

**GEOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES OF EXERCISED SOCIAL CAPITAL**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of Staffordshire  
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**June 2013**

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Stephen Williams and Dr Allan Watson for giving me the opportunity to undertake this PhD and for having faith in my abilities. I have appreciated their support, encouragement and guidance throughout the process.

I would like to thank the participants of this research who gave their time and effort so unsparingly. I hope this thesis brings together their stories in a way that honours and respects their work as creative and cultural practitioners. I remain in their debt and have the utmost respect and admiration for their tireless dedication to making Stoke-on-Trent the best place it can be for the people who live here.

## Contents

<i>Abstract</i> .....	iv
<i>Publications and Presentations</i> .....	v
<i>Lists of Tables and Figures</i> .....	vi
<i>Introduction</i> .....	1
<i>Chapter 1 Social Capital Theories: locating context, space, place, agency, and power</i> .....	11
<i>Chapter 2 Jane Jacobs, Cities, and Systems</i> .....	53
<i>Chapter 3 Methodology</i> .....	87
<i>Chapter 4 Setting the Scene(s)</i> .....	131
<i>Chapter 5 Making it Happen</i> .....	155
<i>Chapter 6 Going Round in (small disconnected) Circles</i> .....	181
<i>Chapter 7 Tales of Two Cities</i> .....	211
<i>Chapter 8 The ‘Stories so Far’ of Exercised Social Capital</i> .....	237
<i>Chapter 9 Conclusions: Making Space for Space-Making Stories</i> ..	274
<i>References</i> .....	295
<i>Appendices</i> .....	312
<i>Appendix 1a Evaluation of research design</i> .....	313
<i>Appendix 1b Researcher reflexivity statement</i> .....	316
<i>Appendix 1c Ethical considerations</i> .....	322
<i>Appendix 2a List of participants</i> .....	323
<i>Appendix 2b Summary of most frequent names</i> .....	324
<i>Appendix 3 Examples of participant maps</i> .....	325
<i>Appendix 4 Networks and resources survey</i> .....	328
<i>Appendix 5a Summary of network methods/context</i> .....	331
<i>Appendix 5b Resources demand/supply</i> .....	333
<i>Appendix 6 Stage 2 mapping exercise results</i> .....	336
<i>Appendix 7 Stage 2 strategic ladder photos</i> .....	338
<i>Appendix 8 Frequency of narrative themes</i> .....	341

## **Abstract**

Social capital, as conceptualised to date, has looked at the composition of social networks and the socio-economic outcomes they produce, with very little reference to context, space, place, agency, or power. This thesis contributes to our understanding of social capital by looking systemically at the socio-spatial context in which networks emerge, and how social capital is exercised through mediating relationships with the objective of understanding how these processes are enabled or constrained in practice. Jane Jacobs approach to observing real-world, city processes from the ground up is applied to a case-study of creative practitioners working in the Stoke-on-Trent area from 2007-2011. Research methods were designed to elicit narratives from participants using a mapping exercise as a way to enact the everyday practices of the participants. These enactments were filmed as participants performed/narrated the story of their network. The narratives collected show that when social capital is conceptualised as an effect of dynamic social networks, rather than a static fund of potential resources, the processes by which individuals and groups win, lose or maintain advantage are uncovered. Exercised social capital has its own spatialities and modalities which place us nearer to, or further away from our goals. This thesis contributes both a novel framework and methods for analysing the exercise of social capital in a real world context which furthers our understanding of the co-constitution of space and society.

## **Publications and Presentations**

The research presented in this thesis will be published in the following journal:

Naughton L (Forthcoming) Geographical narratives of social capital: telling different stories about the socio-economy with context, space, place, power, and agency. *Progress in Human Geography*.

The following publication is in review:

Naughton L (In review) Designing research methods for story-telling: eliciting narratives through enactment and performance. *Crossing Conceptual Boundaries*. Centre for Narrative Research Yearbook.

The research has also been presented at the following conferences:

Naughton L (2013) Narrative performances of power in networks of creative practice. AAG annual meeting 9-13<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Los Angeles.

Naughton L (2013) Designing research methods for story-telling. 'To think is to experiment' seminar, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013. Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London.

## List of Tables

<i>Table 1</i>	<i>Summary of network method/context usage.....</i>	<i>138</i>
<i>Table 2</i>	<i>Supply and demand of network resources.....</i>	<i>150</i>

## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1. Map of Stoke-on-Trent.....</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>Figure 2. Results of mapping exercise to show current connections February 2012.....</i>	<i>233</i>

## Introduction

'It's not what you know it's who you know that counts.'

'I was in the right/wrong place at the right/wrong time.'

These two popular adages introduce the research context of this thesis, which is an exploration of social capital from a geographic perspective. The sayings are almost so familiar that they evade further questioning; they are taken at face value. However, when the sayings are put together, an assumption is required which links both behaviour and context. For this to work, who you know, and how that counts, is to some extent, dependent on where you are and where you can get to, although this is not limited to physical access, reach or presence. According to Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000), social capital produces two types of outcome (although such simplifications will be addressed in further detail in Chapter One). The first is about how people 'get by' at the most basic level, and the second is about how people 'get on' with their lives, by achieving their goals and bettering their circumstances. By way of demonstration, two stories are offered which elucidate how context, space, place, agency, and power, play a part in these under-examined processes.

The first story is taken from Jane Jacobs' (2005) last book, '*Dark Age Ahead*' and is a story of how a person's ability to survive can be significantly affected by where they live. The second tells how a group of eighteenth century inventors,

industrialists, and entrepreneurs gathered under one roof to share and exchange ideas that would enable them to 'get on' with their goals and subsequently transform society. The stories illustrate how the outcomes of social capital are produced by the unexpected and unpredictable behaviours of individuals and groups, working in particular contexts that are inextricable from the analysis of their actions. Who you know, where you are, and what you do, are systemically linked. It is only by looking at the system and not the separate elements that the processes at work behind particular outcomes are revealed.

In a chapter called '*Science Abandoned*', Jane Jacobs (2005) tells how researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.), found that the victims of Chicago's 1995 heat-wave died because they had 'run out of water, had no air-conditioning, did not leave their rooms to find cool refuge and were not successfully checked up on' (Jacobs, 2005: 82). The research told us what is obvious; vulnerable groups faced with extremes of heat will die if they are not able to keep cool and hydrated. However, a second research project undertaken by a Chicago-born sociology student, Eric Klinenberg (2002), uncovered much more insightful information by looking at two neighbouring communities that had significantly different survival rates: North Lawndale with 40 deaths per 100,000 and South Lawndale with 4 deaths per 100,000. Klinenberg found that the differences in behaviour of the elderly were directly linked to the community they lived in.



Jacobs highlights, in her re-telling of the story, how North Lawndale suffered from the effects of sustained depopulation,

‘...elderly people were not accustomed to walking in their district because there was almost nothing for them to walk to. It was a commercial and social desert, almost devoid of stores and other gathering places. Old people were thus unacquainted with storekeepers who could welcome them into air-conditioned space. They were afraid, too, to leave their apartments, for fear they would be burglarized while they were out. For the same reason they feared the strangers who came to check on them. In the crisis they were behaving as they always did in this place with no functioning community’ (Jacobs, 2005: 83-84).

In South Lawndale, things were very different,

‘...(the) elderly were accustomed to walking outside. There were plenty of places for them to go on the district’s bustling crowded streets. They knew storekeepers and had no hesitation about hanging around in their air-conditioned spaces where they also had access to water. They felt secure about leaving their apartments, and they trusted those who came to check on them, some of whom they knew as acquaintances. In the crisis they were behaving much as they always did in this place with a lively, functioning community’ (Jacobs, 2005: 84).

These two neighbouring communities were vastly different in context. North Lawndale had a falling population density and had become unattractive to industry and commerce. Over time, this resulted in its remaining residents becoming isolated from each other and therefore the capacity to self-organise as a community was diminished. This is seen to have constrained the capacity for individuals to act in the crisis. Despite undergoing the same movement of higher income groups to the suburbs, South Lawndale had maintained its population density, with an influx of immigrants who created demand for retail outlets, places of work, and self-organising community services. Getting by in the crisis was determined by the particular behaviour of the elderly which changed according to their environment. Knowing who to go to and being able to find them was important, but what mattered most was the capacity of the individuals to act and this was either constrained or enabled by both their social relationships and their environment. Klinenberg's (2002) study appreciates the importance of context and socio-spatial processes.

The second story is taken from Adam-Hart-Davis's (2001) article in *'Science'*, and is about the social capital that enables people to get on by exchanging ideas, information, influence, and other resources to fulfil their goals. The Lunar Society, an informal group of industrialists, entrepreneurs, and scientists began to meet around 1765, at the Lichfield home of Erasmus Darwin, a doctor and keen inventor. Referring to themselves as the 'Lunatics', they gathered at, or near, full moon as this eased their passage home by moonlight. Notable

members of the society were Matthew Boulton, a buckle manufacturer and entrepreneur, William Small, an American doctor and teacher who had mentored Thomas Jefferson, James Watt the famous steam-engine builder, chemists Joseph Priestley and James Keir, and famous potter, Josiah Wedgwood who sailed his narrow boat up the newly built Mersey and Trent canal to attend meetings. Hart-Davis suggests, 'there has never before or since been such a regular concentration of scientific intellect meeting under one roof' (Hart-Davis, 2001: 55).

For thirty years the group met regularly and one can only imagine the many deals, partnerships, and political manoeuvres plotted in the privacy of this exclusive society. However, we do know that James Watt's association with the group resulted in his being known, albeit incorrectly, as the inventor of the steam engine. The first steam engine had been employed and patented in 1698, long before Watt was born. The early model was both slow and inefficient requiring huge amounts of coal to power the piston. Watt became interested in improving the design. Following productive conversations with Edinburgh chemist Joseph Black, who was tackling thermal problems with alcohol distillation, Watts had a stroke of genius. On a walk across Glasgow Green he realised that separating the steam production from the condenser, would allow a huge reduction in the amount of energy needed, and at the same time, increase the efficiency of the piston. Whilst solving the problem theoretically, the prototype did not work due to a gap between the cylinder and

the piston. This produced an impasse which could not be fixed using the iron-casting technology of the day. Another blow befell Watt when his financial backer went bust. Despite being granted a patent for his new steam engine in 1769, Watt did not make progress for another ten years. Getting on would be dependent on finding the people and resources that would help him to bridge the innovation gap through social, scientific, and financial support.

His fortune changed when a trip to London was broken with a visit to the Lunar Society's founding members, Small, Darwin, and Boulton, who eventually persuaded him to move to the area. Boulton provided both the financial backing and access to a team of skilled engineers at his buckle factory. This gave Watt both the resources and the focus to get on with his invention. Boulton also, 'restrained him from going off in pursuit of other goals' (Hart-Davis, 2001: 56). The technical problem of a steam-tight fit was fixed when Watt came across iron-master, John Wilkinson, based in nearby Wolverhampton, who had faced similar problems in the production of canons. Wilkinson had invented a boring machine to solve the imperfections that arose through the casting process. In a fruitful collaboration, Watt and Wilkinson quickly came up with a working steam engine by using the boring machine to make a perfect fit between the steam engine cylinder and its piston. Thereafter, Wilkinson made cylinders for Watt, and the Boulton and Watt steam engine was used in the furnace to make Wilkinson's iron. As Hart-Davis concludes, although widely known as the inventor of the steam engine, Watt would not

have succeeded without being in the right place at the right time and knowing the right people to turn to for information, advice, guidance, finance, support, and friendship. What might look like genius or good fortune was in fact an unpredictable combination of his own actions and goals with the actions and goals of others operating in fortuitously over-lapping contexts. Getting on for Watt was enabled by a combination of who he knew, where he was, and what he did to achieve his own goals, and in so doing help achieve his associates' goals.

There are many stories about getting by in extreme circumstances, and getting on when faced with obstacles and barriers. These struggles are the basis of our myths, legends and fairy-tales. What is less well known, and less well theorised, outside of class-analytic approaches, is how, exactly, certain groups of people gain, lose or maintain advantage in particular contexts. If social capital, in terms of who you know, where you are and what you do, is at the heart of these struggles then there is scope to understand more about the processes involved. This thesis sets out on this course, by collecting and analysing the narratives of actors caught up in the struggle to 'get by' and 'get on' in the city. The purpose is to observe and locate the geographies, topologies and modalities of social capital as it is exercised in real contexts. This explores how and where the socio-spatial processes combine systemically to form the patterns of practice enacted by city-dwellers which result in different outcomes for different groups. In so doing, the thesis asks how, and where, is

social capital exercised and what effect this has on individuals and groups working towards their particular goals. This thesis argues for a re-imagined social capital as a narrative tool for exploring the associated behaviour of groups in the diverse experiments of 'economy' and 'society' (Mitchell, 2002, 2005, 2008).as they are co-constituted in, by and through space (Massey, 1994, 2005). As a novel approach to this task, the research aims to apply the inductive methods developed by Jane Jacobs in her observation of American cities in the 1960's to a contemporary, post-industrial, British setting to provide new insights into how social interactions relate to city vitality. The results will be critically analysed against the existing literature on social capital to inform further research.

Based on the critical appraisal of the academic research on social capital presented in Chapter 1, and the examination of the work on Jane Jacobs on social interaction and city vitality in Chapter 2, the following research objectives have been identified:

1. To provide a framework which re-imagines social capital as inherently spatial, as constituted in and by space, and as an effect of the mediated social and power relations found in networks.
2. To explore in-depth the case-study of a creative network operating in the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and its surrounding areas, between 2007 and 2011.

3. To assess critically the academic conceptualisations of social capital in the everyday context of the case-study area.
4. To evaluate the on-going relevance of Jacobs' perspectives and how they inform our understanding of the role of social capital in post-industrial regeneration of cities.

Chapter One reviews social capital theories as conceptualised and critiqued in the literature. The objective is to understand what the geographical imaginary can contribute to the debate. Chapter Two is a review of Jane Jacobs' work and particularly her thinking on city processes, social capital, conducting real-world research, and her use of narrative forms. Jacobs, it will be argued, helps us to think differently about social capital and socio-spatial processes in cities by looking for what *is* happening rather than what *should be* happening according to theory or expert opinion. In Chapter Three the research aims, objectives and questions are presented. Following this the methodology section outlines the epistemological/ontological stance, the rationale for the research design, the methods, and an overview of how the research was conducted including the limitations and risks. The last section in this chapter explains how the research site, Stoke-on-Trent, is relevant to understanding city processes. Chapter Four sets the scene for the narratives in terms of how participants establish and maintain network contacts, how the network is understood by practitioners, and which resources are most in demand across the network. The six narrative themes are introduced in the next chapter.

