

STOKES CROFT- A COMMUNITY ECONOMY?

JOSEPH W. HAMPSON

JANUARY 2011

“Presented as part of, and in accordance with, the requirements for the Final Degree of
B.Sc. at the University of Bristol, School of Geographical Sciences, January 2011.

Abstract

This dissertation aims to engage the reader with the area of Stokes Croft and the project of the Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC). I used an Action-Research based approach to work with and study the PRSC as an organisation, investigating their model of community development. Having situated Stokes Croft and the PRSC alongside relevant literature, my analysis will focus on telling the story of the PRSC in relation to Gibson- Grahams theory of the community-economy. I will use a range of sources to help elaborate their unique take on defining and developing the ‘community’ before looking at Coalition policy. By examining policy rhetoric I help to discern what the future may hold for this organisation.

Total word count: 12, 832

Words in tables (figs 1.2- 58, 1.8- 218, 4.1- 99 & 4.4- 667): 1,042

References in brackets in text: 288

Final word count: 11, 502



School of Geographical Sciences

CERTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP OF THE COPYRIGHT

IN A TYPESCRIPT OR MANUSCRIPT

Dissertation presented as part of, and in accordance with, the requirements for the Final Degree of B.Sc at the University of Bristol, School of Geographical Sciences.

I hereby assert that I own exclusive copyright in the item named below. I give permission to the University of Bristol Library to add this item to its stock and to make it available for use and re-copying by its readers.

AUTHOR	Joseph Hampson
TITLE	Stokes Croft- A Community Economy?
DATE OF SUBMISSION	18/01/2011

Signed:

.....

Full name: Joseph William Hampson

.....

Date: 18/01/2011

.....

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maria Fannin for her interest and help in theorising and completing this project. I would also like to thank everyone at the PRSC, particularly Chris, Jake, Rich and Jamie. To all my family and friends who have read drafts and generally supported me, I owe you everything.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, TABLES AND MAPS	6
INTRODUCTION.....	7
AN INTRODUCTION TO STOKES CROFT	8
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRSC	13
LITERATURE REVIEW	17
CULTURAL QUARTERS	17
GENTRIFICATION	20
CONTEMPORARY GENTRIFICATION IN STOKES CROFT	21
THEORISING ‘COMMUNITY’	22
METHODOLOGY AND POSITIONALITY.....	24
WHY ACTION RESEARCH?	25
ACTION RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHY	26
MY PARTICIPATORY PROJECT	26
ANALYSIS.....	28
THE COMMUNITY-ECONOMY	28
COMMUNITY- ECONOMY- THEORY AND PRACTICE	31
STOKES CROFT- A COMMUNITY ECONOMY?.....	32
1. <i>What is necessary to personal and social survival?</i>	32
<i>Necessity in the work and ethos of the PRSC.....</i>	33
2. <i>The appropriation and distribution of social surplus.....</i>	35
<i>Social surplus in the work and ethos of the PRSC.....</i>	36
3. <i>The production and consumption of social surplus.....</i>	38
<i>Consumption of social surplus in the work and ethos of the PRSC.....</i>	39
4. <i>The production and sustaining of a commons.....</i>	40
<i>The commons of Stokes Croft in the work of the PRSC.....</i>	42
COALITION POLICY	45
CONCLUSION.....	48
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY:.....	51
APPENDIX.....	59

<i>List of Illustrations, tables and maps</i>	page
Figure 1.1: <i>Jamaica St. Corner, Stokes Croft</i>	7
Figure 1.2: <i>Table to summarise Deprivation Statistics for St. Pauls (2007)</i>	8
Figure 1.3: <i>Map of Stokes Croft including Conservation Area Boundaries</i>	9
Figure 1.4: <i>A view up Stokes Croft Road</i>	10
Figure 1.5: <i>Pieces on Hillgrove Street</i>	12
Figure 1.6: <i>Practice Wall in the newly built PRSC workers yard</i>	14
Figure 1.7: <i>Jamaica Street Outdoor Gallery, PRSC HQ and Jamaica Street Studios</i>	15
Figure 1.8: <i>Table to summarise the work of the PRSC in 2009/10</i>	16
Figure 2.1: <i>Stokes Croft- Britain in Bloom Winner</i>	19
Figure 4.1: <i>Gibson-Grahams Diverse Economy</i>	30
Figure 4.2: <i>Stokes Croft China and the reallocation of profit</i>	34
Figure 4.3: <i>No Tesco in Stokes Croft Mural</i>	43
Figure 4.4: <i>Table to summarise the policies contained in the Localism Bill</i>	46-48
<i>and the Conservative Party Green Paper on Returning Power to Local Communities</i>	

Introduction



Figure 1.1: *Jamaica St. Corner, Stokes Croft*

This dissertation aims to engage the reader with the area of Stokes Croft and the project of the Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC). I used an Action-Research based approach to work with and study the PRSC as an organisation, investigating their model of community development. Having situated Stokes Croft and the PRSC alongside relevant literature, my analysis will focus on telling the story of the PRSC in relation to Gibson- Graham's theory of the community-economy. I will use a range of sources to help elaborate their unique take on defining and developing the 'community' before looking at Coalition policy. By examining policy rhetoric I will help to discern what the future may hold for this organisation.

An Introduction to Stokes Croft

In this section I introduce the literally and metaphorically colourful area of Stokes Croft. I will begin by painting the reader the stereotypical picture of the Stokes Croft urban environment that I was subjected to upon my arrival in Bristol. I will then contrast this picture with my own experiences of Stokes Croft in an attempt to re-shape this overly negative image of this area.

Stokes Croft is officially recognised as part of St. Pauls, a Lower Super Output Area ¹ in Bristol with an index of multiple deprivation at 60.98, 815th most deprived of 35,482 nationwide and the 13th most deprived in Bristol out of 252 (BCC 2007). Figure 1.2 below summarises some key statistics from the 2007 Deprivation in Bristol Report for St. Pauls. (BCC 2007)

Figure 1.2			
Statistic	Figure	Bristol Rank	National Rank
Index of Multiple Deprivation	60.98 (IMD Score)	13	815
% of people experiencing Income Deprivation	50.2%	2	532
% of work age people experiencing employment deprivation	23.9%	12	1474
Health deprivation and disability	1.35 (Health deprivation and disability score)	18	2,257
Living environment score	46.99 (Living environment score)	13	3,284
% Children experiencing income deprivation	93.3%	1	20
% Older people experiencing income deprivation	48.4%	7	1,020

¹ Lower Super Output Area is a term referring to a geographical area specifically designed by the Office of National Statistics for collecting and aggregating data. For more see http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=5316008

In his city profile of Bristol, Andrew Tallon discusses the latest City Centre Regeneration Project, published in 2005. He states that three zones of the city centre have been the foci of major urban regeneration – Broadmead shopping centre, Temple Office Quarter and the former docks at Harbourside. (BCC, 2005a, cited in Tallon, 2006: 79) While it could be argued that the focus on these areas is justifiable, it also reflects the historic lack of Council investment afforded to Stokes Croft, resulting in post-war economic decline. Much of Stokes Croft is designated as a Conservation Area by Bristol City Council (figure 1.3): “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).

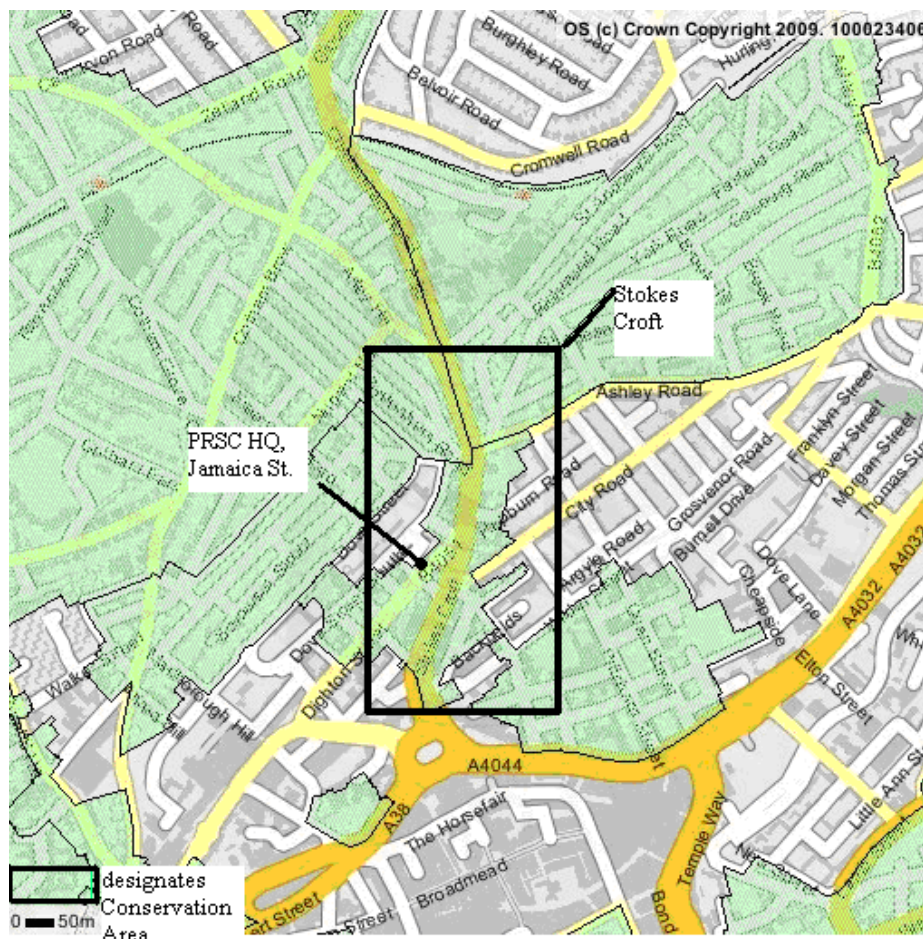


Figure 1.3: Map of Stokes Croft including Conservation Area Boundaries

It is often compared less favourably to other central areas of the city, particularly the more affluent areas of Redland and Clifton. Stokes Croft is often negatively defined, or pigeon-holed as problem area due to the frequent occupation of public space by homeless people and alcoholics. The urban environment is framed by the imposing structure of Westmoreland House (shown in the rear ground of figure 1.4) which provides a canvass for some of the graffiti in the area. The economic condition of the area is reflected in the fact that many shops in the area are unoccupied or boarded up



Figure 1.4: *A view up Stokes Croft Road*

This perception of an area with 7.7% of residents based in hostels may paint a disturbing picture of a community fraught with deprivation, socio-economic decline and danger; particularly when compared to its more affluent environs. Ash Amin stated that “spatial inequality came to be associated with the legacy of state intervention, to be resolved either through the invisible hand of the market or via special measures for specific types of ‘problem’ area (e.g. ‘those inner cities’ in Mrs. Thatcher’s infelicitous

characterization)” (2005: 613). Stokes Croft has lacked state intervention, and ‘the invisible hand of the market’ has remained largely invisible, but it is easy to imagine that Mrs. Thatcher may have characterised Stokes Croft as one of ‘those inner cities’.

By no means do I wish to trivialise or romanticise the plight of Stokes Croft. This video by local media group As It Is Tv (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3rth_ZltfA 2007) provides a disturbing picture of the reality of living in this area for many people. However, while some aspects of this snapshot hold true, I would argue that many of the opinions drawn of Stokes Croft are at the very least outdated and often plain false. Indeed, much of the ‘graffiti’ could be considered as street art that contributes to a vibrant built environment.

The Stokes Croft I discovered was a different place than I was led to imagine. Articulating this subjective feeling is a difficult task and quantifying it cannot be achieved in the same way as quantifying ‘deprivation’, but the sense of community (or rather, community as I imagined it) was to me more evident than anywhere else I had been in the city. The negative aspects of the area are evident, particularly to the passive observer. However, a closer inspection rendered them obvious as but a small piece in the fabric of an area that was attempting to define its own space in Bristol. In his passionate homage to Barcelona’s modernity’s Epps (2004) discusses the inequitable manifestation of progress that often accompanies urban renewal or gentrification; in my view Stokes Croft was reshaping itself in different, exciting and equitable ways. The vibrant street art and culture; the range of independent shops, clubs and bars; the constantly emerging development; all this was to me more worthy of talking about than the deprivation that people relay via the statistics and generalisations I discussed above. This emerging culture has arguably helped contribute to a change in economic fortunes for the area, which could be referenced by the recent article in the Bristol Evening Post (2010) that stated “just when you thought Stokes Croft couldn’t sustain any more café’s, another one pops up”.

