it's Assil's child they'll be looking after him...so never have an issue with that and people will tell you throughout your interviews that it's not a safe place to live or that there's anti-social behaviour and this and that but to be honest you haven't been to some of the places in Bradford, it is quite bad.

Here, he uses an interesting comparison, talking up Billesley by stating it is not as bad as other areas within the city. I will come back to that in the next section as it was another common strategy. Going back to the idea of Billesley as a nice place to

live, Leila calls on her family experience and adds to this story. She explains that several members of her family still live in Billesley and implies they have made a conscious decision to remain in the area. She takes this as a proof that it is nice.

Elizabeth's life-long story of living in Billesley brings a temporal dimension to the story of decline and the problem of outsiders' negative narratives. Indeed, whereas the past was heavily remembered positively by inhabitants and the story of decline succeeded to happier times, Elizabeth's testimony suggests that Billesley has traditionally suffered from an external bad reputation. Still, she suggests this was as unjustified then as it is now by highlighting the merits of the local school. Through remembering positive aspects about the area, she contributes to the construction of an alternative identity of Billesley. Fast-forward to more recent times, and Elizabeth contrasts again her own positive experience of living in Billesley to what outsiders say about it. She does allude to the fact that a specific area within Billesley is deemed to have even more problems than Billesley as a whole. However, she does not expand very much on this and is quick to add "Boys will always be boys," a narrative strategy relying on a common social myth to downplay any difficulties that may exist. Any acknowledgement of the negative story of Billesley, or of Bradford, seems to be followed by a counter-story presenting a positive characteristic of the city.

> But I say, you know, when we had a meeting at church with all the different groups of people, not that long ago, the only thing was there weren't any Eastern Europeans, I don't know why, but a West Indian lady and I we were invited to this meeting, they all said how friendly it was and yet you hear of all this badness that is around Billesley, and it's just a small, I mean, a lot of it is, I don't think I know that side... You know, boys will always be boys and gangs... You know, there's been a few shootings and stuff like that, but there is everywhere isn't there? But it has... Bradford has got a bad press hasn't it? And yet, it's lovely, because you only have to walk up the road here from here and you could see in the distance, it's

surrounded by the moors… And even near down St Michael's, on Wagon Lane above there, you can see right over, you know, it is nice.

Perhaps talking up Billesley reveals a deep attachment to it, a sense of pride that the narrators are happy to share in their stories, whether prompted or unprompted, and often still in opposition with their understanding of what "others" may say or think about Billesley. Expressing their pride in Billesley, the narrators communicate a positive story of the area, which is unexpected if the outsiders' negative story is to be believed, as demonstrated below.

> **Ilham**: So, yes, happy memories still of Billesley. And I think, having lived in Billesley for 30 years now almost, but living in [this postcode] a lot longer, we've taken a lot of pride in Billesley.

> **Leila**: I'm proud to say I'm from Billesley. I mean people used to say when we went to high school, "Are you from Billesley?" "Yeah" "Oh it's a bad area isn't it?" And we thought, well might be but we're not bad. Our area, our end's not it, you'd just defend your end wouldn't you but no, I've never had a problem, I like it in Billesley.

> **[MR]** How do you feel when you say you're from Billesley or from Bradford?
> **[Assil]** I'm proud to say it, and if anyone wants to challenge me on Billesley I'm happy to have a discussion with them.

> **Eleanor:** Am I proud to come, do you mean am I proud, yeah? Yeah, I've no problems! Yeah! When I got married I didn't move away, I lived 26 years there, yeah.

In this second section, it appeared that as they show awareness of a negative external story of Billesley, inhabitants construct an alternative positive story, which they present as a legitimate story of the area because it is anchored within their

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own personal experiences of living there, as opposed to the outsider story, which is not based on actual knowledge of Billesley. As such, the positive story told from within Billesley presents an alternative to the externally imposed negative view of Billesley and contributes to the articulation of a different identity.

## 3 – Comparing with other areas within Bradford and with other cities in the country: Normalising Bradford's experience

In dealing with the negative narratives about Billesley, the narrators often adopted a comparative narrative strategy. When they were talking about events or characteristics that may damage the image of Billesley, they tended to argue that "it's the same everywhere," thus downplaying the issue itself and subtly countering the culturally dominant storyline of "otherness" of Bradford by normalising Bradford's experience. In a couple of instances, they also put forward the idea that Billesley was better, or not as bad, as other places within Bradford, or in the country.

In the following excerpt, Ahmed displays awareness of the external discourse about Billesley, but in the context of this section, it is the end of the passage which is particularly relevant:

> I think it used to be a bad area, they used to say that. Those people who come into these and doing consultation. That's how they used to put Billesley into that. And there was a problem, I will accept that. There was a lot of lads who have been arrested for them Bradford riots happening in 2000...and I don't know, were they 2001 or something? Lot of kids were from Billesley – there might still be some drug dealing problem in Billesley but now I mean, I don't think it's happening... I think it's happening everywhere.

His narrative strategy is particularly interesting. On the one hand, Ahmed does not try to deny the negative image of Billesley, like others have done. On the other hand, he is quick to put in into context: first, he emphasises a positive change by

saying "I don't think it's happening" whilst talking of drug issues, and second, he contradicts himself as he tries to defend Billesley by assuring the audience drugs are not an issue specific to Billesley (implying there is a drug issue), thus attempting to minimise the problem. The upshot is that he argues for the non-specificity of the drug problem to Billesley, a strategy also deployed in other accounts.

In her story, Leila makes the case that it is difficult to know an area unless you have lived in it, implying a criticism of outsiders who have not lived in an area and still criticise it. Positioning herself at odds with such practice, she takes her own personal example to illustrate her case. Like Ahmed, she downplays the problems Billesley faces by saying that other areas have the same issues, but she reckons that Billesley is being picked on by others within Bradford.

> Well you wouldn't really [know] if you didn't live in Billesley. You only really know if like, if you've lived in Billesley you'd know how it is. For example I haven't lived anywhere else apart from Billesley and Woodgate but Woodgate is no different compared to Billesley, they're both the same, cos I know, we've had shooting in Woodgate, we've had drug riots and we've had you know the police being around and stuff. But wherever you are I think you get that, it's not just a particular area. It's just that certain areas are targeted more than others.

Then, just as Bradford fulfils a role within the national imagination, it seems that the same can be said of Billesley and other areas within Bradford at the micro-level of the city. In Leila's story, Billesley is the victim of a negative narrative within the city. Using a similar strategy, Ahmed bounces off the outsider's assumed outlook on Billesley to defend it by taking the particular example of drug problems again, and arguing it is not specific to Billesley, which includes a comparison with another area of Bradford with a seemingly better reputation:

> I mean Billesley is very nice. I mean I know how the outsider might look in this area, they will say well, Billesley is not a good area,

people having a drug problem and all that stuff. But this is happening

everywhere, isn't it. I mean it's not really Billesley. [...] I think it's

happening [drug problems] everywhere. I mean, Westwood area,

used to be one of the best areas. That's what the people used to say.

Now when you go there, it's a bad area now. They're saying, no it's

very bad because the drug dealers have got there now.

Assil recounts a personal experience of going to work in a different area of Bradford, and finding it "worse" than Billesley to reinforce the argument that I have explored before of saying that the bad reputation of Billesley is due to negative narratives spread by outsiders' to Billesley who have no real experience of living there:

But to be honest you haven't been to some of the places in Bradford,

it is quite bad. I was doing some detached work in Eastfield, and we

were going around and I saw this kid and he were smoking and I

thought oh he is smoking a cigarette and he must have been only

about 10. And I thought that's a bit weird that he's smoking a

cigarette, that's a bit young... and I got closer and he was smoking a

splif. It's like, you won't see that in Billesley, there's absolutely no

chance you'll see that in Billesley, a 10 year old kid doing that no

way. So some of the other areas are a lot worse, like I said those

people who give Billesley a bad name don't actually know it. They

can say, they have influence but they don't actually know what it's

really like.

In the excerpt below, George argues that Billesley faces problems like other inner city areas in the country. As he does so, he implicitly argues that using Bradford as a national example of a failing inner city is unjustified. Admittedly, this point is woven into a more typically negative story of the decline of Billesley:

Some of Billesley's a bit run down but I think that goes with a lot of

inner cities doesn't it? The other thing is of course, you can't walk

the streets at night like you could in my younger days. But that applies to every city doesn't it? That is a threat particularly in this area.

Again, Elizabeth uses the same comparative strategy. She uses the case of rioting to emphasise that street disturbances are not a unique phenomenon to Bradford but have happened in other places in the country. Implicitly, Elizabeth's comment takes an element that has become part of the identity of Bradford at the national level, the aspect of social unrest and rioting, and actively makes it non-specific to Bradford by reminiscing about riots that happened in other places. In a way then, it appears unjustified to single out Bradford for having had riots.

[MR] And people often comment on the riots in Bradford...

[Elizabeth] Well that's right, isn't it? And in Liverpool, there were some riots when I was at college there, Toxteth area.

[MR] When was that?

[Elizabeth] In the 50s... 59... I think there was some minor ones then and then there was some later ones in the 1980s or something as well. There are everywhere really you know, where there is a lot of people living together.

I would like to share a final example of the comparative strategy in the narratives of the participants. This time though, the comparison is about Bradford as a whole, rather than Billesley, and whereas in most of the previous extracts, there was an obvious downplaying of the problems that Billesley may encounter, and a push for the non-specificity of certain challenges, here, John recognises the difficulties that the city is facing. Yet, he contrasts it with another city, which makes Billesley look less poor in comparison:

I mean, I work in the centre of town, and when I walk round the centre of town you can see the poverty. Although I found a new place that is nearly the same as that on Saturday... The town centre of Morecambe, bloody nightmare. Went to Lancaster, which is really

quite nice actually, and then the front of Morecambe's not bad,

they've done it up. Then you walk into the town centre and think...

Hold on, I've come back to Bradford here. More shops are boarded

up and then all the people look poor. So... you know, Billesley, you

know, alright people are poor-ish but they are not that poor. It's still

got some kind of spirit around.

This is an interesting quote to end this section on, as it illustrates the complexity in identifying counter-narratives and in the resonance of culturally dominant storylines. Above, John's story displays an element also present in the culturally dominant storyline about Bradford, that of poverty, and clearly sanctions it as a reality. However, by drawing on his experience to compare Bradford to another city, and concluding that Bradford is "not all that bad after all," he contributes to challenging the "otherness" of Bradford as created by the national narrative on the basis of the non-specificity of the issues the city faces. However, whilst the rhetorical strategies and thus the construction of the stories indicate a counter-story, it seems that the terms of the stories remain limited and borrow from the culturally dominant storyline as so far, issues of poverty and crime appear to be accepted as inherent to the area.

In sum, participants often used comparison as a strategy to normalise Billesley and Bradford's experiences, even though in some cases it meant putting forward some aspects that may be deemed negative about the neighbourhood and the city. It goes to show that the overly positive story of Billesley developed as a reaction to the outside story may hide a more complex reality. The fact that John's story managed to present both stories side by side raises the issue of why other stories did not allow for both aspects to cohabit. Overall, the construction of the stories denotes a challenge to the externally constructed story, but there are hints that the contestation may be limited.

## 4 – Disassociation between people and place

In this final section, I look at another strategy to deal with the negative reputation of Billesley: a process of disassociation between people and place used to argue that no place is intrinsically "bad," only the people who live there make it a "good" or a "bad" area.  In this narrative, if one makes the choice of not getting "involved," then one should be able to stay out of trouble. People matter, not the place where they live, which denotes a contradiction with some of the observations made in Chapter Six. This is a view especially strong in Ahmed's narrative, as evident from his repetition of the point:

> **Excerpt 1**: And since then, we have actually settled here. I got my uncle here, I got my nephews here, grandchildren here, everybody in here now. So I mean, I don't think that any area is bad. It's the matter, the people matters, how you behave, how you live in your neighbourhood, I mean I never ever blame Billesley. When some people say well Manningham is not a good area. No. There's nothing wrong with Billesley, it's something to do with the people who live there.

> **Excerpt 2**: It's one of the best areas. Wherever you go, you see, if you make that area your own home, then I believe you can settle in any area.

> **Excerpt 3**: So why should I say Billesley is bad? I mean for me it's nothing wrong with Billesley. There might some street where something happened, it might be that you are...you got one or two people who are having a bad character and they do bad things but I don't want to blame Billesley on it. Billesley is nice and I want to spend my life in this area. Nothing wrong with this area to be honest. I mean some of the people can learn something and just educate their children well I think. It's one of the best areas. Wherever you

go, you see, if you make that area your own home, then I believe you can settle in any area.

But the same argument also comes through in Leila's story:

Then I went to Northfield School that was the centre of Billesley, I went there. And I never seemed to have a problem. I mean people did say stuff about Billesley, a lot of people who lived in, outside Billesley, were saying "oh my god you live in Billesley, it has a bad reputation," they look at you thinking "oh god." The people of Billesley might not be good but Billesley itself was ok.

Interestingly, a couple of illustrations of this very argument can be found in Ilham's narrative. First, she gives the example of a friend who, she evaluates, has succeeded in life, through her children, despite living in an area deemed "rough," emphasising her friend's agency in a story at odds with the common social myth that children growing on an estate will not succeed:

They can't say... You know, there is a perception "oh, you live on the estate, you don't do well, you're not successful" but she has. She is actually a living example that you can, if you work with your children and school, it's irrelevant where you live, and she is a living example to show that, and she still lives on the estate.

Second, she also emphasises the importance of people rather than place by offering an example of how a local "personality" contributed to making Billesley better through her commitment to it:

I mean Eric would have mentioned her because he knew her as well, but she was such an inspiration for me, she really was, doing community work, and she didn't get paid, she did it in her own time, and it really made me appreciate that I was actually being valued, even though I wasn't really employed, I was just a volunteer, and she helped so much and just gave me that confidence, and I don't know

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she just said I can see you'll go far! You know, when you're working with somebody who's old, and you're about 25, 26, you know, you've just coming up to finding yourself in life, what do I want to do? You know, and so through her I got such lovely jobs through the council and I've been working ever since for the council, so yeah, she's done a lot for Billesley.

This is particularly relevant here in terms of the identity of Billesley that it creates. We saw in the previous chapter how the collective stories of Billesley constructed it both in a physical and community sense, anchoring the accepted story of decline in both aspects. In the narrative strategy of disassociation between people and place though, community and social relations are put at the heart of Billesley's identity, with the physical location becoming almost irrelevant. It signals a belief in the individual's retention of agency, and strongly emphasises the potential for (positive) change driven by the inhabitants of a certain area. The positive story of Billesley becomes intrinsically linked to the choices that its inhabitants make, as in Assil's story of success, deeply rooted in an agentive understanding of the individual:

I'm not one of them youth workers that are like, there's some youth workers that would say "Oh young people they didn't do that, they didn't do that, why do you always blame the young people?" Because sometimes young people are to blame. And I was a young person and I was brought up in the exact same manner as you and I was born in the same area as you, and I had the same opportunities as you and I weren't a criminal, I never went to prison, I've never been in trouble with the police. So you can't always blame the situation, you can't always have that victim mentality you know. I'm quite proud to say that I've seen a lot of the world, and I'm quite proud to say that I'm married, I've got a kid and I've got a good life I mean. I'm earning good money but I'm from the same situation as you and you can't say oh but you're clever or you had a good schooling and stuff. But I didn't. I came out of school before GSCEs

and that wouldn't give me a job as a forklift driver. It's just what you

do with the opportunities that are in front of you. I don't feel sorry

for people. But then again I don't go out of my way to disrespect

people and make them feel bad. But people need another reality,

you don't have to be that self-fulfilling prophecy you know. People

are saying, you're bad you're bad you're bad, then you become bad.

You don't have to do. You can be something else.

Then, in this final section, we have seen how inhabitants retain agency through their stories of making active choices about how they live their lives within Billesley, even if it is making the decision not to "get involved" within the area. What matters is that they perceive and articulate it as what they have chosen to do. Disassociation between people and place can be seen as a way of dealing with the threat from the outside story on the identity of the place, which also threatens the identity of those who live there. So, participants countered the existing story by reclaiming an active role in the narrative of the area.

## Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown evidence that inhabitants of Billesley are aware of the existence of a story about Billesley constructed by outsiders and characterised by negative images of the area. Due to the interview context, the stories focused on Billesley but some of the narrators also talked about how Bradford appears to be the recipient of similarly negative stories. In their own stories and observations about life in Billesley, the narrators mobilised a range of strategies to counter the externally constructed negative story. They often exposed elements of it and contradicted it, defending Billesley by using their own personal experience, which was presented as a legitimate narrative of Billesley as opposed to the illegitimate story of outsiders. Doing so, they affirmed a positive counter-story of Billesley, comparing it with other places both within Bradford and within the UK, which contributed to challenging the otherness of Billesley, and of the city. Finally, a narrative strategy of disassociating people and place meant that an alternative identity of Billesley was constructed, one focused on the power of individuals to

overcome the negative narrative to lead positive and agentive lives within Billesley. Countering the negative story occasionally led to discussing some of the challenges that Billesley faces, but they were downplayed either as untrue or non-specific to Billesley. This showed how the positive insider story and the negative outsider story did not cohabit well in the context of the interview. When they were discussing the outsider story, most speakers had a definite positioning on the side of the positive story. Thus, they were engaged in complex negotiations of a public discourse in ways that contested existing stories. There are indications though that there may be a need to qualify the extent of this negotiation and ultimately question the retention of agency. If the construction and content of the stories were explicitly countering an external and dominant story, it was not obvious that the terms of the stories differed from those of the wider discursive context.