Chapters Five to Seven give detailed analysis on the context, agency, goals, modalities, and spatialities of the narratives of exercised social capital. Chapter Eight's discussion draws out what has been learnt about how social capital is exercised in real situations and the importance of context, space, place, agency, and power to our understanding of socio-spatial processes. The contributions of Jane Jacobs and the social capital theorists are addressed in this chapter. Chapter Nine will conclude the thesis by identifying the contribution the thesis makes to understanding social capital from a geographical perspective and avenues for further investigation.



# **Chapter 1 Social Capital Theories: locating context, space, place, agency, and power.**

## ***Introduction***

This chapter reviews the social capital literature in order to understand how social capital has been conceptualised to date and locate the areas of interest to human geographers. The roots of social capital theories are found in sociology, economic sociology, and political science. As the majority of the work is from outside the discipline, it is not surprising that questions of spatiality have not been fully addressed or else, as will be shown, have been overly simplified. The argument presented here is that geographers have much to contribute to the debate, as the exercise of social capital is an inherently spatial process. In addition, a revised conceptualisation provides a trans-disciplinary vehicle for geographers to employ as a conduit for more nuanced imaginaries of space, place and society.

The chapter is presented in three sections. The first section situates social capital research within human geography and argues for human geographers to (re)-engage with the concept. The problems associated with social capital theory sit within the wider debate concerning the use of neo-classical economics and simplistic geographies which allow both policy-makers and those outside the discipline to avoid the question of context. The tensions

produced in encounters between neo-classical economics and geography largely remain unresolved and leave popular geography predicated on hidden assumptions taken from the dominant policy discourse. This section highlights the need for geographers to re-enter the debate with stories that can both resonate and be accessible to a wider audience.

The second section focuses on the theoretical development of social capital as a specific example of how neo-classical economics over-simplifies society, space, and context. This demonstrates how these simplifications simultaneously move theory away from the complexity of context and towards the abstractions of the aggregate and the uniform. An overview of its theoretical development will be presented from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000), giving the key inclusions and exclusions highlighted in the critique by geographers and across the social sciences.

The final section of the chapter proposes an alternative conceptualisation for social capital that re-inserts some of the contexts that have been excluded. This is done with reference to the work on diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 2008); multiple rationalities (Ettlinger, 2003); marginalised perspectives within development geography (Mayer and Rankin, 2002; Nagar, 2000; Rankin, 2002); relational economic geography (Yeung, 2005); and topologies of power (Allen 2003, 2004, 2011). In bringing this work together, social capital is reconstructed as an effect of the activated power relations within and between

groups, as opposed to an individual asset or a public good. It is divested of its neo-classical roots and returned to the context in which it is produced and reproduced by individuals who have multiple rationalities that are embodied, performed, emotional and subject to change. This new conceptualisation affords a more ambitious research agenda for social capital by engaging with the processes that groups employ to gain and maintain advantage through the playing out of power relations. This is a story of social capital that aims to attract attention from both the academic and public audiences that find these contexts meaningful.

## **Social Capital, Human Geography and Policy Discourse**

Social capital theory as developed by James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) has been widely critiqued by geographers from across the discipline. The prescribed methodology of using proxy measures of trust, reciprocity, and social norms, has been put to the test by social geographers and the results found to be inconclusive and in danger of deflecting attention from the real problems of structural inequality and deprivation (Mohan, 2012; Mohan and Mohan, 2002, Mohan *et al.*, 2005). The scales at which social capital operate are unknown, as are the processes by which individuals or groups gain advantage by accessing networked resources. Evidence that people gain advantage from their social networks has been gathered using network analysis (Granovetter 2005; Burt, 1992, 1998) that

focuses on the network structure and points to patterns of social capital, but ignores the agency and processes by which network qualities emerge. The World Bank's social capital initiative has engaged with development studies but largely from an institutionally depoliticised standpoint (Bebbington *et al*, 2004). Elsewhere in development studies, grounded research demonstrates the need for approaches that incorporate the role of the state and the context in which the social capital is being produced (Fox, 1996, 1997; Fox and Gershwin, 2000).

In economic geography, social capital research has been used to look at knowledge sharing and enterprise networks at a regional scale, using much the same conceptualisation and methodology of the original studies (Feldman and Zoller, 2012; Miguelez, Moreno and Artis, 2011; Iyer, Kitson and Toh, 2005). This work has contributed to our understanding of networks within and between firms where it can be shown trust reduces transaction costs and increases the motivation and propensity for knowledge sharing. The focus on the firm and the associated profit incentive affords these studies less ambiguity when using the original conceptualisation than for example an open network that has conflicting interests and goals.

Insights from this work have not changed the way social capital is conceptualised, as it continues to be treated as a fund that can be built, accumulated and depleted without an understanding of how this is achieved or how the particularities of space and place interact with these processes.

The same short-comings of network analysis are evident in social capital research where structure is privileged over agency (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). One attempt to insert place suggests the importance of 'place attachment or sense of belonging' in particular to children and young people (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004: 149). However, this 'critical synthesis' (*ibid*: 140) appears to bolt place onto the existing concept and refers to a particular group who often have their social relationships governed by the demands of parents or other institutions responsible for their care, schooling or recreation.

Woolcock differentiates social capital into three kinds; 'bonding' which relates to close family and friendship ties, 'bridging' which are looser community relations made for example through work, and 'linking' which connects people to outside communities and institutions (Woolcock, 2001: 13-14). There is an assumption made in the literature that more of these links are better and they should be balanced across the different types to prevent isolation or exclusion from resources. Julie Lahn, studying social capital in Aboriginal communities found a 'veiled normativity' (Lahn, 2012: 298) in the adoption of social capital within policies on disadvantage which prescribe the necessary kinds of social capital that supposedly ameliorate economic outcomes for disadvantaged groups whilst ignoring the practices of discrimination and exclusion that are more significant determinants in finding employment. It makes the assumption that the existence of a tie produces the desired effect, when for groups that face discrimination this is not the case. Lahn found that family and kinship ties were far more important to Indigenous groups and were effective in mobilising

resources. She advocates, 'close attention to the texture of social life, rather than the application of *a-priori* frameworks of measurement' (Lahn 2012: 304).

What is needed is a spatially sensitive engagement with the geography of social capital and how it impacts and is impacted by everyday experience and practice. This thesis argues for the re-engagement of geographers with the concept of social capital for the following three reasons. The first is the capacity of social capital narratives to engage both policy-makers and public audiences in contemporary geographic imaginaries that resonate with their experiences of social mobility and power. This is also true of inter-disciplinary mobility where social capital has opened up dialogues between economists, sociologists, and political scientists inside the academy and across institutions such as the World Bank and the OECD.

The second argument is that social capital is an inherently geographical phenomenon and can be framed within constructions of socio-spatial processes as put forward by geographers from across the discipline. The advantage of a relational framework is that it allows a potential conduit for understanding how the everyday practices of actors in particular contexts succeed or fail to gain economic, social, emotional, cultural or other kinds of desired advantage. This produces a different perspective from the abstract, economic, input-output models which are limited to ideal types and purely theoretical market conditions such as perfect information. The objective is to seek the processes that explain the pattern, not only from the network structure, but also from the agency of

actors within and outside its borders. These grounded accounts of how social capital emerges and is deployed in context can accommodate the complexity of socio-spatial relations without reducing space or over-simplifying practice.

The third reason for gaining an understanding of the geographies of social capital responds to themes at the heart of radical geography: inequality and social justice. This research agenda would seek to understand the processes of social capital that operate within groups that use their power to gain advantage and the extent to which these actions reduce possibilities for other groups. Social capital could be explored in the context of financial elites, political and industrial lobbyists, large and small-scale social movements, the power hierarchies of government and those of non-governmental institutions like development agencies, charities and think-tanks.

Social capital as a concept has been criticised widely but this criticism has often conflated a particular version of the concept and its associated use. As Bebbington *et al.* state, social capital did not de-politicise the World Bank but the version it adopted suited its purposes for continuing a depoliticised programme. He warns against this reification of 'social capital' as having agency and points instead to the 'human agency within development institutions' (Bebbington *et al.*, 2004: 37). Agency within socio-spatial processes would be at the centre of a new geographical understanding of how social capital works.

Despite undergoing a critical pounding, social capital theory, deprived of context, made significant gains in the dominant pro-market/self-help/neoliberal political discourse where it was (and still is) seen as the no-cost alternative to social welfare provision. This influence on policy discourse of neo-liberal ideologies, simplistic geographical concepts, and neo-classical economics is found elsewhere and is part of a wider debate within human geography that needs to be addressed.

### ***Communicating across the gap between geography and economics***

Contemporary human geography celebrates the multiple, the diverse, the partial, the contingent, the dynamic, and the embodied performances of the social in space and place. Neo-classical economics privileges the predictable, the ordered, the 'rational', the '*ceteris paribus*' of an undifferentiated world modelled on quantifiable variables and equations that auto-equilibrate. While this is not new to geographers, it is the 'clear models' of economics that dominate the policy discourse and leave more nuanced models excluded (Hirsch, Michaels and Friedman, 1987: 333). The relationship between geographical research and the policy process has been described by Peck as 'fraught', where 'stories about policy that are shallow and simple tend to win out over ones that are deep and complex' (Peck, 1999: 131-134). This remains a challenge for the discipline, 'how can human geographers more effectively shape the popular imaginaries of geography?' (Aoyama, 2011: 79).



To start, a disclaimer is necessary against the many traps of simplification and reduction this thesis is attempting to expose but not fall into itself. It is not the intention to present the disciplines of geography or economics as uniform entities operating in intellectual spaces of total consensus. Nor is it the intention to elucidate all the tensions (or convergences) within and between each discipline. The aim is to highlight the tension between two ends of a constructed spectrum, where at one end sits a desire for universal principles with explanatory power, and at the other end, grand theory is rejected in favour of context, difference and multiplicity. This, itself a simplified spectrum, is constructed for the purpose of exposing certain tensions and the resulting impasse in inter-disciplinary engagement. A second disclaimer regards the use of terms such as 'market', 'economy', 'culture', and 'society'. It is not the intention to make ontological claims for these terms. Instead, the argument follows both Castree (2004) and Mitchell (2005) in their critical analysis of these terms as signifiers of dynamic collections of ideas and performances in particular contexts. This will be revisited in the concluding section of the chapter which addresses how these practices point to alternative ways of understanding social capital.

Two examples will be offered from recent geographical debates, that demonstrate how tensions operate both within the discipline of human geography, and between geography and neo-classical economics. This is to highlight how latent economisms creep into both economic geography despite its claims to explore context and in the 'new geographical economics' which

erases difference in favour of a one-world, capitalist, market economy (Sheppard, 2011). These examples represent views from across the discipline on topics that are emblematic of the situation this chapter wishes to demonstrate; the resistance of neo-classical economic theory, and in particular social capital theory, to questions of space, place, agency, power, and context.

Gordon Clark's (2011) reading of the global financial crisis in 2008 relies on two simplifications. The first is a generalisation, taken from 'new behavioural economics' that understands certain traits as fundamental human characteristics (Kahneman, Schwartz, Thaler and Tversky, 1997). This allows Clark to claim the innate myopia of individual financial agents and financial institutions, albeit amplified by certain environmental conditions, was the root cause of the crisis. Lewis summarises the implications of the first generalisation thus, 'that people are born people and all people are short-sighted, and what is at stake is a condition that might be corrected' (Lewis, 2011: 36). The inference here is that universal traits exist without exception and while Clark admits geographers are 'rarely comfortable with universal conceptions of human nature' (Clark, 2011: 6) this does not stop him employing one (Christophers, 2011). This discomfort is echoed in four of the five responses to the paper (Rankin, 2011; Winder 2011; Christophers, 2011; Lewis, 2011) whereas Cooper (2011) uses the same argument to invoke the short-termism surrounding carbon markets.

The second simplification regards the question of context, space, and territoriality. Winder criticises Clark's treatment of New York and London as the 'core of the global economy' (Winder, 2011: 30), thus ignoring the relations, dependencies and effects of the crisis on the rest of the world. On the wider question of structure and agency, Christophers argues that when blame is being levelled at people and their deficient characters, as opposed to the context of western capitalism, 'crisis, by this way of thinking, is not endemic to capitalism' (Christophers, 2011: 33). It also relies on a very narrowly defined context of financial practitioners and institutions seemingly unconnected to 'the real economy' and 'the prevailing political-economic system' (*ibid*: 33). Clark's argument whilst claiming to re-insert the significance of geography into accounts of financial behaviour fails to convince an audience of geographers when its simplified economic foundations are exposed.

Eric Sheppard gives a detailed and far-reaching exposition of how neo-classical economic principles simplify geography to a 'static, exogenous form', in particular, methodological nationalism, methodological territorialism and methodological individualism (Sheppard, 2011: 54). Methodological nationalism occurs when nation states are prescribed as the correct unit of measurement and methodological territorialism explains performance by linking it to particular attributes of the area, thereby excluding the interdependencies occurring at various scales within and between spaces. These are combined with methodological individualism; the generalisation of human behaviour to ideal types. When applied to studies of development these methodological

abstractions work together to produce 'imaginaries of capitalist development as a common, economic path to the good life, eventually deliverable and acceptable to all' (Sheppard, 2011: 66). Whilst providing a detailed critique of the dominant discourse, Sheppard recognises the success of this imaginary and its 'taken-for-granted status' (*ibid*: 67). The more nuanced relational approach he proposes is welcomed in the critical responses (Aoyama, 2011; McAnany, 2011; Moseley, 2011; Peet, 2011; Watts, 2011) but there is a sense that these dynamic geographic imaginaries are not the concern of economists or likely to enter popular geographic understanding. This is most pessimistically summed up by Richard Peet, 'Yet the economists will never read Eric's critique, nor my own intervention, and things will continue as usual' (Peet, 2011: 83).

The evidence of tensions between geography and economics as a result of two seemingly divergent ways of exploring the world might lead one to conclude that geographers are left with a choice of unsatisfying compromises or exclusion from the discourse. However, these debates have also been constructed between sociologists and economists as the 'embeddedness' problem which recognises that economics is embedded in social relations (Granovetter, 1985). The construction of a spectrum, that categorises theory as either over- or under-socialised, has stimulated inter-disciplinary debate, despite significant intellectual and institutional differences (Baron and Hannon, 1984).

This debate between economics and sociology fails to recognise contemporary geographic imaginaries which construct social relations by and through space (Massey, 1994, 2005). If economics is embedded in social relations, it follows that it is also embedded in a socio-spatial context. When geographers foreground the socio-spatial in this way, it makes explicit the assumptions being made about socio-spatial processes. In other words, which contexts have been included and excluded, and to what end? This allows geographers to go beyond a critique of economic theory and to re-insert socio-spatial contexts that provide alternative imaginaries to contest the dominant discourse. For interdisciplinary engagement, Aoyama states the case,

‘what is left wanting is an assertion that moves us beyond the acknowledgement of differences, the deficiencies of the other, and showcasing of our analysis, to a proposal for tools to overcome obstacles in dialogue’ (Aoyama, 2011: 79).