My initial experiences of Stokes Croft were in my first year as an impressionable student at Bristol. The stereotypical student nights failed to excite and the clubs and bars of Stokes Croft played host to a more exciting sortie where music, rather than sex and

alcohol was the focus. The excitement of my first night in Lakota, a three-story club in the heart of 'the Croft' playing drum and bass; the feeling of being part of something different and stimulating; these experiences created an aura around Stokes Croft that has not disappeared. The traits that I felt to be engrained in Stokes Croft; the importance of culture; localism; sustainability; community; pride; resourcefulness were all emphasised and referenced by the successful Stokes Croft Street Festival, held on May 19th 2009. The walls, signs and buildings of Stokes Croft provide an (illegal) canvas that graffiti artists reshape almost daily, while art installations such as those at St. James Barton Roundabout (mid ground of fig 2.1) help to bring something different to the environment. The constantly changing works of art by legends of the Bristol scene such as Ziml, Epok, 3Dom and Paris (Braun, 2008) combined with the 19th century architecture help to create a unique built environment that is dynamic, contemporary and exciting yet also full of history and nostalgia. Indeed, it was my struggle to conceptualise just what made this area so magical that helped me conceive this project.



Figure 1.5: Street Art on Hillgrove Street

An Introduction to the PRSC

In this section I am particularly mindful of the work of Leigh Dennis, whose 2009 MSci project on the PRSC was influential and provided an excellent introduction. However, I feel that my work provides a more up to date representation of a dynamic organisation and looks at it from a different perspective. He defines the development work of the PRSC as counter-discursive, where as I focus on Stokes Croft as a community-economy. I hope that these distinctions will be made clear with further reading of this dissertation.

The Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft is a Community Interest Company (CIC) based in Stokes Croft, St Pauls, Bristol. They believe:

That Stokes Croft has been criminally and deliberately neglected by Government” and therefore “reject top-down government. The future of Stokes Croft must rest in the hands of the people who live, work and play in the area. To this end, we have produced an alternative vision, one that actually aims to make the area more people-friendly, one that plays to the strengths of the area.

(prsc.org.uk, 2008)

The PRSC began in 2006 as “a tongue-in-cheek project” (Transcript A: 1) that has evolved over time into an organisation that now aims to impact on the sustainable and equitable redevelopment of Stokes Croft. Central to this project is the philosophical idea that ‘the area must determine its own future’ (Transcript A: 1) and that Stokes Croft’s ‘underlying strength of culture’ can be used to provide a platform for this redevelopment. The organisation recently became a CIC in order to better represent itself to the community and “seek to lay the foundations for a strong, vibrant local economy, providing where possible employment opportunities for the local community, and to generate an ethos of sustainability.” (PRSC Memorandum and Articles of Association, 2008) Several factors have been vital in ensuring the organisations longevity; particularly its openness to new ideas and the structure of the organisation. This has allowed it to be dynamic and develop with Stokes Croft. The organisation runs on approximately 8 volunteers. Some rotate working in the shop and others provide more manual labour, but this number is generally dependent on the project. In spite of the connotations of the term

‘Republic’ and apparently contrary to popular belief ² the organisation is run using a small number of people, with added input arising from interactions with members of the local community when necessary. The openness of the PRSC is reflected in this quote from Chris Chalkley, one of the founders and a key part of its development and success. “Some of the most important things that I do is [sic] simply sweeping up the streets, picking up the dog shit... Don’t do anything that you wouldn’t expect anybody else to do.” (Transcript A: 4)

The organisation provides a space for local artists to practice and create work via the ‘practice wall’ (figure 1.6), while the gallery on Jamaica Street provides a place to sell this (or other) work. This space provides a safe area for all artists to practice without fear of prosecution as well as a place for social interaction for the artistic community.



Figure 1.6: *Practice Wall in the newly built PRSC workers yard*

² While working in the Stokes Croft Museum a group of students came in to look around. We discussed my project and work with the PRSC. They also expressed an interest in the PRSC, but felt that the organisation was too ‘big, cliquey and exclusive’. When I informed them of the reality of the organisations size and structure they were surprised. Others in the area have expressed similar surprise at the small size of the organisation, particularly in relation to the work they complete.

The unique project of the ‘Outdoor Gallery’ (See figure 1.7) represents a huge improvement to the urban environment of the area and also embodies many PRSC values; it is a statement of trust and tolerance to the local community and helps develop a sense of identity and community by promoting local culture. It also serves as a unique marketing point that helps boost the areas self-styled reputation as Bristol’s Cultural Quarter. As the PRSC state:

Because of the economically challenged nature of Stokes Croft, there are many areas where there are gaps in the normal commercial landscape. This can be seen as a disadvantage, a gap-toothed smile. PRSC sees only opportunity, the opportunity to flavour forever the visual nature of our quarter. More stimulating. Tidier. Safer. Better

(prsc.org.uk, 2008)



Figure 1.7: *Jamaica Street Outdoor Gallery, PRSC HQ and Jamaica Street Studios*

Figure 1.8 below helps to summarise the work of the PRSC during 2010, highlighting the benefit of the work it does to the local community.

Nature of work	Who benefits?		Funding
	PRSC profits	Stokes Croft	
Painting murals in Stokes Croft		Y	Self funded
Helping to organise and run the Stokes Croft Street Fest		Y	In partnership with other local organisations
Cleaning, restoring and painting buildings		Y	Self funded
Curating the Stokes Croft Museum	Y	Y	Self funded
Curating the Banksy Q exhibition	Y	Y	Self funded
Clearing, designing and building the Jamaica Street workers yard	Y	Y	Self funded
Recovering and storing old art and graffiti from the Stokes Croft area	Y	Y	Cost of storage funded by PRSC
Clearing and building the Jamaica Street gallery	Y	Y	Self funded
Producing its own range of Stokes Croft China	Y	Y	Self funded, with 10% of profit going to the people of Stokes Croft after sold for £1000 of profit
Helping local artists sell their work via the Jamaica Street Gallery	Y	Y	PRSC take 50% of the sale
Producing its own art and furniture to sell	Y		All profits go to the organisation
Cleaning the streets of Stokes Croft		Y	PRSC receive no remuneration
Organising a bus to help locals attend a funeral for a local resident		Y	PRSC receive no remuneration
Working with the local No Tesco in Stokes Croft campaign		Y	Resources provided to campaign at cost to PRSC

Many of the activities above create little or no measurable economic capital yet contribute directly to the social and cultural capital of the area. It is these projects that

help to highlight the nature of the work of the PRSC, and the need for it to adopt certain aspects of traditional business structure to ensure its sustainability, efficiency and profitability in areas that generate them income. However, it is the fact that these areas are largely of secondary focus that sets the PRSC apart from traditional development organisations or theories. Other methods of redevelopment in the form of gentrification and Cultural Quarters will be further discussed in the literature review.

Literature Review

Community development is at the heart of the work of the PRSC. This section will introduce the reader to relevant literature on Cultural Quarters, gentrification and theories of community, situated in relation to the PRSC and Stokes Croft. By introducing this section with a quote from the PRSC I wish to help the reader better situate the organisation and its aims against other theories of community and development that will become more apparent with further reading. This mission statement introduces several aspects for further investigation in this project- the concept of a Cultural Quarter and the idea of a sustainable, community based economy.

PRSC will seek to promote and bring to fruition the notion of Stokes Croft as a Cultural Quarter, as a destination. PRSC will seek to promote creativity and activity in the local environment, thereby generating prosperity, both financial and spiritual. PRSC will work in all ways to enhance the reputation of Stokes Croft as a globally renowned Centre for Excellence in the Arts, both in its own actions and by encouraging the action of others. PRSC believes that the strength of the local Community resides in its creativity, tolerance and respect for each other.

PRSC Mission Statement, February 2009.

Cultural Quarters

Roadhouse defines a Cultural Quarter as:

A geographical area of a large town or city which acts as a focus for cultural and artistic activities through the presence of a group of buildings devoted to housing

a range of activities, and purpose designed or adapted spaces to create a sense of identity, providing an environment to facilitate and encourage the provision of cultural and artistic services and activities.

(Roadhouse 2010: 24)

As a consequence of economic restructuring and de-industrialization, promotion of cultural activities as a means of bringing about the regeneration of declining urban areas is becoming more popular (McCarthy 2006: 397). Furthermore, Roadhouse argues that “cultural quarters provide a context for the use of planning and development powers to preserve and encourage cultural production and consumption.” (2006:22) The benefits of promoting an area as a Cultural Quarter are both economic and social; the improvement of the built environment and investment by cultural organisations and services are part of an ‘attempt to support and reinforce each other and help to restore previously derelict areas through the conversion of properties for cultural uses.’ (Wansborough and Mageean 2010: 184)

The idea of a Cultural Quarter as a Council-planned strategy for development is discussed heavily in the literature (Roadhouse 2010, Wansborough and Magean 2010). Stokes Croft is an interesting case because it is a self-styled Cultural Quarter, as opposed to an officially designated Council project. Via the focus on street art the PRSC build on Roadhouse’s definition, attesting importance to other cultural aspects of the built environment not specifically tied to the ‘*presence of buildings* devoted to housing a range of activities’ (2010: 24, emphasis added). By branding Stokes Croft as Bristol’s Cultural Quarter, the PRSC are essentially marketing the areas own unique ‘culture’ to help raise its profile and bring investment to the economy. The appropriation of a typically officiated discourse is itself a statement of the PRSC’s position in relation to the politics of the Council, who they argue have “consistently neglected Stokes Croft” (prsc.co.uk, 2008). The sign near St. James Barton roundabout at the entrance to Stokes Croft jokingly declares that the area is Britain in Bloom winner 2012, 2013 and 2015. The association with the artistic Montmartre district of Paris also serves to promote Stokes Crofts *a la mode* credentials. By using an official looking template for a non-official sign

the PRSC playfully highlight how these same authorities who manage and award these cultural achievements have forgotten about the unique culture of Stokes Croft.



Figure 2.1: *Stokes Croft- Britain in Bloom Winner*

David Ley argues that artists can be seen as agents in the ‘aestheticisation’ and later gentrification (defined below) of an area. His discussion of the complex relationship between cultural and economic capital in the cultural field arguably has many parallels with the process of development occurring in Stokes Croft, particularly “the movement of a product, and indeed a place, from junk to art and then onto commodity” (2003: 2528). However, the PRSC aim to ensure that the development of the area does not lead to the gentrification of Stokes Croft, as Ley argues may be the case. His study draws heavily on Pierre Bourdieu’s work on social space (1984, 1993). The street art that brightens Stokes Crofts urban environment could be seen to be enriching the *cultural* capital of the area which in turn positively impacts on the *economic* capital. This view offers a way to distinguish and validate the work of many artists in Stokes Croft, as art and culture are often seen as activities that contribute little to the area in terms of economic capital. Ley uses empirical data from Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto to argues that “the aesthetic disposition of the artist that rejects commercialisation, values the commonplace and

redemptively transforms junk into art may be, indeed *is*, converted into economic capital by varied actors who may include artists themselves, other residents or the development industry.” (2003: 2540, original emphasis) Indeed, the cultural capital of the area is directly beneficial to the local economy, signalled by the opening of several new cafés and bars such as The Arts House, Hooper House and Bank. The discourse of Stokes Croft as ‘Cultural Quarter’ rather than an area of deprivation is arguably diffusing into Bristol society, signalled by this quote from the Bristol Evening Post (2010, emphasis added) regarding Café Kino³; “like a jigsaw, the pieces of this Cultural Quarter are finally fitting into place... it [Café Kino] is very on-trend but it is also being run for all the right reasons – a café for “the people” rather than the profits and the accountants. Ultimately, it’s *just very Stokes Croft* and a very welcome new addition to this fascinating, rapidly changing corner of Bristol.”

Gentrification

Gentrification is a term with a contested definition. In its literal sense it refers to the replacement of an existing population (usually lower or middle class) by a ‘gentry’, or higher class population. This results in the renovation of typically modest housing, which has the effect of driving up prices and changing the social character of the area. (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008: 4-8) However, this process is a much more complex economic, cultural, political, social and institutional phenomenon. Lees, Slater and Wyly (2008) make the distinction between ‘classic’ and ‘contemporary’ gentrification. The theory of classic gentrification is based on the term coined by Ruth Glass in 1964. The key facet of this is the displacement of the working class from an area by the middle class. The economic and social benefits of gentrification are often well publicised by developers and the state alike (Hackworth and Smith 2000), but the marginalisation of the lower classes who reside in the area is often glossed over. David Harvey argues that “the genius of neoliberal theory is that it provides a benevolent mask full of wonderful sounding words such as freedom, choice and rights to hide grim realities of the restoration of naked class power, locally as well as transnationally” (2005:119). Maybe the great triumph of

³ A not-for-profit co-operative café that has recently relocated to 108 Stokes Croft

gentrification is creating a discourse that makes the practice of gentrification seem like a positive and optimistic process for the whole neighbourhood. As Neil Smith states;

“Hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, refused with middle-class sensibility; real estate values soar, yuppies consume; elite gentility is democratized in mass produced styles of distinction. So what’s not to like? The contradictions of the actual frontier are not entirely eradicated in this imagery, but they are smoothed into acceptable grooves” (1996a:13, cited from Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008:195).