# Chapter 8 – Parallel stories: unheard tales of the city and their limitations

## Introduction

This chapter takes up the issue of agency that the previous one introduced to explore it further to consider the extent to which individual stories reflect or contest existing collective stories and what this reveals about the relationship between individual and collective narratives of urban spaces. In Chapter Seven, I observed how the negative story of Billesley was countered by individual stories by virtue of their content and explicit construction against an external story of the area. In this chapter, I explore "parallel stories," which reveal elements of life in Billesley relevant to the participants but whose content has been unheard so far and not constructed directly in opposition to the dominant stories. Through those, the inhabitants of Billesley seemed to be retaining a degree of agency. However, there were also indications in the counter-stories of Chapter Seven and the "parallel stories" of this chapter that beyond the content of the stories itself and their construction, their terms remained limited, not necessarily by the culturally dominant story of Bradford, but by the wider discursive context in which it is situated. Then, I also consider the need to qualify the retention of agency of the individuals and ultimately what this means in terms of dominance and contestation of stories in the contested urban space.

In the first section, I explore how a sense of belonging was articulated through expressions of attachment to Billesley. Then, in the second section, I look at how attachment translated into a commitment to the area. In the third section, in contrast with the story of decline in Chapter Six, I give evidence of positive perceptions of change over time, amounting to a story of betterment of the area. In a fourth and final section, I look at the limitations of the parallel stories and what

they reveal about the dynamics of storytelling between individual and collective stories.

# 1 – Sense of belonging and attachment

In the dominant public stories, Bradford is often presented as a place people want to leave, especially young people, or white and/or middle-class people. Indeed, we did see in the first section that narratives of movement out of Billesley were present in the participants' accounts. However, I also found that they had a strong sense of belonging and attachment to Billesley, a type of story that is not necessarily put forward in the public stories. Here, I will explore how the narrators expressed their sense of belonging through an attachment to people or an attachment through work, all amounting to a sense of home and a perception of being rooted in Billesley.

## a – Attachment through connections to others

First, the narrators strongly linked their attachment to the place to their connections with people, and the existence of support networks, as Matt and Leila testify:

> **Matt**: Actually if you asked these guys I'm always walking the streets. You know, and I meet people and I talk to people. And I've watched them grow up, I've watched them grow up and become solicitors, some have become chemist and I've watched quite a few as well go the other way. But it's like that's all I feel. If I'm so well adjusted here that if I need a plumber at 12 o'clock at night I don't have to go in the yellow pages, because we are like a family and we are that well connected that you know, I just ring somebody and say 'oh do you know a plumber?' 'yeah' and so on. This is the kind of, this is why I like living here. Because in a way it's a kind of feeling I had when I lived in the Caribbean. I really sort of enjoying living here.

**Conversation with Leila:**

[MR]Fair enough. So do you think...have you made, did you really decide to stay in Billesley?

[Leila] Yeah! I've never had a problem, I've always liked Billesley. I think it's just like a small community, it's quite nice.

[MR] So you say it's a small community, who's part of that community?

[Leila] Well, for example when we lived on Birchley Grove all us lot around Birchley Grove, we'd just get involved together. If we were doing something we'd let each other know that so and so is happening or that there's a trip going on and that this is happening. We'd just tell each other like word of mouth. So it was just helping hands.

Ilham makes sense of her inability to move away from Billesley by explaining her attachment to the area through aspects such as as friendships and a sense of being involved in Billesley which contribute to her sense of place:

And if, when the kids have gone, we want to downsize, we will look, but not too far, because I don't want to leave the friends and the things and initiatives I've developed in Billesley, I don't want to go too far. And I think, you know with me 50 now, there's no possible way I want to go start up somewhere else.

Admittedly, in the following quote, Sophie talks about a different area of Bradford. But the important point here is again the emphasis on the link between people and attachment, rather than Billesley itself. Indeed, she describes loving a specific area despite its bad reputation:

[Sophie] Heathland, yes we used to live in Heathland. I loved Heathland.

[MR] Why was that?

[Sophie] And that's supposed to be a rough area. I liked Heathland, going back then though, it's like all me friends, all me school friends were from that area, so as you do, you go where your schoolmates are. Still got some friends, still are friends today. Still see each other.

In her testimony, Elizabeth also explains attachment through connection to people. Interestingly, she describes being attached to a particular area within Billesley, but not necessarily the whole of Billesley. Once again, the divisions within Billesley are made relevant within the inhabitants' stories.

[MR] So would you say you feel attached to Billesley then?

[Elizabeth] Well to this area yeah. Not necessarily really to the bottom of Billesley.

[MR]Up here then?

[Elizabeth] Yeah

[MR] And so why do you think you feel that way?

[Elizabeth] Well possibly because when I go out I don't meet people in Billesley, you know down there... I go to the hairdresser's and then... But on the other hand if I do go down there to the hairdresser's I quite often do meet somebody, who go to church or who I know.

[MR] So why do you feel attached to up here?

[Elizabeth] Because when you go out I know people, and I've known people for a long time so it's people I know.

Interestingly, in spite of the points raised above and in the previous section about attachment through people and disassociation between people and place, certain comments also showed that the physical environment is of importance, and practical concerns such as accessibility matter. The reader may remember Ahmed's insistence on how people make a place, and not the other way round. Yet, here, as he justifies his choice to remain in Billesley, he emphasises the quality of the amenities available to him:

> I mean I personally like Billesley, I think I won't leave this area, and the facilities are there, there's the local mosque nearby, there's actually 3 mosques in our area, there's the schools nearby, all the family nearby if you need them in bad time they will come straightaway. So if you look at those things you know, then it's very good.

Although talking about a different area, George also notes the importance of the facilities available that help a resident feel connected to a place:

> Well, Vale [...], it's urban, brilliant bus service, shops, I mean at the bottom of my drive, for argument's sake, speaking personally, I can get on a bus and I can get up to BRI and I can step out of one bus, straight to Interchange and I can step on another and I'm straight out of here, for contacts and communication straight onto motorway network. It's ideal.

Rather than highlighting the contradictions within individual stories, with for example the physical space deemed important at some times but not at others, this is an example of the residents' complex negotiation of public discourse and creativity in articulating their own story. At this point, the purpose of the stories is to justify living in a particular area, and so the residents mobilise the themes they need to make sense of the material reality of being located in a physical space.

## b – Attachment through work

Going into the field, one of my working assumptions had been that attachment to the area was linked to the fact that it is the place where someone lives, and I will explore that further when I look at how people spoke about "home." However, I had not anticipated that there could be a strong attachment through work, as in John and Eric's cases. Admittedly, it is only one of the facets of their attachment to Billesley, as they were both born and grew up in Billesley. Still, it is worth noting that they have both moved out of Billesley since, but their work, either paid or voluntary, is deeply rooted there. John tells the story of moving away from

Bradford due to work, and of coming back both for paid work, and in his retirement for voluntary work:

Excerpt 1: So I lost the link with Billesley but then when I worked in Dewsbury I kept, you know, I was a teacher for a number of years and gradually when a job came up in Bradford in 1985 so I came back home, but still didn't live in Billesley but did some of my work in Billesley as a youth officer.

Excerpt 2: I was involved as a contact officer for the youth centre there, amongst my other jobs throughout the city. So I was involved from 84 right through to when I retired in 2003. I retired from the council in 2003 and then after 2003 then I kept on my links with Billesley in terms of me voluntary work so, you know, [this postcode], Billesley became my [unclear] where I was chair of the youth centre, chair of the youth club, [organisation], Wichnor, keeping my links with Billesley... generally keeping my links although I live on the edge of Billesley...

Similarly, Eric talks about how he and other friends have moved out to live somewhere else, but have come back to Billesley to work. He speaks of a strong attachment to the area due to his familiarity with it, and the ease of navigating within it, be it the physical space or the community:

So we've all moved, but we're all working here, and we've all come back, do you know what I mean? So no matter where you go, metaphorically, you always come back anyway. Which is great for me, because everything's here. You know, because you feel safe. Maybe that's what it is, you feel safe, you don't want change, you know there's loads of things. But no, it's easy. It's nice talking to people, you know everybody. It's good.

Again, one could see a contradiction in Eric's story, as in Chapter Six I pointed out how he reflected on the elderly population's tendency to dislike change. Yet, here, he acknowledges that change may bring about uncertainty and that a reason for feeling attached to Billesley is the sense of continuity that the area gives him. Beyond the apparent contradiction, Eric's narrative shows how he actively constructs his story to serve different purposes at various points of the interview interaction.

## c – Billesley as a "home"

All of the above seems to culminate in a strong feeling of attachment and connectedness with Billesley, sometimes also with Bradford, encapsulated by descriptions of the feeling of being at home and especially the idea of roots, despite moving away. In John's words:

> Coming back home. The idea of... you know... Bradford is my home... Billesley is sort of home... feel much more allegiance with something like that and basically what I said about me politics and hopefully... although my wife would love to, she thinks she would love to live in Ilkley but she'd hate it. We go and see these big houses and "Oh I would love to live there" and I said "Look as a Black person and the only Black person in Billesley you wouldn't. You'd want to come back to get your hair done, you'd want to get your food so..." I've said... so that's not me putting me foot down but she realises it's not quite true. She still wants to go back home to the Caribbeans...

To Assil, the fact that he has travelled around and has worked in other areas makes him appreciate Billesley even more as home. In his story, having left the area for a while has given a new dimension to his relationship with his birth place. In his case, leaving and travelling led to a strong feeling of attachment to Bradford, especially Billesley. It may not be the case for everyone, but it was relevant to Assil's story and to some others'.

> And obviously I've got an affinity to Billesley cos I've lived there all my life and stuff but I always look forward to coming back to the

place. I've been to some of the best places in the world, do you know what I mean? I've been to 24 countries but coming up the M606 coming up to Bradford like I say it's just home isn't it, you can't replace home. It's always been...And it's not like I've kinda only worked in Billesley, I wanted to challenge myself when I was doing my placement. I worked in Leeds. I could have picked an easy placement, I could have said to Helen[36] "Come on, give me a placement for 6 - 8 weeks" and she would have said yeah. But I wanted to challenge myself and do something different and I worked in a white estate you know really racist white estate in Leeds, because you want to, you know, broaden your experience and maybe have that kinda bad experience cos you can learn from that, any experience you can learn from, so I'm not one of them kinda insular people in Billesley, everything's about Billesley cos they haven't seen the world but I know the beauties of Billesley because I can compare them to other places in the world so you know, it is good. The community always feels like you're part of something, especially at cricket, people know you, oh you're part of the cricket club or whether you're at the mosque and people are coming to meet you and say "Alright Assil", work again, doing community work you're part of something, everybody interlinks and kinda knows each other from maybe...not just one place but two places or one person might know me from cricket and the mosque and another person from football and work or... you know, lots of people interlink and stuff so it's really good.

This is strikingly different from the image of Bradford as a place that young people want to leave. Admittedly, it could be related to Assil's specific positioning within Billesley, as someone who has lived there for a long time, has chosen to live there

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[36] A community worker.

with his family, and is actively involved in the community through sport and volunteering. Yet, this story is relevant to him, and it is what matters in terms of a complementary story to the existing stories.

To Ilham, home is where you settle down to have your family. Like others, she mentions a bond with her place of birth, and where she grew up, but there is a stark difference between past and present and home is very much her present, with a continuity with a more recent past than her early childhood:

> I think when you grow up somewhere, even though I grew up in Kenya, we go back from time to time, and I have gone back to Mumbai, so I have looked where I was born, where I lived, but actually that's all in the past and you're quite young then, and you do have very fond memories of it, but I think it's where you develop, though, your family, your relationship, your children, and that's what becomes home to you, and I think I probably felt more at home here when I had my children. Because then you know you're secure, you're here to stay, you're not going to move. And having been living in this house, we moved here in 83, so it'll be nearly 30 years now that we've actually lived in this house!

Similarly, Ahmed's narrative of home is linked with the places where he has settled, and like Ilham, his place of birth has become somewhere to visit rather than somewhere to live and call home:

> I'm very attached, very attached. I don't think I have any intention of moving out from this area. And all of my kids are settled here, they're all in Billesley, they're all living happily. I mean nobody in my household talks about moving out now. [...] I mean, my future will be here. Whatever the life I have will spent in Billesley. I mean, even, I said to my family that if I pass away, don't take me to Pakistan, don't take my body to Pakistan. Just bury me here in Bradford you see. So, it's my home now. It's not that...In the beginning we said we'd go

back but that never happened. And we're settled here. My kids are here, my whole family are here so I mean I still go there to Pakistan, but that's just a holiday. Because you get some peace of mind there, you don't really worry about everything...

Another aspect of home is that it feels safe and some of the stories highlight the sense of safety that contributes to the attachment to a place – particularly well expressed in Ilham's story of trying to move out of Billesley but not managing to go through with it for a range of reasons – including the idea of "feeling safe." I have already mentioned how she talked a lot about the idea of moving out of the area, and goes back to it here:

> Two years ago we wanted to sell, put the house up for sale, we went to see the estate agents, we listed it, everything. We had it valued, but do you know, everywhere we looked, I didn't like it, I didn't like it, it's a bungalow that I do want, eventually because I want it all the same level for my condition to be able to not go up and down all the time. There were some properties we saw, beautiful properties, not far, and we're driving in the street and I say to Joe, and I say "It's alright, I don't want to see this," And he said "for goodness sake! We haven't even gone in yet!" And do you know what it is? It was the feel of Billesley. I didn't like it, I didn't feel welcome, I didn't feel safe, I didn't feel, I don't know! That feeling wasn't there. "I don't want to see the house, I don't like it!" As soon as we drove up in some streets, I just said "I don't like it here." I had to feel that it was, I don't know, wanted, felt welcome, felt safe, felt secure, and I think that comes with, I don't know, where you grow up I suppose. If I was, say anything happened and I had to go live somewhere, I'm sure I'd be fine. But there's nothing like coming home where you know you feel safe. Where you belong. I just felt like I didn't belong in those streets.

This is especially interesting in terms of a parallel narrative and negotiating contradictory stories as Ilham was one of the people who had put a strong emphasis on the issue of lack of safety in the story of decline of the area, as seen in Chapter Six. This is an apparent inconsistency in her story, which raises the question of her positioning and her purpose at different points of the interview. In this specific excerpt, she may be affirming the feeling of safety she has in the area as she tries to make sense of her inability to move away from Billesley. In contrast, in Chapter Six, her story was more about exploring one of the reasons why she feels protective of her children, but she was also talking about changes in Billesley and in lifestyles in general.

Overall, this section is about parallel stories in that the narratives explore the idea of feeling attached to an area, putting forward the personal and almost intimate relationship that the inhabitants have with Billesley. This kind of story is not so much present in the dominant existing stories. Through the various ways of feeling attached that sometimes contradicted some of the other aspects of the narrators' commentary and storytelling, we are reminded that there are many truths about life in Billesley, and these various narrative truths can coexist to help the narrators make sense of their experience as they negotiate the public stories and shape their identities in the meaning they give to place, events, and people. Through their content and their construction not obviously in opposition to or reinforcing the culturally dominant narrative, these stories show how the individuals retain a complex if sometimes contradictory understanding of their situation.

## 2 – Commitment to community

In this section, I explore the stories of commitment to "the community" told by the participants, whether they were talking about the organisations they were involved in or explaining their motivations for getting involved in such work. This is an unusual story about Billesley in terms of its content, and one that is also not present in the dominant stories of Bradford. Admittedly, the prominence of it here may be linked to the specific positioning of the inhabitants I managed to interview,

recruiting them mainly through a local church and a local community organisation. However, it remains that community involvement was meaningful to them and deserves to be investigated as such.

Ilham tells her story of getting involved with the local advice centre as a young person who was unemployed. After volunteering there for a short while she explains that she found paid work, but carried on volunteering in the area as she thought it was important to give back to "the community," especially considering she had benefitted from being given an opportunity at the advice centre. She goes on to list no less than five organisations that she is involved with in Billesley on a regular basis. Similarly, Matt lists the voluntary work that he does in the area. To him, this is part of his attachment to Billesley, and has provided him with a sense of continuity within "the community" as he has got to know people, has now known them for a long time, and compares it to a small close-knit village. From a professional point of view, he also adds that living in the area and being involved in such a way has meant that he discovered the type of work he wanted to do and it has been a turning point in his life, highlighting how the locality has been relevant to his personal journey:

> If I'd lived anywhere else in the UK right, I don't think I would have
> been able to experience what I've experienced here and sort of
> professionally as well, it's moved me on in life, because of my
> involvement in what I did, eventually I went into community
> development because I saw it was what I wanted to do.

