

Who Knows? Reflections of a community research team in Bradford and Keighley

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Project Overview

- Community research
- Visual methodologies
- Two estates:
 - Scholemoor: ‘the forgotten estate’?
 - Braithwaite and Guardhouse: a political football?

Community Research

- Social actors as social analysts
- Genuine participatory research means involvement in all stages of the process
- Participatory research facilitates collective analysis
- Three distinct – but overlapping – perspectives
- Outcomes of participatory research

“The research is to help the communities to help themselves ... to look at how decisions are made and to what extent do we, as members of communities, have involvement in this. It is about what is happening in our communities, how we socialise in different groups and to find out your opinions on local issues.”

Value of Participatory Research

- Negative impact of previous research
- High expectations of community research

“Community based research is enable-ing us to readdress power so that we are no longer objects for researchers / policy makers, rather our contribution to knowledge through our lived experiences means that we have access to equal participation, the project becomes research with us, co-designed by us, carried out using the methods which we want and believe will work in our communities. It produces research which is owned by us and which we as a community can then use. It doesn't become a study which privileges the academic over our lived realities, or in what outsiders may think we need, or may write up and never show us.”

Value of Participatory Research 2

- Role of the academics
 - ‘Distance’ from local politics
 - Access: to different kinds of knowledge and spaces
 - Training, academic knowledge
 - Role of the community researchers
 - Shared experiences
 - Trust
 - Embedded knowledge
- A creative partnership...

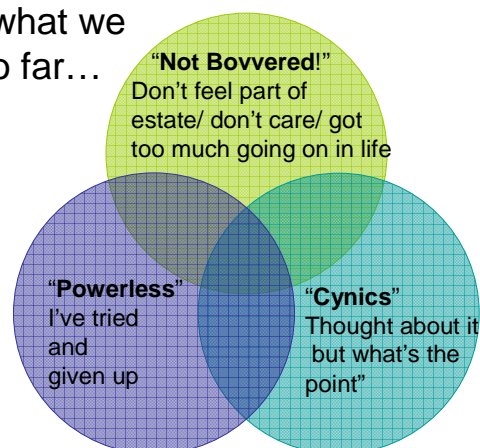
Community (Researchers) and...

- Research planning
- Data collection
 - Innovative visual methods
- Data analysis
 - A participatory and reflexive process
- Dissemination and use
 - Accessible, credible, dialogical

*“they’re not going to do anything; they’re academics. They’ll just go on to their next project. However, **we** as a community will use it. It’s our research.”*

I don’t take part in organised activities on the estate because....

3 groups of people on estates from what we have heard so far...



Unmeasurable outcomes?

- A catalyst for community action?
- Concrete outcomes: music night for Slovakian teenagers, 'encounters': between communities, between generations, volunteering ...

Challenges : Whose Knowledge Counts?

- Community members perceptions of their own knowledge
- Expectations of funders
- Expectations of academia: what if we don't 'deliver'?
- Community expectations (and views) of community researchers
- Agency expectations of community researchers

Absences

- Reasons for non-participation
 - Not invited?
 - Not worth it?
 - Not confident?
 - Not enough time!?
- Representation?
- The things we don't know

- Involving Community Researchers – and involving the community

Final thoughts

- Why do we / people participate?

- Social justice? Social change? Whose agenda is it?

- What is research *for* anyway...?
 - ... representation or intervention?
 - Capturing reality, reflecting on it, or changing it?