Contemporary Gentrification in Stokes Croft

Neil Smith argues that contemporary gentrification is the reinvestment of capital at the urban centre, designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space. It is often used to describe the residential aspects of this process, but this is changing as the process of gentrification itself evolves (Smith 2000: 294). The negative social impacts associated with gentrification give the PRSC and other residents cause for concern. This concern motivates the organisation to fight against any developments that will not provide social or economic benefit to the community (articulated by this video, from PRSCdotORGdotUK 2008 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3rth_ZltfA); be it from the private or public sector. Geographical enquiry on gentrification has been on a wide base of conceptual categories including class, gender, race, consumption, housing, social polarization and the governance practices of neoliberalism in the global city (Ley 2009: 274). Williams (1984: 221) observed gentrification in Bristol by the early 1980’s. However, this process has arguably eluded Stokes Croft until now. This is arguably evidenced by the planned construction of a Tesco Metro store on Cheltenham Road, despite the opposition of local residents and the range of nearby local shops. Smith’s concept of gentrification as the production of space for a more affluent class of people is particularly relevant considering the current socio-economic demographic of Stokes Croft and St. Pauls. The recent emergence of Stokes Croft as a cultural area with low rent and close proximity to the city centre mean that Stokes Croft has many aspects that make it attractive to both public and private organisations as a target for redevelopment and arguably, gentrification. This highlights the point that the area been overlooked by Council

planners in favour of a public-private redevelopment of the waterfront area of Bristol, fitting in with similar strategies such as London Docklands, Salford Quays in Manchester, Cardiff Bay and Liverpool's Albert Docks.

Theorising 'community'

In this section I will examine the literature on defining 'the community' alongside recent community-based policy known as 'Third Way localism' (Amin 2005) that has been implemented under Tony Blair's New Labour government. Stoeker defines the community as:

"People who reside closely enough to each other that they can maintain face to face relationships, interact across multiple roles, and cooperate in trying to create social change. The easiest example of this is a neighbourhood, but there are other examples that also emphasise identity, such as a metropolitan area lesbian community." (2009: 389)

The PRSC contest this emphasis on residence with their definition:

"The Community is those who live in, work in or pass through Stokes Croft and its surrounding area." (prsc.org.uk 2008)

This broad definition of who counts as 'the community' highlights the attitude and ethos of PRSC rhetoric. The above definition supports Mae Shaw's assertion that 'community is a slippery term to define'. She states that "much has been written about the problematic nature of 'community', emphasizing its distinctive character as a historically situated and theoretically contested idea". (2008: 24) She quotes Mayo who observes that; "It is not just that the term has been used ambiguously, it has been contested, fought over and appropriated for different uses and interests to justify different politics, policies and practices." (1994: 48) An example of this would be the post-Thatcherite New Labour government who "emphasized the notion of 'community'... it was made a fundamental concept in the new ideology of the party" {Fremaux, 2005} resulting in projects such as the New Deal for Communities (NDC) that built on Conservative policy such as the City

Challenge Initiative and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)⁴. While much work has been done on the failings of these policies (see Macleavy 2009, Dinham 2005) and how communities can mobilise themselves to produce the various socio-economic benefits associated with a close community, (Richardson 2008, {Marinetto, 2003}) relatively little work has been done on actual organisations or social movements who wish to have a vested and productive impact on their area outside of central or local policy, such as the PRSC.

In his 2005 paper, Ash Amin critiques the “recent turn by New Labour to community cohesion and social capital as a means of overcoming local poverty and disadvantage.” (2005: 612). He states that Third Way localism suffers from ‘a romance of local community that in practice will be assailed from all directions and will be modest in its economic and political returns, especially in the areas in which it is most expected to deliver.’ (2005: 618)

Amin’s critique of Third Way rationale could be applied to the historical and contemporary social context of Stokes Croft.

“Lack of community is blamed for local degeneration without any critical appraisal of other contributing factors, or of alternate forms of social connectivity that do not fit the stereotype. In turn, the restoration of community is seen to be the mainstay of local economic and political regeneration, once again without critical assessment of what community really means and without serious analysis of the drivers of change and renewal beyond community. The problem of ‘failed’ places becomes a problem of eliminating bad community and replacing it with good community.”

(2005: 619, emphasis added)

⁴ The City Challenge Initiative and the Single Regeneration Budget were pre-Blair Conservative policies that aimed to involve local communities in regeneration. Macleavy (2009: 850) states that the model of community partnership in NDC—where communities are positioned as crucial points of access for individuals to attain scarce resources is intended to redefine and configure the roles and relationships between local government, quasistate agencies and local residents.

While aspects of this critique could be applied to Stokes Croft there are some key differences. Whereas Amin is referring to the restoration of ‘community’, and thus society/economy as a result of specifically targeted policy, the PRSC are attempting to develop the community as a result of direct action and participation due to relative lack of policy intervention or investment. By improving and developing the area’s cultural capital, as argued by Ley above, the effect of the PRSC is likely to be markedly different than the effect that local policy would have.

Methodology and Positionality

I studied the Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft using a Participatory-Research based approach, investigating their model of community development whilst working with the organisation itself for a month. This section will introduce the nature of the work I undertook and how the ideology and practices of Participation-Action Research (PAR) influenced my project. As Stoeker argues, the diversity of use and lack of consistency associated with the terms *participatory* and *action-orientated* research means that the terms need clarifying (2009: 387). Rather than detail my ‘methods’, this section will aim to engage the reader with Participatory-Action Research as an approach. I argue that this approach is well suited to studying communities and community development from a geographical perspective that “aims towards greater congruity between the values one espouses and the values one enacts” (Brydon- Miller et al. 2003: 12). To supplement my analysis I also undertook an interview with Chris Chalkley (see appendix). This method of research would typically be regarded as extractive and looked at unfavourably by Action Research practitioners. However, I argue that the interview will help to bring a more structured reflection to my analysis, as opposed to writing about the PRSC based solely on my recollections, experiences and PRSC discourse from their website. As I used the interview in tandem with PAR, I justify its use within the PAR framework.

Why Action Research?

Participatory Research (PR) and Action Research (AR) allow for a more politicised mode of research which enables the researcher to actively contribute to achieving an outcome. Randy Stoeker remarks on the difference between participatory and action-orientated research, stating that:

Participatory research emphasized grassroots participation and critical analysis, while action research focused more on action outcomes and less on participatory processes and critical stances.

Brown & Tandon 1983, cited in Stoeker 2009: 387

As I believe in the project of the PRSC, both socially and politically, this method of politicised activism/ research was appealing. As opposed to more extractive methods of inquiry such as questionnaires, PR and AR aim to work with the community to inform and produce positive social change whilst researching, as opposed to merely researching then publishing research on a ‘phenomenon’. In 2003 a new academic journal dedicated to AR was introduced- a landmark event and a signal of the growing application of AR in a diverse range of disciplines. In their inaugural paper entitled “Why Action Research?” Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) cite Peter Reason and Hillary Bradbury (2001) who define AR as:

A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historic moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

In her 2003 review paper, Rachel Pain suggests that “action-orientated research is one area where distinctively social geographies are thriving” (2003: 649). She quotes Jackson (2000) who discusses a renewed interest in “rematerializing human geography”, and argues that “there is space for a distinctive radical social geography to jump back into the breach” (2003: 650). Indeed, Loretta Lees argued that the ‘new’ urban geography

offers little in the way of methodological description to its practitioners. She states the importance of being honest and upfront about the successes and failures of your methodology (2003: 110) and argues that urban geographers need to pay more attention to action research in the form of in-depth participatory research than has been the case to date. (2003: 111)

Action Research in geography

As scholars such as Pain and Lees have argued, there is much scope for the application of participatory and action research to many aspects of social and cultural geography. Action Research in itself is arguably an approach, not a discipline (Brydon-Miller et al 2003). However, the versatile nature of AR means that much of the research currently done by academics who would not profess to be geographers can be a useful source of information on contemporary geographical topics.

Bjørnar Sæther is an example of a scholar who argues for the integration of AR into a different branch of geography. His paper calls for an “Action Research inspired economic geography” (2007: 15) arguing that a change from the narrow research methodologies that rely solely on conventional social science methods to a broader one involving PAR is necessary to improve enquiry and generate better knowledge. He states: “coming from a background within economic geography, engagement in local economic development processes represents a possibility to question under what conditions theories on regional economic development are actionable. This is a question where mainstream qualitative and quantitative methods only give partial answers” (2007:16). The work of Robert Chambers (1994, 1994a) and the Sussex Institute of Development studies has been instrumental in promoting the use of Participatory techniques in the developing world, while other academics have merged Geographical Information Systems (GIS) with AR to promote a more equitable form of resource management in developing countries (Ahamed et al. 2009).

My Participatory Project

Having read of the importance of building trust with the community prior to undertaking a project (McIntyre 2008, Chambers 1994, Sæther 2007), I decided to volunteer with the

PRSC. This involved me aiding in any task that needed doing in and around PRSC HQ and the Stokes Croft area. This interaction developed my relationships with the many people involved in the PRSC and allowed me to play a role in the development of Stokes Croft through the transformative work of the PRSC. One of the benefits of PAR is the diverse and dynamic toolkit of research methods suited to a range of disciplines, social settings and ages. My initial method was the participation, which allowed me an insight into both the PRSC and Stokes Croft. While I will not be using a strictly ethnographic approach to representing this experience I will be incorporating ethnographic writing to represent my experiences where appropriate. I feel that it will provide snippets of relevant information that help inform both my research and practices. It could be argued that this is not the most participatory method of representation. I would debate this argument; for practices to be improved self-reflexive accounts of methods must be accounted for, as well as shared methods of producing knowledge. My reasoning is in line with Lees' view:

The attractions of an ethnographic approach (which covers most of the methods used in 'new' urban geography) are numerous. It addresses the richness and complexity of human life and gets us closer to understanding the ways people interpret and experience the world. It is well able to deal with complex concepts like culture. It believes in the socially constructed nature of phenomena and the importance of language, and it reminds us that the researcher only ever gains partial insight.

(Lees 2004: 103)

Analysis

This section will provide me with a space to elaborate my opinion that there is real benefit from the PRSC's unique take on development; socially, culturally and economically. I will make this point using my own research, interviews and PRSC discourse from various sources by situating the work of the PRSC in relation to J.K. Gibson-Graham's theory of the community-economy. I begin this chapter with a short section introducing this theory. I feel that the work of the PRSC can be seen to be "cultivating awareness" of the four aspects of the economy that Gibson-Graham feel need addressing in order to rethink the ontological rigidity of the economy as an already defined capitalist object. As Dennis (2009) argued, the PRSC effectively constructed their own counter-discursive development strategy for Stokes Croft. I would argue that this strategy could also be seen to be a way of cultivating Stokes Croft as a 'community-economy'. However, while the PRSC appear to display many characteristics that make them a valuable case study to demonstrate an emerging 'community-economy' (Gibson-Graham 2006a), my reading of Gibson-Graham's theory leaves a space for doubt as to whether the authors would categorise them as such. The focus on localism in PRSC discourse is at odds with Gibson-Graham, as is the fact that the PRSC do inherently operate in the capitalist economic space. I will play on these points by detailing the theory of Gibson-Graham alongside the practical work of the PRSC. While I acknowledge the argument that this literary based analysis is misplaced in this section, I feel that the direct comparisons help me to argue my point in a way that would not be possible if the literary portion of the text were located in the literature review. I then move onto analyse Coalition policy to ascertain whether it provides a real space for a wider application of the PRSC approach to development. This will help me reflect upon the future of the organisation and summarise my own opinion on the work of Gibson-Graham, via practical reflection on my own research.

The Community-Economy

This section does not aim to detail the entire theory of deconstructing capitalist hegemony that took Gibson-Graham two books (2006, 2006a) and several papers to

document. I will give a brief overview of the context and content of their work in order to situate the goals of building community-economies. This will provide a better understanding of the community work of the PRSC and help the reader clarify how I critique aspects of Gibson-Graham's work in relation to the practical process of community-economic development.