He tells the story of how his voluntary work came about, and how it stemmed from a desire to see Billesley improve as an area:

> When I first moved here it was a dump right. Initially it was a dump,
> there was rubbish thrown all over the places, there was un-kept
> parks, there was litter all over the places. And my real bit of
> community involvement started when we, we used to be writing bids
> to see how we could actually improve Billesley. We successfully got

some money for the Birchley Park, and that was sort of the kick start. And after that it kinda got me going but you know it was us getting together with a cup of coffee or what not and sitting there and chatting and writing bids and stuff like that and you know.

Several participants articulated the idea of giving back to "the community," and emphasised the importance of helping others. Mahmoud was one of them, as he considered he had benefitted from a privileged schooling (although he tells me that it was by chance), which led him to want to make a difference for his peers, and the younger generation:

It was the fact that I was in a privileged school, all the ideas that were being pumped into my mind, all the things that had [unclear], the success in school stuff, it was making me into a certain type of character, and that was not happening with them, and that really dawned on me after, how much an influence school can have on you and it was a real eye opener, it really was and I think that's when the seeds were laid of wanting to do something for my community, like teach by having high expectations of them because the impression I got was apart from the fact that some of my peers in the community were lacking the facilities, I got the distinct impression as well from the stories, anecdotes and stories and discussions that we had, I got the impression that the teachers, some of them, they weren't really bothered about them, they had already written them off, you know, "these Pakistani lads" or "these Asian lads, they're not going to get anywhere" so I got the impression that some teachers had already written them off, and it bothered me. Because I'd been obviously benefitting from teachers that were really motivating and having high expectations and stuff, so I decided to go into teaching.

In the case of George, moving away has not weakened his and his wife's links with Billesley and they both come back for voluntary work, also to give back to the place that once was their "community."

> I'm available on a Monday, and on a Friday afternoon, because those are my allocated hours, which I do on a voluntary basis. So putting back into the community if you like! So that's me involvement and that's why I've always gone back to Billesley, for that, having spent a lot of my years here, good years, really, so and you see Eleanor was bred and born in Billesley, so she knows a lot of people, I've always been drawn back to this particular area.

Like Ilham, Assil considers he benefited from the work of a local organisation as a young person, and now volunteers for the same organisation:

> And then I kinda came full circle so going from a 12 year old coming to visit that place, I'm now the vice chair on the management committee. Now I'm seeing we can work with other young people and develop other young people. It's been a massive part of my life, it really has. [...] [And] I seriously don't mind, you know, sometimes you think why am I giving my time up for something? But with this I'd give up a lot of time for it. If somebody says to me you've got a football match tomorrow or Helen's asking you to do something, I'd do it for Helen and I love football. So you can just imagine... cos I know how important it's been in my life and how important it is in other people's lives.

There was a real emphasis on the fact that voluntary work was for the wider "community," and not for specific groups, especially not ethnic groups. Ilham, for example, talks of an organisation which was originally for Afro-Caribbeans, but that in the summer welcomes children from any background who come from families with low incomes. Below, Issam talks of the importance of trying to help all who face difficult situations, especially looking after the elderly:

So we used to do voluntary, we love to help. It's not just the Asian community, we help every community. You know. And especially with the elders, I feel really sorry for the elders, the pensioners, they fought in the Second World War, they worked in the mills and factories and everything. And at the end of the day the government ordered new council or anything, they should give at least a decent house, a decent life. What they have put in. Unfortunately we've taken everything from them. And that is wrong. That's what I do not like. Because they worked hard to build this country. And through them we've done everything. But unfortunately, you know, we've sort of taken things from them. Like the heating, old people are cold. They need their heat. And then they get bills, like two to three hundred pounds, on a pension of seventy, eighty pounds, how are they going to survive? These little things, if we look at it, instead of looking at the bigger picture, the very small things inside the community and try to help them out. So that's what we have here on Tuesday, I think it's on Tuesdays now, or is it Tuesdays or Wednesdays, something like that. For £3, you can get a three course meal.

For Mahmoud, it was about reaching out to children from different backgrounds as he explains that deprivation and lack of opportunities are a reality for children from a range of ethnic backgrounds:

I know the poorer end, I'm not just saying Muslims, Asians or whatever, because there was lots of people you know, white working class estates, there's that same situation with people in them, they've got low confidence, low self-esteem, got lots of social problems in the home, so it was really a lot of these working class deprived children, any background, I was really wanting to have an impact on them, really inspire them and get them to believe and feel good about themselves and have success and stuff.

Similarly, John's desire to become involved within the community came from being given an opportunity as a child, and wanting to give that opportunity to younger generations:

I always reflect on when I left grammar school. I didn't go on to university straight away I went abroad for a year. In the induction [for the trip abroad], we had an induction week at Manchester university, and I think it were about 40 or 50 volunteers about going abroad and I must have been the only, there was maybe only a couple of us who had come from state schools, everybody else was public schools and it just made me realise, all those people who came from public school had never identified [unclear] they were all destined for [success] in their lives, whereas all the people from state school they were destined for failure... Failing GCSEs, failing this, failing that, you know, and I think that's why I were privileged and that's why I always go back to me roots really in terms of projects like this. You have to give kids better opportunities than the kids who go to public schools [unclear]... And that shaped my politics because when I was growing up, it was very much, certainly, my politics with a capital P, so basically I think that's why I've accepted work... I've tended to work with disadvantaged groups etc. so I try to give some empowerment, I don't know how good I am but, some empowerment... But when you are brought up in a place like this, you do, you know, you realise that it's not that easy, and nowadays, kids are under much more pressure than we were. You know, I've talked about peer pressure but luckily my peer pressure worked with, I had peers who tended to achieve things, whereas if I had gone with the kids in [another area of Billesley], if I had mixed with them, I would have failed, I wouldn't have passed you know...

The stories of commitment to the community are particularly significant here as, like those of belonging, they do not feature in the culturally dominant storyline. They construct Billesley and Bradford differently, and show how important the residents believe the locality has been in terms of the people they have met, the work they have gone on to do, even the lives they have gone onto live. Although in Chapter Six, the observations tended to amount to a decline in the community spirit, the stories of commitment to the community reveal a type of cooperation and support network that is meaningful to the inhabitants and can be interpreted as an alternative but nonetheless legitimate type of community spirit.

## 3 – A story of betterment? Positive perceptions of change over time

This section works in conversation with the first section of chapter 6: Pessimistic tales – A story of decline. Although there is less evidence of positive change over time compared with negative change over time, there are nevertheless a number of occasions when participants emphasised how Billesley had changed for the better. Interestingly, familiar themes came up again, such as physical change, looking out for each other, and safety, with the addition of general observations about Billesley as a neighbourhood, highlighting a range of contradictions in the inhabitants' construction of reality within Billesley.

Concerning physical change, Eleanor had a positive example of how Billesley had changed, especially in terms of housing: "I think a lot of the terraced houses have been modernised, lovely you know, which in those days they weren't." Although admittedly, she continues "I think, I don't think it's the same with the housing, the type of housing, in that a lot of the modern housing I think it's lost a lot of its character, a lot of its neighbourly, I think when they transformed Wagon Lane that split, it caused, you know, a big divide." This is especially interesting in that it reveals the possible contradictory feelings towards Billesley. In addition, as the reader may recall, I used a quote from Matt's interview that encapsulated the idea

of decline over time in Billesley to open the sub-section on negative perceptions of change. Yet, a little later in our conversation, he stated:

> I've seen the place change, I've seen when that place was all littered up now it's got a nice area around that's been landscaped and stuff like that. I've watched it change so much. But to someone who's just come in, they wouldn't see it like I have seen it. But I have seen how much Billesley physically has improved.

In this passage, Matt constructs a very different identity for the area than the one he had created before, raising the question of what lies behind the two aspects of his narrative and of the complexity of place narratives.

Again, concerning the sense of support and looking out for each other, Ilham was explaining how nowadays, she would not consider telling off someone else's children on the street. Still, she relates this area-specific and personal anecdote:

> But in this area we're so fortunate, we still have some of that [looking out for others' children]. Because the community around here will know obviously who my boys are, and they all know where we live and what I do and what their dad does and so they will come and say so, I remember one man just down there, his children went to the local secondary school, and he said "He shouldn't be playing with those lads, because those lads aren't very good characters," So that made me sort of think about who was he hanging around with.

Her original comment on one's inability to engage with others' children's behaviour was made in general and non-area specific terms, making her story of decline perhaps more about society in general rather than specifically about Billesley. On the contrary, this part of her story is rooted in her personal experience in the area. As she tells this, she offers a different story of Billesley, one where rather than having been lost, the "community spirit" she remembers so fondly from growing up in Wichnor Place persists. In fact, in our second meeting, she remembers an

occasion on which she herself felt compelled to tell children off for playing around a memorial to a local volunteer who had dedicated some of their life to Billesley.

There are a couple of observations that are made on safety, and noticeably on the part the police have come to play in Billesley. Leila contrasts past and present, regarding police presence in Billesley, and presents the area in a positive light, which is coherent with what we know of her interview and interaction with me:

> **[Leila]** I think, to be honest with you, since [Regeneration Scheme] has been involved, it's improved because the police are actually patrolling on the road, that's helping, I mean they did have community wardens patrolling on the road, so stuff like that does help, cos you know that somebody's got their eyes open around.
>
> **[MR]** Is that something that didn't happen before?
>
> **[Leila]** No, well I never saw any, we never used to see the police.

This story of police presence and involvement is also rehearsed in Assil's testimony:

> And just like...it's generally a nice place Billesley and it's just turned into something...and it was like...it must have been the duration of maybe a year when it just like...It was just one thing after another after another somebody's just shot at somebody's windows or this has happened...what the hell has just happened to Billesley? It's just become a war zone pretty much and knives and guns what's happened. The best thing that's happened for Billesley in the recent years is the new inspector of our area is really tough on drugs and a lot of them people who were causing trouble are now in prison and again it's become a better place to live again, it's become something that it used to be, you know, a nice place to live, or a decent place to live.

Although those do not relate directly to the feelings of fear of crime described in Chapter Six or to the experiences of being a victim of crime as told by others, it

does give a different view on approaches to safety as perceived by some within "the community." It means that the issue of safety within Billesley is a complex one, and depending on who tells the story it contributes to building the identity of Billesley positively or negatively, creating a degree of ambivalence within the stories of decline and betterment.

In terms of education, I already noted the ambivalence in Mahmoud's story, in which he described education both as a way of improving on previous generation, but also as a mechanism of alienation. Here, Ahmed talks from a different perspective to Mahmoud's, that of an earlier generation of migrants to the UK and unequivocally praises education. Interestingly, Mahmoud's story was more an evaluation of the situation in society at large, whereas Ahmed's story is very much area-specific and linked to the industrial identity of Billesley. Ahmed's case is that education became important in the area specifically because of its industrial past:

> The most people of Billesley they were all these textile workers, most of them, I mean including myself, I used to work in textile, I was lucky to have a job in office then, very, very lucky. But a lot of people were not lucky and actually stayed in the factories, mills and all the stuff. But what thing change is that their children, not all the children I won't say that, but a lot of people have raised their children well despite their own... because they were not actually educated, but they tried, they worked hard so that their children could get some education and they're having a good job. In Billesley there's so many people, so many kids having a good job around, pharmacies, solicitors, barristers, all these people can be found in Billesley. So their parents spent their whole life in textile, but they knew that there is no future in the textile, that everything depends on the education and they tried hard. I mean I myself tried my best to give my child education.

He then adds:

Despite that they tried hard to raise their children and give them a good education, good future and now a lot of parents are enjoying themselves and they're happy because they see their children are prosperous and having a good job. [...] A lot of kids had a lot of good education, and I think this is a positive point.

Finally, I would like to reflect on a couple of quotes that do not necessarily fit into any of the themes I have identified so far, but which contribute to the sense of betterment of Billesley that I have explored here. The first is about home ownership, and reveals Ahmed's association between home ownership and positive change. At one point in his interview, he explained to me how he believes no area was intrinsically "bad," with the exception of council estates, although he did add that he could not explain why this was. Later, as we discuss Billesley, he then tells me:

The thing I've seen was that there was a council estate, here as well in Billesley, which was called Birchley [...]. But that area's got better now. The thing is because a lot of people actually bought the properties for their own use and there's... the tenants are reducing, there's no sort of tenants.

I would argue that what is important is the perception of improvement of the neighbourhood, which results in a positive story being told about Billesley – not the personal opinion about council estates, or home ownership for that matter, but the positive story about an area in which people have more at stake because they own their homes. In sum, Ahmed makes a link between home ownership and sense of community.

The second quote is an observation by Eric on people moving back to Billesley. Throughout the two previous chapters, I highlighted that there was an issue around movement out of Billesley, especially in relation to the slum clearance of the early

1980s, which was seen by many as having broken down "the community." Eric, describing what happened in the 1980s, has noticed a positive trend though:

> And those communities were sort of sent to the four corners of Bradford, if you like, and over the last sort of, I don't know, ten, fifteen years, those communities have been coming back, so you see a really good African Caribbean population in Billesley, a good Pakistani population in Billesley, people've started coming back because they're the roots.

In Eric's statement, there is a sense of positivity, not only about the present but also about the future of Billesley, with a suggestion that people feel attached to it and are coming back to their roots. This sense of attachment to Billesley reflects positively on the area, as a place remembered for its "community spirit," which can create a desire to go back to it.

All of the above leads some of the interviewees to put forward and sometimes list the benefits of living in Billesley. This is particularly relevant in terms of the positive image of the area that it conveys. Far from wanting to leave, there are a range of reasons that mean the interviewees are making conscious (agentive) choices to remain in Billesley. Elizabeth and Doris narrated some of their story in such terms, but it is perhaps best illustrated by Ahmed's narrative:

> Billesley is a nice place to live in. I mean my son he is computer programmer somewhere, he works in [...] company. I mean sometimes he says that we need to move on to some other area. And I say, Ok, look the benefits here and then compare these benefits there. If you think you will get all these benefits like local mosque, I can take your children to the mosque locally without driving, there's relatives round here if we have some difficulty they come to help. If you can find all these I will go with you. But, it is not the case you see. I think Billesley is a nice place to live. It's that I live in it, that's what I'm saying, I mean it's over 30 years now. If this area

would have been bad obviously I would have moved out and secondly I had a job here as well in this centre, which is almost about two minutes' walk from my home. So that's very good, isn't it? And I've been in this job over 21 years now. [...] I mean, my home is just there. I go for lunchtime home, come back and if there's any problem at home, I mean I could go straightaway. There's not much problem in that sense because it's just there. So Billesley – terrific. No problem with Billesley in my view.

## 4 – Limitations of the counter and parallel stories: Terms of the stories and dynamics of individual and collective stories

Having mostly focused on the construction and content of the individual stories, which have so far suggested a different and possibly unheard story of life in Bradford, I would now like to focus on the terms of these stories. In Chapter Seven, I have already noted how the counter stories seemed to be limited by the terms of the culturally dominant storyline. A closer reading of the parallel stories reveals that despite their content and construction suggesting they are not like the stories explored in Chapter Six and Seven, they remain limited by the terms of the collective stories that have become dominant. In that sense, the agency of individuals can be seen as narrow. This can be illustrated with a range of examples.

First, it is interesting to note the different meanings of community that are mobilised in Section Two of this chapter, and generally throughout the interviews. Even if occasionally there are mentions of the complexity of the ethnic makeup of the area, it is worth noting how readily concepts of "Asian" and "White" communities are deployed in a matter-of-fact fashion. As Baumann (1996) has found, people regularly apply as well as contest the dominant narrative, reifying in some instances what in others they are aware of creating. In this research, participants have tended to construct "difference" along ethnic and religious lines, thus reproducing the essentialist discourse of identity, which has come to construct

Bradford as a contested urban space. It operates to support a particular notion of multiculturalism – or rather here community cohesion – and British citizenship, which puts an emphasis on shared values defined at the national level to the detriment of the specific cultural situation of minority ethnic groups. Then, it relies on assumptions of more or less essential differences between people, which are a product of a certain form of narratives about the meaning of "culture" and "community" (Baumann, 1996).

Similarly, it seems that poverty is accepted as a natural state of affairs in the area and in Bradford, echoing the (often) uncritical narratives about inner-city problems rather than questioning why in fact it persists in such a wealthy country as the UK. Issues of crime, drugs and deprivation were generally accepted as realities, even if rhetorical strategies were used to downplay their significance. Ahmed's quote which links improvement of Billesley with home ownership is particularly telling in this sense. The content of his reflection can be interpreted as a sign that there is an improvement in Billesley. However, looking more specifically at the terms of his story, or how it is said rather than what it said, his narrative also reflects a common social myth characteristic of the wider discursive context on housing and home ownership in contemporary Britain. Then, in the individual stories, there is no obvious sense of the cause of "problems" in the area, or indeed in Bradford as a whole. Ultimately, the responsibility for "problems" in Bradford still lies with the communities at the heart of the contested space, rather than with local and national government or the recognition of structural constraints. This goes to show that the terms of the culturally dominant storyline tend to be used and mobilised uncritically, which can be argued reinforces it.