One answer, proposed here is to use social capital as a conceptual vehicle for transporting to a wider audience the rich geographical narratives that evoke the everyday practices of power that impact on lives. Woolcock (2010) has repeatedly argued that social capital has mobility as a heuristic device. The re-telling of social capital stories would make explicit how the dominant theories have included and excluded certain contexts for audiences with particular political agendas. The narrative turn in the social sciences recognises our use

of stories to make meaning from the complexity of everyday life (Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993, 2008). Story forms can hold complex information together via instruments such as theme, time-series or a network of interconnecting relationships. They have the capacity to relay information in a context that is further contextualised by the audience's experience. This is not a call to make stories simple but to deliver stories to policy-makers that direct attention to context and simultaneously make nonsense of sweeping generalisation.

The trap or '*habitat*' to avoid, as Castree points out, is 'naming and evaluating the unnameable – the grand phenomenon' (Castree, 2006: 6). This can be seen where terms like 'neoliberalism' and 'globalisation' become the villain in a themed story of good versus evil, both of which are difficult to locate without context. The absence of geographers in policy debates makes it easier for 'common-sense' terms like social capital to become part of the 'new planetary vulgate' that presupposes a world order based on a particularised set of concerns for U.S. neo-liberal institutions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001: 2).

A critical factor in art is resonance which works below the surface and beyond the immediate gratification of the image. The aim here is to make stories resonate with the audience, brought to life via the rich complexity that context affords. This is not to discount or dismiss the stories and story-tellers of contemporary geography; these are the origins of the alternative geographic imaginaries this thesis wishes to engage. It is, instead, to suggest social capital

as a familiar vehicle for stories that challenge assumptions being made about socio-spatial processes. These stories combine the social, the economic, the political, the emotional, and the spatial because that is how they are experienced in everyday contexts. The next section explores how the particular inclusions and exclusions of context have been delivered within the stories of social capital developed by theory.

## **Stories of social capital**

The definition of social capital remains contested. Intuitively it is easy to understand that a person's access to resources via their social contacts may affect their economic, physical or emotional well-being. At the community level, it is also recognisable that people working collectively for an outcome can produce benefits to the group that outweigh the individual input or gain. This creates what might be a public 'good' or 'bad' depending on the activity. This has made social capital a flexible vehicle for delivering ways of thinking about these processes. Stories about people 'getting by' in tight knit communities and 'getting on' in mixed communities contain certain ideologies that are familiar in Western societies. As will be seen, the unquestioned assumptions being made about these complex processes lead to claims for social capital that rely more on particular ideologies than the circumstances in which these processes take place.

At its most basic level, Foley and Edwards posit, 'social capital is best conceived as access (networks) plus resources' meaning how people find the things they need, through the people they know, to achieve their individual or group goals (Foley and Edwards: 1999: 166). However, depending on the subject under investigation, theoretical differences occur when defining the network structure, the context in which it has been established and in which it operates, the different kinds of resources, the potential economic and non-economic returns, the process of investment and disinvestment, the depreciation of stocks of social capital, and questions of measurement regarding the use of proxies. Many of these problems can be attributed to the different starting points of its three key authors, Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam.

Portes attributes the first 'systematic contemporary analysis' to Pierre Bourdieu (1986) as part of his treatment of '*Forms of Capital*' and the reproduction of advantage within class groups (Portes, 1998: 3). Theory took a neo-classical turn when James Coleman (1988) used it to explore the difference in educational outcomes of children attending different schools. This work is closely related to Becker's (1964) work on human capital. The concept leapt into the public domain with Robert Putnam's evocatively named '*Bowling Alone*' (2000) following his work on democratic institutions in Italy (Putnam, 1993) and associational activity in the USA (Putnam, 1995). This work explored the deficiencies of American society through an analysis of social capital measured by a number of proxies. Although there has been a vast literature covering the



development of social capital theory (for in-depth reviews see Cannone, 2009; Fine, 2001; 2010, DeFilippis, 2001; Foley and Edwards, 1999; Portes, 1998; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Woolcock, 1998, 2010) the basic differences between conceptualisations can still be seen via the differences in these starting points and the socio-spatial contexts on which they are based.

### ***I. Bourdieu, society, and the reproduction of class***

Pierre Bourdieu was a French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher perhaps most famous for his work on class, social structure and his theory of class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital is an integral part of a suite of different forms of capital that reproduce class distinctions and, correspondingly, privilege and disadvantage,

‘...the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, .i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 46)

He looked at the way social groups, in their everyday practices, unconsciously repeat behaviours by which they recognise each other and create homogenous networks within their own class. Bourdieu defines social capital as,

‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words,

to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 51).

In this conceptualisation there is a mediating process of obligation, recognition, and mobilisation of resources that results in a fund of social capital. Bourdieu is interested in where social capital exists, how it has been accumulated historically, who the social capital belongs to, and how it gets passed on to subsequent generations. The measurement is given by summing all the contacts and all the actual and potential resources of a given network. The socio-spatial context includes the historical, political, cultural, symbolic, economic, and geographical spaces in which the individuals making up the group reside, as well as their internal models that structure their dispositions and tastes. Bourdieu gave much more attention to his analysis of cultural, symbolic, and economic capital which makes it difficult to elaborate on his conceptualisation of social capital which is compounded by the repeated references of social capital being ‘institutionalized in the form of a title or nobility’ presenting a rather rarefied view of society (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). This may explain the imbalance in the critical attention given to this conceptualisation when compared to the work of Coleman and Putnam.

Geographers calling for a return to Bourdieu’s work (Cannone, 2009; Foley and Edwards, 1999; Holt, 2008) recognise the attention this conceptualisation gives to the structures and contexts, economic and non-economic, which allow

groups to access and exclude others from resources. However as a class-analytic approach it excludes other social differences and the potential for social mobility, as class boundaries are taken as fixed by social practices (Holt, 2008). Radcliffe (2004) adds to the conceptualisation calling for other social differences to be included such as gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and inter-generational difference. Even within Bourdieu's class analysis there are exclusions as Cannone (2009) notes that the focus on the social capital of elites excludes the contexts in which less privileged groups use social relations to access resources. There is also an exclusion of contexts where resources are accessed for illegal purposes or for activities that have a negative social pay-off. Holt's (2008) conceptualisation of 'embodied social capital' starts with Bourdieu and adds contributions from performance theory (Butler, 1990, 1993, 1997; Butler and Robson, 2001) which allows for transformations to occur in less rigidly constructed social spaces.

Bourdieu's social theory of class reproduction pays attention to socio-spatial constructions but this conceptualisation has largely been ignored in debates and policies. This may be due to the methodological difficulties of summing all the resources within a network (Cannone, 2009) or as Mayer suggests, 'the theoretical incompatibility of class-analytical approaches and pluralistic approaches' (Mayer, 2003: 113). As a story of how the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor, it doesn't offer much in the way of inspiration or emancipation.

However, in focusing on class differences and inequality it avoids the overly positive stories of Coleman and Putnam.

## ***II. Coleman, the family, and educational outcomes***

James Coleman was an American sociologist who wrote extensively on social theory and education. He was an influential figure in both scholarly and public debates on schooling as well as a pioneer of rational choice theory (Coleman, 1990). Coleman's investigation into social capital seeks to identify causes for the differences in educational achievements i.e. human capital, given similar distributions of other factors. He states his aim,

‘to import the economists’ principle of rational action for use in the analysis of social systems proper, included but not limited to economic systems and to do so without discarding social organizations in the process. The concept of social capital is a tool to aid in this’ (Coleman, 1988: S97).

Drawing on rational action theories he conceptualises social capital as a resource and defines it by its function:

‘It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social

capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends which in its absence would not be possible' (Coleman, 1988: S98).

He measured drop-out rates for school children in the U.S. in different educational settings: Catholic, private faith-based and public schools. He found that a household's social connections within and outside the family, as well as their expectations of success, were positively correlated with achievement. This was more prevalent in religious communities because he claimed they provide 'inter-generational closure,' meaning that the children's parents are friends with each other and therefore will exert an influence on both their own children and their children's friends (Coleman, 1988: S106).

This empiric approach was the first to introduce proxy measures of social capital. Coleman gave prominence in his theory to three elements,

'obligations and expectations, which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment, information-flow capability of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions' (Coleman, 1988: S119).

Closure of the network is necessary for norms to be easily enforced. The fund of social capital is seen as a public good, in that its benefits are experienced by people other than the actors bringing it about. However, Coleman also recognised that actors could destroy social capital by acting in rational self-interest, for example by breaking ties and moving out of a neighbourhood to take a better paid job. The process of building social capital relies on members

of a group following informal rules of expectation, obligation, and reciprocity for fear of reprisals which would damage their ability to access resources in the future. The social capital existing in the networks could have been produced for other purposes and by any form of association but it is always deemed to be produced for gain (Cannone, 2009).

Coleman did not reference Bourdieu's earlier work and the two approaches have three key points of difference. The first is based on an underlying assumption of rational behaviour coupled with utility-maximisation, closely following Gary Becker's (1964) theory of human capital and the economic principle of methodological individualism. In this context the focus is self-interest and gain, non-economic motives are not considered. The second moves social capital from belonging to the individual to residing in the relations of the network. In addition, the network must be closed thus eliminating influences, flows or activity from external actors or institutions. The wider historic, economic, political and cultural context also disappears with only the parents' educational achievement and incomes taken into account.

This focus on the family and network closure, reduces the context to a static snapshot of an isolated network in an undifferentiated space, although some effect is noted from people moving in and out of the area. Thirdly, a shift of focus is made from resources to qualities of the network. These qualities, given explanatory power, exist in the expectations of the mother, norms of trust, and intergenerational closure. This is despite Coleman's own admission of no direct

measure for the latter (Coleman, 1988:S114). It is also difficult to see how norms of reciprocity and punishment are being evaluated. In Bourdieu's work it is the mobilisation of resources that make the difference. For Coleman the network structure and qualities are foregrounded, in a model of inputs to, and outputs from, a fund of social capital.

In Coleman's work, social capital is measurable through the use of proxies, but it is difficult to conclude what exactly is being measured although the claims being made for social capital are extensive. Economic rationality assumes that individuals who can access a benefit they require without invoking an obligation will do so and 'thus fail to add to the social capital outstanding in the community' (Coleman, 1988: S117). Further, he states,

'the social structural conditions that overcome the problems of supplying these public goods – that is, strong families and strong communities are much less present now than in the past, and promise to be less present in the future' (Coleman, 1988: S118).

In this context it is communities and families that are responsible for producing social capital, and the resulting human capital, although there is no mention as to what may have produced the strong families and communities in the first place.

Many of the proxies used in the research relate to family structure and contain inferred assumptions about the characteristics of the 'ideal' family structure; two

parents with high levels of human capital, regular church goers, not more than two siblings, a stay-at-home mother with high expectations of her children's attainment, and an active member of the parent-teacher association. This excludes all the other possible variants of 'family' and 'community', the effects of openness on a network, non-economic rationalities and subjectivities, the wider context of how communities have come into being and in which social relations are embedded. As a story it fits easily into the 'family values' discourse popular with social and religious conservatives at the time of Coleman's research. It shifts the responsibility for social outcomes away from government and onto communities. David Cameron, claimed in 2010,

'[t]he differences in child outcomes between a child born in poverty and a child born in wealth are no longer statistically significant when both have been raised by confident and able parents' (Gold, 2012: 40).

It would seem that this story is still informing policy frameworks.

This view of community excludes other qualities that people may find in socio-spatial relations such as friendship, freedom, altruism, individuality as well as the misanthropy that is often found but not voiced (Thrift, 2005). Critical responses to Coleman's work have highlighted more of these exclusions. Portes and Sensenbrenner criticised Coleman's overly positive outlook as 'a marked instrumentalist orientation that views social structural forces only from a positive perspective' (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993: 1322). Referring to empirical studies on ethnic entrepreneurship and immigration, they point to a



number of negative effects of social capital that derive from the strong enforcement of local norms. These negative effects have been found in a number of studies on ethnic communities (Bourgois, 1995; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Turner and Nguyen, 2005). Portes (2000) provides empirical evidence that when controlling for parental socio-economic status, the effects of social capital become insignificant. Following from this research they offer alternative explanations for social capital built around nationality and community effects rather than the isolated families which form the basis of Coleman's (1988) study.

Fine gives a thorough account of the limitations of methodological individualism and the assumptions it makes: perfect information, frictionless money, full employment, harmonious equilibrium, stable consumer preferences and interchangeable consumers acting in predictable ways to maximise their utility (Fine, 2001). This assumption selects out any other possible options and maintains the social as a subset of the economic, described by Polanyi (1944), where society is shaped by the needs of the market and not the other way round.

### ***III. Putnam, 'the civic', and democracy***

Robert Putnam is a political scientist who gained scholarly attention for his study of Italian regions and celebrity for his work on America's declining community associations which resulted an invitation to the White House during Clinton's administration (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). Putnam's theory of social

capital takes a macro-economic approach where good governance, effective democracy, and economic wealth are determined by the amount of social capital residing in a community, state or nation. Putnam writes in an anecdotal style which makes it difficult to tease out exact definitions of the analytical concepts he employs. He introduces his topic thus, 'by "social capital" I mean features of social life – networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Putnam, 1995: 664). He acknowledges that those shared objectives may result in both positive and negative outcomes for individuals and wider society but chooses his focus as only, 'forms of social capital that, generally speaking serve civic ends' (Putnam, 1995: 665). He goes on to separate civic engagement from political participation introducing the term 'civic engagement' to mean the 'peoples connections with the life of their communities not merely with politics' (*ibid*: 665). He generalises further,

'the theory of social capital presumes that, generally speaking, the more we connect with other people, the more we trust them, and vice versa. At least in the contexts I have so far explored [referring to his work on Italy] this presumption generally turns out to be true: social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated' (Putnam, 1995: 665).

He admits that working out the direction of causality between joining groups and building trust is 'complicated' and then proceeds with the empirical evidence on how fewer people are joining groups in the U.S.A.. This pattern is repeated

throughout his work where anecdotal descriptions are followed by an overload of empirical 'evidence' which measures social capital using a number of proxies: the number of community organisations; engagement in public affairs; community volunteerism; informal sociability; and survey measures of social trust.