To understand the theory of the community-economy it is important to situate it in the context of its authors and their previous publications. The theory of the community-economy builds on previous work contesting the capitalist political economy from a Marxist-Feminist perspective. In their seminal text *The End of Capitalism as we knew it: a Feminist critique of the Political Economy*, J.K. Gibson-Graham aimed to "distance the economy from politics" in order to "transform peoples understanding of capitalism as the naturally dominant form of economy" (2006: ix). By critiquing existing theories of capitalism as the dominant economic structure, they hoped to make space for new economic representations and a new form of social space. This 'dislocation' (2006: xi) from the practices and processes of the capitalist economy allows people to recognise that other forms of economy are possible. They discuss new economic and political space in *A Postcapitalist Politics* (2006a) under the name 'community-economy'. Figure 4.1 below aims to represent the economy 'as it really is', bringing in factors and organisations who are often not recognised as economically important. They bring in elements of the economy that are marginalised or excluded (such as unpaid work) by the 'theory and presumption of capitalist hegemony' (2006: xii). The aim is to widen the identity of the economy by bringing in aspects that are currently unvalued or undervalued in the capitalist system. As stated, this project is developed in *A Postcapitalist Politics* as the 'community-economy', where four aspects of economic discourse are 're-socialised'; necessity, social surplus, consumption and the commons. These aspects will be analysed below.

Figure 4.1. The Diverse Economy. Designed to be read up and down the columns, not across the rows

Transactions	Labour	Enterprise
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
<i>Alternative Market</i>	<i>Alternative Paid</i>	<i>Alternative Capitalist</i>
Sale of public goods	Self-employed	State Enterprise
Ethical “fair-trade markets”	Cooperative	Green Capitalist
Local trading systems	Indentured	Socially responsible firm
Alternative currencies	Reciprocal labour	Nonprofit
Underground Market	In-kind	
Co-op exchange	Work for welfare	
Barter		
Informal Market		
<i>Nonmarket</i>	<i>Unpaid</i>	<i>Noncapitalist</i>
Household flows	Housework	Communal
Gift giving	Family Care	Independent
Indigenous exchange	Neighbourhood work	Feudal
State allocations	Volunteer	Slave
State appropriations	Self-provisioning labour	
Gleaning	Slave labour	
Hunting, fishing, gathering		
Theft, poaching		

Figure 4.1 shows Gibson-Graham’s diverse economy (2006, xiii). It aims to:

Disrupt the binary hierarchies of market/nonmarket and capitalism/non capitalism, turning singular generalities into multiple pluralities, and yielding a radically heterogeneous economic landscape in preparation for the next phase of the projects- *the construction of “community economies” in place.*

(2006: xv, emphasis added)

Community- Economy- Theory and Practice

It is important to make the distinction between the *theory* of the community-economy and the *practice* of the community-economy. The theory itself revolves around an “ethical and political space of decision” (2006: xv) as an alternative space and discourse to the capitalist economic structure, not an actual geographical or social community. When this theory is practically applied as a method of resistance to capitalism, such as in Gibson-Graham’s AR projects (see <http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home> or *A postcapitalist politics* 2006:165-196) they advocate that the ‘fantasy’ of perfect community-economy is discarded along with the notion that there is one blueprint that tells us how to “be communal”. J.K Gibson-Graham propose a discourse of the community-economy in order to “politicise the economy in new ways.” This is “*part of a strategic move against the subordination of local subjects to the discourse of (capitalist economic) globalisation.*” (2006: xiv, emphasis added)

Before continuing, I will interject to begin to paint a picture of how both the theory and practice of this theory links to the work and ethos of the PRSC. From my participatory work with the PRSC, an analysis of their discourse and a reading of their mission statement I would argue that their work could also be viewed as a move “against the subordination of local subjects to the discourse of (capitalist economic) globalization”. A reading of Gibson-Graham’s work offers a confusing picture of how they would view the PRSC. As I will detail, the work of the PRSC encompasses many aspects of Gibson-Graham’s ‘diverse economy’. Indeed, Gibson-Graham state that “locally based social movement interventions all over the world are already embodying many of the features of the political imaginary we have been tracing, building new economic futures within a clearly enunciated commitment to a politics of possibility.” (2006a: Xxv) However, they also state that; “To engage in this project of discursive construction, we have stepped aside from those visions of community-economies that draw on a set of prespecified values such as localism, self-sufficiency, stewardship or sustainability.” (2006a: 97)

While the first statement is arguably representative of the work of the PRSC, the second statement puts Gibson-Graham’s project in conflict with the PRSC ethos regarding community. Yet as a locally based practical community project they arguably embody

many of the ‘imaginaries’ Gibson-Graham trace (as I will detail below), while also attempting to work in alternate ways to the capitalist system; a disruption that Gibson-Graham would arguably call “the community-economy.”

Stokes Croft- A Community Economy?

Gibson-Graham propose a ‘resocialising’ of the economy to create ‘community-economies’. I will now detail the four aspects they cite as key, then detail how the work of the PRSC could be seen to be actively working to achieve them, in spite of the differing foci of their work; challenging ‘capitalocentrism’ and achieving community development.

1. What is *necessary* to personal and social survival?

Gibson-Graham’s Marxist reading of the modern capitalist economy makes the distinction between *necessary* and *surplus* labour. Marx defined necessary labour as the labour needed to produce a certain commodity, while the surplus labour is when workers do more than is necessary to pay the cost of hiring that necessary labour power. This surplus labour then becomes appropriated as profit as part of the Capitalist economic process of exploitation. (Marx, 2000) Building on this, Gibson-Graham state that

Fixing the socially acceptable meaning of *necessary labour* (in terms of wages) has material social consequences that translate into the level of consumption directly accessed by the producer and her dependents, the volume of *social surplus* that is privately or socially appropriated, and thus the level of social consumption indirectly accessed by society at large.

(2006a: 89, emphasis added)

Gibson-Graham question the ethos of individualism and the promotion of the ‘right’ to want and consume material goods without limit as a crucial motivating force behind economic health and growth. This focus on consumption takes away perspective on what people actually ‘need’ to live- necessity more rigidly defined when compared to a more

contemporary definition that is heavily influenced by the consumer society; a definition of need which should arguably be categorized as ‘desire’. Their discourse of the community-economy highlights “the inherent sociality of decisions made in defining necessity and the various trade-offs that are enacted when such decisions are made.” By looking at what needs must be met to achieve subsistence in the community-economy, Gibson-Graham’s community-economy would work with, sustain and strengthen the assets already present in the community (2006a: 167).

Necessity in the work and ethos of the PRSC

In relation to *necessity* the PRSC can be seen to embody facets of Gibson-Graham’s community-economy in two ways. Firstly, their community work focuses on working with, sustaining and strengthening already existing assets. Secondly, the wage system for labour was such that often the work was unpaid, or undertaken in expectance of remuneration at a later date. Unlike many organisations, I found that an enjoyable working environment was always of paramount importance to help workers learn or develop skills. This different view of both labour and the process of redevelopment as a learning experience is manifest in the work of the PRSC and the structure of the organisation. The PRSC recognise the ‘inherent sociality of decisions’ and thus fix the value of labour based on different ideals- the furthering of the worker and the furthering of the PRSC, and thus the community. Indeed, the goal of transforming the community is a big motivation for most of the volunteers I asked, myself included.

The PRSC has recently started producing Stokes Croft china, a commodity that arguably does not directly contribute to the furthering of the community, or an existence outside of the commodity-driven capitalist economy. However, the appropriation of profit by their commercial exploits is used in ways that benefit the community of Stokes Croft (see figure 4.2), while the labour of the organisation is often directed to tasks that help promote or rejuvenate the area with the PRSC receiving no remuneration for the work.



Figure 4.2: *Stokes Croft China and the reallocation of profit*

In their diverse economy (see figure 4.1, bottom right) Gibson-Graham recognise that there can be ‘commodity-producing enterprise of a non-capitalist sort (2006a: xiii). I would argue that the PRSC could be categorised as such for three reasons; the non-exploitative nature of the labour, the redistribution of profits and the fact that all the china and lithographic transfers⁵ are sourced from now closed factories.

An example of the non-economic work of the PRSC was the painting of the ‘No Tesco In Stokes Croft’ mural (see figure 4.3). This materials used for this piece alone cost £700, which does not include paying the people involved a wage. It required the wall and

⁵ In this case, a lithographic transfer is an image specifically designed to be transferred to China ware, before the China is re-fired in a kiln to make the transfer permanent. All the transfers used by the PRSC are sourced from closed factories in Staffordshire.

border of the building to be carefully prepared before the artists could paint the mural. This preparation ensured that the work would be of the highest quality and last longer, demonstrating the PRSC view of best practice in all their work. Many of the team preparing the wall were unemployed people from the local area who were learning valuable transferrable skills as part of the process. As the work of the PPSC becomes more in demand, the organisation hopes to employ these same local people to redevelop their very community, taking on voluntary work or commissions from the public and private sector. This bottom-up focus, combined with a worker rather than profit focused approach to labour will lead to a community-economy that acknowledges the social nature of labour transactions, as Gibson-Graham advocate. The PRSC have arguably created a situation whereby what they *need* to survive as an organisation is directly tied into the success of Stokes Croft's redevelopment, thus their vested interest is both economic and social.

2. *The appropriation and distribution of social surplus*

As stated above, surplus labour is the labour a producer performs above and beyond the labour time necessary to reproduce him/herself as a worker. (Resnick and Wolff 1987: 115 in Gibson-Graham 2006a: 90) In the capitalist economic system, surplus labour is appropriated by the 'non-producer' as profits. In the diverse economy presented by Gibson-Graham, surplus labour is produced in various forms. This social surplus arises when labourers produce more for society than they themselves consume. This social surplus can be used in a variety of ways; supporting 'non-producers' such as administrators, the young and elderly or building infrastructure, thus making it "a potential object of ethical and political contestations". (2006a: 91)

Gibson-Graham argue that this surplus could be appropriated by the "us all" of the community, rather than flowing as profit to the capitalist/board of directors. They state that "if social surplus is what builds communities and cultures then the decision making processes that configure surplus appropriation and distribution will play an important role in determining their ethical character." (2006a: 92)

Social surplus in the work and ethos of the PRSC

This notion of social surplus gives us an interesting way to discuss the work of the PRSC. During my time with the PRSC, the labour of the organisation was used in two ways;

1. Working in and around the Jamaica Street PRSC HQ to transform the space into a workshop. This included creating a workers yard to act as a base for PRSC activity, while refurbishing the Jamaica Street studios themselves in preparation for the Banksy Q exhibition that opened on the 12th November 2010.
2. Painting and repairing infrastructure in Stokes Croft to rejuvenate the fabric of the area.

It's a funny thing, it's like a journey, you know, the PRSC... is not funded... and it comes out of the erm... filthy gains that I made when I was being an arch-capitalist, y'know but it's kind of a scary thing when you just put your money in, put your money in, see it go... but... if we can turn it round by individuals putting in their money and time... because that's what's happening, yourself, all the other guys there, they're putting their time in, I'm putting my money in, and we're putting all this stuff in together, and from other people we get envelopes through the post with cash in it. People put this all together and it works and suddenly we've done something that's pretty unusual and that for the last 20 years we've been told is not possible, because that's what neo-Conservatism, starting with Thatcher, that's what they said, you know. There's no such thing as society.

Chris Chalkley, Transcript A: 8

As mentioned above, this development of Stokes Croft and the nurturing of community has had a direct impact on the PRSC as an organisation, creating more scope for the organisation to run sustainability and even grow in the future. The interlinking between the success of the organisation and Stokes Crofts community/economy, or 'community-economy', creates questions as to how the allocation of social surplus is best distributed to achieve this success. Previously the PRSC was funded by donations and its founder, Chris Chalkley (see above quote). The work of the organisation has relied largely on the

hard work of a range of full and part time volunteers from a range of social backgrounds who also share an enthusiasm for the work of the PRSC. This work directly contributes to the cultural, social and (indirectly) economic capital of Stokes Croft and has had a huge hand in transforming the area. As local graffiti artist and businessman Rob Zimmer/ Zimmer remarked to me while I was working with the PRSC, “the transformation since I moved down 10 years ago has been unbelievable”.