This was particularly clear in participants' stories of "integration," articulated around hopes or desire for more "integration" and at times praises for the level of integration currently experienced. There were also interpretations of what barriers to "integration" may exist, interestingly, with an element of recognition that the word itself came from the culturally dominant story. For example, Ahmed was

amongst the narrators who thought there should be more "integration," in a narrative coherent with his lamentation of "white" people moving away from Billesley. His wish was for his children and grand-children to grow up within a mixed community, as he treats "diversity" and "integration" as desirable. His story resonates with the dominant storyline in that there is a lack of "integration" or certainly interaction between "communities" in Bradford, which must be rectified. Ilham also wishes there were more "integration" in Billesley, and she expresses a desire to "improve" this situation. In contrast, a range of participants put forth the idea of Billesley as a diverse place, despite some of the perceptions that it might not be. Dealing with this preconception is Assil:

> I think what distinguishes Billesley is the fact that people see it as an Asian community but it's not and if you actually look at the geographical make up of [this postcode] more than 50% are white, so it's not an Asian area if anything. You know if you're looking at the majority, the majority's the white community. The reality is it's a diverse community of different people of different ages. We've got an aging white population and we've got a younger Asian population. We've got a kind of migrant community that's ever-changing. We've got different kinds of houses. We've got privately owned, we've got publicly owned houses, we've got loads of sport facilities I think, I can't remember but I think we had 15 sport facilities within just the Billesley area including tennis, golf, cricket, football...

But what Assil and others talk about is not just diversity itself, it is the work that has been done to improve "diversity" and "integration" within the area, so much so that they argue Billesley is a model in this domain:

> **Assil**: We've got a rich history of that. Diverse communities, a lot of community development stuff that goes on. And if you look at other places in the UK it's a good model of how people work with each other, how people kinda get on with each other. So yeah,

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that's the real Billesley but people think it's just a rough area where you can't walk at night.

[John] But there's so much positive about it…There's so many positive about Bradford, that's the thing… The thing that gets me is when you go elsewhere to find out about what they're doing, it's not as good as what we've done…

[MR] [laughs]

[John] No it's serious, seriously. Youth work, you go elsewhere and it's rubbish. We're miles ahead of a lot of people, doing things. You go and you think "oh they're trying this" well we tried this 20 years ago. And… you know, like police, bad relationships with the police… But we've sorted, well there's obviously still problems, but we've sorted reasonable relationships… We've done it years ago. All this thing about the London, were you there when there was, last year, the riots?

[MR] Yeah

[John] Yeah, and it didn't happen here. It didn't happen here because we… well, there's various reasons but people talk to the police actually, they do, they can call them and they can come and see you. Whereas in London, London it's very different. Very, very different.

Admittedly, this is a story that rarely emerges about Bradford and in that sense it can be seen as counter to the dominant story about the city. However, it seems to value the modes of interaction defined as normative in the culturally dominant storyline of community cohesion. For example, the narrators mobilise reified ethnic categories such as "Asian" and "White" to talk about diversity, implying a conception of difference on ethnic terms. As such, the remit of the contestation of the culturally dominant storyline may be limited. Overall, going beyond what is said and looking at how it is said, it transpires that many aspects of the dominant

narrative go unquestioned. Although in their content the individual stories may tell a different story, ultimately by mobilising the very terms of the dominant story, they fall short of "expos[ing] the construction of the dominant story by suggesting how else it could be told." (Harris, Carney and Fine, 2001: 13 as cited in Andrews, 2004a: 3) Admittedly, this could be a reflection of what I asked the participants, of the specific context of the interview and of the dynamics of my relationship with the participants. Bearing this in mind, it remains that the socially situated stories I collected present little deeper questioning of certain ideas and assumptions that are typical of the dominant story of Bradford when it is constructed as a contested urban space on faith and ethnic terms. While there is contestation in these stories, it is limited in scope due to the considerable forces that shape cultural understanding.

In terms of the dynamic interplay between individual and collective stories, this reminds us of a number of points that were made in the theoretical chapter. First, I have found some evidence, as in Smith and Sparkes' (2008) storied resource perspective, that the respondents are discursively situated and limited by the terms of the stories that have become dominant in a specific time and space, but have a degree of agency. Indeed, as we saw in Part Two, the dominant story about Bradford is inseparable from the wider discursive processes and struggles linked with identity, culture and class politics which characterise contemporary Britain. It is these complex, intertwined dominant stories that shape the responses of my participants, and is part of what they have to negotiate. Despite this, the intrinsic uniqueness of each story and the ability to creatively negotiate and contest, at least in construction and content even if possibly less so in terms the dominant story, means that the narrators are "active experiencing individuals." (Finnegan, 1998: 176) Whatever the conventions used or common social myths mobilised, the individual stories remain the personal reflections of the narrators who share their experiences.

Secondly, it remains unclear why a story attains a different level of social influence so as to become dominant. In the case of Bradford, it seems that over the years, a dominant narrative has become so institutionalised that it is mobilised as a resource in wider political and ideological struggles. For example, the "meaning" of an event like the 2001 riots goes beyond simply re-affirming a negative story about the city. For those on the extreme right, it can confirm discourses about the corrupting influence of immigration and the failures of multiculturalism. For others, it is evidence of the failure of policies to address inequality and disadvantage amongst minorities, and of the need for a more inclusive approach. The context of the contested urban space allows us to observe how these stories are appropriated and how certain collective stories crystallise into a single and definitive view of the world. In the contested urban space, not all stories are equal and this impacts both on the collective story of the place and on the individual stories of its inhabitants. At the collective level, we saw how despite repeated efforts to put forward positive stories of the city, the institutionalisation of the negative story of the city seems to prevent them from becoming more widely available. At the individual level, the dominant story has become that much more crystallised that it is chosen over others and mobilised by individuals to frame their experience. In their contestation of the negative story of Bradford, individuals still showed they were rehearsing a story of difference and inequality defined in ethnic and faith terms. Thus, national cultural forces appear to have an impact at the local level. The contestation of the city in terms of faith and ethnicity characteristic of the culturally dominant storyline, has come to frame the individual stories and identities within the contested urban space. The danger, then, is that people's experiences and identities are reduced to ethnic and religious considerations at the detriment of other significant layers of story (such as class and gender), which may also impact on their lives and those of their communities.

Finally, Chapter One looked at theoretical considerations on the contestation of the culturally dominant storyline and the affirmation of the transformative potential of stories. However, having noted the narrow retention of agency and the discursive

situatedness of individuals, I am led to ask what kind of stories would support a move away from the mode of identity and interaction determined by the culturally dominant storyline and rehearsed collectively and individually. We have seen how the basis for contestation in Bradford is ethnic and religious difference, and stories that emanate from various initiatives to offer a positive story of the city try to move away from that by celebrating a common, overarching Bradford identity. However, how successful is this? We can see elements of it in the responses that I collected as inhabitants spoke positively about where they live, about the pride they take in their area, and generally about their desire to "get on." This can become the basis for a positive identity that transcends ethnic and religious identity and has the potential to change the terms of the debate. Still, the stories of the participants also rehearsed the terms of the culturally dominant storyline, and thus reinforced it as they used ideas of cultural difference. As a result, we need to understand contestation as more than just "giving a voice" or articulating and revealing different or many stories. It is also about changing the terms of the culturally dominant storyline.

## Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on complementary or parallel stories to the culturally dominant narrative, stories that conveyed a different identity and different images of Billesley to the ones presented before. At times, those stories revealed some contradictions within the residents' narratives, which showed that beyond mobilising and orienting towards or against the culturally dominant storyline, participants found an agentic voice to portray the area in a different light. As a result, rather than countering the dominant narratives, they exposed new elements of daily life in the urban space. Expressing a strong sense of place, they showed that the locality plays a role in their personal life journey and shared their own interpretations of what it means to belong. As they talked of the continuities provided by the locality, they also articulated their own idea of what "community" means. Although they showed themselves to be "active experiencing individuals, ones who can also reflect on – tell stories about – their experiences" (Finnegan,

1998: 176) and crucially those of others too, I observed that in the contested urban space, a dominant story framed individual stories to a large extent. Indeed, as individuals retained a degree of agency expressed through their creativity in terms of the content of their stories, they appeared to be limited by the terms of the culturally dominant storyline that they mobilised uncritically.

# Conclusion to Part 3

Throughout Part Three, I have demonstrated that different stories are relevant and meaningful for individuals depending on their purpose in a time, place, and interaction. Then, collective dominant stories provide a framework within which individual stories are articulated. However, it is a fluid framework and I have shown several examples in which individuals actively negotiated culturally dominant storylines in various ways. Depending on their purpose and audience, individuals may reinforce or contest existing stories, but also complement them with parallel stories that are neither in opposition nor in support of the dominant stories. Collective stories endure and tend to be more crystallised than individual ones. They can "produce hegemonic consensus" (Megoran, 2013: 893) and define urban problems narratively, collectively bestowing an identity upon a place which can be simplifying and reductive. However, the chapters in Part Three reveal how individuals retain agency in creating their own narrative realities as they express the nuances of their experiences in the urban social world through complexity and contradictions. Dominant stories are only such in relation to the tellers and their strategic goals. In Chapter Six, as they made sense of the present and their lives within the contested urban space, the residents of Billesley presented a negative story of the area, which resonated with the overall dominant story of Bradford. In Chapter Seven though, the purpose shifted to showing a different side of Billesley, and as they sought to counter the "illegitimate" outsiders' view of the area, they presented a more positive story of it. Following on from that, in Chapter Eight, residents made sense of their choices to remain in Billesley and live there. Doing so, their stories contributed to constructing a different identity of Billesley through a process of differentiation with common stories. Personal stories are heterogeneous, complex, and reveal individuals' creativity in using cultural resources to negotiate their everyday lives. They allow individuals to navigate and construct reality as they formulate and validate their experiences (Finnegan, 1998). Then, they are not just the "fragmentary reflections" (Finnegan, 1998: 170) of the culturally dominant storylines. Rather, they co-exist with them, sometimes overlapping and sometimes not.

# Thesis Conclusion

In this conclusion to the thesis, I summarise the research findings by looking at my contribution to the literature in terms of the debates on the relationship between personal and collective stories, narrative research methods, and knowledge about Bradford. Then, I also reflect on the limitations of my research. I end the thesis by considering the potential for further research.

The overall aim of this study has been to explore and critically engage with a wide variety of stories in and about communities and places. It has been about the situated negotiation of those stories at individual and collective levels of authorship. Having positioned myself and the research within a narrative framework, I chose a narrative methodology to investigate national, political and local collective stories of Bradford. I combined this with a narrative analysis of in-depth interviews, which I conducted with a small sample of inhabitants from a selected geographical area of Bradford. As a result, I shed light on the narrative complexity in the context of a contested urban space.

## 1 – Summary of findings

Theoretically, the thesis contributes to narrative research by exploring aspects of relationships between individual and collective stories. I chose the specific context of a contested urban space to engage with debates on the determining power of collectively dominant stories and questions of the retention of agency and creativity of individuals in constructing their own narrative realities. I did so as contested urban spaces are characterised by polarised material realities and power relations that tend to be accompanied by narrative tensions. As such, it presented an interesting context to examine the dynamic interplay between personal and collective stories. I established that collective stories endure but are not merely "a veil for power." (Finnegan, 1998: 169) Rather, they are rooted in the material realities as perceived and constructed by a collective and it is the processes through which they endure and the power relations they hide that need to be questioned.

As such, I considered not just the stories themselves and their content, but also the uses of the stories and found that at a collective level, beyond the appearance of a dominant cultural storyline, there is a multiplicity of stories that interact with each other. As I turned my attention to personal stories, experiences of the contested space in everyday life were revealed and a situated story of Bradford emerged. It showed that individuals are engaged in complex negotiations of collective stories in ways that may reinforce and counter collectively dominant stories. In addition, it also transpired that beyond the opposition between dominant and counter narratives, individuals also appeared to narrate "parallel stories" that neither concurred nor contested the cultural storyline. Rather, they offered a different or not commonly heard story of life in Bradford. Then, individuals were creative in their uses of the cultural storyline in negotiating their life stories, reminding us that collective stories are only ever dominant in relation to individual and how relevant and meaningful they are to them.

Regarding the methodology and methods, my research is an example of a narrative analysis of culturally dominant storylines and collective and individual counter-narratives in contemporary Britain, following an empirical strategy. Indeed, the "empirical realm" (Kölbl, 2004: 32) is at the heart of my research, which analyses a wide range of primary data, including books, films, documentaries, academic papers and interviews of Bradford inhabitants. This allowed me to go beyond the idea of a "presumed dominant cultural narrative" (Kölbl, 2004: 32) and explore relationships between collective stories by taking into account a variety of sources of cultural narratives, and relationships between individual and collective narratives by observing not only the content of stories but also questioning how and for whom certain stories and not others are meaningful. Whilst I analysed the stories, using a narrative approach allowed me to take into account issues of audience, authorship and strategic and purposeful storytelling. It follows that my findings are necessarily situated in a specific time and space and anchored in stories that were told to me with a specific purpose in mind as the interview interaction bears upon the storytelling process.

In terms of the research on Bradford, I have shown that there is not one "true" story about Bradford but a plurality of complex stories in and about the city, more than could be thought at first sight. As Bujra and Pearce put it, "Bradford is many places depending on where you look from and where you look to." (2011: 215)I have explored a range of those stories, but by no means all of them. By doing so, I have offered some explanations as to why Bradford may be particularly prone to a negative public gaze and considered some of the impacts of those mainly (but not only) external perceptions on the city. Bradford has arguably suffered (and might again suffer) from reductive and negative narratives articulated about it. Through my research, I have investigated many different and subjective ways to construct the city, which varied from academic stories, to local collective and individual stories. It complicates the narrative representations of Bradford and argues for the necessity to go beyond a single story of place and community. It may seem obvious that a plurality of stories exists. However, considering the reductionist and simplifying context of a contested urban space, narrative complexity needs to be acknowledged and actively sought out to go beyond the common and possibly polarizing stories.

## 2 – Reflections on the limitations of the study

I have identified a range of limitations that deserve some attention at this point, mainly linked to the study design and thus concerning the data collection and data analysis phases of the research.

The limitations of the data collection are twofold. The first aspect concerns the collective stories. The ones I collected and analysed were only some of the potential collective stories about Bradford. I disaggregated the concept of collective narratives to a certain extent, but I could have taken this further. For example, I could have disaggregated further the production of press and media stories of Bradford. I looked at national broadsheets' coverage of events in Bradford but other sections of the national press and media may have developed different

narratives about Bradford. I also only took into minimal account the stories constructed by the local and regional press. At the local level, I did explore to some extent how the local council developed a different narrative about the city compared to national levels of government. However, I did not seek local histories and heritage tales, or planners' stories of the city, which may have all been subtly different to the local stories I presented. The second aspect concerns the personal stories. I would like to acknowledge and remind the reader that due to the biography of the individuals I interviewed, my sample is not representative of the population of Bradford, or even of Billesley. Rather, it is socially specific in that the participants were all linked to just two organisations and I would consider they were active in their communities. This necessarily played a part in the narratives they shared with me. I did not talk to inhabitants from "hard to reach" sections of the community, who may have had contrasting experiences of life in Billesley. Similarly, I am aware that "Eastern European" migrants are talked about at length, but were not talked to. In addition, life stories require a certain amount of trust-building between the interviewer and the participants. However, for reasons I have already detailed, this did not happen to the extent that I had envisaged. I believe this also had an impact on the personal stories I collected, but I have tried to reflect on this shortcoming throughout the thesis.

The limitations within data the analysis part of the research are equally twofold. First, in terms of the collective stories, I made the assumption when analysing them that the various collective tales I presented were collectively meaningful. However, beyond having found cultural artefacts that carried them, it is difficult to tell to what extent this is true, and what their actual audiences are, how much impact they have on them, and how immutable this impact is. For example, I have assumed that academic stories matter in the wider collective narrative, but I would be unable to tell to what extent and some may argue that academic tales tend to be disseminated to a small audience. Secondly, and possibly most importantly, I wish to recognise the limitations in the interpretation of the personal stories. I have tried to create an exploratory and explanatory framework to "accommodate the

complexity and variety of experience" (Andrews, 2004c: 53) of the participants, but I am aware that the findings reflect only my interpretation within this framework and was not put to the test of the participants themselves. Therefore, I do not have a definite interpretation of the meaning of these stories. In addition, I am conscious that I may have focused on experience and content of the stories to the detriment of language and nonverbal signs as displayed during the interaction. Koborov (2004) and Spreckels (2004) aptly show how those may impact on the interpretation of stories, and such considerations may have helped me to provide a more refined interpretation and to write myself into the narrative as a co-author more fully.

## 3 – Suggestions for further research

As my focus has been on the individuals' stories and the collective stories of the communities they live in, this piece of research is situated within a specific time and space and the findings are intrinsically linked to its location. Therefore, although similar ones may be reproduced in other situations, the dynamics of the dominant narratives and their processes of establishment are to an extent specific to Bradford. Studies applying a narrative framework to other contested urban spaces would allow for comparative research with the findings in this research. Different types of contestation may be supported by different types of narratives, which may have a range of implications and effects on the situation of contestation and the dynamic interplay between dominant and counter stories. Exploring a variety of conflict and contestation situations narratively would further knowledge on the interactions between collective stories, and between collective and individual narratives.