In this reading of social capital, 'civil society', made up by associational and voluntary groups, is distinct from the polity or state (Häkli, 2009). Social capital, in this case, is a public good held at the community level. It is instrumental in achieving collective goals, and as part of this process skills are acquired. Collective successes contribute to the levels of generalised trust and the propensity to further engage in group endeavours. In this 'communitarian' approach, 'civil' society has one meaning that excludes the state and any other power structures. Social capital is always good so that more is always better and aggregated proxy measures represent the social capital fund of a specified and static territory.

The assumptions that underlie Putnam's work create a one-dimensional society where everyone, having the same view of 'civicness', works together to improve this quality. This is achieved mainly through associational activity which improves economic outcomes and the performance of democratic institutions. These 'virtuous civic spaces' exclude all the seemingly 'un-civic' attitudes and relations of protest, conflict or resistance in all their heterogeneous forms (Cannone, 2009). The one form of 'civic society' becomes reified as having a

certain combination of elements. Häkli identifies this as '*the paradox of trust*' within the literature that stems from the double hermeneutic whereby a Western view of civil society, set in the past, assumes a single social order with a politics of consensus that excludes other forms of social or political protest (Häkli, 2009: 15). This concept of a 'civic society' built on the 'glue' of social trust then forms a 'double-hermeneutical moment' whereby 'the concept is constitutive of the phenomena it appears only to describe' (Häkli, 2009: 18). In this story, individuals, communities and society are undifferentiated actors in service to the 'civil' which is uncontested and unconnected to the political. This version of social capital appealed to the pro-market/self-help ideologues looking for a no-cost alternative to social welfare provision. The answer was to 'build' social capital through community organisation regardless of the socio-spatial context.

The overwhelming critique from across the social sciences recognises and exposes this conception of social capital as blaming the victim (Amin, 2005; Defilippis, 2001), being devoid of state or other mediating institutions (North, 1990; Skocpol, 1995; Skocpol et al, 2000), excluding 'civil society' from both the state *and* the economy (Goonewardena and Rankin, 2004) and claiming causality that has not been proven convincingly in subsequent empirical research (Devadason, 2011; Durlauf, 2002; Mohan and Mohan; 2002, Mohan et al 2005). As Mohan and Mohan conclude, if social capital is not the independent variable in economic outcomes then,

'social capital would be little more than a flag of convenience, allowing centre-right governments to pretend they are contributing to the solution of social problems when very little was actually being done to mitigate fundamental inequalities' (Mohan and Mohan, 2002: 206).

Writing on India, Das (2004) gives a very different picture of group membership, reciprocity, trust, security and interdependence when individuals are at or below subsistence levels, concluding that social capital cannot be an independent variable and poverty a dependent one.

At the macro level, Putnam homogenises space as a container of political culture thus distributing social capital evenly across the area representing a political unit or territory. This is done by aggregating individual measures up to the national or regional scale. This produces what Häkli terms the 'hidden geography of trust' where the geographical differences within an area are hidden behind a single measurement attributed to a single undifferentiated spatial container (Häkli, 2009: 19). This creates stories where one country or region is more 'trusting' than another. Mohan and Mohan (2002) argue that social capital will have its own spatialities according to different patterns of government intervention, volunteerism, participation and economic development. This leads them to question the spatial scale at which social capital operates and to look for disaggregated measures. The focus on quantitative measurement produced a shift towards identifying inputs for social capital and away from an analysis of process and context. The argument that

follows directs communities to 'build' social capital by increasing these inputs. Despite the inconclusiveness of quantitative studies, self-help strategies are still being touted as a solution for deprived communities (Mohan, 2012). Social capital in Putnam's work is embedded in communitarian ideologies and dissociated from space which serves only as a receptacle into which 'civicness' can be poured.

This section has connected theories of social capital to the stories of socio-spatial context they tell. These stories are based on assumptions that are made about context that are often hidden within the theoretical structure. In Bourdieu's stories of class reproduction, contexts of other differences are missed as well as stories of social mobility and transformation. Coleman's stories of strong families and strong communities, foregrounds economic self-interest and obligation at the micro-level while excluding the wider economic context and non-economic motives. Putnam's story of 'civicness' homogenises society and aggregates space into a singular analysable unit, separate from political power and devoid of all other context, flow and difference. Stories of social capital have been many things to many people and this has been criticised in terms of their analytical use (Fine 2001, 2007, 2010). However, as a narrative or heuristic tool, this flexibility could offer opportunities for its use as a vehicle for wider understanding of how society and space are co-constructed.

## **Re-contextualising stories of social capital; re-inserting context, space, place, agency, and power**

How can a geographical understanding of socio-spatial constructions in defined contexts add to the conceptualisation of social capital? There are at least three ways in which this can be done. The first is taken from economic and cultural geography where neo-classical economics and the abstraction of 'economy' have undergone continued analysis and critique. While problems of economic imperialism still remain, as highlighted in the first section, geographers are finding room to manoeuvre by focusing on the practices of economy within society and space. These practices are expressed in the work on diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 2008; Mitchell, 2002, 2005, 2008) and multiple rationalities (Ettlinger, 2003).

The second way geographers can, and have brought different narratives of solidarity and gender, is in development studies (Mayer and Rankin, 2002; Nagar, 2000; Rankin, 2002). These gendered accounts from the global south foreground the practices and processes of institutions and communities that marginalise individuals and groups. This shifts the balance away from the singular voice of a consensual civic society and re-inserts multiple voices and lives that challenge, resist and upset the imposed or planned power configurations.

The third conduit to re-imagining social capital comes from relational economic geography and the treatment of power (Allen, 2003, 2004, 2011; Yeung, 2005). Here, power is seen as a dynamic, emergent quality of the practices of actors in inter-related networks operating to gain advantage. This perspective allows a focus on how social capital is exercised within network structures connecting space, place, agency, and power without being prescriptive about the outcome. In this way the social capital of a group is always in the making, the outcomes will be unpredictable but the processes may be observed on the ground. This geographical conceptualisation views the exercise of social capital as a set of relations, processes, practices, and subjectivities that affect and are affected by the contexts and spaces in which they operate. This moves away from stories and theories which view social capital as a good or bad thing and the taken-for-granted contexts in which these are set. Instead the focus is grounded by the diverse contexts and processes which motivate groups to form, and dissipate, over time and space for diverse outcomes.

Alternatives to market triumphalism are found in Gibson-Graham's diverse economies research programme; a 'performative ontological project – part of bringing new economies into being – rather than a realist epistemological project of capturing and assessing existing objects' (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 4). This work encourages geographers to open up to new possibilities of 'economic autonomy and experimentation' such as: the care of others; producer, consumer and worker co-operatives; local exchange currencies; social



enterprise and third sector activities; fair trade; community supported agriculture; and informal financial networks (*ibid*: 2).

This new way of thinking about economies asks theory to, 'help us see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility' instead of confirming what we know to exist (Gibson-Graham, 2008: 7). For this they use Sedgewick's (1993, 2003) label of 'weak theory' (Gibson-Graham, 2006: 4-8). This work questions the ethics and performances of the academic subject as an agent of change and is far-reaching in its scope. It challenges academics to accept the possibility of, and responsibility for, imagining alternatives to dominant 'neoliberal' stories. The search for an alternative frame for social capital aligns with these principles. Gibson-Graham cites Mitchell's view of 'economy' as continuous experimentation,

'to avoid the assumption that capitalism has an "is" and take more seriously the variations, disruptions and dislocations that make each appearance of capitalism, despite the plans of the reformers, something different' (Mitchell, 2002: 248 cited in Gibson-Graham, 2008: 9).

In its new conceptualisation, social capital research would question the forms of experimentation, in their particular manifestation, that produce, reproduce, and deny advantage to individuals and groups.

Similar to the limitations of 'economy' as constituted by economics (Mitchell, 2005), economic rationality, as understood by neo-classical economics, limits

human behaviour to that which is economically efficient or profitable, given perfect information. Conditions of imperfect information have been incorporated by behavioural economics and economic geography to form theories of bounded and selective rationality but as Ettliger (2003) argues these theories are still founded on the underlying assumption of economic gain. Ettliger takes a different approach to social relations introducing a 'cultural economic geography' which includes 'multiple rationalities' and 'dehomogenized trust' as a way to theorise how change occurs in workplaces (Ettliger, 2003: 146).

Characterising the problem of rationality as its unidimensionality, Ettliger proposes that individuals develop different rationalities in different spheres: home, workplace, neighbourhood, professional organisations and informal groups that can be local or non-localised. These other rationalities are 'imbued with thoughts and emotions, each of which has its own logic or rationality' (Ettliger, 2003: 152). This obviates the need to oppose economic 'rationality' with 'irrationality'; instead, multiple rationalities are brought to bear on decision-making in different spheres. This parallels the findings of neurobiologist Damasio (1994) investigating how brain damage affects decision making. He found that we rely on our bodies, our emotions, and our feelings to make what are termed 'rational' decisions. Our decisions are based on embodied experience and memory, not on the neutral or detached reasoning attributed to 'economic man'.

This multiplicity raises questions of how these rationalities work at the inter-change of social relations where an individual may experience conflict between their own rationalities and with those of others, within or external to their group. This introduces conflict which is often excluded from studies of social capital which favour positive outcomes. These multiple and conflicting rationalities between different spheres, open up conduits to understanding the obstacles that block the emergence of social capital when worlds and emotions collide. The actors in re-contextualised social capital stories would draw upon their emotions, experiences and memories to understand their achievements and failures within contexts that reveal this information.

In response to Putnam's communitarian approach, Mayer and Rankin ask of social capital theory,

'what if it were to admit within its purview contemporary oppositional movements – antiglobalization protest, union organising, poor and homeless people's campaigns, mobilizations against workfare and structural adjustment – all of which also build trust, coordinate action and often establish their own economic base?' (Mayer and Rankin, 2002: 801).

This links back to the work on diverse economies mentioned above and includes internal conflicts within these movements. Putnam's singular and sentimental 'civic' is replaced with the multiple voices of inter-connected 'civics' situated in the particular historical, economic, cultural and political contexts.

This goes beyond perspectives which have co-opted 'solidarity groups' in the service of the World Bank's development policies, e.g. the case of rural women being targeted by microfinance schemes in Nepal (Rankin, 2002). It includes conflict within communities, like Nagar's 'gendered acts of resistance in everyday places' where a minority of women choose 'to be rude rather than ruled' by their own communities. The analysis need not be limited to disadvantaged groups or protest (Nagar, 2000: 571). Equally important are the processes by which groups gain and maintain advantage through other forms of leverage such as advocacy in the case of political lobbying.

This situates the social capital that emerges from social relations in diverse spaces of protest, conflict, suppression, elitism, and leveraged influence. It introduces questions of power which have been noticeably absent in social capital research. As Briggs (1998) observed, where one group wins access to resources another group will lose. Additionally, there may be other cases where power alliances are made that favour co-operation rather than competition. This represents for Cannone, 'the relations of 'power' (a la Foucault) inevitably established between those who manage them and those who seek access to them' (Cannone, 2009: 50). These relations of power will be central to new stories of social capital and would combine with existing work that understands the 'geographies of resistance' outside of the 'heroic struggles or grand gestures of opposition' (Pile, 1997).

Yeung's (2005) critical analysis of the relational turn in economic geography highlights the failure of thematic descriptions of networks and relations to identify causal processes. He proposes, 'a movement away from abstract phenomena (e.g. the firm or the network) to examine the inter-connections between discrete phenomena and to transcend their dichotomization' (Yeung, 2005: 44). This he defines as relationality; 'the tension between actors and their embedded networks.' This tension manifests in power relations played out in negotiations and through 'firm-specific practices' (*ibid*: 44). These relations produce 'relational geometries... the spatial configurations of heterogeneous relations among actors and structures through which power and identities are played out and become efficacious' (*ibid*: 38).

Following Allen's (2003) analysis of the relations between space and power, Yeung proposes, 'power as the relational effects of the capacity to influence and the exercise of this capacity through actor-specific practice' (Yeung, 2005: 45). This overcomes the deficiency of social network analysis used in social capital research which privileges network position and structure over agency. Ettliger (2003) identifies this as a conflation of pattern and process where the presence of certain characteristics is taken as producing the outcomes. The presence of a network and relationships between actors do not pre-determine the socio-spatial outcomes. For Yeung (2005), it is power as an emergent quality, greater than the sum of the networks' individual parts and activated by concrete practices that determine the effects.

This leads us to question what the geographies of social capital would look like when we take in to account the mediated relations of power through space and time. For Allen, moving away from power relations as being either domination or subordination makes visible 'quieter registers of power' (Allen, 2011: 296). If, as Allen argues 'resources... are not the same thing as power and the exercise of power is always already spatial' then our focus shifts from the fund of resources, to the spatial practice of power and its various modalities (Allen, 2004: 30).

Domination exists as one modality; others include authority, manipulation, seduction, inducement, negotiation and the application of these modalities will rely on different strategies in different contexts (Allen, 2003, 2004). The exercise of power has to be observed in context to understand how space and agency are inter-related. Allen (2003) argues that power cannot be everywhere, as in Foucaultian perspectives of dispersed power, or in one centralised location, as in traditional theories of state power. Understanding how topologies of power come into existence and are practiced by actors through mediated network relations offers us a new way to understand the spatialities of social capital as an emergent effect of power relations. In this way, the particularity of social capital is understood, not in the abstraction of economic principles or in the generalisation of one specific trait such as trust. In this conceptualisation, social capital is no longer seen as a public fund, built or accumulated in a fixed space defined by arbitrary political or territorial units.

This de-territorialisation means social capital moves according to the successfully exercised intentions of actors when exercising power through network relationships. As power is understood, not as resources but the effect of mediated relationships, so too social capital is an effect which will have its own spatialities and modalities. Given the associational nature of social capital in terms of achieving collective goals rather than domination and subordination it is these registers and modalities that are sought in the research context. This however is with the caution of not conflating solidarity and social cohesion with the exercise of social capital. The former are both network qualities whereas social capital must be observed as an effect produced by the mobilisation of resources through mediated relations.

This framework starts to unpack the 'black box' of inputs and outputs to uncover the processes by which individuals and groups gain, lose and maintain advantage in diverse contexts. This relational conceptualisation of social capital goes beyond the description of network structures and resources to analyse the tensions that underpin social relations as they are acted out in the everyday. It responds to the simplifications and exclusions of methodological territorialism and nationalism by having no *implicit* territorial or temporal fixity. Following the cautions Jones offers about 'thinking space relationally' there is, likewise, no implicit assumption of other given characteristics such as mobility, autonomy, openness or connectivity (Jones, 2009: 487). The expanded form of context, including the historical, political, social, economic, cultural and spatial

processes over the long term, is embedded in the relational geometries of the connections between institutions, actors and networks.