In order for the organisation to be sustainable in the long term, it needs to generate an income. As part of the regeneration the PRSC have branded Stokes Croft as ‘Bristol’s Cultural Quarter’, helping to create an identity for the area that also serves to benefit them. As part of this the PRSC organised and curated the ‘Banksy Q’ exhibition and now work to produce their own furniture and china range. That is not to say that the PRSC have moulded Stokes Croft into an image, or brand, that directly relates to the organisation economically benefiting in the form of profits. The PRSC have only served to use the resource that is Stokes Croft’s unique social and cultural context that they argue developed as a result of neglect from the Bristol City Council (prsc.org.uk, 2008). This sort of savvy branding strategy is normally associated with consumerism and the creation of demand (Pike, 2009); hardly the ideals of an organisation who are trying to promote a new type of development outside of the capitalist system. From working with the PRSC I know that currently they do not make a profit and Chalkley himself has lost a large sum of money in the long run through pursuing the project of improving Stokes Croft. Whereas typically branding and advertising would be used as a technique to create more demand to appropriate more profit (surplus), the PRSC as an organisation are struggling to remain economically viable. They view their work as vital to the development of Stokes Croft, both economically and non-economically- arguably flowing to the ‘us-all’ of the community. Thus, rather than appropriating surplus profit or labour, all current expenditure and work is directed to Stokes Croft; either directly through their work or indirectly through income from china sales (see fig 1.8) However, with the PRSC embracing the localism of Stokes Croft but also promoting a view of community as ‘anyone who lives, work in or passes through the area’, they come into conflict with the ideals of community that Gibson-Graham argue are counter-productive; localism, self-sufficiency and stewardship (2006a: 97). Yet surely the work of the PRSC provides

evidence that embracing these ideals can go hand in hand with a community-economy that doesn't necessarily follow the norms and procedures of the capitalist system?

3. The production and consumption of social surplus

In the capitalist system, consumption of goods and services in different forms is encouraged as essential to the logics of the economy. Gibson-Graham continue their Marxist analysis by critiquing the “weight of a time-honoured and socially validated practice of maximising income and thus consumption.” (2006a: 90) They state that “discussions of consumption tend to focus on which type will be more decisive in maintaining, growing, or overheating the body economy⁶” (2006a: 93). This is in relation to the fact that in the capitalist economy demand is an indicator of economic growth. Thus, stimulating demand for products is a vital part of maintaining growth, which serves to reinforce the capitalist economic system. This view on consumption as a process for economic gain takes focus away from the social costs occurred from chasing economic gain, and also negates the relevance of the social economy that may not directly contribute to creating ‘demand’. This commodity-focused global flow of production to fuel consumption is arguably inequitable and unsustainable, as recognised by the PRSC; as Chris stated to me, “shit *will* hit the fan” (Transcript A: 7).

Gibson-Graham highlight the Marxian distinction between labour engaged in capitalist commodity production that is *productive* of surplus value and labour that is *unproductive* of surplus value (advertising, marketing, finance sectors etc). For Marx, the work of *productive* workers was crucial to the volume of surplus value produced and thus to expansion, through investment in productive capital. This process is better known as capital accumulation (2006a: 94, for more on capital accumulation see Harvey, 2007). They enquire about the role of productive and unproductive surplus value in a discourse of the community economy. By highlighting the inherent sociality of all economic relations the community-economy seeks to recognise the interdependence of a broad

⁶ The body economy refers to the commonly used metaphor of referring to the economy as a ‘body’. thus the body economy can be referred to in a similar discourse as a human body- healthy, (finish this)

variety of economic and so called “noneconomic” activities. (2006a: 95) The discourse of the community-economy thus questions the practice of singling out certain activities as more important in determining the “health” of the body economy and distinguishing them from those that are regarded as less important. This discourse leaves space for work that may not create the most wealth, but may provide an important social good, such as social work or childcare, producing social surplus in a variety of forms rather than just economic value. In this way, Gibson-Graham want to foster the community-economy building capacities of social surplus.

Consumption of social surplus in the work and ethos of the PRSC

My time spent with the PRSC provided evidence (see figure 1.8) that their work was used to produce both economic goods for consumption, as well as non-economic and social surplus that was used to develop the community. As such, the work they undertake would arguably be categorized as *productive* labour. Their work provides evidence that they view the local economy to be more than just the sum of its economic parts and view social surplus as an important tool for regeneration, rather than a way to appropriate profit. Indeed, as stated above the area has a high proportion of people who are unemployed and a high number of artists. This is recognised by the PRSC, who often operate outside of a monetary wage-based economy. One of the first things impressed on me by the PRSC was that it's vital to do little jobs to help people in the community. The task of promoting trust and togetherness was exemplified by the PRSC throughout my time with them. Various local people and firms have benefitted from the PRSC's skills and resources; expensive scaffolding was lent to the Full Moon Hostel⁷; tools and space have been provided for local artists to work; graffiti was removed from the PR Solicitors property while the Turbo Island area and Jamaica Street are regularly cleaned as needed. By helping local people and businesses the PRSC aim to build relationships and trust in the community. This reciprocal trust helps to create a more social and open community

⁷ The Full Moon Hostel, Pieminister and PR Solicitors are local businesses located at 1-9 Stokes Croft, 24 Stokes Croft and 64-68 Stokes Croft respectively.

while also giving local people an insight into the work of the PRSC; an organisation that people may have reason to feel sceptical about due to the politicised discourse associated with the name ‘Peoples *Republic* of Stokes Croft’ and the organisations relationship with graffiti artists. This view of economic and non-economic transactions is arguably more in line with the community-economy than the current capitalist economy, although, as before, their work does have some characteristics that are part of the capitalist economy. The PRSC attempt to be a sustainable organisation and take the status of Stokes Croft as a Conservation area to heart, as represented by this statement:

What we should be doing is building the technology, building the infrastructure so that we *can* repair our own building and we *can* repair our own walls and we *can* fix our own stuff because then the stuff will be fixed in the style of the local area, which is how local colour develops.

(Transcript A: 5)

The recognition that social surplus can be appropriated and consumed to produce a communal good is an important part of the PRSC ethos and the discourse of the community-economy, providing further strength to my argument that the PRSC provide a counter argument to Gibson-Graham’s view that localism and community must be separated from building community economies.

4. *The production and sustaining of a commons*

The Tragedy of the Commons (1968) refers to a situation where overexploitation occurs as a result of a resource being depleted by independent individuals to serve their own self-interest, despite the long term depletion being detrimental to future use. Gibson-Graham cite Gudeman, who claims that the tragedy is “not of a physical commons, but of a human community, because of the failure of its members to treat one another as communicants and its transformation to a competitive situation” (2001: 28, in Gibson-Graham 2006a: 95). Thus, Gibson- Graham tailor the theory of the Commons, again with their own Marxist reading. Like Chatterton (2010: 901) and others, they highlight the danger of the commons being “enclosed” by corporations to restrict and appropriate what

they see as communal wealth, citing the rise of neoliberal economic policy⁸ and the sale of public property by Thatcher in the 80's as examples. This quote summarises Gibson-Graham's position;

The commons- whether it be agricultural land, the Internet, community facilities and support systems, or even the whole set of relationships comprising a community economy- provides direct input into social and physical well-being. What must be individually or communally done to exact survival is clearly related to what can be accessed directly from the commons- whether it be clean air and drinking water, a public health system, a network of community-orientated enterprises, a system of reciprocity that ensures access to basic food requirements, a working road system and communications network, land for livelihood, or the psychological support of a shared culture in which symbols, values, memories, and traditions can be freely drawn on to create meaning.

(2006a: 96)

This commons provides the essentials for the community-economy; as they state, “the availability of the commons is one determinant of the necessary surplus labour required to sustain an individual and a community.” (2006a: 97) The stock of this commons needs to be monitored and replenished to ensure its survival, which requires management. This management practice and indeed the practice of management itself is part of what defines and constitutes a community- who *is* the community? Who makes decisions? While Gibson-Graham acknowledge this question, they apparently offer little guidance as to how this community-economy would deal with this management. My argument, detailed below, is that the PRSC are in a unique position to manage, monitor and replenish the commons of Stokes Croft either alongside or autonomously from the Council- a task that is evident in their mission statement and in my interview with Chris Chalkley.

⁸ Neoliberal economic policy refers to the free-market economic theory that was “aggressively politicised by Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980's” (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 380). It advocates the extension of the market and market-based competition and a shrinking of the state and best represents the current phase of the capitalist economy.

The commons of Stokes Croft in the work of the PRSC

This small area needs to determine its own future and one of the first things we wrote was ‘we make our own future’, because it seemed that a lot of the problems of Stokes Croft derived from outside forces, whether it be by developers coming in to er... earn profit by changing the infrastructure or council policy that served to oppress the artistic inspirations of the local community.

Chris Chalkley, Transcript A: 1-2

This quote provides an insight into the ethos of the PRSC and their attitude towards the ‘commons’ of Stokes Croft. Gibson-Graham bring up the idea of protecting the commons from being ‘enclosed’ by big corporations; the PRSC have been an active part of the fight to keep Tesco’s from building a store on Stokes Croft. Indeed, on my first day volunteering with the PRSC I was put to work as part of a team to prepare the building below to make sure that the ‘canvas’ was the best possible quality for the artists (figure 4.3).

The planning application for the Tesco’s was recently approved, despite opposition from local business and carefully assembled evidence of the disruption to the space, economy and culture of Stokes Croft from this store. This included a ‘flash mob’ outside the proposed store, who arranged themselves into the shape of a Tesco delivery lorry then ‘parked’ themselves on the busy Cheltenham Road, as the delivery lorry would do up to 4 times a day. This alternative form of protest caused much disruption to an already busy road and served to highlight the trouble that would inevitably be caused if this were to happen regularly. However, this evidence was not considered valid in the planning committee, where councillors voted 4-3 in favour of Tesco in front of a packed out and disbelieving court (I was present at this meeting, but also see Bristol Evening Post, 2010a). The fight against Tesco in Stokes Croft was coordinated with the PRSC as its node. The PRSC



Figure 4.3: *No Tesco in Stokes Croft Mural*

benefits from an advantageous location in the centre of Stokes Croft, looking over Turbo Island and Jamaica Street (see figure 1.3). One of the most striking things about working in Jamaica Street studios (once the workshop, now the gallery for the Banksy Q exhibition) are the immense, red sliding doors that provide a literal window into the vibrant everyday of Stokes Croft. Chris Chalkley agreed, stating:

You know, we've been very fortunate in that the property that we work out of is right on the... in the fulcrum of Stokes Croft, right on the front line, with doors that open right up onto the street, so we are on the street all of the time. Which is why it gives you a better understanding of the public domain, and what it is. Public spaces belong to everybody and we've got a set of rules and behaviour that actually seems to separate people one from each other.

(Transcript A: 3)

Gibson-Graham state that the commons of an area provides direct input into social well-being. As discussed above, the work of the PRSC contributes an important social good to Stokes Croft autonomously from the council. It is this autonomy that often puts the PRSC at odds with the Council and neoliberal-capitalist economics. As Chatterton (2010: 899) elaborates, “what we see among those struggling for autonomy is an impulse to find creative survival routes out of the capitalist present, through a rejection of hierarchy and authoritarianism, and a belief in collective self-management... This impulse is given shape through the political space of the common.” While the rejection of the Council’s way of operating in favour of their own model of development could be seen as antagonistic, it could also be viewed as a more powerful form of democracy, with the Council being forced to act to justify their existence to the community of Stokes Croft in the face of an alternative.

As Chalkley states;

We’ve evolved a plan that involves working with the skills of the people here and since this is an area that through neglect has been driven by addiction, homelessness and is full of artists then it seems quite obvious where our priorities should lie. And that’s what we’ve been doing.

(Transcript A: 3)

I have argued that the PRSC display many characteristics of a ‘community-economy’ advocated by Gibson-Graham. However, their focus on localism means that they offer a different perspective on a community-economy to the one elaborated by Gibson-Graham. “As we were writing the *End of Capitalism* we had in mind an ultimate audience (though not a proximate readership) of local economic activists who saw no alternative to producing capitalism with a human (or perhaps green) face.” (2006a: xxxiv) I would argue that the PRSC embody the alternative to the ‘green face of capitalism’ by actively attempting to operate and develop outside of the capitalist space in what could be conceived of as a community-economy.

Coalition Policy

In this section I will summarise my analysis of the Coalition Governments⁹ proposed Localism Bill (Parliament, 2010) and the Conservative Party Green Paper on Returning Power to Local Communities (Conservatives, 2010). While none of the policies contained in these proposals has yet been passed through Parliament, examining the rhetoric of these documents provides an interesting insight into what the future may hold for the community and the PRSC in the eyes of the Coalition. Due to extensive debating and editing the rhetoric of the Green Paper is arguably closer to traditional Party ideology than the White Paper¹⁰ or finished Bill. My analysis will be summarised in figure 4.4 which details the aspects of the documents that are most relevant to Stokes Croft and the PRSC.