After remarking on Bradford's negative image in the national imagination, Bühler et al. asked "how the external attitude might be changed in a more positive direction." (2002: 14) We now know that it is not just a case of an outsider view of the city being negative and we saw how some of the internal stories contributed to the articulation of the pessimistic story of Bradford. This quote, however, leads me to raise another question and suggest another possible path for furthering this

research in terms of the uses of stories. In the case of Bradford, we can put forward the hypothesis that if some of the challenges the city faces are articulated narratively, solutions may be constructed narratively too. Then, building on the relationship and interaction between different types of stories, to what extent can stories (be used to) foster transformative experiences at the personal and collective level in the contested urban space? And in methodological terms, how do we empirically observe personal and collective change through narratives in the contested urban space? Conflicts and experiences of contestation are complex and have material and psycho-social roots, manifestations and consequences. Then, stories by themselves cannot lead to a state of peace. However, they do have a part to play in peaceful social change, and finding out exactly how so deserves more attention.

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# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES USED IN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

### Resources analysed for dominant storyline within popular culture

Written sources

- Bainbridge, 1984
- Bryson, 1995
- Cantle, 2001
- Denham Report, 2001
- Kureishi, 1986
- Malik, 2010

Visual sources

- Bradford: City of Dreams (2013)
- Bradford Riots (2006)
- Britz (2007)
- Make Bradford British (2011)
- Poor Kids (2011)
- Rita, Sue and Bob too (1986)
- White Girl (2008)

Compared with evidence and analysis in

- Alexander, 2004
- Greenhalf, 2003
- McLoughlin, 2006a
- Russell, 2003
- Russell, 2004
- Schmid, 1997

### Resources analysed for dominant storylines within local stories

Written sources

- Arora and Khatun, 1998
- Bradford Congress, 1996
- Bradford Metropolitan Faith in the City Forum, 1995
- Chadwick and Hutchinson, 2004
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2010
- Hunter, 2005
- Ouseley, 2001

- Taj, 1996

Visual sources

- Range of Joseph Rowntree Foundation documentaries
- Neighbourhood noise, 2010

Compared with evidence and analysis in

- Greenhalf, 2003
- Russell, 2003
- Trueman et al., 2004

## Resources analysed for dominant storylines within the academic stories

Written sources

- Alam and Husband, 2006
- Alexander, 2004
- Amin, 2002
- Athwal et al., 2011
- Bolognani, 2007
- Bowes, Dar and Sim, 1998
- Bühler et al., 2002
- Burgess et al., 2005
- Burlet and Reid, 1998
- Burnett, 2008
- Carling, 2008
- Cater, 1981
- Dahya, 1974
- Din and Cullingford, 2006
- Hudson et al., 2011
- Husband, 2000
- Hussain and Bagguley, 2005
- Johnston et al., 2005
- Kitchen, 2007
- Knott and Khoker, 1993
- Kundnani, 2001
- Lewis, 1997
- Macey, 1999a
- Macey, 1999b
- Mawby and Batta, 1980
- McEvoy, 2009

- Phillips, Butt and Davis, 2002
- Phillips, Davis and Ratcliffe, 2007
- Ratcliffe, 1997
- Ratcliffe, 1999
- Rex and Samad, 1996
- Samad, 1992
- Samad, 1997
- Simpson, 1993
- Simpson, 1997
- Simpson, 2004
- Simpson, 2005
- Singh, 2002
- Vertovec, 1998
- Webster, 1996
- Webster, 2003

# APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE OF DATABASES

## Example 1: 1970s written documents database

| | (A) Travel Writing | (B) Other non-fiction | (C) Academic Articles/Books | (D) Reports | (E) Fiction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | | Fieldhouse, J. (1972) *Bradford*. Bradford: Watmoughs Financial Print. | Dahya, B. (1974) The nature of Pakistani ethnicity in industrial Britain. In Cohen, A. (Ed.) *Urban Ethnicity*. London: Tavistock Publications, 77 – 118. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1977) *The Education of Children of Immigrant Parental Origin*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |
| **2** | | | Saifullah Khan, V. (1977) The Pakistanis: Mirpuri villagers at home and in Bradford. In Watson, J.L. (Ed.) *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell, 57 – 90. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1978) *District Trends 1978*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |
| **3** | | | Le Lohé, M. (1979) The effects of the presence of immigrants upon the local political system in Bradford, 1945-77. In Miles, R. And Phizacklea, A. (Eds.) *Racism and Political Action*. London: Routledge; Kegan and Paul, 184 – 203. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1978) *Population Statistics*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |
| **4** | | | Cater, J. And Jones, T. (1979) Ethnic residential space: the case of Asians in Bradford. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 70(2), 86 – 97. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1979) *District Trends 1979*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |

## Example 2: 1980s database

| | (A) Travel Writing | (B) Other non-fiction | (C) Academic Articles/Books | (D) Reports | (E) Fiction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bainbridge, B. (1984) *English Journey or the road to Milton Keynes*. London: BBC; Duckworth. | Bradford Heritage Recording Unit (1986) *From Mill to Microship: Bradford in the Making*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | Afshar, H. (1989) Gender roles and the moral economy of kin amongst Pakistani women in West Yorkshire. *New Community,* 15(2), 211 – 225. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1981) *Turning Point: A Review of Race Relations in Bradford*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | Mehmood, T. (1983) *Hand on the Sun*. London: Penguin. |
| 2 | Kureishi, H. (1986) Bradford. In *Granta: In Trouble Again: A Special Issue of Travel Writing,* 20, 147 – 170. | | Appignanesi, L. and Maitland, S. (1989) *The Rushdie File*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1982) *A Chance to Speak*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |
| 3 | Murphy, D. (1987) *Tales from two cities*. London: Penguin. | | Barton, S.W. (1986) *The Bengali Muslims of Bradford*. Leeds: University of Leeds. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1982) *The Other Man's View*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |
| 4 | | | Batta, I.D. and McCulloch, J. (1981) Crime, social problems and Asian immigration: The Bradford Experience. *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology,* 18(12), 135 – 168. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1985) *Race Relations in Bradford: The Council's Approach*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (Policy Unit). | |
| 5 | | | Campbell, M. and Jones, D. (1982) *Asian youths in the labour market: A study in Bradford.* Bradford: Bradford College. | City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (1981) *Race Relations: The Twelve Point Plan*. Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. | |

| 6 | | | Cater, J. (1981) The impact of Asian estate agents on patterns of ethnic residence: A case study of Bradford. In Jackson, P. and Smith, S. (Eds.) *Social interaction and ethnic segregation*. London: Academic Press, 163 – 183. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | | | Halstead, M. (1988) *Education, Justice and Cultural Diversity: an Examination of the Honeyford Affair, 1984-85*. London: The Falmer Press. | | |
| 8 | | | Mawby, R.I and Batta, I.D. (1980) *Asians and Crime: The Bradford experience*. London: Scope | | |
| 9 | | | Mirza, K. (1989) *The Silent Cry: Second generation Bradford Muslim Women speak.* Birmingham: Centre for the study of Islam and Christian relations. | | |
| 10 | | | Perks, R. (1986) Everyone Has a Story to Tell: The Bradford Heritage Recording Unit and the Value of Oral History. *The Bradford Antiquary*, 2, 18 – 27. | | |
| 11 | | | Singh, R. And Ram, S. (1986) *Indians in Bradford: The Development of a Community*. Bradford: Bradford and Ilkley Community College. | | |

# Example 3: Visual documents database and notes

| | TV series or film (fiction) | Documentary | Online videos |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1970s** | | | |
| | Dummy (1977) | The Bradford Godfather (1976) | |
| | | Bradford Re-Born (1979) | |
| **1980s** | | | |
| | Rita, Sue and Bob too (1986) [based on Play: Rita Sue and Bob too (1982)] | BBC Newsnight feature on the city (1985) | |
| | | A Corner of a Foreign Field (1986) | |
| **1990s** | | | |
| | Band of Gold (1995-97) | Manningham Diaries (1995) (drama-documentary) (channel 4) | |
| **2000s** | | | |
| | Bradford Riots (2006) (Channel 4) | The last white kids (2003) (Channel 4) | Dance Bradford Weekend – September 2008 – Jennifer Morris Film |
| | Britz (2007) (Channel 4) | Edge of the city (2004) (Channel 4) | JRF – Voices from Holme Wood – 2009 |
| | White Girl (2008) (BBC2) | Last Orders (2008) (BBC2) | JRF – Our lives Project – 2009:<br>• In my name<br>• One day in May<br>• Syima<br>• Mumtaz: In our Defence<br>• Riffat: Traditions in a changing society<br>• Saiqa: Driving out stereotypes |
| | | | JRF – In my name – A collection of Muslim men's voices 2009 |
| | | | JRF – WBYI – Then, Now and the Future 2009 |
| **2010s** | | | |
| | The Arbor (2010) | When hate came to town (2011) (Just West Yorkshire) | Neighbourhood noise (Vimeo 2010) |
| | | Poor Kids (2011) (BBC) | Bradford City of Film – 2012 – Bradford city of film website |
| | | Make Bradford British (2012) (Channel 4) | Bradford City Park – August 2011 – Jennifer Morris Film |
| | | Bradford: City of Dreams (2013) BBC2 | Positive Bradford: Linda Barker – April 2010 – Jennifer Morris Film |

Notes on some of the visual items:

**The Bradford Godfather (1976; re-run 1979)**: Portrait of Mohamed Fazal Hussain who, more than forty years ago, was one of the first immigrants from what is now Pakistan, to settle in Bradford. At 73, he is now the oldest member of the Muslim community, amongst whom he wields enormous influence, being called by some, "The Godfather", by others "The Emperor", and is personnel manager of a foundry near Bingley. (Source: BFI)

**Dummy (1977)**: Sandra is a deaf mute girl whose life descends into prostitution and degradation on the streets of Bradford. (source: IMDB)

**Bradford Re-Born (1979) (City of Bradford Metropolitan Council)**: This film contains footage of the regeneration of the city of Bradford, and in particular, the Pollard Park area. It also contains footage of interviews with some local people who moved into the new neighbourhood in Pollard Park. (Source: Yorkshire Film Archive)

**A Corner of a Foreign Field (1986)**: Documentary in which three men and two women from the British Pakistani community talk about their lives, and the racial divisions that still exist in society, after living in Britain for 25 years. Includes the Pakistani communities in Bradford, Birmingham and London. (Source: British Film Institute (BFI))

**Manningham Diaries (1995)**: Drama documentary based on the diaries of real life prostitutes working in Lumb Lane, the red-light zone of Bradford's Manningham district. The diaries of Angie, Carla, Pat and Anne cover every aspect of a prostitute's life; how they started working, their view of men, of pimps, what their clients want and the effect of this work on their lives. (Source: BFI)

**Bradford Riots (2006)**: Dramatisation of events surrounding the riots which took place in the Manningham area of Bradford in July 2001, following tensions between the Asian community and far-right sympathisers. (Source: BFI)

**Last Orders (2008)**: Last Orders tells the story of the embattled Wibsey Working Men's Club in the city of Bradford. Once regarded as the "backbone of the nation", white working-class communities in the UK now often feel themselves the object of ridicule. Considering themselves forgotten by a Labour Government, which many people in these communities think is reluctant to acknowledge their existence, many white working-class people feel as if they have fallen off the edge of the policy table, with the smoking ban the latest example. The Wibsey Club has been operating at a loss for several years and members' worries for their club mirror larger anxieties. With high unemployment and a perception that recent Asian immigrants receive the lion's share of Government benefits, members feel that their very community is under threat and that racial tensions could erupt at any time. Bafta- and Emmy-nominated director Henry Singer follows up his critically acclaimed 9/11 film, The Falling Man, by spending several months in one white working-class community whose story reveals much about the breakdown of social cohesion in 21st-century Britain. (Source: BBC)

**The Arbor (2010)**: Portrayal of the late Bradford playwright Andrea Dunbar (Source: IMDB)

# APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE ANALYSES OF WRITTEN AND VISUAL SOURCES

## Example 1: Hanif Kureishi's travel writing piece

**ANALYSIS SHEET**

**Document Title:** Bradford

**Author:** Hanif Kureishi (Born December 5, 1954 in Bromley, England, to an Indian father and an English mother, Hanif Kureishi grew up experiencing first-hand the racial and cultural clashes that he addresses in most of his work. The inspiration for his work has been drawn from his own life's trials and tribulations as a culturally hybrid individual of two different races and cultures. – Source: http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/hanif-kureishi/#ixzz2neQTQntS)

**Publication Date:** 1986 (In the context of Bradford – just after the Honeyford Affair)

**Published by**: Granta – Travel writing special issue *In Trouble Again*

**Document genre:** Travel writing article

**Who is telling the story?** The author himself

**Who is the audience?**
The magazine readership, which is likely to be an international audience ("Granta magazine was founded in 1889 by students at Cambridge University as *The Granta*, a periodical of student politics, student badinage and student literary enterprise. During the 1970s, it ran into trouble from which it was rescued by a small group of postgraduates who successfully and surprisingly relaunched it as a magazine of new writing, with both writers and their audience drawn from the world beyond Cambridge. *Granta* does not have a political or literary manifesto, but it does have a belief in the power and urgency of the story, both in fiction and non-fiction, and the story's supreme ability to describe, illuminate and make real." – Source: *Granta* website). This particular piece was published in a special issue on travel writing and it is worth noting that all the other articles are about lands from far afield (for example Brazil, China, Angola and Afghanistan). Kureishi's article on Bradford is the

only one which takes a place in Britain as its subject. Does it put Bradford on par with all the other destinations that the book looks at?

**What is the plot?**

The London-born and based author decides to visit Bradford to explore issues of race and culture in the Northern city (*"Bradford, I felt, was a place I had to see for myself, because it seemed that so many important issues, of race, culture, nationalism, and education, were evident in an extremely concentrated way in this medium-sized city."*149 – 150). He starts with relating his train journey up North, his arrival and the taxi ride that takes him to his friend's house. He shared his observation of the Pakistani neighbourhood he arrives in. He then describes his experience of the city centre, of visiting a bar (with only white people), a working men's club on a White estate, another Pakistani area of Bradford and a pub in that area (frequented by a diversity of people).

On his second day, the author makes his way to Batley where the first Islamic Girls school is opening. After relating a conversation with Ibrahim, *"a white Muslim in white turban and robes"*, he reflects on the contradictions between the school and "*the principles of liberal education*". He visits the Council of Mosques in Bradford and talks to its president. But then he goes in search of the younger members of the community.

Here, he starts with sharing his own experience of being a mixed-race child born in Britain but *"referred to as 'second-generation immigrants'"* and talks about belonging. He then meets Tariq, whose job is *"to advise on the setting-up of businesses and on related legal matters".* Next, he meets Britain's first Asian or black mayor, Mohammed Ajeeb and relates their conversation about Ajeeb's experiences as Mayor of Bradford. The discussion seems to mostly revolve around racism and the New Right and "Honeyford Affair" are brought up.

Kureishi then discusses the Honeyford Affair and wider issues of New Right thinking that are relevant not only to Bradford, but also to the rest of the country. Most of the rest of the article focus on that, with a last section looking at 'culture' and the *"New Right's vision of England"* ending with two examples of recent racist attacks on Asian men in Bradford.

**Who are the characters?**

The author

The first character is the author, as the travel writer. His voice is the clearest in the article, as he uses the first person to relate his experiences, observations but also reflections, both on Bradford and on wider issues that concern the country in the

1980s. In the course of the article, we learn of the author's mixed ethnic background (he refers to an English grandfather and of his colour and racial mix). We know he is not from Bradford as he talks about going to see the city for himself. [Outsider account] [Multicultural Britain]

Main characters
- Ibrahim, Yusaf Islam's assistant, the white Muslim in white robes with white turban
- Chowdhury Khan, the President of the Council of Mosque
- Tariq, the 22-year-old who works advising on the setting-up of businesses, who also was the chairman of the Asian Youth Movement
- Mohammed Ajeeb, Britain's first Asian or black mayor

Minor characters
- The bouncer (white) who won't let Kureishi in the pub/night-club – the reason given is Kureishi is not dressed smartly enough (no trousers)
- The Asian man, one of the Bradford Twelve, in the pub (altercation with Kureishi about his film *My Beautiful Launderette*)
- Sir Michael Shaw, MP for Scarborough (speech at the Islamic Girls School opening)
- The (white and catholic) Batley citizen (speech at the Islamic Girls School opening)
- The waiter in the Pakistani Café who addresses Kureishi in Punjabi

Characters that are talked about
- Ray Honeyford, the school headmaster
- Roger Scruton, the Tory editor of the *Salisbury Review*
- Maurice Cowling, Scruton's tutor at Peterhouse in Cambridge

Other characters
There are many characters in Kureishi's account, but we don't hear all of their voices:
- the black porters on the train station, the black ticket collector, the black railway workmen, the Pakistani train guard, the Asian taxi driver, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood he stays in (the women crossing the street, the old man with a stick, the crying child, all Pakistani) [multicultural Britain],
- Kureishi's English grandfather [Personal heritage],
- the young white men and women who have dressed up to go out [habitus – white working class],

- the 150 people at the WMC, the white entertainers, the elderly white men at the bar [habitus – white working class],
- Sonia and Peter Sutcliffe [the Yorkshire Ripper] [Prostitution] [negative publicity],
- the inhabitants of another Asian area: the kids playing on the street, the uneducated women who do not speak English and stay behind with the children whilst the men go out to the pub [habitus – Pakistani immigrants],
- the police, their spies and informers [Policing] [mistrust],
- the Asian men, white women and three Asian women in the pub [multicultural Britain],
- the prostitutes in the pub [Prostitution],
- the gay and lesbian couples in the pub
- the punks in the pub
- the three hundred Asian men at the school opening [patriarchy],
- along with the white policemen and white dignitaries (men and women), [
- Cat Stevens/Yusaf Islam
- Neil Kinnock (he comes up twice)[Links with national politics],
- the football fans who died and were injured in the Valley Parade fire [Bradford City Fire][international coverage][negative publicity],
- the middle-aged Indian tax inspector who is turned down by Labour and switches to the Conservatives
- the racist police officer in London [racist verbal attack],
- the Asian parent who visited Honeyford [multicultural Britain],
- Margaret Thatcher [Links with national politics],
- the Conservative Philosophy Group (including John Casey, a fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, and graduates of Peterhouse, Cambridge, like John Vincent, Professor of History at Bristol University and Colin Welch, a columnist for the *Spectator*) (visited by Paul Johnson, Tom Stoppard, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Enoch Powell) [New Right],
- Rupert Murdoch, Clive James, Kiri Te Kanawa [Australian/NZ immigrants – white],
- The Asian man being slashed in a pub by a white gang, Mohammed Saeed, Mohammed Suleiman, Javed Iqbal, the taxi drivers attacked by twenty or thirty whites [racist physical attacks].