This section has articulated an alternative framework for social capital that includes possibilities for diverse economic experimentation; multiple rationalities developed in different spheres; multiple civics that work at different spatial scales; and the relations of power that connect individual and groups in specific contexts for specific purposes. This is social capital divested of the latent economisms and simplistic geographic imaginaries that have been shown to erase context. It goes beyond Bourdieu's analysis of class to include the differences found in everyday exchanges between groups that struggle to control scarce resources.

The research agenda would include sites of conflict as well as collaboration without creating unnecessary opposition by labelling one 'good', and the other 'bad' social capital. It could critically engage with new large-scale movements such as the World Social Forum and the influence of small groups with vast resources, like those of political lobbying groups operating at international scales for economic and political outcomes. These stories could have a much wider scope for engaging audiences as they relate to contexts in which they are more likely to find themselves and therefore find meaning. There is already interest in the geographies of the 'super-rich' (Beaverstock, Hubbard and Short, 2004; Hay and Muller, 2011). While uncensored access may be difficult to obtain to certain groups, Gordon Clarke's (2011) analysis came from his



extended contact with financial institutions and their agents. Bebbington and his colleagues at the World Bank give fascinating insights into the institution's workings and how social capital as an idea travelled through its social networks (Bebbington *et al.*, 2004). This research agenda seeks to find how, and where narratives of exercised social capital connect at different scales; to understand how the actions in one sphere and with certain rationalities inter-connect with other spheres that are directly or indirectly impacted, positively and negatively.

As this research conceptualises social capital as an effect and not a quality of networks there is a logical impasse which renders the methods mentioned above unsuitable for this study. To complement the storied approach advocated here, a movement towards narrative is suggested. This opens up possibilities for stories of social capital that go beyond the one-dimensional treatment of social capital as a form of trust or on the basis of purely economic outcomes. This could include narratives of belonging, friendship, tolerance, indifference, hostility, confidence, risk-taking, fear, and loathing. Cameron's review of the use of story and story-telling by geographers, questions the recent move away from meta-narratives of power and injustice towards more personal, affective and experiential accounts, emphasising the need to, 'scrutinize the political and intellectual implications of these new approaches' so that one complements and invigorates the other (Cameron, 2012: 588). The emphasis on stories of social capital would see if, when, and how meta-narratives connect to everyday accounts and in what way they are invoked, diverted, distorted, translated or transformed by different groups.

The new geographic starting point for social capital theory must come from the observation and interpretation of everyday practices where individuals and groups resolve their issues in messy and unanticipated ways, using improvisations that are rarely captured by grand theory or abstract measures. Geographers can breathe life into a concept of social capital that need not serve the further constructions of dominant neo-liberal discourse or be predicated on neo-classical economic theory. Jane Jacobs in her observations of urban processes presented stories of social capital in her seminal work, '*The Death of Life in Great American Cities*' (Jacobs, 1961/93). It remains a conceptualisation of social capital which has received no critical attention despite the enduring interest in her work on urban design and to a lesser degree city economies. The next chapter will review both Jacobs' ideas on city processes and her conceptualisation of social capital to assess what contribution they make to the theoretical discussion presented above.

## Chapter 2 Jane Jacobs, Cities, and Systems.

### *Introducing Jane Jacobs*

In the social capital literature, Jane Jacobs is occasionally acknowledged as an early user of the term but her ideas on social capital have been given scant critical attention. This is somewhat surprising as she goes to some lengths to describe how social capital is formed and the effects its use can have on cities, for better or worse (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985, 2005). In '*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*' (1961/93), Jane Jacobs observed social interactions to be fundamental to the processes indicating a city's economic, social, and political vitality. In successful neighbourhoods, she saw that effective network relationships and behaviours allowed city dwellers to feel safe, solve community problems, and seek redress politically when those problems became over-whelming.

These social interactions were also vital for the innovation processes that lead to economic success in terms of a city's ability to replace imports with export-production. However, as Glaeser asserts, it is difficult to transform her thoughts about processes into a 'body of facts that represents solid social science' (Glaeser et al., 2000: 115). Jacobs' real-world descriptions of novel combinations that resulted in new products, like the replacement of the corset

with the brassiere or the inadvertent discovery of sand-paper by 3M, demonstrate that these processes occur (Jacobs, 1970). Social science has not been able to say how often and to what extent this is important without resorting to the two-variable, quantitative analysis that Jacobs so ardently opposed.

The importance of social contacts as conduits to opportunity, power and innovation are at the heart of her observations of cities and city-work. Jacobs saw the city as a messy and unpredictable system, but one which was ultimately organised in its complexity. This means it can be understood, if one is willing to abandon ideas of how it *should* work and instead look for what is actually there. Unfettered by grand theory or disciplinary affiliation, Jacobs sets out her observations as a systematic revelation of the city, allowing the reader to see what was obvious and familiar in new ways. This is the strange originality of Jacobs' writing; the ideas and observations are not necessarily new, but for us to see what is in front of our eyes, she shows us we have to think differently.

Similarly, this thesis aims to think differently about social capital and argues that Jacobs' understanding of city processes has the potential to contribute in at least four ways. The first is her conceptualisation of the city as an organised system which differs from other urban areas such as towns or suburbs. The second takes Jacobs' methodology of observing processes from the ground up

thus avoiding the use of statistical abstractions. The third is her conceptualisation of social capital; how it is formed and how it makes a difference to city vitality in terms of a city's ability to solve its own problems. Finally, Jacobs contributes as an exemplar of social science writing, successfully employing narrative techniques to influence and persuade an audience of non-specialists to think differently about cities. These narratives alone are not scientific proof of phenomena but they work as vehicles to communicate complex ideas and are at the very least a starting point for observing and understanding socio-spatial processes operating in city environments. The chapter follows this line of argument by first reviewing Jacobs' key ideas about the city and illustrating how her work has often been misunderstood or misappropriated in the critical responses to her work. The second section presents both her methodology and a close reading of her conceptualisation of social capital in the city. This is contrasted with the work of the social capital theorists mentioned in the previous chapter. Finally, Jacobs is positioned as a writer of engaging narrative which changed the way we think about cities and broke new ground in social science writing.

## **Jacobs and systems of thought**

Introducing and summarising the work of Jane Jacobs is a challenging task.

This is due, in part, to the range of themes she tackled in her work and also to

the diverse influence it has had since the publication of her seminal book, '*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*' (Jacobs, 1961/1993). (The shortened form of '*Death and Life*' will be used from here onward). The list of contributors to a publication celebrating her work, '*What we see: advancing the observations of Jane Jacobs*' (Goldsmith and Elizabeth, 2010), hints at the complexity of the task. This list includes architects, urban designers and developers, eco-designers, economists, planners, mayors, politicians, social activists, community organisers, journalists, consultants, artists, a commissioner of transport, a geographer, a psychiatrist, a sociologist, a landscape architect, a natural science writer, a social and urban anthropologist, a youth minister and a playwright. A surprising breadth of influence given that Jacobs only wrote six major publications of which, only the first three have received critical, academic attention (this review excludes a book by Jacobs (1980/2011) on separatism in Quebec).

Jacobs' work is woven together by her systemic view of cities as problems of organised complexity. In the last chapter of '*Death and Life*', Jacobs quotes at length a report by Dr Weaver to explain her method and purpose,

'...cities happen to be problems in organized complexity, like the life sciences... (they) do not exhibit one problem in organized complexity, which if understood explains all... the variables are many, but they are not helter-skelter; they are "interrelated into an organic whole"' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 564-565 citing Weaver, 1958).

This view of the whole being more than the sum of its parts makes her work less meaningful when it is disaggregated into smaller components that align with specific disciplinary interests. However, there has been very little academic interest in Jacobs' city systems with only a couple of exceptions.

Peter Taylor (2006a), for example, acknowledges her work as indispensable to his work on city-networks (Taylor, 2004, 2006b). Appreciating Jacobs' systemic approach, Taylor finds that critics, 'often focus on particular parts without taking in the whole argument' (Taylor, 2006a: 1986). With a focus on systems, relationships and processes her work covered elements of geography, urban studies, planning, sociology, economics, philosophy, ecology, biology, and social psychology. As Max Allen claims, 'Jane is the best brightest mind in complexity theory in the human and economic domain. She has been leading the pack before there was a pack' (Allen, 1997: 205). With few adherents of complexity theory in the social sciences it is more usual to find piecemeal approaches to her work which do not assimilate her ideas into a coherent whole and give rise to paradoxical critique. Jacobs did not generally respond to the use or misuse of her ideas, preferring to let her books speak for themselves. This strategy distances her from academic practice and has probably added to the misappropriation of her ideas.

Within the organised complexity of the city, Jacobs observed elements such as streets, parks, land use, building age, population density, and investment,

function in a dynamically inter-related system to either produce or destroy city vitality (Jacobs, 1961/93). '*Death and Life*' is often regarded as an anti-planning treatise, warning against the large-scale slum clearance and urban renewal projects favoured, at the time, by New York's master-builder Robert Moses. It appeals to the common sense of interested citizens, by asking different questions about how cities work, and identifying differences between those that prosper and those that stagnate or decline. Jacobs weaves together anecdote and personal observation about the places she knew from experience as a resident, social activist, and journalist writing about U.S. architecture, housing, industry and culture. '*Death and Life*' is her best-known work and has never gone out of print. Citation indexes from the Web of Science show an increased interest in this book measured by annual citations which rose from an average of 'about 30 in the mid 1990's ... and reached 120 in 2008-2009' (Harris, 2011: 66).

Jacobs' observations of the city continued in '*The Economy of Cities*' (1970), focusing on socio-economic processes, she asserts that cities grow by a process of import replacement and not as the economists believed both then and now by export-led growth. Imports are replaced when a city innovates and adapts for local markets the products they had previously bought from other cities. She illustrates this with an example from Japan at the turn of the twentieth century where foreign imports of bicycles lead to the need for bicycle repair shops which led in turn to the manufacture of cheaper parts using local



supplies, and then to the local manufacture of bicycles. This process is dependent on development work which, though unpredictable, costly and messy, Jacobs claims is fundamental to a city's success. This 'new work' is pitted against established 'old work' which can, if left unchecked by government, dominate economic activity and stifle the city's development into new arenas (Jacobs, 1970). While this process resembles Joseph Schumpeter's theory of 'creative destruction' there is no Marxist inference of the eventual destruction of capitalism (Schumpeter, 1943/1994). In Jacobs' writing, import replacement appears more like a process of natural economic regeneration which is developed further in '*The Nature of Economies*' (Jacobs, 2000).

In '*Cities and the Wealth of Nations*' (1985) Jacobs moves to the macro level to observe city processes within and between nations. Advocating cities as the driving engine behind growth, she rejects the nation state as the logical unit for either economic measurement or the control of currency. As an early opponent of methodological nationalism, Jacobs envisaged sovereign city currencies as a better feedback indicator of the value of a city's products and services. Her argument claims national currencies only work for the wealthy cities of a nation but distort price information to those places whose products and services are not competitive. This means that declining regions do not have appropriate feedback mechanisms for arresting stagnation and instead become dependent on transfer payments from richer cities (Jacobs, 1985).

At the time of publication this was a radical departure from mainstream economic thought. Contemporary research into world cities, the current speculation about mega-regions, and the launch of local currencies aimed at invigorating local markets are now coming into line with Jacobs' thinking. Jonas (2012) advocates re-visiting her work on city-regions as a way to think about cities, distribution, and politics under late capitalism. Using examples from across the industrialised regions she describes how cities that do not create their own city-work will stagnate and then decline, eventually becoming '*bypassed*' places in terms of people and investment (Jacobs, 1985). The physical, social, and economic attributes of cities are given central significance in the development of nations and the relationships between cities. Cities, regions, and nations are approached in the same systemic way she first approached streets, neighbourhoods, and cities.

The macro scale is further explored in '*The Nature of Economies*' (Jacobs, 2001). Going beyond the use of biological metaphors she claims both economics and economies as natural processes that obey the same natural forces and laws as other ecosystems. Jacobs defines economic processes as natural, energy distributors. Densely located and diversified networks of economic operations work in the same way as mature eco-systems that maximise the input of energy, to produce yet more complexity, diversification and therefore resilience (Jacobs, 2001). These are contrasted with deserts;

areas of limited economic/ecological diversity where energy is absorbed but not redistributed. The importance of import replacement and import stretching is reiterated as better identifiers of expansion than the still dominant focus in mainstream economics on export generation. Jacobs saw this as too much focus on the thing produced and missing the importance of the systems of relationships that are necessary to create a diversified economy. Jacobs points to the failure of import-substitution policies, implemented in developing countries, as evidence that development is not generated in isolation from the rest of society.

'*Systems of Survival*' (1994) written in the form of Platonic dialogue could be read as a diversion into philosophy but when taken with the other works it is still based on Jacobs' unflinching curiosity about how systems work. It divides public life into two moral syndromes: 'guardian' and 'commercial' (Jacobs, 1994: 23-24). These syndromes have their own codes and rules necessary for making a living, either by taking (guardian syndrome) or by making (commercial syndrome). According to this model, the guardian syndrome shuns trading and demands loyalty, tradition, and obedience whereas the commercial syndrome shuns force and demands honesty, competition, and initiative. Mixing the moral syndromes can produce both positive and negative results. 'Syndrome-friendly inventions' produce positive results when guardians input regulation or finance into commercial schemes without controlling the way in which the required results are obtained (Jacobs, 1994: 158). By contrast, '*monstrous hybrids*' occur

when commerce is operated under guardian modes by force, deception, or through obedience gained by judicial domination (Jacobs, 1994: 93). Again, Jacobs takes a different look at how government and trade is organised systemically and offers an explanation of systemic flaws that are commonly seen as isolated aberrations.

### ***Critical Response to Jacobs***

Contradiction typifies the critical response to Jacobs' work which focuses on particular elements and disregards the integration of a systemic approach. Jill Grant's (2011) critical analysis of Jacobs' influence on the 'new urbanist movement', suggests that one axis of disagreement is the degree to which Jacobs is guilty of environmental or spatial determinism. For the sociologist Herbert Gans (1967/1982, 1968), Jacobs misunderstood what people want and her treatment of the suburbs as areas of dullness, flies in the face of their popularity with Americans as safe places to raise children. His critique calls into question the degree to which the built environment affects social organisation. Jacobs clearly advocated for 'good' design and the importance of physical attributes that potentially contribute to city vitality such as lively streets, short blocks, mixed age buildings and mixed use neighbourhoods. However, it would take a very narrow reading of her work to take these as prescriptions or blue-prints for urban designers. As Jacobs states,

'my idea, however, is not that we should therefore try to reproduce, routinely in a surface way, the streets and districts that do display strength and success as fragments of city life. This would be impossible and sometimes would be an exercise in architectural antiquarianism' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 183).