Yeah, and of course this is uncharted territory, but if you look at how much money we've spent and what we've achieved from the money we've spent, I think the whole spend is about £80,000 or something over 4 years, which is tiny in Government budgets. But you look at what's been created, and what's been done, in a way that's one of the strengths of the street art in that you can make something look very different very quickly with a bucket of paint and a ladder! And that has been incredibly powerful. So the idea of using the community of street artists who are working with the community of the street artists who are vilified and demonised and locked up, to actually be the agents for change in the area that they live in seems to be a no brainer, but it terrifies the pants off the government.

Chris Chalkley, Transcript A; 6

⁹ The Coalition Government refers to the Liberal Democrat- Conservative Coalition that was formed after the 2010 General Election failed to elect a party with a majority of votes.

¹⁰ White Papers are issued by the Government as statements of policy, and often set out proposals for legislative changes, which may be debated before a Bill is introduced. Green Papers are set out for discussion of proposals which are still at a formative stage and do not represent a commitment to act.

This quote provides an interesting introduction to this section on Coalition policy. It situates the work of the PRSC by showing that their work has been a cost-effective, locally based form of regeneration to what could be regarded as Stokes Croft's community-economy. It also evidences the Council's apathy towards the PRSC's redevelopment of the area, founded upon years of attempts by the PRSC to work in tandem. My analysis of both the Green Paper and the Localism Bill shows that the general rhetoric is a call for the divulgence of more power to 'the local community'. This focus would theoretically lead to the organisation being afforded more power to shape Stokes Croft's future. However, there are several issues that conflict with the philosophy of the PRSC and the community-economy. This potential benefit provides an interesting juxtaposition for two reasons; the PRSC's view that the area needs to 'make its own future' autonomously without the negating influence of government, and the focus on graffiti/ street art; a legally contested issue.

Figure 4.4 <i>Policy Idea</i>	<i>Contained In</i>	<i>Summary of Policy</i>	<i>Hypothetical impact on PRSC</i>
Decentralising power from national to local communities	Green Paper on Returning Power to Local Communities (GPRPLC); p.7	"Our vision of localism is one where power is decentralised to the lowest possible level. For services which are used individually, this means putting power in the hands of individuals themselves. Where services are enjoyed collectively, they should be delivered by accountable community groups; or, where the scale is too large or those using a service too dispersed, by local authorities themselves, subject to democratic checks and balances. This is a different vision of Britain, one where power is shared and communities are once again trusted to be in charge of their own destinies."	Theoretically will provide scope for the PRSC to have a positive impact on decisions that affect the provision of services to Stokes Croft, although this is without taking into account the fractious relationship between the PRSC and the council.
More power to local authorities	GPRPLC; p. 14	Local Authority's will be given more powers as part of the drive to decentralise power. They state that	See above

		no action – except raising taxes, which requires specific parliamentary approval – will any longer be ‘beyond the powers’ of local government in England, unless the local authority is prevented from taking that action by the common law, specific legislation or statutory guidance.	
Using local referendums to control the level of taxation	GPRPLC; p. 15 Localism Bill Part 4, Chapters 1- 2	The introduction of a new system that uses local referendums to control the level of local taxation “providing a direct link between local residents and the spending decisions of the local authorities to whom they pay their council taxes.” (p.15)	Designed to allow residents to calibrate how much council tax they want to pay, thus affecting the provision of local services. As the PRSC are keen to provide many services to Stokes Croft using local people and their own resources, this system may provide them more scope to do this.
‘Direct Democracy’	GPRPLC; p. 21	To achieve greater local accountability this policy will give power to residents to hold local referendums on any local issue by legislating to ensure that a referendum is held in a local authority area if 5 per cent of local citizens sign a petition in favour within a six month period. (p.21)	These referendums may give the PRSC more scope to directly influence the decisions made in the area, as it would theoretically be able to lobby its members and sympathisers in Stokes Croft to trigger a referendum.
New ‘enterprise partnerships to take over from Regional Development Associations’s (RDA’s)	GPRPLC; p. 29 Localism Bill Part 5, Chapter 1	RDAs are often less effective than they could be because they are defined by arbitrary regional boundaries. We will also give elected local authorities the power to come together to establish new enterprise partnerships that truly reflect natural economic divisions, and to take over from their RDAs the responsibility for economic development within those areas.”(p.29)	Divulging powers away from regional authorities may prove beneficial to local communities to Stokes Croft, although the rhetoric on relying on entrepreneurs and enterprise for ‘economic development’ is at odds with both Gibson-Graham and the PRSC’s view for the future of Stokes Croft.
Assets of Community Value	Localism Bill, Part 4, Chapter 4	Land in a communities area may be nominated by authorities or local people to be listed in the LA’s ‘assets of community value’. If they are successful after being nominated.	The PRSC, or members of the PRSC will have the ability to nominate community areas (such as Turbo Island) to be

		Whether or not land is 'of Community Value' appears to be dependent on the regulations of the individual LA. Further detail on how this will benefit communities is unclear, as is what may count as an asset of community value.	'assets of community value', although what benefit this will afford them is unclear.
--	--	---	--

While the message of giving 'power to the community' is apparently clear from these documents and Conservative party rhetoric, the reality of applying these changes may not result in the control that this sweeping statement may imply. While they proclaim that local communities will be given more power, they also aim to give Local Authorities (LA) more powers as part of their drive to decentralise power. This may result in conflict if the vision the LA has for the future of the area is at odds with the community's vision, as is often the case in Stokes Croft. Worryingly to me, the neoliberal discourse of individuality is still present in the ideology of 'localism' despite the call for a 'Big Society' from David Cameron. While this divulgence of power may be good for the PRSC, it also leaves other ethical questions to be answered about what this may mean to other communities. While some communities may have the resources, political knowledge and infrastructure to take more control, other less affluent areas may not. This may lead to further neglect of areas that need most help from Government, while more organised and well off areas are left to profit from a system that is inherently designed to suit the traditional Conservative model of what society should be, resulting in widening inequalities.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have argued that the PRSC provide a refreshing and exciting approach to both theories of 'the community' and community development. Stokes Croft is often portrayed as an area of deprivation and decline. Without romanticising the area and glossing over its problems, I have tried to dispute this outdated representation. I have argued that the community work of the PRSC has played an important role in the recent redevelopment of the area, particularly regarding the image of Stokes Croft as a Cultural Quarter- a rebranding that is arguably now beginning to be recognised. The PRSC's ethos

regarding community, development and labour has many similarities with the theory and practice of 'community-economies', as argued by J.K. Gibson-Graham. However, the PRSC's view of community and localism means that they could be seen to be at odds with the criteria specified by Gibson-Graham. I have argued that the PRSC provides evidence that embracing these ideals can go hand in hand with a community-economy that doesn't follow the norms and procedures of the capitalist system, a distinction that may not previously have been made due to the recent appropriation of 'localism' by the political discourse of both the Third Way and more recently, the Coalition government. I argue that the effects of the PRSC brand of localism are markedly different, and deserve to be categorised as such. The community-based policy of the Coalition looks encouraging as it will potentially create a system that will help the PRSC have a hand in developing the area. However, the tension between the organisation and the local Council make this unlikely, despite the benefits that this partnership may have for both parties. Overall, I have aimed to document what I argue to be the positive and encouraging work of the PRSC as an organisation who have a real impact on transforming Stokes Croft, regardless of whether they can be classified as a community-economy.

Limitations and future research

It could be argued that a more detailed analysis into this question would include quantitative research into the popularity of the PRSC. Their method of using street art to 'develop' the area is often seen as controversial, but the response I got from the many people I asked, or who came up to me to enquire about the work we were doing, was overwhelmingly positive. A future project may entail a further use of Participatory research in the community, involving a stakeholder analysis (Varvasovszky and Brugha 2000) of local community stakeholders. This would create knowledge on how the community view the PRSC, and how they feel that their work can be improved. The challenge for the PRSC is to remain autonomous and resist any imposed development that may be harmful to the area. The popularity of the areas street art and the high profile of luminaries such as Banksy may have swayed public opinion in favour of the PRSC's method of using local artists to help develop the environment, but the lack of Council support for this plan has meant that they may meet resistance and hostility. How they

react to these challenges remains to be seen. Thus, any project that quantifies actual local support for the PRSC would provide useful data.

Bibliography:

Ahamed. T, Khan, M. I. N., Tomohiro, T., Masayuki, K. Farhat, T., Zaman, J. M. Q. (2007) “Resource management for sustainable development: a community- and GIS-based approach.” *Environmental Development Sustainability* 11 pp. 933–954

As It Is Tv (2007) ‘Decline of Stokes Croft: Who’s to blame?’ available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3rth_ZltfA, accessed on 15th December 2010

Baldock, P. (1977) Why Community Action- Historical origins of radical trend in British community work, *Community Development Journal*, 12:2, pp. 68-74

BCC (Bristol City Council) (2007) Deprivation in Bristol 2007. BCC, Bristol

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press

Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York, Columbia University Press

Braithwaite, R., Cockwill. S., O’Neill, M. & Rebane, D. (2007) “Insider participatory action research in disadvantaged post-industrial areas. The experiences of community members as they become Community Based Action Researchers”. *Action Research* 5:1 pp 61–74

Braun, F. (2008) *Children of the Can: 25 Years of Bristol Graffiti*. Bristol, Tangent Books

Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) ‘Cities and the geography of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”’, *Antipode*, 34:3, pp. 349-379

Bristol Evening Post (2010) ‘A Welcome Addition’. Published 13/1/2011, available online <http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/news/welcome-addition/article-3095703-detail/article.html>. Accessed on 14/1/2011

Bristol Evening Post (2010a) ‘Protesters vent rage after Stokes Croft Tesco store given approval’. Published 6/12/2010, available online

<http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/news/Protesters-vent-rage-Tesco-store-given-approval/article-2988348-detail/article.html>. Accessed on 13/12/2010

Brown, L. D., & Tandon, R. (1983) Ideology and political economy in inquiry: Action and participatory research. *Journal of applied behavioral science*, 19, pp. 277–294

Brugha, R., & Varvasovszky, Z. (2000) “Stakeholder Analysis: A review.” *Health Policy and Planning*. 15: 3. pp. 239-246

Brydon-Miller, M., Greenwood, D & Macguire, P. (2003) “Why Action Research?” *Action Research*, 1:1, pp.9-28

Castree, N. (2001) ‘Commodity fetishism, geographical imaginations and imaginative geographies.’ *Environment and Planning A*, 33, pp. 1519–25

Chambers, R. (1994) *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last*. London, ITDG

Chambers, R. (1994a) “The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Action.” *World Development*, 22:7, pp. 953-969

Chatterton, P. (2010) ‘Autonomy: The Struggle for Survival, Self-Management and the Common.’ *Antipode*, 42:4, pp. 897-908

Clarkson, M.B.E. (1995) “A Stakeholder Framework for analysing and evaluating corporate social performance.” *Academy of Management Review*. 20:1, pp. 92-117

Conservatives (2010) Control Shift: Returning Power To Local Communities. Responsibility Agenda, Policy Green Paper No. 9

Day R (2004) ‘From hegemony to affinity. The political logic of the newest social movements.’ *Cultural Studies* 18:5, pp.:716–748

Dennis, L. (2009) Slum it in style: the PRSC and Counter-discursive urban redevelopment strategy in Stokes Croft, Bristol, *Dissertation for the MSci Program, University of Bristol*

Du Gay, P. and Pryke, M., editors 2002: *Cultural economy: cultural analysis and commercial life*. London, Sage

Elwood, S., Feliciano, R., Gems, K., Gulasingam, N., Howard, W., Mackin, R., Medina, E., Ramos, N. & Sierra, S. (2009) "Participatory GIS: The Humboldt/ West Humboldt Park Community GIS Project, Chicago USA." In *Participatory Action: Research Approaches and Methods. Connecting people, participation and place*. Kindon, S., Pain, R. & Kesby, M. (Eds.) London, Routledge

Epps, B. (2004) 'Barcelona and Modernity'. *Catalan Review: International Journal of Catalan Culture* 18.1-2

Fincher, R. and Jacobs, J. (Eds.) (1998) *Cities of Difference*. New York, The Guilford Press

Foley, P. (2000) A new deal for the community? Public participation in regeneration and local service delivery, *Policy and Politics*, 28:4, pp. 479-492

Fox, R., (2009) Engagement and Participation: What the Public Want and How our Politicians Need to Respond, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 62:4, pp. 673-685

Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum

Fremaux, I. (2005) 'New Labour's appropriation of the concept of community: a critique', *Community Development Journal*, 40:3, pp. 265-274

Gilchrist, A. (2009) *The Well Connected Community: A networking approach to community development*. Bristol, The Policy Press

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006) *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)*. London, The University of Minnesota Press