**Who is absent from the story?**

Although they are present as background characters, members of the white community are not present. Same goes for the police.
Pakistani women

Any other migrants who have settled down to the city (i.e. anyone who is not Mirpuri)

**What are the themes within the stories?**

From the very beginning, Bradford is defined as a place that is DIFFERENT ("something unusual about the city of Bradford, something that distinguished it from other northern industrial cities").

Kureishi's second paragraph is about the Honeyford Affair, and interestingly, the last 6 pages (out of 20 – so a considerable share of the piece) of the article also are. In this paragraph though, he describes the VIOLENCE associated with the affair ("shouting abuse", "there were fights, sometimes physical brawls") and talks of the NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE.

The fact that this follows the characterisation of Bradford as DIFFERENT, along with mention of the Yorkshire Ripper and the Bradford City Fire, makes the reader understand this DIFFERENCE as NEGATIVE. On the second page, he describes Bradford as a medium-sized city. But he also chooses to compare it in this respect to neighbouring Leeds and Manchester. So he situates the city geographically in comparison with other cities [would have to check how Leeds and Manchester were doing in 1986, but certainly reading this in 2012, it can only be read as a negative comparison for Bradford as Leeds and Manchester are held as successes of regeneration of industrial cities in the North] and not within Yorkshire for example [seek how other writers situate the city geographically: e.g. Bill Bryson talks about Harrogate in the same chapter as he talks about Bradford].

Still on the first page, he announces other themes that he will elaborate in the rest of the chapter: UNEMPLOYMENT, the FAR RIGHT, and RACIAL ATTACKS. In this long list of Bradford's traits, he also mentions "a mayor from a village in Pakistan", which I intuitively would have put down as a positive thing. However, as it is listed by Kureishi, I am not sure what message he is trying to convey about it: positive or negative?

Interestingly, Kureishi calls Bradford "a microcosm of a larger British society", justifying the relevance of going to Bradford to explore questions of race relations, culture, nationalism and education (his list). This is followed by a characterisation of STRUGGLE "to find a sense of itself" (NEGATIVE), but which implies that British society at large is also struggling to find a sense of itself, so Bradford is not so different after all? [SIMILARITY WITH OTHER CITIES] Importantly, he emphasises

how "the people governing the country" meaning people in position of power, most probably in the South (NORTH SOUTH DIVIDE) do not see this struggle. (150)

The first thing he does in Bradford is take a taxi and explains the city if full of taxis. This is an indicator of the type of work available in the city (ECONOMY). [Need a bit more here: See Kalra's *From textile mills to taxi ranks* – what happened after the mills closed to the immigrant workforce].

He alludes to Bradford's WEALTHY PAST by quoting T.S. Eliot "silk hat on a Bradford millionaire" (151) and again here "The town hall was a monument to Bradford's long-gone splendour and pride" (162) although there is a negative connotation (it's gone).

UNEMPLOYMENT: white youths doing up cemetery (Youth Opportunity Scheme) → only work that can be found for them (151).

POVERTY (across communities): houses overcrowded and in poor state of repair (151), people look unhealthy and their clothing is clearly second-hand (152), the white estate is described as scruffy with some flats boarded up and rubbish blowing about (153),

He also observes how the Pakistani community reproduces traditions and a culture from 'back home' (HABITUS – PAKISTAN) with women covering their heads and everyone wearing salwar kamiz. This is encapsulated in this quote: "If I ignored the dark Victorian buildings around me, I could imagine that everyone was back in their village in Pakistan". (152) Later, he talks of Asian men who have married Pakistani women out of family pressure (154).

SIMILARITY WITH OTHER CITIES: Description of the city centre – same shops and characteristics as in other city centres in the country ("It looked like many other town centres in Britain" (152)).

BRITISH HERITAGE: some part of the city look old-fashioned and remind Kureishi of his grandfather and "pigeon-keeping, greyhound racing, roast beef eating, and pianos in pub". Traditional shops include: "drapers, ironmongers, fish and chip shops that still used newspaper wrappers, barber's shops with photographs in the window of men with Everly Brothers haircuts." Interestingly, he states that this wouldn't be found in London. Late he contrasts London with the rest of the country again when he explains that everything shuts at ten thirty "as they do outside London" (NORTH SOUTH DIVIDE).

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION and HOUSING: "The Asians tended to own their homes. They had difficulty acquiring council houses or flats, and were harassed and abused when they moved on to white estates." – whether true or not, it is unclear where the information comes from. Is it then a *common perception*?

WHITE HABITUS: Young people dressing up to go out ("open-necked shirts, Top Shop grey slacks and Ravel loafers" (153)), experience at the WMC (no Asians there), people have dressed up there too.

YORKSHIRE RIPPER: Relates driving past Sonia Sutcliffe's house plus comments on Peter Sutcliffe.

POLICING: spies, informers (MISTRUST), importance of information about all sorts of groups: Asian militants, racists, journalists, vigilante groups (154).

MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN: Asian men at the pub, Asian men having affairs with white women

"The Asian women [who had come from villages to marry in the UK] had a terrible time in Bradford" (not sure how to code this – but again, where does the claim come from?)

PROSTITUTION: Kureishi relates how the prostitutes frequent the pub and know his friend, Jane, who is taking him around the city. She has her own story about the women (YORKSHIRE RIPPER).
INNER CITY (155) as opposed to "guide-book England", "nineteenth-century industrial England", "contemporary England of by-passes and suburbs"

DIVERSE BRITAIN: not only ethnicity – also sexuality (gay and lesbian couples in the pub) and punk subculture (155)

PATRIARCHY and PAKISTANI MUSLIMS: Opening of the Girls school → only men are there. Kureishi's questioning of who wants the school in the first place: "Or was it only a few earnest and repressed believers, all men, frightened of England and their daughters' sexuality?" (159) Also comments from the President of the Council of Mosque: "He said there were no women in the Council because 'we respect them too much.'" and "women's interests,' he said confidently, 'are being looked after.'"(159) → "conservative and traditional views" (160) but BACKLASH (generational?): 22-year-old Muslim man tells Kureishi "the people who wanted such schools were not representative; they just made a lot of noise and made the community look like it was made up of separatists, which it was not". (162)

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BELONGING: Wider issue than Bradford – the author talks about his own experience as a 'mixed race' child growing up in the 1960s. The rhetoric (that he remembers reading in the newspaper) is negative and frames non white people as the problem: "problems" faced by children of colour, "We didn't know where we belonged", "second-generation immigrants" → "Not really belonging in Britain", "Caught between two cultures" (160 – 161)

But then the author says "this view was wrong": mentions the MYTH OF RETURN for his parents' generation (160). But he states he belongs to Britain, as he was born here. He rejects the idea that there might be "a conflict of culture", rather "our lives seemed to synthesize disparate elements [...] Our extended family and our British individuality co-mingled." (161) [GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE]

FAR RIGHT: mention of the National Front marching on Bradford in the 1970s

ASIAN ACTIVISM: The Asian Youth Movement founded in 1978 (161), several mentions of the Bradford 12 but also UNEMPLOYMENT (161) linked here to GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE: parents had come to Britain to work but now their children are left with little prospects as the textile industry collapses → ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

Causal link between INTEGRATION and POVERTY made by Tariq: "But for him the problem of integration was adjacent to the problem of being poor in Britain: how could people feel themselves to be active participants in the life of a society when they were suffering all the wretchedness of bad housing, poor insulation and the indignity of having their gas and electricity disconnected; or when they were turning to loan sharks to pay their bills; or when they felt themselves being dissipated by unemployment; and when they weren't being properly educated, because the resources for a proper education didn't exist." (162)

RACISM: Ajeeb had "a terrible time" (162); "the racism he experienced, both explicit and covert, was of a viciousness he hadn't anticipated. And it was relentless." (163)

Opportunity offered by move to Britain: Ajeeb: "a feat for someone like him to have got so far in Britain. In Pakistan, with its petrified feudal system, he would never have been able to transcend his background" (163) → SOCIAL MOBILITY (?) certainly gained symbolic capital – POLITICAL POWER (here link with NATIONAL POLITICS too: "highly regarded for his tenacity by the Labour leader Neil Kinnock" (163))

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE: "Bradford's superb Museum of Film, Television and Photography"

PRIDE: Ajeeb speech about Honeyford Affair: "I cannot see [...] the unity of our great city being destroyed by one man." (163)

QUOTE Mayor Ajeeb: "While groups liked to cling to the old ways and there would be conflict, eventually different groups would intermingle." (163)

POLITICAL RACISM: Middle-aged Indian man, 10-year Labour member, turned down for canvassing on white estate because "it wouldn't be to the party's advantage for him to help in a white area" (164)

POLICE RACISM: Indian man at Wakefield Police College; Author's experience in London outside South Africa House (164)

FAR RIGHT/NEW RIGHT: Ajeeb: take comfort in that it is rejected by the electorate (164); MYTHICAL WHITE CULTURE (164) ['mythical idea of white culture' → Kureishi's words]

MYTHICAL WHITE CULTURE (165): described as being under threat by 'multi-racial policies'

The passages quoting Honeyford highlight his particular view of BRITISHNESS (166) (one particular way of describing Britishness, associated with the New Right: 'understatement, civilized discourse and respect for reason') and his RACISM (166 and 167).

MOBILISATION (166) against Honeyford

More on the NEW RIGHT view of BRITISHNESS and NATIONHOOD (167): nationhood 'requires a unity of national sentiment' of which non-white people are not able to take part in. Kureishi carries on by exposing the NEW RIGHT's USE OF CULTURE explaining how they define what British culture is/ought to be. Crucially, the New Right's use of culture means that there are insiders and outsiders to the culture, creating and us/them dichotomy (169). As a response, Kureishi offers his own, contextualised definition of British culture (169). Further, Kureishi puts forth a list of other dichotomies symptomatic of how British society is "divided": 'the differences between those in work and those out of it; between those who have families and those who don't; and, importantly, between those who live in the North and those in the South' (169) (NORTH SOUTH DIVIDE).

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Witness account of POVERTY on WHITE ESTATES in Bradford.

The article ends with the description of two violent RACIST PHYSICAL ATTACKS that have happened in Bradford in the same year the author is writing.

* * * * * *

## Example 2: Dahya's academic research published in the 1970s

**ANALYSIS SHEET**

**Document Title:**The nature of Pakistani ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain

**Author:**Badr Dahya (At the time of publication: "Lecturer in Anthropology in the University of London, presently on secondment to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria." – *SAGE website*) (*In the notes on contributors' section of the book:* Born 1927, East Africa. Studied at University of London, M.Sc. Research Fellow, East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere University College, Kampala, Uganda, 1961-63; Research Associate, University of London (SOAS), 1968-70; Lecturer, University of Edinburgh, 1970-72; Lecturer, University College, London, 1972 - ; presently on secondment to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Author of articles on Arab and Pakistani immigrants in Britain (370)).

**Publication Date:**1974 [The research this is based on was done in the mid-1960s, before economic recession and deindustrialisation in Bradford. See page 78: 'the figures for unemployment in Bradford since the Second World War have been below the national average'] [year the city became METROPOLITAN DISTRICT, but it is likely the chapter was written before this happened. Indeed, the findings from the research were presented at a conference in 1971]

**Published by:** Chapter in Abner Cohen (editor) *Urban Ethnicity*. London: Tavistock Publications. "This volume is a collection of papers presented at the annual

conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth, which was held in London at Easter 1971, on the theme of 'Urban Ethnicity'." (vii)

**Document genre:** Chapter in Academic Book

**Who is telling the story?**

The author – uses the first person throughout the chapter. The author is clearly implicated in the research relies on data collected by himself to make his argument. He also does not shy away from giving his opinion in several instances ['for it is my belief that...' (78); 'on numerous occasions when I tried to dissuade my informants in Birmingham and Bradford from buying cheap property with short leases...' (99); '[I] have no desire to whitewash its discriminatory policy...' (102); 'I feel it must be pointed out that...' (102)] and from drawing from his own experience to make his point.

**Who is the audience?**

Academic audience (sociology, anthropology, urban studies); there is a critique of other authors (Rex and Moore; Krausz; Butterworth) so these academic authors are likely to be part of the audience too.

**What is the plot?**

The author's aim, in his own words, are as follow:

-   "To discuss how and why the process of settlement developed in the form [it did]" (77)
-   "Patterns of Pakistani immigrants' settlement in Bradford and Birmingham" (77)
-   "To look at the situation from 'the actor's frame of reference" (78)
-   "Fieldwork began in 1964" (80)

It is striking that the author puts a great emphasis on the importance of ethnicity in the decision-making of Pakistani migrants. In doing so, he highlights their agency in their choice of where to live, both in terms of location and type of housing. Part of the 'plot' is to offer a different interpretation to 'segregation' to that offered by

other academics (i.e. Rex and Moore, and Krausz), who privileged *racial discrimination* as an explanation to the characteristics of settlement of Pakistani migrants. Although migrants from other parts of the world are not at the centre of this chapter, certain comparisons are made, especially in terms of the specific needs of migrants depending on their country of origin.

**Who are the characters?**

Here, the question should be more about 'who is talked about' rather than 'who are the characters' as the research does not put forth voices from its participants so much (see next section on who is absent from the story). The following groups and people are mentioned throughout the chapter:

- Pakistani immigrants in the Midlands
- Pakistanis in Bradford
- Total population 295,768 [BRADFORD] [BEFORE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT → what were the boundaries then?]
- 3,457 Pakistanis
- 1,512 Indians
- 984 West Indians
- A small number of Africans, mainly from West Africa
- Workers from Austria, Italy, Poland, India, Pakistan and other Commonwealth countries
- Indo-Pakistani seamen who settled in 1941
- A retired police officer (his comments are reported; one of the rare voices here)
- Bangladeshis
- Poles and Ukrainians
- Ethnic entrepreneur
- One informant
- Another informant, this time from Sparkbrook
- Informants in Bradford and Birmingham
- Italian migrants to Bedford
- West Indian immigrants

**Who is absent from the story?**

Interestingly, despite the author's aim "to look at the situation from 'the actor's frame of reference," (78) the voices from the researcher's informants are barely heard throughout the chapter. Over a 38-page long chapter, there are only 5 quotes

from the author's interviews with Pakistani migrants, the very subjects of this research. The author presents several ideas from the point of view of Pakistani migrants and yet distance the migrants from the text by not supporting his argument with their voice more directly.

As the focus of the chapter is on Pakistani ethnicity, it is not a surprise that other groups do not figure prominently in the chapter. Yet, there are certain comparison drawn with other migrants, including West Indian and Italians immigrants. This is particularly interesting as "white" migrants do not seem to figure much in research elsewhere.


**What are the themes within the story?**


*1. Introduction* (77)

Very first sentence: 'Studies conducted during the past two decades show that immigrants from Commonwealth countries tend to settle in the slums of the inner wards of our industrial cities.'[→ Sets the scene: POOR HOUSING, DEPRIVATION, IMMIGRANTS, INNER CITY, INDUSTRIAL CITY]

> → 'The immigrants' concentration in the inner wards of towns and cities is said to be an outcome of various structural constraints exercised by the host society.' [STRUCTURAL RACISM]

'The immigrants' concentration in the inner wards of towns and cities is said to be an outcome of various forces which have brought about the concentration of immigrants in certain areas of our industrial cities and towns' (78) [SEGREGATION] [RACIAL DISCRIMINATION] [STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS] [This is the argument that the author sets about to dispute in this chapter.]


*2. Bradford (78)*

Bradford = centre of the wool textiles industry [INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE] [INDUSTRIAL PRESENT]


Population breakdown in 1961 census (80)

294

- Total population 295,768 [BRADFORD]

- 3,457 Pakistanis

- 1,512 Indians

- 984 West Indians

- A small number of Africans, mainly from West Africa

On page 80, the author breaks down the area of origin of the Pakistani population who settled in Bradford.