Grant argues the 'new urbanist movement', developed within planning by Emily Talen (2006, 2008a, 2008b) cites Jacobs' work extensively, but selectively ignores her understanding of how 'time, scale and control affect urban outcomes in significant ways' (Grant, 2011: 97). The designs of new urbanists attempt to create neighbourhoods in the present, using design principles from the past, with American architecture from the period 1900-1920 serving as a model. These designs, and the codes and covenants that go with them, act to 'freeze form in a unique moment in time' (Grant 2011: 98). This produces the conformity that Jacobs abhorred and resists the social and historic processes that give places their diversity and uniqueness; essential elements according to Jacobs for city vitality. However, Jacobs could be faulted for her insistence on low-rise development which reduces the opportunities for low-income families to own property in the city (Alexiou, 2006; Glaeser, 2012).

In debates around gentrification, Sharon Zukin (2009, 2010) faults Jacobs for romanticising an urban ideal that, even at the time of writing '*Death and Life*', was becoming obsolete through the market-led housing developments in up-

and-coming areas that were forcing out poorer residents. She deems Jacobs to be an unwitting ally of the power brokers and investors who were selling, to those who could afford to buy, images and messages of the good life, based on the needs of middle-class gentrifiers. Zukin explores the search for authenticity by such groups and describes a group of Latin American food vendors serving 'authentic' home-cooked dishes in a public park in Brooklyn. The interest from non-Latino customers generated by a number of food bloggers, drew attention from the authorities and a threat of penalties and restrictions ensued on the basis of hygiene standards. Fearing the vendors would be put out of business, the bloggers and other influential customers rallied to support their cause. In this case Zukin asserts it was the authenticity-seeking middle-classes who 'enabled a vulnerable social group of immigrant street vendors to defend their right to the city' (Zukin, 2009: 551).

While Zukin identifies the social links that enabled the food vendors to organise and fight the authorities, she omits to credit Jacobs with her observation of these processes, identified in *'Death and Life'* as the 'hop-skip relationships' that are critical when neighbourhoods have 'to take on city hall and win' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 175). Jacobs was critical of the sentimental treatment of neighbourhoods, 'harmful to city planning' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 146). By contrast Zukin identifies a search for authenticity which appeals to a contemporary yet romanticised vision of what has been lost as a result of free-market capitalism. It is difficult to say when this particular nostalgia emerged

but it is not evident in Jacobs' writing which puts innovation, novelty, and new adaptations at the heart of city vitality.

Jacobs' ideas on city diversity directly influenced Richard Florida's (2002, 2005) work on the 'creative class'. This links creativity, social diversity, and tolerance to regional economic benefits and puts the onus on city governments to provide unique urban and cultural environments to retain and attract talent (Florida, 2002; Lee, Florida and Gates, 2002; Lee, Florida and Acks, 2004). Rausch and Negrey (2006) highlight a contradiction between Florida's idea of building a creative economy and Jacobs' assertion that, 'economic development has to be open-ended rather than goal-oriented and has to make itself up expediently and empirically as it goes along' (Jacobs, 1985: 221).

As human capital theories follow neo-classical economic principles, it is difficult to marry Jacobs' city processes with the input-output models of educational attainment and career success. Florida's work presumes a special class of 'creative' workers who are assumed to be critical to a city's economic success. Jacobs, by contrast, saw ordinary citizens attempting to solve their problems by finding social and economic innovations in the course of their everyday lives. The labelling of a 'creative class' and the city boosterism agenda which often accompanies the 'Floridisation' of city councils, is illustrated in a story told by Jacobs about Pittsburgh. Following economic stagnation at the turn of the twentieth century Pittsburgh's city leaders 'decided that the city was not

“attractive” enough to hold its young people or to attract new industries’ (Jacobs, 1970: 199). Following the advice of a long list of consultants and experts, the measures applied to the city were, ‘as if the economic problems of Pittsburgh were the problems of a young lady with insufficient grooming, manners, breeding and popularity’ (*ibid.*: 199). She summarises, ‘artificial symptoms of prosperity or a “good image” do not revitalize a city, but only explicit economic growth processes for which there are no substitutes’ (Jacobs, 1970: 200).

Jacobs’ ideas are often used selectively and then mixed with the kind of statistical analysis she eschewed. Economist, John C Weicher’s (1973) analysis reformulates, in mathematical terms, Jacobs’ four building blocks of diversity: short blocks, aged buildings, mixed primary use, and concentration. Though he finds little evidence to support the theory, Weicher celebrates Jacobs’ work as being ‘readily testable’ and providing specifics into a theoretical vacuum where only ‘planners’ generalities’ previously existed (Weicher, 1973: 39). By contrast, Richard Hill’s critical assessment of Jacobs from a planning perspective, asserts the lack of ‘empirical verifiability” as a main weakness in her work (Hill, 1998: 312). Her ideas on the benefits of concentration for clusters of diverse and competing industries are now known as Jacobsonian Externalities. Glaeser found evidence consistent with her thesis and inconsistent with the specialisation growth theories of Romer and Porter (Glaeser *et al.*, 1992). However, it would be a pyrrhic victory to claim success



for Jacobs in one area of economics at the expense of her systemic approach to socio-spatial urban processes.

## **Jane Jacobs' methodology - social capital in practice**

As presented in Chapter One, research into social capital has led to conceptual definitions and frameworks for measurement that are severely limited by neo-classical economic principals, aggregated proxy measures, and simplistic geographic imaginaries that remove context. Statistical correlations are normally applied to quantitative measures of inputs and outputs. Where qualitative methods have been used, the structure of questioning is often based on an unpoliticised version of social capital which privileges trust as the determining variable, and excludes questions of power or agency. To think about social capital from the ground up, Jacobs applies a systemic approach by observing everyday processes.

Jacobs sets out her methodology for thinking differently about cities in the closing chapter of her first book (Jacobs, 1961/93). Following her identification of the city as a problem of organised complexity her methods to explore these myriad relationships are given,

‘to think about processes, to work inductively, reasoning from particulars to the general... to seek for “unaverage” clues involving very small

quantities, which reveal the way larger and more “average” quantities are operating’ (Jacobs 1961/1993: 574).

Jacobs opposed the gods-eye view taken by ‘expert’ planners and architects who saw the city as a problem of, ‘disorganised complexity, understandable purely by statistical analysis, predictable by the application of probability mathematics, manageable by conversion into groups of averages’ (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 568). For Jacobs the economic treatment of people as interchangeable is erroneous,

‘real people are unique, they invest years of their lives in significant relationships with other unique people, and are not interchangeable in the least. Severed from their relationships, they are destroyed as effective social beings – sometimes for a little while, sometimes forever’ (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 178).

To understand the uniqueness of relationships and their effects, social capital research must return to real people and their everyday practices. This section returns to Jacobs original observations about social capital to ask whether her inductive observations can re-invigorate our understanding of the concept.

Jacobs’ starting question asks, ‘what do city neighbourhoods do, if anything, that may be socially and economically useful in cities and how they do it?’ (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 148). She defines a successful city neighbourhood as,

‘...a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them. An unsuccessful neighbourhood is a place that is

overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them' (Jacobs, 1961/93: 146).

For city neighbourhoods to succeed there needs to be both 'formal and informal self-government' (*ibid*: 149). This starting point places the inquiry directly in particular places, at certain scales, and focuses on the processes by which people solve the problems that affect them collectively. Jacobs is concerned with, 'the spatial arrangement of society' (Hill, 1988: 307). Thus her conceptualisation of social capital focuses not on the outcomes of collective action in terms of a network's successes or failures but rather on the processes by which these are manifested in particular spatial contexts. In order to do this, Jacobs makes some assertions about space, scale, and the relationships that are fundamental to these processes.

Jacobs' observations of the city are evoked most poetically in 'the ballet of Hudson Street') where she lived at the time of writing '*Death and Life*' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 66). In this passage, she documents the daily comings and goings of residents, shop-owners, children, workers and strangers to the area. As mentioned above, this is taken by Zukin (2009) as a romantic ideal of a way of life that was already becoming unsustainable. Wider economic forces were forcing more people to work at longer distances from their neighbourhoods, more women to enter the workforce, and fewer local commercial opportunities as mom-and-pop stores gave way to the pressures of redevelopment. It is certainly true that New York was undergoing a huge transformation, but what

underlies Jacobs' interest and remains relevant is how space and society co-construct processes and practices of daily existence either successfully or unsuccessfully. Jacobs noted some of the conditions that were necessary for the social exchange opportunities that initiated the social networks that could be either built or destroyed over time.

Jacobs' (1961/1993) four conditions for generating city diversity: mixed primary uses, small blocks, aged buildings, and concentration of people are also fundamental for providing opportunities for impersonal social contact. This she identifies is the first building block to social capital. When these conditions are being met, enough people are on foot, using neighbourhood streets for different purposes, at different times and providing the 'eyes on the street' and 'general street support when the chips are down' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 72). This is how Jacobs conceptualises trust, 'formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts' (*ibid*: 73). Jacobs stresses that the interactions necessary for these webs of local public contacts, 'implies no private commitment' a distinction which is necessary when one considers the number of strangers performing these exchanges (Jacobs, 1961/93: 74).

This distinction is missing from the social capital literature which has not considered the city as a different environment for establishing social contact and social networks. For Jacobs this is critical, as informal organisations in the city do not grow in the same way as they do in suburbs or towns. Jacobs

claims privacy as both necessary to the process, and desired by city dwellers unlikely to get caught up in private relations with the people they meet on city streets. These repeated public contacts constitute the informal public life that mediates between residents and the kinds of organisations that are deemed to form spontaneously in the social capital literature.

Jacobs summarises the benefits of this informal system of public contact,

‘...it is possible in a city street neighbourhood to know all kinds of people without unwelcome entanglements, without boredom, necessity for excuses, explanations, fear of giving offense, embarrassments respecting impositions or commitments, and all such paraphernalia of obligations which can accompany less limited relationships’ (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 81)

This is possible because these contacts are made in passing and not out of any particular need for what Jacobs terms, ‘togetherness’. This need is expressed by the ideal, ‘if anything is shared among people, much should be shared’ (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 81). This ideal, attributed by Jacobs to urban planners, leaves residents with the choice of sharing much of their private existence with their neighbours or sharing nothing because there are no spaces for the informal, uncommitted contacts outlined above. ‘Sharing much’ leads to forced encroachment of the private domain and is made contingent on being welcomed into the group with whom residents share their neighbourhood. ‘Sharing nothing’ risks social isolation, the loss of potential resources in times of

need, and the erosion of simple forms of social contact that make the frustrations of modern life bearable.

Jacobs' observations of the city and the way wider social processes are initiated from the contacts made possible in certain spaces, has been over-looked in the social capital literature. Jacobs captures this oversight, 'lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 95). Jacobs' view of social capital is directly linked to the city's public life through an interconnected web of contacts at different spatial scales.

Jacobs identifies a city's social capital networks operating at three different scales: the street neighbourhood, the city district, and the city as a whole. The first and last of these scales are widely accepted and used in both urban design and academic analysis. The city district is yet to receive any critical attention despite the importance Jacobs gives it for linking the street neighbourhood to the powerful city administration and mediating between the two in times of need. As illustrated above, the street neighbourhood provides the opportunities for the informal public contacts that form the basic links necessary for security and sociability in everyday circumstances. However in times of crisis, and when a neighbourhood's problems risk overwhelming their capacity and resources, assistance must be drawn down from those who hold both power

and resources. This is achieved when the city district scale is effective at linking the street up to decision-making units for the city as a whole.

Jacobs describes how street neighbourhoods that have achieved stability will start to form other organisations with a shared common interest: public causes, campaigns, protests, fund-raising, residential associations and so on, much like Robert Putnam's view of associational life (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000).

However, Jacobs identifies a further set of relationships that must be present, if the social capital built up over time in these organisations is to have an effect on the city's public life. She called these, 'hop-skip relationships' and defined them as,

'working relationships among people, usually leaders, who enlarge their local public life beyond the neighbourhood of streets and specific organisations or institutions and form relationships with people whose roots and backgrounds are in entirely different constituencies' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 175).

This might be termed 'linking capital' according to Woolcock's (2010) framework but for Jacobs it is not the existence of the link that makes the difference but what is mediated and mobilised through it, namely power and resources.

These relationships come via the opportunities a city offers people wishing to partake in niche activities that only become viable when there are enough interested people with access to each other. Special-interest groups can

provide opportunities for hop-skip links which can assist a street neighbourhood in time of need. A city district needs to consist of people with relationships to political, administrative, and special-interest groups that operate at a city-wide level. For a city to operate at these inter-connected levels it must be more than a collection of 'self-contained or introverted units' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 150). Jacobs reiterates that the socio-spatial processes of cities operate differently from towns which seek self-containment through their boundaries and network closure. Containment is effective in towns where a higher percentage of people are known to each other, but is harmful to city districts which succeed or fail according to their ability to sustain a range of cross-use. A city district, 'has a character of its own and specialities of its own, it draws users from outside (it has little truly urban economic variety unless it does), and its own people go forth' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 173). Jacobs asserts that it is the cross-links that are instrumental for a district to be effective and not the endowment of a particular physical property, be it a school, a park or an administrative function. Jacobs recognises that these cross-links, enabled by cross-use, are dependent on time, 'time to find each other, time to try expedient cooperation – as well as time to have rooted themselves, too, in various smaller neighbourhoods of place or special interest' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 175).

Jane Jacobs' observation of social capital connects the socio-spatial processes of a city to the outcomes it achieves or fails to achieve for its residents over time. The process starts with the informal public contacts that ordinary citizens



make every day on city streets. This contact is either enabled or constrained by the opportunities thrown up by the physical and social infrastructure of the neighbourhood. These contacts unwittingly perform multiple functions that lead to the stability of neighbourhoods which provide opportunity for further contact and the forming of formal and informal organisations. The city itself provides opportunity for people to meet in sufficient number to afford opportunities that would not be viable in smaller, less connected areas, or in sparser populations. Effective city districts encourage the mobility and cross-use which furthers the opportunities for contact between people who have different backgrounds and interests. For Jacobs, 'these networks are a city's irreplaceable social capital' and critical to her idea of 'self-government' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 180). Unlike neo-conservative notions of self-government which isolate communities from the state, Jacobs' social networks link to decision-making power. They also need time, skill and motivation to form.