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006a) *A Postcapitalist Politics*. London, The University of Minnesota Press

- Gibson-Graham, J.K., Resnick, S. and Wolff, R. (2001) *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in postmodern Marxism*. London, Duke University Press
- Glass, R. (1964) *London; Aspects of Change*. London, MacGibbon and Kee
- Greenwood, D. & Levin, M. (1998) *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. California, Sage
- Hackworth, J. and Smith, N. (2001) 'The changing state of gentrification.' *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*. 22. pp. 464- 477
- Hall, P. (2002) *Urban and Regional Planning, 4th Ed.* London, Routledge
- Hamnett, C. (1991) 'The blind men and the elephant: the explanation of gentrification', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 16, pp. 173–189
- Hardin, G. (1968) 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science*, 162: 3859, pp. 1243-1248
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. London, The University of Georgia Press
- Harvey, D. (2008) *Social Justice and The City: Revised Edition*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens and London, Original Edition 1973
- Imrie, R., and Raco, M. (eds.) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*. Bristol, The Policy Press
- Jackson, P. (2000) "Rematerializing social and cultural geography." *Social and Cultural Geography*. 1:1, pp. 9-14
- Lees, L. (2003) "Urban geography: 'new urban geography and the ethnographic void'" *Progress in Human Geography*. 27, pp. 107-113
- Ledwith, M. and Springett, J. (2010) *Participatory Practice: Community-based action for transformative change*. Bristol, The Policy Press
- Lefevre, C. (1998), Metropolitan government and governance in western countries: A critical review, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 22:1, pp. 124-127

- Ley, D. (2009) 'Gentrification', in Gregory, D., Johnson, R.J., Pratt, G., Watts, M. and Whatmore, S. (Eds.) *The Dictionary of Human Geography, 5th Edition*. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell
- MacLeavy, J. (2007) 'The Six Dimensions of New Labour: structures, strategies, and languages of neoliberal legitimacy', *Environment and Planning A*, 39, pp. 1715-1734
- MacLeavy, J. (2009) '(Re) Analysing Community Empowerment: Rationalities and Technologies of Government in Bristol's New Deal for Communities', *Urban Studies*, 46:4, pp. 849-875
- Marinetto, M. (2003) 'Who wants to be an active citizen? The politics and practice of community involvement', *Sociology-the Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 37:1, pp. 103-120
- Marx, K. (2000) *Theories of Surplus Value: Great Minds Series*. New York, Prometheus
- Mayo, M. (1994) *Communities and Caring: The Mixed Economy of Welfare*, Basingstoke, Macmillan
- McCarthy, J. (2006) 'The application of policy for cultural clustering: Current practice in Scotland', *European Planning Studies*, 14:3, pp. 397-408
- McIntyre, A. (2008) *Participation Action Research*. London, Sage
- Montgomery, J. (2003) 'Cultural Quarters as Mechanisms for Urban Regeneration. Part 1: Conceptualising Cultural Quarters' *Planning, Practice & Research*, 18:4, pp. 293-306
- Nancy, J-L (2000) *Being Singular Plural*. Trans. Richardson, R.D. and O'Byrne, A.E. Stanford, Stanford University Press
- Pain, R. (2003) 'Social Geography: on Action Orientated Research.' *Progress in Human Geography* 27:5, pp. 649-657
- Pain, R. (2004) 'Social Geography: Participatory Research.' *Progress in Human Geography* 28:5, pp. 652-663

Parliament (2010) 'Localism Bill', available online at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/126/11126.i-v.html>

accessed on 21/12/2010

Peck, J. (2005) 'Struggling with the creative class', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 29:4, pp.740-770

Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (2002) 'Neoliberalising Space', *Antipode*, 34:3, pp. 380-403

Pike, A. (2009) 'Geographies of brands and branding'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33:5, pp. 619-645

Prendergast, J. (2008) *Disconnected citizens- is community empowerment the solution?* London, Social Market Foundation

PRSCdotORGdotUK (2008) 'Stokes Crofts: Flats or Culture? PRSC interviewed.' Accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3rth_ZltfA

PRSC Memorandum and Articles of Association (2008), available online at <http://www.prsc.org.uk/wordpress/090403Mem&ArtsPRSC.pdf> accessed on 5/1/2010

Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. 2001. (Eds.) *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*. London, Sage

Resnick, S. and Wolff, R. (1987) *Knowledge and Class: A Marxian Critique of Political Economy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press

Richardson, L., (2008) *D.I.Y Community Action; Neighbourhood problems and community self-help*, Bristol, The Policy Press

Roadhouse, S. (2006) *Cultural Quarters: Principles and Practice*. Bristol, Intellect Books

Roadhouse, S. (2010) *Cultural Quarters: Principles and Practice 2nd Edition*. Bristol, Intellect Books

Sæther, B. (2007) "From Researching Regions at a Distance to Participatory Network Building: Integrating Action Research and Economic Geography." *Systematic Practical Action Research* 20. pp 15–25

Smith, M. K. 1997, 2002. 'Paulo Freire and informal education', *the encyclopaedia of informal education*. [www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm. Last update: November 04, 2009]_Accessed online 25/10/10

Smith, N. (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London, Routledge

Smith, N. (2000) 'Gentrification', in Johnson, R.J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and Watts, M. (Eds.) *The Dictionary of Human Geography, 4th Edition*. Oxford, Blackwell

Smith, N. (2002) 'New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as a Global Urban Strategy. *Antipode*, 34:3, pp. 427-450

Stoeker, R. (2009) 'Are we talking the walk of community based research?' *Action Research*. 7:4, pp. 385-404

Stoney, C. & Winstanley, D. (2001) 'Stakeholding: Confusion or Utopia? Mapping the conceptual terrain.' *Journal of Management Studies*. 38: 5, pp. 603-626

Taylor, P. (1993) *The Texts of Paulo Freire*, Buckingham, Open University Press

The Trapeze Collective (Eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: A handbook for changing our world*. London, Pluto Press

Urry, J. (1995) *Consuming Places*. London, Routledge

Varvasovszky, Z. & Brugha, R. (2000) "How to do (or not to do...) a Stakeholder Analysis" *Health Policy and Planning*. 15: 3. pp. 338-345

Wansborough, M. and Mageean, A. (2000) "The Role of Urban Design in Cultural Regeneration." *Journal of Urban Design*, 5:2, pp. 181- 197

Williams, P. (1984) 'Gentrification in Britain and Europe', in Palen, J. and London, B. (Eds.) *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighbourhood Revitalization*. Albany, State University of New York Press

Appendix

Transcript A: Chris Chalkley

Location: PRSC Headquarters, Jamaica Street, Stokes Croft, Bristol

21/10/10

9:35 am

Joe Hampson: So yeah, my dissertation is basically involving action research and working with community groups and I've basically done a case study on you [the PRSC] and your work in the community. I feel that your sort of model of community development is the most productive in terms of taking communities forward er, and achieving a sort of, more socially aware community, which is one of the sort of ethos's of action research. From the research I've done it sort of seems that your ethos's are very very similar to the ethos's of action research, does that sort of ring any bells to you?

Chris Chalkley: Well, I don't know anything about action research and em, I haven't really thought too much about... the erm... er... what we have been doing hasn't necessarily been framed in the notion of community regeneration or any of those things, er, it started off tongue in cheek and erm, has been an ongoing and evolving process it hasn't been something that... though we did write a website with a specific mission statement it has very much been an evolving process, so.. yeah.

JH: Yeah, that's interesting, because when I first read your website in my first year it was the notion of community of 'everyone that lives, works and passes through Stokes Croft' that was quite interesting for me, and from an academic point of view that sort of definition of community is a lot more inclusive than some of the other ones that have been used to formulate policy and other things like that. And erm, a lot of it's done at a local scale but hasn't maybe been that successful, such as the New Deal for Communities which was a Labour policy down in another area of Bristol...

CC: Yeah it's interesting really because this notion of community... when I first really started I didn't really have an idea of what this notion of what community was and how it

would play out, but that's been an evolving process, what you find out is as you go through the process different people and different organisations impact upon the area, erm... and in the process of putting out... what happened was... and this is quite interesting Joe you said that you read the website and yeah, with all these things they start out with an idea, with a philosophy and so erm... Stokes Croft was an area that was seriously... was seen to be seriously struggling...but actually on closer inspection you realise that there's all sorts of amazing things going on and that it's a very special area with an underlying strength of culture.

[Break for phone call]

CC: Before we were interrupted we were talking about community and well, the mission statement really and so in the writing of the mission statement it was a philosophy. Yeah, at the basis is the philosophical idea and the idea was that this small area needs to determine its own future and one of the first things we wrote was 'we make our own future', because it seemed that a lot of the problems of Stokes Croft derived from outside forces, whether it be by developers coming in to er... earn profit by changing the infrastructure or council policy that served to oppress the artistic inspirations of the local community. Whatever it was these factors were conspiring to produce an area that was run down and couldn't really see a way forward. So it started with the idea, and then what is very interesting from an academic point of view is that it's very easy to have ideas but it's a fucking sight harder... it's a lot harder to put them into practice so what we've been trying to do is to actually follow our mission statement and to er work with the community, with the... such as it is and produce something that is real and what it's actually evolved into is a bit like a blue print for the way we should be going in the widest generalities so that we get more local, less global that we realise that the way that our food's distributed for example through large multinational supermarkets is actually er takes power away from the local communities and so we start to put things into practice whereby local people get to determine their own future. And in the doing of that, local community i.e. 'comm-unity' of interests, community of desires, erm things in common, becomes manifest and so that's actually what happens. So we start with the council and are rebuffed and so then we start to make contact with the people who live here, who have common interests against the oppressive forces, whatever they may be, and you move forward to something that becomes these different links. And that is what 'comm-unity' is; community of interest, common values.

JH: So the other thing I was going to ask you was... well obviously the project starting up, and I've seen first hand from being here for the last sort of month, how quickly things move forward, but where do you sort of see this in a couple of years time? Because you were talking about erm maybe taking some of the council contracts in terms of their

cleaning teams [the council currently employ teams of people to come and remove tagging from the Stokes Croft area. This happens at a great cost to the tax payer on a regular occurrence and does nothing to solve the route of the problem] , erm, and redoing the area via that sort of route. Do you see the council and your interaction with the council as playing a role in the future of the Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft?

CC: I think it is inevitable that there has to be some kind of relationship with the body that has been governing this area and the... what that relationship will be will erm.. defined by erm... it's a work in progress. So, if we managed to get ourselves sufficiently organised then there's a possibility that those kind of things might happen but there will also need to be a political will. What that process does mean is that because we have been making those noises the council have had to up its game and it has had to start to consider more carefully what it actually does with its people which is about redressing the balance of power from those who think they know and are used to doing things *to* the populus, when the populus speaks back a dialogue ensues whereby the end result is different and what that result will be is determined by the efforts... the amounts of efforts that both sides are prepared to put in.

JH: So, a more appropriate form of social democracy, based on what the community want and need... cos, do you sort of see yourselves as representing the whole community or would you *like* to see yourselves as representing the whole community of Stokes Croft or are you quite happy being the sort of radical marginalised organisation. Is that how you seen yourself?

CC: I think it would be quite arrogant to say that one has a desire to represent a whole community, the thing did start as a tongue in cheek operation and y'know... what actually happens is that you start to realise that this word that you bandy around very easily- 'democracy'- is actually quite a difficult concept. And what its nature is I'm not so sure, but the process of investigating all these things and putting out links means that more people do have a voice and more people are emboldened to say what they think and that's got to be... and whether that is any conventional er... model of representative democracy I'm not sure as yet but it is true that we need to be involving more people in the decision making process, which kind of happens on an ad-hoc basis at the moment- we do things and we work with businesses, we listen to the word on the street and er... y'know, that notion of holding votes- that's not happening at the present and I don't... we need to work out how that works. As it stands, we're just pushing forward, getting things done, working for what would appear to be the best interests of the local community.

JH: And when you say local community do you mean... who do you mean exactly?

CC: Well I mean it's written in the mission statement.

JH: Right, OK.

CC: Those who live, work and pass through Stokes Croft.

JH: Cool. But in terms of the future involvement of local businesses and erm... other residents and people like that, would you like to have more of an impact from them in terms of how you do things? Because I mean in terms of representing the community and sort of, sort of being a community organisation and pushing towards something that can have a mandate against the council and a mandate for your own work in the area, they're obviously quite an important part of that.

CC: Well of course, yeah, of course.

JH: And I know how much work you've got to do at the moment in terms of just getting things sorted here [Banksy Q exhibition, sorting the yard out, day to day running of the organisation] so I know it's not a short term goal of yours, but in the future is that maybe how you see yourselves going?