### 3. Immigrants' background (81)

Socio-economic background: majority of landholders (not necessarily big land, but ownership matters more)

➔ 'The immigrants' and their families' attachment to land and their interest in increasing the size of their landholdings is a characteristic they share with peasants generally.' (81) [LAND OWNERSHIP] [WEALTH] [SOCIAL STANDING]

➔ 'Their attachment to their landholdings, then, gives the immigrants a firm root in their village-kin groups both in Pakistan and in Britain. Further, their traditional bias for land ownership is the basis of their predilection for real estate in Britain.' (82) [HOME OWNERSHIP] [PLURI-LOCALITY ATTACHMENT]

### 4. The motive for migration (82)

'From the immigrant's and his family's point of view, migration is an economic investment.' [ECONOMIC MIGRATION]

'Migration is undertaken for raising the immigrant's family's socio-economic status back home, and not for the immigrant's immediate gratification in the receiving country. It is important to bear this fact in mind, for the immigrant's behaviour patterns in Britain, especially with regard to living conditions, consumption, etc., are influenced by this motive for migration.' [SOCIAL STANDING IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN] [IMMIGRANTS' HABITUS IN HOST COUNTRY]

'The fact that the politically dominant group of the host society judges the immigrants as belonging at the bottom of the class structure in Britain is not a valid reason for a sociologist to assume that the immigrants and the native proletariat

share a single scale of values and preferences.' (83) [PUBLIC DISCOURSE] [ACADEMIC DISCOURSE] [INDIGENOUS PROLETARIAT] [IMMIGRANTS]

'The immigrants come with the firm intention of returning home where they hope to enjoy the fruits of their labour in retirement. That is, the immigrants consider themselves to be transients and not settlers. However, this is not to imply that the immigrants, or any significant number of them, will in fact return home. None the less, this myth or ideology of return is an important factor that has consequences with regard to the immigrant community's social organization, the immigrants' willingness to endure hardship in work and living conditions, and their emphasis on savings which are remitted to their families in Pakistan.' (83) [MYTH OF RETURN] [IMMIGRANTS' HABITUS IN HOST COUNTRY] [in contrast with what Carling describes in his 2008 article, several decades later: immigrants firmly established with set of institutions to serve their needs]

## 5. Settlement in Bradford (84)

'The first Indo-Pakistanis to settle in Bradford were former seamen who, during 1941, were directed from seaports such as Liverpool, Middlesbrough and Hull to munition factories and essential wartime industries in the Bradford and Leeds areas. These were the pioneers whose arrival in the city and whose economic success there led to the subsequent emergence and development of the immigrant communities.' [FIRST WAVE – 1940s] [PIONEER IMMIGRANTS]

'It is said that during the war Indo-Pakistanis at Leeds outnumbered those at Bradford, and it was largely due to the success of the early settlers in Bradford that former seamen from other cities and seaports moved to Bradford.' [ECONOMIC SUCCESS] [BRADFORD AS ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION] [POSITIVE]

## 6. Selective migration and sponsorship (85)

'This selectivity in migration has affected the growth of the community in Britain generally and enabled the immigrants to create small-scale units based on village-kin ties.' (86) [VILLAGE TIES] [CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES]

*7. Ethnic groups and their distribution (86)*

'During the early stages of their settlement in Bradford, Indo-Pakistanis (that is, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh immigrants) from undivided India used to stay together. With the division of the subcontinent into two national entities in 1947, and with the arrival of fresh immigrants, older settlers began to differentiate themselves on the basis of national/ethnic origins. Later on, as a result of sponsorship the number of immigrants increased and new forms of sub-groups based, at first, on regional identity and, later, on the basis of village-kin group, emerged. Since 1960, with the arrival of wives and children, the village-kin (87) group as a residential unit has very gradually begun to ramify into nuclear households.' → fusion/fission/segmentation

'Where immigrants have set up family households, they move away from areas where all-male dormitories predominate and take up residence in areas (or streets) where there are other immigrant family households.' (88) [SELF-SEGREGATION (?) (See Carling's definition)]

*8. Ethnic preference (88)*

'The pattern of immigrant settlements over the city and also on streets within the zones reflects the immigrants' preferences along ethnic lines.' [SELF-SEGREGATION]
'A further preference with regard to settlements occurs along sectarian lines.' [SELF-SEGREGATION]

'There are several reasons why the immigrants chose to settle in the zones they did. The area within the inner ring of the city is characterized by back-to-back artisan cottages, old terrace houses and large late Victorian and Edwardian houses, mills, warehouses, factories, workshops, stores, shops, and schools, public houses, and places of worship. The area is close to the (89) central business and commercial

districts in the city. The zones are thus centrally situated with easy access to the city centre and to the main arterial routes of public transport.' [INNER CITY] [WORK AREAS] [PLACES OF WORSHIP] [TRANSPORT LINKS]

'Once the pioneers had settled in zone A, they attracted other immigrants to the adjoining streets and gradually the boundaries of the immigrant settlement began to stretch.' (89) [SELF-SEGREGATION]

➔ 'In brief, there were a number of factors such as environment, cheap housing, and easy access to transport and communications, which, taken in conjunction with the economic circumstances and motives of the immigrant population, made for their settlement in the inner ring. Further, there was no competition for the houses there, where no one, other than the immigrants, wanted to live.' (89) [IMMIGRANT ZONES] [IMMIGRANTS' MOTIVATIONS] [CHEAP HOUSING]

➔ 'In the circumstances in which the immigrants found themselves on their arrival [lack of money], they could not have been expected to buy modern houses in the suburbs and, therefore, their settlement in the zones of transition was a form of adaptation to the problems they face.' (90) [ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS] [TRANSITION ZONES] [IMMIGRANT ZONES]

*9. Economic enterprise and ethnicity (90)*

Ethnic establishments serving the needs of the immigrant community [ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS]

'The presence and proliferation of such a vast range of ethnic concerns in the zones has an important bearing on the nature of Pakistani ethnicity and on the quality of interpersonal relations among the immigrants. It helps, *inter alia*, to keep the immigrant community a relatively closed one as the immigrants do not have to cross the ethnic boundaries to satisfy most of their everyday needs.' (91) [CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES] [ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS]

'Some of the streets in the areas of settlement tend to acquire a peculiar character and remind the immigrants of their ethnicity, and at the same time they make the

natives aware of the immigrants' separate identity.' (91) [CULTURAL DISTINCTION] [US AND THEM (maybe)] [IMMIGRANT IDENTITY] [NON-ASSIMILATION]

'Every time an immigrant visits a Pakistani shop or café, he is exposed to various influences emanating from such an environment which remind him of his distinct identity.' (91) [SELF-PERPETUATING IDENTITY]

(92) 'Village-kin and ethnic ties are potentialities for social participation and mutual aid. These potentialities are activated, *inter alia*, during economic recession and are among the factors that help to keep the number of unemployed immigrants down to a low level. Thus village-kin ties and ethnicity help to bridge physical distance between members of the immigrant community who may be scattered all over the country, and in spite of its numerical size and geographical distribution, the immigrant population turns out to compose a small-scale society. (93) That is, it consists of small interlocking and interdependent groups whose members are bound to one another by virtue of their shared past, their experiences and interests in Britain and their orientation to the country of origin.' [IMAGINED COMMUNITY] [IMMIGRANTS] [BRITAIN]

'Since the ethnic institutions depend on ethnic patronage, they acquire a vested interest in the immigrants as their clientele. [...] Accordingly, one role of the entrepreneur in the immigrant community is to remind immigrants of their traditional culture and values, that is, to perpetuate and defend their ethnicity.' (93) [PERPETUATING IDENTITY]

'Some of the entrepreneurs [...] sit on the local Mosque Committee. In their capacity as members of the Committee, they act as a pressure group, for example, on the local education authority and emphasize their religious and cultural traditions in order to seek concessions with regard to female dress and the content of education, especially physical education. Thus, ethnic entrepreneurs take steps to ensure that some aspects of their community's traditional forms of family

organization and values may be transmitted to the second generation.' (93) [PERPETUATING IDENTITY] [SOCIALISATION OF SECOND GENERATION]

'The immigrants' participation in their own socio-cultural activities and their patronage of ethnic institutions reduces their chances of meeting non-immigrants. By taking hold of the immigrants' allegiance, the ethnic institutions bring about their relative encapsulation and reduce the potentialities for interpersonal relations across the ethnic boundaries.' (94) [PERPETUATING IDENTITY] [MIGRANT INSTITUTIONS] [LACK OF INTERACTION WITH INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS]

→ 'Participation in ethnic institutions increases their pride in their traditional culture and nationality and is an expression of their ethnicity. Unlike its native – British – counterpart, the Pakistani shop fulfils extra-economic functions which could not be fulfilled by the former.' [PERPETUATING IDENTITY AND CULTURE]

'To put it negatively, the ethnic institutions are a means of making explicit to outsiders the immigrant community's refusal to adopt local norms or to surrender its ethnic identity.' (95) [NEGATIVE OBSERVATION] [NON-ASSIMILATION] [ISOLATION FROM HOST SOCIETY]

'Reinforced by endogamy, the ecological base with its concomitant institutions serves as an instrument for the transmission of the community's culture, values and identity to the second generation, and for maintaining ethnic boundaries and for avoiding (or minimizing) ambiguities with regard to ethnic identity. Further, during local elections, the ecological base is transformed into the community's political base, and generally it enables the community to act as a pressure group on local, as well as national, civic, and political institutions.' [FUNCTIONS OF ETHNICITY]

*10. Settlement in Birmingham (95)*
*11. Attitude to real estate (97)*

'There is no housing shortage in Bradford and the local authority does not discriminate against immigrants in the allocation of houses and flats. The qualifying period for joining the waiting list for council houses is six months' residence in the city. Burney (op. cit., p.35) tells us that council houses in Bradford "are going begging". Asian immigrants generally, and Pakistanis in particular, are not interested in renting flats and houses. Their attitude in this respect was expressed by one informant who remarked: "Why pay rent for property which can never be yours? Better to save money and buy a house, so that you can live in it and also make more money."' (97) [HOME OWNERSHIP] [here the reported attitude of the council seems contrary to what I have read somewhere else. Need to double check this] [This is the first actual quote from an informant in the chapter and it comes on page 97, half-way through the chapter]

On page 98, the author shares an anecdote about registering an informant's name as a prospective buyer with several estate agents in Bradford. He reports that the informant and other prospective buyers declined buying houses in the suburbs (reasons: too expensive; issue of transport to work and to visit friends; 'long distance away from the immigrant areas' thus getting food would be more difficult).

'On several occasions I tried to text the immigrants' reaction by advising them to buy modern houses. Their reactions, which were more or less similar, are illuminating:

'What is the use of spending so much money on a house in this country? We are not going to live here for ever.'

'Will the English people think better of me if I buy a modern house? Better to build a *pakkā* house in the village where there are people who know you and respect you. They are the people who matter.'' [only third quote in the text] [MYTH OF RETURN] [PREFERENCE FOR CHEAP HOUSING]

'significant others' = kinsmen and fellow-villagers back home

'It cannot be overemphasized that the immigrants came to Britain with the firm intention of earning and saving money and eventually returning to their homeland. They did not come in order to enjoy a comfortable life here.' (99) [MYTH OF RETURN] [ECONOMIC MIGRATION]

*12. Landlords as entrepreneurs (99)*

'At least four Indo-Pakistani professionals are known to have lived in places such as Allerton and Shipton which are within Bradford's 'green belt' and where, during 1964-66, a modern house cost between £4,500 and £6,000. Indo-Pakistani professionals, however, differ from the immigrant labourers with regard to their socio-economic background, motives for migration, style of life, aspirations and so on, and therefore their differential patterns of settlement need not surprise us.' (105) [DIFFERENT TYPES OF MIGRATION]

Immigrant houses OVERCROWDED in Bradford despite 'little demand for council houses' (106)

'It is necessary to distinguish the housing needs of West Indian immigrants from those of Asian immigrants.' (106) [DIFFERENT TYPES OF MIGRATION] [DIFFERENT NEEDS]

'It is clear from the above examples that the authors in question have interpreted the immigrants' housing situation in the light of their own (that is, the authors') perspectives. They have assumed that the immigrants and the authors share a single frame of reference, a similar perspective; so that what appears to the observer to be poorer housing with low amenities and overcrowding is similarly viewed by the immigrants.' (108) [RESEARCHERS' BIAS]

*14. Conditions in Pakistan (108)*
*15. From*kachchā *to* pakkā *houses (110)*

'The immigrants regard their way of life in the areas of their settlement as "different" from but certainly not "inferior" to the natives'. As an immigrant observed:

'What is wrong with the place [i.e., Bradford's Lumb Lane]? The English used to live here before we came, so what makes it "low" now? It is just that we live differently. That is all.'' (111) [CULTURAL DIFFERENCE] [Informant quote 5/5 in the chapter]

### 16. Conclusion (111)

'I have tried to show in this paper that the patterns of Pakistan immigrant settlement in the zones of transition in English industrial towns and cities cannot be explained adequately in (112) terms of racial discrimination. The immigrants' choice of poorer housing in the inner wards of industrial cities and their preference for living there is related to their motives and orientations and is not an outcome of racial discrimination, as writers like Rex and Moore, and Krausz have asserted. This is not to deny that there is racial discrimination against Pakistani immigrants but to point out that during the early stages of their settlement, the immigrants voluntarily segregated themselves because they realized that their economic goals were more likely to be achieved through conformity to group norms, by means of mutual aid and under austere living conditions than through dispersal into wider society.' [RACIAL DISCRIMINATION] [SELF-SEGREGATION] [SETTLEMENT STRATEGIES] [AGENCY]

'The kind of housing towards which the immigrants are attracted provides them with an ecological niche which they are exploiting to their economic advantage by becoming landlords and, in some cases, *rentiers*. In this respect, given their economic circumstances, their motive for migration and their predilection for living in their own houses rather than in rented accommodation, their choice is voluntary and rational, and irrespective of whether racial discrimination occurs or not.' (112) [RACIAL DISCRIMINATION] [AGENCY] [CHOICE OF HOUSING]

'The immigrants' settlement in poorer housing is a form of adaptation – a response, one might say – on their part to the situation which they face on their arrival here. Crucial to their response in this respect are their motives for migration, the ethnic preference, the nature of sponsorship and the immigrants' perception of the situation.' (114) [CHEAP HOUSING] [AGENCY] [SETTLEMENT STRATEGY] [MOTIVATIONS] [ETHNIC PREFERENCES]

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## Example 3: TV reality and documentary show *Make Bradford British*

**ANALYSIS SHEET**

**Title:** Make Bradford British

**Category:** Cross between documentary and reality TV

**Director:** Story producer: Vicky Mitchell; Series director Martin Fuller

**Produced for:** Channel 4

**Date:** 2012

**Context/ Occasion which gave rise to the need for this film**
- National context of "failure" of multiculturalism
- Recurrent question about what it means to be British with debates (and fears about immigration, refugees and asylum seekers in the backdrop)
- Rise in Islamophobia in the wake of 9/11 and 7/7
- Community cohesion and big society on political agenda

**Subject of the film**
According to C4 website:

"Make Bradford British is a major two-part series exploring what it means to be British."

"It brings together some of Bradford's residents - all British citizens, but from different races and backgrounds - to see if they can come up with a common notion of the thread that binds them all together; what it means to be British."

→ Trying to define what it means to be British from the people's perspective is the main aim of the series

**Purpose of the film**

<u>According to C4 website:</u>

"The series uses the Government's Life in the UK Test as a prism to explore British-ness, overcoming stereotypes and preconceptions to uncover the shared values and common ground in what it means to be British." [PLOTLINE]

"To define what it means to be British, the series begins with the Government's UK Citizenship Test - the Life in the UK Test. Over 100 people from across Bradford, all British citizens, are invited to sit the test, in which the questions include: 'What percentage of the British population is under the age of 19?' and 'When were women given the right to vote?' Eight people who fail the test are invited to live together in a microcosm of multicultural society.After debating what being a British citizen means, from exploring use of language through to accommodating religious and dietary requirements, they'll experience a side of life in Great Britain they've never seen before.In pairs, the eight residents of Bradford, ranging from a pub landlady to a former magistrate, will live each other's lives.From visiting a mosque for the first time, to experiencing a traditional dinner party, each person opens their eyes to the world that exists around them, right on their doorstep.Can eight people from different worlds but the same city really define what it means to be British in 2012?Diversity and community experts Taiba Yasseen and Laurie Trott help guide the eight through the experience, to see if, by uniting people within the city, they can create a blueprint for a genuinely multicultural Great Britain."