The socio-spatial processes on which these networks rely cannot be guaranteed or institutionally directed but can be easily destroyed when top-down approaches are based on towns and not city-living. Jacobs warns, 'whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly and chancily accumulated.' (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 180). By inference, cities that lose their funds of social capital also lose their capacity to solve their own problems. As the interconnecting networks disappear, the city loses sight of problems at

street level and conversely the street neighbourhood loses its ability to draw down resources. This failure connects at each scale: the city as a whole, the city district, and the street neighbourhood. The failure is systemic and compounded by the disruption of feedback brought about by the disappearance of social networks that would have fulfilled this function. This indicates the limitations of taking a non-systemic approach to analysing social capital which isolates specific spatial units and fails to take into account the flows and interactions within and between them.

### ***Jacobs and the social capital theorists***

Jane Jacobs cannot be deemed a social capital theorist in the same way Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam are categorised. Jacobs' social capital, first conceptualised in '*Death and Life*' (1961/1993) was observed as one of many processes operating in post-war, industrialised cities in the United States. In Jacobs' later writing opportunities for social exchange within the city are observed as fundamental to developing city work, the life-blood of city vitality (Jacobs, 1970, 1985, 2001). The use of vitality as a metaphor encapsulates more than just economic success and indicates that there are many systems that inter-connect to keep a city alive and healthy. Jacobs did not put forward a theory of social capital and her observations need to be kept in context. However there are interesting sites of contention in what she

observed and what was subsequently theorised, and these do provide insights into where social capital theory can be usefully developed.

There is minimal overlap between Bourdieu's class analytical approach and Jacobs' avoidance of both class and race issues. For Jacobs, neighbourhoods could succeed or falter irrespective of their relative class characteristics. Gated housing developments adhering to upper middle-class values which exclude difference, she said, produced sameness and dullness preventing cross-use and cross-fertilisation of ideas. In areas of poverty, she observed residents exchanging assistance such as labour and materials for residential improvements after bankers had written-off these areas as non-investable slums. When street neighbourhoods succeeded at mobilising social capital to take on power-brokers in city hall, it was because people from different backgrounds had decided to work together on common goals, as opposed to an advantage operated by class division. Jacobs did not refuse the possibility of power elites, of which she wrote and warned against in her last book (2005), but class is not explicitly invoked as an instrument of domination.

Contrasting Jacobs and Coleman (1988) is easier as there is a very distinct difference in their understanding of space and how networks operate. For Coleman, social capital operates when there is network closure, so that norms of reciprocity and obligation will be effective. The commitments of network members can be monitored, and norms will both force the warranted

reciprocation and avoid the free-rider problem. Coleman's social capital resembles the self-containment that Jacobs attributes to towns. By contrast, Jacobs' social capital is a quality of open networks of people that are motivated to travel into foreign city neighbourhoods, exchange, call on assistance, and build networks at the district and city level. Jacobs alludes to reciprocity held at the community level when one street neighbourhood has been assisted by another, but this seems qualitatively different from Coleman's norms and pressures to adhere to group values for fear of retribution or expulsion. Jacobs may have idealised the kindness of strangers but economists are still at a loss to explain why people leave a tip in a restaurant they will never return to. It would seem that something much more complex than methodological individualism or economic rationality is at work.

Coleman's sociological economics approach takes account of place only in terms of the number of residential moves undertaken by group members. Jacobs agrees that stabilisation is a critical factor for neighbourhoods, where 'staying put' increases stability and the likelihood of networks to form but this has to be related to the cross-use of districts where people move around the city. There is also some agreement on the importance of human capital in terms of outcomes for cities. However for Coleman it is placed at the household level and the outcomes are motivated by self-interest, i.e. educational attainment. For Jacobs, human capital is leveraged in the ability of groups to co-operate, and the skills required when dealing with institutional and

administrative bureaucracies. This is especially true when the unwritten procedures and protocols of such groups are evasive or abstruse.

Putnam and Jacobs share an interest in the effects of social networks on democracy and economic development. They both observe how informal and formal organisations at the grass roots level 'grow in our cities like leaves on the trees' and are important for neighbourhoods (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 174).

However the similarity stops at the point where Putnam sees these organisations as an end in themselves; as incubators of trust which lead to improved performance of democratic institutions and economic success.

Jacobs identifies these organisations as a second stage of development following the informal public contacts made possible by lively streets. However the networks, skills and resources held by these organisations are not adequate to the task of resolving problems that must be addressed at a district or city-wide level. Putnam's depoliticised social capital advocates self-government at the local level but excludes the political and economic structures that create problems for under-resourced areas.

The dominant depoliticised view of social capital is associated mostly with Robert Putnam. Dismissive of ideologies and ideologues, Jacobs was often difficult to place politically, as her activism and advocacy was pro-people and not pro-party. Peter Taylor puts her 'broadly on the left' (2006a: 1984) while David Hill finds her politics, 'curiously bi-modal' (1988: 307). Sanford Ikeda's

(2004) appropriation of Jacobs' ideas to justify methodological individualism and policies that forego all forms of government intervention distorts her view of self-government to a neoliberal extreme. In her last book, Jacobs criticised the 'cheeseparing' of neo-conservatism for damaging communities by pricing public facilities solely on economic return (Jacobs, 2005: 112). Jane Jacobs' ideas of self-government do not mirror ideas of a market-lead society, or one that leaves citizens to answer the problems created by larger institutional forces, or wider structural inequalities. In this respect Jacobs' social capital is political, and conflict is present in these processes as ordinary people must fight against policies, made at a distance that affect their everyday lives. Jacobs' observations of social capital processes are political and at all scales there are both winners and losers in the competition for city resources.

## **Jacobs as author**

How has Jacobs changed the way we think about cities through her writing? Critical responses to Jacobs' earlier work focus on the ambiguity of her professional status and once again split opinion. For some, celebrating her position as an unqualified amateur her work rightfully questioned the authority of experts (Fulford, 1997). For others, particularly within planning, her apparent lack of professional status allowed them to dismiss her ideas with an ironic lack of professionalism. Lewis Mumford referred to her as '*Mother Jacobs*' and she

was often labelled pejoratively a 'housewife' which in the 1960's can be assumed to insult her intellectual standing (Allen, 1997: 96). Peter Laurence (2007, 2011) has documented Jacobs' early life and shown that she was not an unqualified amateur in the areas she explored. Jacobs described herself as an author, and in that capacity was a paid professional with over ten years of experience when her seminal work was published in 1961 (Laurence, 2011). In her funding application to the Rockefeller Foundation, Jacobs stated she was writing for the 'generalised interested citizen, rather than writing for the specialist' (Jacobs 1958, cited in Creed Rowan, 2010: 45). If we are to judge her as a writer for the general public then it is certain she succeeded in communicating her ideas to a very wide audience of interested citizens. Her purpose was ambitious, to develop 'a new system of thought about the great city' (Jacobs, 1958 cited in Laurence, 2010: 13). Jacobs' writing has been recognised as fundamentally changing the way we think about cities (Allen, 1997; Campanella, 2010; Desrochers and Hospers, 2007; Ellerman, 2005; Hall 1985; Taylor 2006a) and also how we write about cities (Harris, 2011; Creed Rowan, 2010).

In an appraisal of Jacobs' literary style, Jamin Creed Rowan applauds her accessible use of 'literary and narrative form', likening her style to the gum-shoe detective genre, popular in the 1950's (Creed Rowan, 2011: 45). Not satisfied with merely titillating her readers with 'exciting vicarious urban experiences' Jacobs incites them to care about the places they would never think to visit by

connecting up the city, street by street (Creed Rowan, 2011: 45). He highlights her use of hyphenation, colloquialisms, alliteration, unusual italicisation, and capitalisation to produce the effect of engaging in a side-walk conversation. For Creed Rowan, '*Death and Life*', 'falls short of establishing a memorable, coherent, and over-arching whole' (2011: 54) although he sees these faults being addressed in the two books that followed.

As an author it is difficult to extract Jacobs from her journalistic roots. Peter Laurence sees Jacobs as, 'ill-equipped, as well as, disinclined to construct fully documented narrative' (Laurence, 2011: 72). Summarising the books' deficiencies by 'normal standards of scholarship' Laurence lists the main criticisms, 'they assert but fail to demonstrate; they rely on anecdotes, they rarely engage with the ideas of others who have tackled the subject' (Laurence, 2011: 80-81). However, both Creed Rowan and Laurence are willing to overlook these faults because Jacobs wrote accounts of social science that were engaging, original, and persuasive. Well known for her anti-expert and anti-credentialing position, she divided audiences between those that found her ideas inspiring despite their lack of proof (Lucas, 1988) and those who were frustrated by her lack of academic rigour. Reviewing '*Cities and the Wealth of Nations*' Peter Hall states, 'as in her previous work, Mrs Jacobs firmly excludes every scrap of hard quantified evidence' but interestingly recognises '*Death and Life*', which used the same method, as being 'one of the most influential books on city planning ever written' (Hall, 1985: 277).



Jacobs' work does not follow established standards of scholarship and it is arguable, given her intention to write for the public, and not the specialist, whether there is any benefit from analysing her work using academic protocols. The academic interest in her ideas on urban design and the development of cities continues although much of what she has written has been left unexplored. The problem of popular writing in academia is nothing new and still not resolved for academics, as the risk of being 'popular but not profound' (Hubbard *et al.*, 2008: 112) is seldom taken. While Jacobs was certainly successful in reaching a wide audience ('*Death and Life*' has been translated into 6 languages) her work remains a challenge for specialist academic audiences asking questions that relate to a particular area of interest. For the purposes of this thesis, which crosses disciplinary divides and takes a more systemic approach to city processes, Jacobs offers a way through the overwhelming complexity.

***Conclusion: what does Jacobs contribute to a geographical understanding of social capital?***

Jacobs' systemic and grounded approach seeks out the processes which affect the economic, political, and social vitality of cities. The everyday processes she observes work on different spatial scales, are dynamic, inter-connecting, perform a range of functions, and provide a number of services to city dwellers.

Social capital is an asset which Jacobs saw emerging from a number of processes that take time to establish and can easily be destroyed. She particularly highlighted the ignorance of planners and institutional bureaucrats who do not understand how social capital and other neighbourhood capacities for self-government are formed. Jacobs' social capital is particular to cities and highlights how cities and towns are different in terms that are not merely matters of size, physical attributes or resources. Jacobs points to the behaviours that enable or constrain city processes so that we can ask different questions related to space. For example, how do self-containment behaviours affect the cross-use of a city? Where has cross-use of city districts enabled groups to achieve their outcomes? This is novel in the literature and offers another way of thinking about socio-spatial processes differently, as it ties the exercise of social capital to real places.

Jacobs regarded opportunity and not necessity as the mother of invention. She viewed the city as the unrivalled incubator of encounters which could lead to the novel adaptations that solve the problems cities generate. Given this context, the social capital of the city is created first by city dwellers carrying out their daily activities in the company of other people. Informal, public contacts give rise to further opportunities for co-operation in the form of neighbourhood associations and other special interests when city dwellers seek and find other people interested in the same pursuits: cultural, political, social, physical etc. These social exchanges, gatherings, and the networks they form must be relied

upon to perform a political service in times of need; when a neighbourhood or city district has a problem that is too big for it to resolve on its own. Jacobs sees the need for city dwellers,

‘to fight it out with each other, and with officials, on the plane where the effective decisions are made, because this is what counts as winning.

Anything that diverts such contenders into fragmenting their power and watering their efforts ...vitiates political life, citizen effectiveness and self-government. This becomes play at self-government, not the real thing’ (1961/1993: 174).

This separates Jacobs from the social capital theorists mentioned above; it is the political to which social capital returns when the chips are down, not economic motivation, self-interest or consensus.

Jacobs’ social capital is grounded in the reality of the socio-spatial processes from which the political, economic, social, historical, material, and cultural emerge. Jacobs captures the processes by which social networks connect city residents to power at different spatial scales: street district, city district, and whole city. However, these scales may not be effective if there is little opportunity for people to interconnect and exchange in the public domain.

Jacobs’ stories of social capital incorporate a sensitivity to, and awareness of, spatial perceptions of mobility, opportunity, encounter, relationship, flow, performance, density, sprawl, embodiment, containment, and openness. Her work starts with context and works inductively from observations of processes,

to a system of thinking that crosses and connects people and place. Not satisfied with statistical abstraction or expert views from afar, Jacobs insists on taking research back to reality. It rejects the assumptions of grand theory, the abstractions of quantitative models, and the ideologies of social designers. In this way, Jacobs reinvigorates a conception of social capital that is based on how people live in real cities and provides a framework for carrying out real-world research. Employing Jacobs' bottom up methodology and focussing on systemic city processes could lead us to a different way of thinking about the everyday practice and exercise of social capital.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

The findings from the critical review of the social capital literature draw four conclusions. The first is that geographers have a contribution to make to the debate on social capital which is an inherently spatial phenomenon. The second conclusion regards the particular way in which social capital has been conceptualised with the emphasis on the economic and to a lesser degree the social. In a re-imagining of the concept, social capital would be seen as both constituted in and by space. This directs research to its particularities by first asking how and where it is exercised, and second, to what effect. This reverses the direction taken by research so far and opens up the black box of process (Radcliffe, 2004).

To do this, a third conclusion finds the work of Jane Jacobs on cities and socio-spatial processes relevant. Following her inductive methodology the research will observe the city processes she claimed built or destroyed the social capital which enabled or constrained city dwellers to solve their problems. The final conclusion draws on the narrative methods used by Jacobs to capture the complexities of cities as systems of inter-related parts. Narrative approaches are novel in the research and move the focus from theoretical abstractions to the particulars of how and where social capital is exercised in everyday lives of individuals and groups.

## ***Research Aim***

Based on the above conclusions the overall aim of the research is to re-insert context, space, place, agency, and power to a re-imagined conception of social capital. As a novel approach to this task, the research aims to apply the inductive methods developed by Jane Jacobs in her observation of American cities in the 1960's to a contemporary, post-industrial, British setting to provide new insights into how social interactions relate to city vitality. The results will be critically analysed against the existing literature on social capital to inform further research.

## ***Objectives of the research***

Based on the critical appraisal of the academic research on social capital presented in Chapter 1, and the examination of the work on Jane Jacobs on social interaction and city vitality in Chapter 2, the following research objectives have been identified:

1. To provide a framework which re-imagines social capital as inherently spatial, as constituted in and by space, and as an effect of the mediated social and power relations found in networks.
2. To explore in-depth the case-study of a creative network operating in the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and its surrounding areas, between 2007 and 2011.

3. To assess critically the academic conceptualisations of social capital in the everyday context of the case-study area.
4. To evaluate the on-going relevance of Jacobs' perspectives and how they inform our understanding of the role of social capital in post-industrial regeneration of cities.

### ***Research Questions***

To meet the objectives of the research the research questions have been divided into three stages.