CC: Yeah. The desire is to do things that people want, part of the issue is actually... you sometimes have to put forward arguments and that's what we've been doing. We've evolved a plan that involves working with the skills of the people here and since this is an area that through neglect has been driven by addiction, homelessness and is full of artists then it seems quite obvious where our priorities should lie. And that's what we've been doing.

JH: Yeah. Cos it's interesting, from when I've been working with you I've been stood in the workshop and pretty much every day there's been one or two people that've come in, had a look around and said 'oh, what's going on here, this used to be this this and this' or 'oh, this is really good, it's good to see sort of creative forces acting in the area. So it does sort of seem like people... and also you, seeing how you interact with the local people and the homeless people, and they all know you and they all have a bit of a joke or some sort of relationship with you so it's sort of an interesting face on the PRSC as opposed to, sort of in my view, the local council and how so far away and remote they are from the area and redeveloping it, which is why I see your model as a very interesting and proactive way in sort of the ethos of Action Research which is about engaging and participating with local people to produce results that help them. That's sort of why I see your model of working with local people from the bottom up as opposed to top down government like you say as... as a positive force in the community and a way that could possibly be transferred to other areas.

CC: Yeah, I mean... Some of the most important things that I do is simply sweeping up the streets, picking up the dog shit, those things doing stuff... Don't do anything that you wouldn't expect anybody else to do. So even with our councillors there is a hierarchy,

they are an elite you know? And you go up to our head of the council and he's earning £180,000 or something. Actually, you don't really need to earn that amount of money. And the people who govern us would be far better connected if they were to do more mundane stuff on the streets and actually get out to know how people actually live. You know, we've been very fortunate in that the property that we work out of is right on the... in the fulcrum of Stokes Croft, right on the front line, with doors that open right up onto the street, so we are on the street all of the time. Which is why, y'know... it gives you a better understanding of the public domain and what it is. Public spaces belong to everybody and erm, we've got a set of rules and behaviour that actually seem to separate people one from each other, it seems.

JH: You've got a lot of future plans in terms of working with the local community, I remember you discussing maybe a food wholesalers to rival Tesco's... [there is a Tesco currently going through the planning stages with a view to be built on Cheltenham Road, despite opposition from the local community]

CC: Laughs*

JH: ...out of the church. I don't know if that was a serious idea. Just for the record, Tesco's have recently had a planning dispute for a shopfront on Cheltenham Road, which the PRSC have been involved in in terms of making signs for that and working with the No Tesco campaign to try and stop the building of Tesco, which is sort of another issue completely...

CC: No it's not, it's part of the same issue. The point about the... just as a point of record, what's actually happening is that Tesco's have applied for planning permission to move into the area, and this area is actually defined, even in the conservation area documents, that er... that are supposed to determine how this area develops *according* to government policy, local businesses is seen as one of the essential aspects of this area, so for a multinational retailer to come in, with the proven track record of companies like that destroying local culture then it is obviously central to our belief system for the area to oppose that development, and so that's what we're doing, and that is absolutely central, it's not another issue, it's central to the whole idea.

JH: Yeah... no I meant another issue to the sort of PRSC... but it's definitely central to the idea of sustainable community.

CC: And in response to your question about erm... future things... if you don't articulate ideas they definitely won't happen. So you know we can talk about making flapjacks with the homeless and sell them on the streets, but every time you do that you send out a little message about what could be possible. So that's happening all the time, but what

we're actually doing, and this is the most important thing for longevity as far as I can see, is building a base. Because without a base, without the infrastructure to be able to do stuff, you *definitely* can't do stuff. So, y'know, you build a yard, you build a retail space, you build a gallery, you build stuff that you can then use so that you can generate income so that, erm, local people have local jobs, earn some money and self-esteem increases, dada dada dada... positive energy... it all works. So you know, we've built a yard and a gallery space that will allow the possibility of things happening. And that will be up to the way we manage it, whether that does happen. But without that infrastructure, you're behold unto other organisations such as the Council, and we've spent many years trying to do stuff with the Council, they're always guided by central Government funding, dada dada da, you never know if you're going to get any money, or if you'll get it in a chunk and it's specifically directed to a specific cause, or y'know you get money but you have to fix up the park or something, and that's not always the best way to spend that money. It's maybe better to spend the money buying tools so that you fix up lots of parks, and that goes back to simple ideas like Schumacher's intermediate technology, small is beautiful, back in the seventy's he wrote a book about Third World development- buy wheel barrows and shovels rather than hydroelectric dams, because a hydroelectric dam is imposed upon you from above and you don't even know how to work it, and you haven't got the machinery to fix it, because you're used to doing things with shovels and wheelbarrows! So actually, to help those countries, you give them the technology that's appropriate. Now, this is a conservation area so what we should be doing is building the technology, building the infrastructure so that we *can* repair our own building and we *can* repair our own walls and we *can* fix our own stuff because then the stuff will be fixed in the style of the local area, which is how local colour develops. And if you look at modern developments throughout the city, the buildings are in a way dictated by the computer programs that are used to design them. So if you look at all the new buildings that are built, you can see, you can feel the footprint of the design in the buildings... and the buildings that are built in Bristol are not significantly different to the buildings that are built in Doncaster, because they're built by computer, because it's central. Whereas if you look at the stuff from a hundred years ago you've got stuff like double Roman pantiles or whatever they're called, double Roman tiles, which were only made in this local area! And the way buildings are built developed over thousands of years, hundreds of years to a specific style that is typical of the area. So... you do these things and it retakes diversity. It's just like the jungle, biodiversity if you like, in an urban cultural setting.

JH: Yeah, it's interesting when you talk about that, and with the tools as well, as that's another one of the [Action Research] ethos's, which is why I thought that Action Research would be good to apply to you because you have so many similar ethos's to Action Research, and to me and obviously to you, it all just seems common sense that this is the way that things should be done, but in a lot of the literature that I've been

reading and in a lot of the policy... you know, you just have to look at the government initiatives... that's just not how it is. It seems a key ethos of Action Research to give local community the power and the tools...

CC: Yeah, and of course this is uncharted territory, but if you look at how much money we've spent and what we've achieved from the money we've spent, I think the whole spend is about £80,000 or something over 4 years, which is tiny- tiny in government budgets. But you look at what's been created, and what's been done, in a way that's one of the strengths of the street art in that you can make something look very different very quickly with a bucket of paint and a ladder! And that has been incredibly powerful. So the idea of using the community of street artists who are working with the community of the street artists who are vilified and demonised and locked up, to actually be the agents for change in the area that they live in seems to be a no brainer, but it terrifies the pants off the government. So it's kind of just like working with the wood and trying to draw people in and we do get it wrong sometimes and we do upset people and erm... though... I don't think we have too many people who are too upset at the moment and generally speaking it seems to be quite a positive vibe going on at the moment.

JH: Yeah, I remember the problems with the Evening Post, and the surveys that they were doing that showed that Tesco apparently had the majority of public interest...

CC: Yes but Tesco's advertise massively in the Evening Post and the Evening Post is owned by... I can't remember who it's owned by, Lord Rothenberg or somebody, so the Evening Post has a vested interest in commerce and in placating and encouraging Tesco's so that's hardly surprising.

JH: Yeah, definitely.

CC: Yet, y'know, within all these organisations, and you can include Tesco in that, you talk to... this is the thing, you talk to individual people and talk to the reporters who report for the Evening Post and many of them have sympathies for the things that we're doing and for the direction we're... we want to be going in, and yet on a professional basis they can't do that. You go to the drug agencies and they individually go 'well yeah, we think methadone's no good, and we should be legalising drugs', but professionally I can't say that cos I risk the sack! Well, you actually have to stand up and say what you think, and the same applies to our Councillors over the Tesco battle, they're terrified of being sued by the people who own Tesco's, and that's what's actually happening. As things go by, and as the world approaches some kind of Armageddon, as we certainly are, then we actually... we're in the last chance saloon. We have to start to find genuine radical solutions and y'know erm I may be enthusiastic but I'm not optimistic.

JH: I don't know, you seem very optimistic to me. Or you put on a very good show of being optimistic.

CC: Yeah yeah of course you have to, in your behaviour you have to work on the positive, but if you asked me to write a scenario of where I think the world's going, I think we'll probably have food shortages and it won't be long, I think erm... the er, loss of biodiversity and global warming will mean the changes in the ecosystem will be such that the massive amount of population that has been made possible by the burning of fossil fuels and all of the systems that we have put into place that have predicated upon the burning of oil, will not be sustainable, and so you just do the maths! You've got all these people and you haven't got enough stuff to sustain them! It seems fairly obvious to me that there's going to be difficult times ahead. And sadly it won't be in the UK that the difficult times will take place; it's already there and it's in Africa. And it's in the fishing ports throughout the world... you... you've only got to go down to Cornwall- when I was a kid there were boats all of the time in the ports and now it's hardly even worth going out because there's no fish. So that's what's happened. Biodiversity is clearly disappearing and it's the biodiversity that was our means of support. And now there are too many people and not enough life support. So yeah, the shit *will* hit the fan. That's what I think's coming and the best we can actually hope for is to ease that transition

JH: But do you not think that for the transition to... for the ideological transition needs people to realise that we are living beyond our means, and that the choices of foods that we have in our supermarket is unrealistic. Do you not think that maybe some big disaster is needed to try and wake people to see that this is everybody's problem?

CC: Well there's something called erm... what's the word... economic pro... well I can't remember the word for it now but... if you reveal... economic preference... If you look at the way that we, all of us, actually live our lives, and I'm a prime example of talking one thing and doing the opposite... for 30 years I was saying 'oh... global warming' because we knew 30 years it was coming, we really shouldn't be flying around in aeroplanes, but there I was flying around in aeroplanes! So that's the truth of the matter, we're all a bunch of hypocrites actually. And there seems to be an insatiable desire for experience, so, so you know, we're talking about doing this stuff but for this recording we've bought a fandangly new recorder, which you know, is all resources and we know that this won't last very long- 5 years time it'll be superseded by something else. That's the world we're...

JH: The constant modernity of...

CC: There doesn't seem to be a... you know, we're on an exponential curve. If you look at the curve it's exponential, it's impossible the way that we're going. By 2050 I think there's gonna be 3 times more cars than there were in the year 2000. 3 times more! In a situation where we've already got too many. But we've got bucket loads over here but India's got none and it's really actually about inequality. You know, the West shows no desire to share the goods out. I don't see us... you know, the interest we get from the

Third World, Africa, is erm... greater, at least this is my understanding, than the aid we send to them, so actually we're getting money off Africa and not the other way round. So what we've actually done is suck the money in for ourselves. So you actually look at it, what peoples behaviour and country's behaviours are, they tend to be quite self serving. And if we're gonna make any progress we've gotta be generous. So that goes right back to that left versus right erm... acting together, acting separately... it goes right back to Hobbs and Locke, this kind of thinking goes back thousands of years y'know, working together produces better results, or does everybody looking after their own selves... is life nasty, brutish and short as Hobbs would have it or is it more the Lockian scenario where we all work together for the common good, it'll all be splendid. So yeah.

JH: I think that's one of the main things that got me interested in the PRSC, was sort of, at the start of second year I was getting a bit carried away with the inequalities and how sort of futile and powerless we were to do anything about it. And I eventually sort of realised that the only way we can really try and have an impact is to start where we are and build up from there...

CC: By doing it!

JH: Yeah, by doing it, which is exactly what you guys are doing, which is working with what you've got, trying to improve it for everyone and get everyone more aware, cos everytime you're talking to people you're sort of preaching the message... maybe not a preacher, that's a bad terminology maybe...

CC: Talking to them.

JH: Yeah, talking about it and involving them and getting them involved and getting them to think about things in a different way, and I think that's one of the main things we've got to do, and one of the main reasons that I'm so passionate about what we're doing here...

CC: Yeah but if you say it without doing it, then that's no good. It's a funny thing, it's like a journey, you know, the PRSC has been... is not funded... and it comes out of the erm... filthy gains that I made when I was being an arch-capitalist, y'know but it's kind of a scary thing when you just put your money in, put your money in, see it go... but... if we can turn it round and if we can actually... by individuals putting their money and time... because that's what's happening, yourself, all the other guys there, they're putting their time in, I'm putting my money in, and we're putting all this stuff in together, and other people we get envelopes through the post with cash in it. People put this all together and it works and suddenly we've done something that's pretty unusual and that for the last 20 years we've been told is not possible, because that's what neo-conservatism, starting with Thatcher, that's what they said, you know. There's no such thing as society,

JH & CC: Thatcher said that...

CC: Erm, so yeah. Learning curve. That's the process that's taking place.