<u>What C4 website says about episode 2:</u>

"The group is split into pairs, to live each other's lives as they continue to search for what makes us all British.'I'm British,' says Desmond, 'I was born here. But there's more to it than that.'When he shows retired policeman Jens around his majority-white estate and points out where he was once attacked, for being black, Jens begins to realise the full implications of his use of language.Landlady Audrey invites

Muslim Sabbiyah to one of Bradford's pubs.But while Sabbiyah sees herself as 'more British than anyone that you can see,' and is looking forward to her shift in the pub, for the first time she's challenged over her dress.A customer asks her: 'Why are you dressed like that? So you're born over here. Why not take our identity? Why not take our ways? When was the last time you came out in a mini skirt and a low cut top?'Sabbiyah is moved to tears, prompting Audrey, who has a black father and a white mother, to confront the racism that she has experienced all her life and that is now directed at the Asian community.Steel welder Damon's stay with Rashid will include his first visit to any of the city's 80 mosques.'Because of what you read in the papers, you do have a bad view in your head. Not so much a terror camp but you think they talk about things, it's a secretive place.'Damon's stay with Rashid, working out in the gym and not drinking, has a profound effect on the 24-year-old.As he learns more about Islam, he says 'Islam doesn't seem like a bad religion. The ways of life are the old British ways. It's how I look at the simple life and I wish I was born in my grandma and granddad's era.'Former magistrate Maura is paired with taxi driver Mohammed, and it's her first taste of Asian hospitality. Self-styled feminist Maura challenges Mohammed over how the women of the house do all the work.When Maura has Mohammed to stay, she shows him a traditional British dinner party - but will Mohammed stay long enough to enjoy the meal?For those who took part, Make Bradford British is an emotional journey that challenges each person's personal set of beliefs as they seek to find an answer to one of the most challenging questions of our time; what makes us British?Can what they learn be a blueprint for a truly integrated Britain?"

In the document:

VOICE OVER: "This series aims to answer a question that haunts the future of our country: can different races, different religions, and different cultures really live together?"

**Characters**

- Voice over: Amerjit Deu (Born in Punjab, India) (actor)

- 8 people from different worlds but the same city: Jens; Audrey; Mohammed; Damon; Rashid; Sabbiyah; Maura; Desmond
- The "diversity experts"

**Plotline**

- UK citizenship test
- Explore what it means to be British in miniature multicultural society
- First part: the 8 participants live together for 4 days and need to try and accommodate each other's culture and beliefs. They go on a couple of trips, including one to a stately home where they learn about British history.
- Second part: the 8 participants are paired up and made to experience each other's life over 4 days. At the end, they meet back at the house they lived in together to share their reflections on the experience.

**Tone (alarming, casual, humorous)**

- Voice over = factual (important in how he presents Bradford)
- Experts = authority voice
- Participants = more emotional; personal reflections; opinions

**Main argument – what assertions/claims are made?**

EPISODE 1:

VOICE OVER: "Multicultural Britain needs help; some people are not mixing; our cities are becoming increasingly divided; nowhere is the problem clearer than in Bradford." [SINGLES OUT BRADFORD] [PROBLEMATISES MULTICULTURALISM]

One of the participants: "it's a ticking time bomb, and all it takes is one little spark" (Audrey) [ALARMING]

VOICE OVER:

- "Regarded as one of the country'smost segregated cities" (This point is repeated several times). [SEGREGATION] [AFFIRMATION OF EXTERNAL PERCEPTION OF BRADFORD]
- "The city centre is now predominantly Asian." ["ASIAN" – HOMOGENIZING CATEGORY] [AGAIN SPECIFIC VISION OF THE CITY CENTRE]

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- "Surrounded by exclusively white suburbs" [GOES BEYON THE USUAL FOCUS ON CITY CENTRE]
- AGENDA HERE: "But now the people of Bradford are going to be brought together."

APPEALING TO RATIONAL ARGUMENT BY BRINGING IN "DIVERSITY EXPERTS"

Laurie Trott (expert number 1): No multicultural Britain at the moment; level of integration apart from London is particularly low. [FAILURE OF MULTICULTURALISM] [INTEGRATION – MEANING?]

They need to find 8 members of Bradford's segregated communities to test whether or not the people of this city and this country can live side by side

Taiba Yasseen (expert number 2): never heard what the people think, the community thinks [EMPHASIS ON "PEOPLE'S VOICES"]

Citizenship test:
- First they show citizenship test being taken in a mosque in Manningham – 95% failed the test
- Test in Idle – 90% failed
- Haworth – middle class, wealthy, exclusively white – 85% failed
- City centre – 100% failed
- Wibsey – 2 passed... 89% failed

→111 took test, 100 failed

Expert 1: "Accurate sample of multicultural Britain" → live together; attempt the "unthinkable" [IMAGE: RIGOROUS SOCIAL EXPERIMENT]

Expert 2: no clear view of what Britishness is. Let people brought together to work it out.

EPISODE 2

First voice over sentence: Bradford regarded as one of the most segregated cities in the UK

Diversity and community experts

- What do we need to do to be citizens of today's Britain?
- Understand what being British is all about

Participants will be going to segregated parts of Bradford they've never experienced.[Interesting because it implies that Haworth and Ilkley, where two of the participants come from, are segregated]

VOICE OVER: "White people in growing minority in city centre"

VOICE OVER: Haworth: one of the most segregated areas of Bradford [confirms the observation above]

Expert's conclusion: Britishness = having common values

Finishes on a very positive note – we see them all walking away, hugging each other, smile on their face – MESSAGE: integration is hard work but it can happen; people need to make an effort to make it happen. [almost dismissive (or oblivious too?) of the difficulties that were encountered, in particular regarding the issue of racism]

**Role in terms of the representation of Bradford in the national imagination**

The documentary rehearses some of the stereotypes about Bradford, especially with the use of the authoritative voice over delivering "facts" about the city: it is segregated, divided, and this is how it is perceived in the country. However, these are claims not backed up by proof. It relies heavily on the way the city is stereotyped in the country. There is no explanation of what segregation and division mean.

The focus is on the large and rising "Asian" population in the city.

The title of the programme itself encapsulates the "othering" of Bradford by implying that the city is not "British" (unlike where for example?) T&A called it a

"Bradford-bashing title." It encapsulates the negative image of the District. London-based point of view?Bradford as an easy-target?

Comment on a resident's blog about the "documentary": "It's a complex place with a rich history and idiosyncratic present. But round the Evian and poncily named coffee strewn meeting table of a TV production company hundreds of miles away, Bradford is simply shorthand for Muslim. And that's what this programme was really about. It wasn't Make Bradford British, it was 'Make Muslims British'. It's pure laziness. They care not a jot about Bradford or the image they're leaking into the nation's living rooms." (http://www.sabotagetimes.com/life/make-bradford-british-another-lazy-attack-on-worstedopolis/ Keith Wildman)

However, segregation is usually associated with the Asian community, and it is interesting in the second programme that twice there are references to exclusively white areas as segregated places. It shifts the focus of segregation somehow onto the white community too, although I am not sure to what extent this was intended, and also how much notice was taken of it.

**Channel 4's justification for using Bradford for their "documentary" (**www.channel4.com/programmes/make-bradford-british/articles/all/why-bradford**)**

*Why Bradford? By Heenan Bhatti, Series Editor*

The British Prime Minister made a speech last year in which he questioned multi-culturalism and how it had encouraged people to live apart rather than find a common notion of national identity. [CAUSALITY LINK BETWEEN MULTICULTURALISM AND SEGREGATION] [NATIONAL IDENTITY – PREPONDERANCE OF THE NATION-STATE]

We set out making this series with the intention of exploring these issues: how do we, despite class, cultural and religious differences, find a way to live together? What makes us all British today?

It's a pressing question. This is a country which needs to come to terms with a distinctly ethnically mixed future. The first non-white majority city in the UK is predicted in the next few years. But is that a future defined by difference? Or one which brings us together as a nation? [AGAIN IMPORTANCE OF THE NATION]

Our starting point was the fact not everyone agrees on what it is to be British. Put eight different, diverse people around a table and everyone will have a different notion of 'Britishness', ranging from the emblematic fish and chips, to feelings of national pride, and notions of freedom and individuality. [VARIOUS NOTIONS OF BRITISHNESS ACKNOWLEDGED] [EXAMPLES NOT SO DIVERSE THOUGH – TRADITIONAL VIEW OF BRITISHNESS MAINLY]

It was exactly this debate that we see in Make Bradford British; by asking a cross section of British citizens - holding a very different sense of what it means to be British - to live together as a micro-version multi-cultural community.

The aim was to see if they could find common ground on what made them all British, offering clues to how we can all, despite our differences, find ways to live together. In short, what unites us rather than divides us.

When we started looking at potential locations to base this ground-breaking series, we looked at cities up and down the country. We chose the city of Bradford. Here, a predominately Asian city centre is surrounded by areas which are nearly exclusively white. [CHOICE OF BRADFORD DUE TO ETHNIC MAKE UP]

Furthermore, its ethnically distinct areas offered fault-lines of difference: cultural, religious and social. Spending time in Bradford confirmed ordinary people were having this discussion as a matter of course, while independent research cited it as 'one of the most deeply segregated areas in the country' although there had been 'a great deal of progress in Bradford' there was still 'a great deal to be done'.[WHICH RESEARCH?] [IDEA OF FAULT-LINES – SUGGESTS CONFLICT] [FOCUS ON IMAGE OF BRADFORD AS SEGREGATED]

Bradford was somewhere we could find the differing viewpoints, reflecting a cross section of opinion representative of the whole country. Our research team - mostly all living or from the Yorkshire area - then spent several months finding potential participants, immersing themselves in Bradford's diverse communities.

Our main interest was to find the authentic and unmediated voices of ordinary people. [I WOULD QUESTION THE MEANING OF AUTHENTIC AND UNMEDIATED, BOTH IN "COLLECTING" THE VOICES AND IN "SHARING" THEM THROUGH EDITING PROCESS]

It was a huge task but it finally led to over 100 people being invited to a number of 'assessment days' - in venues ranging from a pub, a Mosque and a tea shop, representing the diverse range of communities and people - for potential inclusion in the series.

Under the watchful eye of our two respected project managers, Taiba Yasseen and Laurie Trott, the groups were asked to take the Life In the UK Citizenship Test. Normally the test is taken by those who want to live in this country and gain citizenship.

We found that 90% of our Bradford British citizens failed. Some were upset; some felt they weren't British enough; some felt it was a bit of fun.

But what failure allowed us was a pool of people from which a final eight contributors - all of who held differing notions of Britishness, representing a cross selection of multi-cultural Britain - were selected.

Last summer they came together, to live under the same roof so they could learn about each other. There were few rules. They were asked to be honest with each other. And tasked with seeing if they could find a common notion of Britishness as a way of exploring how people from different cultural, religious and social backgrounds can live together.

What happened is documented in the two films which make up the series, which we hope makes a positive contribution to the ongoing debate around what constitutes a collective 'national identity'.

The conclusions are surprising, revealing and intriguing. In a short space of time, opinions did change, new and surprising friendships were made and a common sense of Britishness did emerge.

How the conclusions translate into the real world is part of an ongoing debate. We hope Make Bradford British supplies some insights to contribute to that.

# APPENDIX 4: THE PARTICIPANTS

The following notes are background information on the participants to my research. Ages and present tenses refer to the time of the interviews (2011-2012).

**Adil**

Born 1979 in Bradford. Grew up in neighbouring area to Billesley and left the city for the first time to go to university in Liverpool. Came back to the city and took on a variety of jobs before settling for community work. Has lived in various parts of Billesley with his wife and children since.

**Ahmed**

Born in Pakistan in 1951.Came to Bradford in 1964.Male relatives already in the city. Attended school until 16. Worked in the textile industry until was made redundant. Did volunteering in community, especially translation as level of English was good. Now has office job in Billesley. Daughters live locally and son and wife live in same house.

**Assil**

Born 1984 in Bradford. Grew up in Billesley and has always lived there. Went to school in Billesley up. Attended local youth club and travelled (day trips, residential) with the organisation as a young person and later as a volunteer. Attended university. Family still lives in Billesley. Now works in public service for a local authority organisation. Married with one child.

**Clare**

Born in Bradford in 1930.Grew up near Billesley. Grandmother lived in Billesley and used to visit regularly. Family moved to Billesley to look after blind aunt when grandmother died. Aunt played important part in education, especially religious education as was her godmother. Left school at 16 to work as secretary in local mill. Then learnt how to weave and went onto working in textile industry. Had three children – one died as a small boy in road accident. Husband died at just 50. By then had moved out of Billesley but went back to the area. Had several jobs including as a carer and pastoral assistant at church. Moved out of Billesley now but goes to church there.

**Doris**

Born in Bradford in 1930. Lived and grew up on farm on outskirts of Billesley. Used to visit regularly with her father due to his work. Left school at 14 or 15 and when got married came to live in Billesley. Moved out until split up from husband and came back to live in Billesley. Remembers life on the farm during the war. Happy with life in Billesley but deplores lack of neighbourliness. Doesn't do much during the week except going out to lunch club. Children do not live locally. Grandchildren visit occasionally.

**Eleanor**

Born 1939 in Bradford. Grew up in Billesley. Married in 1960 at St Michael's and settled down with husband George in Billesley. Worked in the area until had first daughter in 1964. When children were older took on volunteering position at local community organisation. Trained in community work and worked in Billesley until retiring. Moved to suburban area after retiring. Two daughters live and work nearby.

**Elizabeth**

Born 1939 in Bradford and grew up in Billesley. Memories of the war in Bradford, especially of father going to work in ammunition factory in Leeds. Went to local school. Also many memories of Sunday school at St Michael's. Left school at 16 to go and do teacher training in Liverpool. Spent two years away from home to train. Came back to Bradford and had several jobs teaching in various schools. Inherited parents' house when they died. Still lives in same house. Never got married. Now retired and actively involved in local church. Distinct sense of many smaller areas within Billesley and not all the same.

**Eric**

Born in 1959 in Bradford on the edge of Billesley. Memories of playing outdoors in the summer and of the area looking different, especially in terms of the shops, mills and pubs that were numerous at the time. Joined Royal Navy at Seventeen. Came back to Bradford and Billesley and worked in the police. Moved out of Billesley some time after getting married ("to get a nicer house"). Comes back to the area for work (now community work), volunteering, and seeing friends. Strong sense of rootedness in Bradford.

**George**

Born 1939 in Dewsbury. Came to Bradford as a teenager to go out. Met now wife at a dance in Bradford. Moved to Billesley, where she was from. Carried on working in factory in Dewsbury until retirement. After retiring, moved out of Billesley to somewhere further out on the outskirts of Bradford. Now coming to Billesley at least three times a week for volunteering. Two daughters, live in West Yorkshire.

**Ilham**

Born 1962 in Kenya and grew up there. Moved to Billesley in Bradford as a teenager following her mother moving there in the early 1980s. Has lived, worked and volunteered in various parts of Billesley since then. Currently working in a school. Married with two teenage children.

**Issam**

Born in 1955 in Pakistan. Came to Bradford as a small child. Father came to the UK just before was born and came to be with him. Always lived in Billesley. Went to school in Billesley and loved it. Remember it as being majority "English" but still mixed. Feeling of happiness expressed about childhood. After school, worked in textile industry but had to stop due to poor health. Since then, volunteers for 3 or 4 local organisations on a regular basis. Grown-up children live locally.

**Jenny**

Born 1918 in Billesley. Father worked in textile industry locally. Went to school up to the age of 14. Parents could not afford to send her to secondary school so went to work in the mill weaving cloth. When war broke out, went to work in ammunition factory whilst sister went into nursing. Sister played big part in life. Still upset when talks about her sister's premature death. Went back to working in the mill after the war. Had two children – moved away and not local now. Missing neighbours and friends who have died or moved away. Still a couple of friends on the street.

**John**

Born 1947 in Bradford. Lived in Billesley for the first 18 years of his life. Fond memories of growing up in the area (enjoyed going to school; lots of games played on the streets). Passed eleven plus test and went to grammar school on the other side of town. Meant was only one of his friends in the area to go to university. Took year out before going to university to travel. After university came back to Yorkshire but not Bradford. Worked nearby until retired. Now comes back regularly to Billesley for volunteering in community work. Involved in primary school and youth club to give more opportunities to children from disadvantaged background.

**Leila**

Born 1980 in Bradford. Has always lived in Billesley, although in different part of the area. Went to school locally until GCSEs and then got a job in the area for a community organisation. Has been in the same job since. Married with two children.

**Mahmoud**

Born 1979 in Bradford. Grew up in Billesley. Attended local school and then "privileged" local technology college. Considers it a privilege to have had that education. Attended local youth club and did training for youth work. Now still volunteering at youth club. Also trained as teacher and teaches across Bradford as supply teacher. Still lives in Billesley today with elderly parents as looks after them.

**Mark**

Born 1940 in Bradford. Grew up in Billesley. Married in Billesley at St Michael's. Left Bradford when joined the army. Came back to the city to retire and settled in a different area of the city. Comes back to Billesley on a regular basis and edits a newsletter for a local history group about Billesley.

**Matt**

Born in London in 1957 but family moved to Caribbean when was a baby. Came back to England as a teenager and joined the army. Chose to come and settle in Bradford as had a friend in the city after left the army. Has lived in Billesley with wife since then. Has had a range of jobs in the city. Currently doing community work but not in Billesley.

**Sophie**

Born in Bradford in Billesley in 1966.Grew up in Billesley. Vivid memories of street games with other children. Not that fond of Billesley as was growing up. Attended local club and went on day trips. Friends were mostly in another part of Bradford. Left school to work at 16.Went into caring for elderly people. Got married at 26 and moved out of Billesley. All friends have moved out of the area. Still visits some of the people she worked for in the area. Now working for police and as part of her role works in Billesley regularly.