Stage 1. Locating the network and the resources by asking:

1. How are networks understood, constructed, and maintained by their members?
2. What resources are accessed and mobilised or denied by actors seeking particular outcomes when using social networks and networked resources?

Stage 2. Identifying and placing the exercise of social capital and its effects by asking:

3. How does the exercise of social capital constrain or enable individuals and groups to achieve their goals?
4. What are the spatialities of exercised social capital in a particular context?

5. How does the exercise of social capital affect city vitality within a system of organised complexity?

Stage 3. Analysing the contribution of a re-imagined conception of social capital by asking:

6. How does a re-imagined understanding of social capital that re-inserts context, space, place, agency, and power contribute to our understanding of social capital in a real world setting?
7. How does this understanding of everyday social capital relate to the theoretical understandings put forward in the literature?
8. Is Jane Jacobs' way of seeing relevant for contemporary post-industrial settings?
9. What avenues are there for further research to pursue?

The rest of the chapter will present how the research was designed and conducted in light of the above aims, objectives and research questions.



## ***Introduction to Methodology***

The aim of the research is to understand social capital as it is exercised through mediating relationships in a particular setting. The methodology must therefore reveal the complex nature of social capital processes operating in and around the research site. The four sections of this chapter present the research design, the methods, the approach to data analysis, and finally the context and relevance of the chosen research site.

## **Research Design**

### ***Methodological stance – enacted realities/ontological politics***

The research follows the work of Law (2004) and Law and Urry (2005) which argues for the methods of social science to be re-imagined for the twenty-first century by first recognising their performativity. This approach according to Gibson-Graham (2008) provides a more open framework for answering questions that seek to understand what is not already known, instead of reproducing the taken-for-granted meta-narratives of such generalisations as ‘neo-liberalism’ or ‘globalisation’ or in this case depoliticised ‘social capital’. Law, using examples from Latour and Woolgar (1986), Haraway (1991), and Mol (1999, 2000) states that ‘methods, their rules, and even more methods’ practices not only describe but help to produce the reality they understand’

(Law, 2004: 5). This leads us to a political ontology where the researcher must take responsibility and make a choice about both methods and the reality these may or may not produce. This reconstitutes the relationship between method and 'reality' which positivism assumes is direct and objective. The 'out-there' is enacted in various ways via the practices and discourse of science and social science. This is not to say all enactments are equal or valid, this is not the abyss of relativism. However, there is no singular, independent, anterior and definite reality. Instead we are faced with 'poorly co-ordinated realities' (Law, 2004: 51) and method, 'will often be slow and uncertain. A risky and troubling process, it will take time and effort to make realities and hold them steady for a moment against a background of flux and indeterminacy' (Law, 2004:10).

Following Law's (2004) definition of social science as an on-going enactment then it follows that social capital research is enacted in a certain way. The dominant form of this enactment was presented in Chapter One. The research seeks to produce an alternative enactment by choosing a different methodology which focuses on particular spaces and particular people. Each enactment is understood in terms of 'method assemblage', which is 'a combination of reality detector and reality amplifier' (Law, 2004, 14). Thus some aspects of enacted reality will be highlighted and brought to the fore while other aspects will be made 'absent' or 'other'. Traditionally, these 'absent' or 'othered' aspects have been selectively ignored but in a new ontological politics, these selections must be considered as part of the research. In this case, 'method is not, and could

never be, innocent or purely technical' an assumption of the positivist stance (Law, 2004: 143).

Enactments in social capital research to date have made 'present' the network connection, the network qualities, the network resources, and the positive outcomes for those who fulfil a certain image of the 'civil' as 'trusting' and acting on social norms and obligations. What is missing or made 'absent' is power, agency, structural inequalities, spatial difference, and any number of contextual realities enacted in the messiness of social relations. Arguably what it makes 'other' is protest, resistance and negative outcomes through 'othered' social norms such as domination, corruption or greed. If this research has co-produced a reality, it is one in which inequality is conceived as outside these enactments. The researcher must take responsibility for the realities produced by the method assemblage chosen. The research design which follows aims to enact a different way of thinking about social capital that addresses the complexity of social processes within a particular context.

Claims to truth, according to Law (2004) are based upon the method assemblage, which,

'...does not work on the basis of whim or volition. It needs to resonate in and through an extended and materially heterogeneous set of patterned relations if it is to manifest a reality and a presence that relates to that reality' (Law, 2004: 148).

In producing a possible reality or presence, the research must relate to what is experienced 'out there' and relates to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility. The aim is to produce a reality that opens up the possibilities of understanding the world differently, and in so doing opens up the possibility for transformation to other ways of being. If, as both Law and Gibson-Graham contend, research is performative then the way in which method assemblage is shaped is also political and it must therefore take responsibility for the politics of its ontological manoeuvre. The research of exercised social capital seeks to make the politics of the everyday struggle more real whilst eroding the abstracted, ungrounded, depoliticised versions which make absent inequality. The research is validated on Law's (2004) grounds of 'truth' and 'politics' by asking whether this proposed geographic imaginary opens up possibilities for transformation that previous enactments have ignored or selectively eroded? This question will be taken up in Chapter Nine. The research design was evaluated using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework (Appendix 1a).

### ***Narrative and Case Study***

Following the ontological/epistemological stance set out above, the method assemblage of the research enacts a possible reality in which the exercise of social capital is understood through mediated relations in a particular place. The aim is to explore the exercise of social capital rather than confirm *a-priori*

frameworks and so it must start with a real world context and observe the practices of particular people. This aligns with Jacobs' methodology which works inductively, starting with processes. The research problem is one of 'organised complexity' and the research design must capture this complexity where the social, economic, political, cultural, physical and other elements overlap in unexpected and messy ways (Jacobs 1963/1991: 564). This points to qualitative methods, as statistical models have been shown in the literature to reduce this complexity and erode context. That said, qualitative methods can also be reductive, especially when questionnaires are based on certain assumptions that approximate social capital to trust, associational membership or other behavioural norms. Woolcock concludes, social capital relates to social relationships that 'cannot - and probably should not – be reduced to perfectly calibrated measurement tools and/or be part of neat, all-encompassing grand theories.' (Woolcock, 2010: 483). The research methodology aims to reflect the messiness and unpredictability of social relations in certain spaces and places.

Narrative and story have been employed in human geography and particularly during the cultural turn, as ways of understanding power and inequality through the use of meta-narratives that attempt to capture large-scale processes such as 'capitalism' or 'globalisation'. Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) argues that these meta-narratives reduce the possibility for transformation or for other possibilities to emerge. The recent focus on narrative reflects the need to

capture the complexity of real-world experience and move away from meta-narratives. These 'small stories' focus on the 'particularity and mundanity' of the everyday (Lorimer, 2003: 200). Attention to the particular is seen as a way of 'authorizing thicker versions of a partial but tantalizingly immediate geographical plot' in relation to 'grand, scholarly stories set in the quasi-mythological and exclusive spaces of "the academy"' (Lorimer, 2003: 200). The claims and hope for narrative to upset the dominant forms of story must be balanced with a realism regarding the context from which they derive. As Cameron questions,

'whether orienting toward the personal, felt, and relational represents an effective engagement with contemporary forms of power and oppression, or instead represents a retreat from lines of critique that may be well-worn, but by no means inappropriate' (Cameron, 2012: 588).

The use of a narrative approach recognises how people use stories to make meaning from the complexity of everyday life (Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993, 2008). While there is no definitive narrative approach, this thesis follows Riessman (2008) in using story and narrative interchangeably. Story forms hold complex information together via instruments such as theme, time-series or a mesh of interconnecting relationships and purposeful actions. The link made here between social capital and narrative is one of context and agency. Although there are many approaches to defining narrative, there is one uniting principle, 'narrative structures contain action linkages – that is to say, those

whereby the states of W (world) are transformed by human agency' (Abell, 2004: 293). Narrative can be employed to question how social capital works, in terms of an actor's capacity to act, and in what circumstances this agency prevails. The treatment of agency within the dominant economic versions of social capital is based on assumptions about human behaviour derived from a very limited set of motivations, namely rational self-interest and utility maximisation. The economic ideal of parsimony is not advantageous in the narrative form. Effective narratives relay information in a context that resonates with, and is further contextualised by, the audience's experience in a dialogic process (Bakhtin, 1981). This narrative approach complements contemporary geographical imaginaries which deliver spatially sensitive stories about the socio-economy that direct attention to the real contexts and specificities that differentiate actions from their outcomes. The research sought to reduce or eliminate a number of the assumptions highlighted in the literature by exploring real-world experiences.

The research design was flexible and exploratory, allowing protocols to emerge as the research went along. This follows Law (2004) and Gibson-Graham's (2008) call for more open-ended research methodologies to allow other possibilities or enactments to emerge from data. Holt's conceptualisation of 'embodied social capital' recognises the need for 'an eclectic range of methods, underpinned by a reflective methodology' suggesting, 'innovative methods could be utilized, that seek to point to the limits of representation' (Holt, 2008:

241-242). More-than-representational methods 'conceive of representation (context) and non-representation (practice) held together' (Lorimer, 2008: 554). The method of enacted mapping described below combines ideas of enactment (Law, 2004) and movement (Cresswell, 2006) where the participants' answers are embodied in physical gestures. While acknowledging Harrison's (2007) realization that any attempt at non-representation can only ever be partial the methodology follows Lorimer's 'route towards a wider sort of reckoning' in terms of accessing other more diaphanous ways of knowing (Lorimer, 2008: 556).

The methods must also provide a way past the ambiguities and the resultant problems of operationalisation found in the literature (Fine, 2001, Mohan & Mohan, 2002, Whiteley, 2000). The reflexivity and subjectivity of the researcher was acknowledged in contrast to positivist ideals of objectivity and neutrality. The researcher's input was taken as subjective and a statement of researcher subjectivity can be found in Appendix 1b. The research design was approved by the University's Research Degrees Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1c for ethical considerations).

Following Yin (2004), case study is an appropriate methodology when the research context and the research phenomenon cannot be separated. The case itself had to offer a way of studying social capital as it was exercised through networks of mediated relations. The case chosen was a network of creative practitioners operating in Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding areas



between 2007 and 2011. The idea of creativity is taken from a Jacobsean perspective of individuals and communities that seek to solve their problems. The focus on creativity allowed wider perspectives to be captured than that of a business network or a special interest network. The definition of 'creative practitioner' was not classified in any pre-determining way which allowed the network to emerge through self-identification much as it would have done in practice. The case was chosen to highlight the tensions when individuals and groups are competing for resources within the same network and responding to changes that are internal and external to the network. The network itself can be seen as open and dynamic with no singular criteria for its existence unlike a business or a special interest group. This aligns with Ettliger's (2003) work on multiple subjectivities and non-economic motivations; participants brought with them subjectivities from different spheres and other networks.

The choice to study a network over a period of time was determined by the need for context to also include the effect of time and how this in turn affects network relations. When social capital is exercised in a particular setting the outcomes of those actions are not always immediate and as Jacobs (1963/91) claims the relations that are necessary for social capital are built over long periods of time. Time is part of context, and to understand the processes and effects of exercised social capital, more than a snapshot is necessary. The five year period that went up to the present (at the time of the research) allowed participants to narrate how different network relations were established,

maintained, destroyed over time and in different contexts. The time period covers a significant change in political control in the UK and the economic downturn which is important to recognise as part of the wider context.

## **Research Methods**

A range of methods were assessed for their potential to answer the research questions before a selection was made. Accessibility to the networks members and their practices were principal considerations in choosing the research methods. The possibility for ethnography was ruled out as the network was distributed over a wide area and there was no central site where activities occurred. Following Jacobs (1961/93), activity was produced through ad-hoc conversations and meetings which would not have been captured by either following one network member or being at a particular site. Another consideration limiting the capacity of ethnography was the objective of studying a certain time period 2007 to 2011. Ethnography would be more suitable for observing current practices.

Social network analysis, using standardised protocols that focus on the structure of the network and positions of the actors, was also ruled out as not providing sufficient information on what the members were actually doing to mobilise resources and exercise their social capital (Emirbayer and Goodwin,

1994; Yeung, 2005). Semi-structured questionnaires were also considered as an option but rejected following Mishler's (1986) analysis of interview questioning and its conflict with narrative analysis where the participants' narratives are often eliminated, interrupted or re-directed via the interview design which only allows certain narratives to be told. Structured and semi-structured interviews would also be susceptible to the *a-priori* frameworks which conceptualise social capital in a particular way. The research methods were also limited to the capacity of one researcher, based in the case study area, collecting data over a 9 month period. This ruled out longitudinal study which would have been an alternative way of analysing narratives taken at intervals over a five year time period.

A mixed-methods approach was chosen for the case study using one-to-one mapping sessions which were filmed to capture the process, a focus group organised following the individual sessions, and a reflexive research journal maintained throughout the process.

### ***1. Mapping – enacted narratives***

A mapping exercise was designed to allow participants to both draw and narrate how they had established their networks over the time period with minimal intervention from the researcher. A large piece of paper was stuck onto a wall giving the following prompts: '2007-2011', 'people and

organisations', 'resources', 'spaces', 'what worked and what didn't work'. The participants (excluding the first participant) were invited to look at the participant maps that had already been collected. This demonstrated that there was no particular model to adhere to as the maps all looked very individual (examples in Appendix 3). The participant was asked to map their network starting wherever they chose and narrate the process. When the participant was ready to start the digital recorder and the camera were switched on. The researcher asked questions to clarify details or if the participant asked for prompts. There was no set time limit although some participants set their own completion times. The process did not change following the pilot test as the participants seemed to understand the task and narratives were recorded with very little interference or intervention from the researcher. Some participants used their own prompts such as CV's, diaries or mobile phones for contact names and project dates. The map-making exercise facilitated participants to re-enact making a network through space and time, using the blank piece of paper to represent a mental space in which their network could be organised. The map acted as a visual prompt to the participant, allowing them to organise their content in a way that worked for them and then reflect on the finished map in terms of the processes and patterns it represented.

## ***II. Filming – performing narratives and capturing the process over time***

The mapping exercise was filmed in order to produce a performance of the mapping activity and also capture the process of building a network over time. Only the piece of paper was filmed and not the head of the participant, although sometimes they did move within shot. This decision was taken to reduce the possibility of camera-shyness or self-consciousness. The performance element of the narrative was introduced by the researcher's intention to make a film of the collective mapping exercise. This was to direct the participant's attention to the network or collective of people who were being asked to do the same activity. This captures, to some extent, the idea of the narrative being political in terms of the dialogic/performed element and pays attention not only to what is being said but who is saying it and for whom (Riessman, 2008). The use of film also reinforced the idea of process being as important as the end product. A two dimensional map was the output of the exercise but the film aimed to capture the story of the network and how it had built up over time. The use of film captured this process whereby the participant started from a blank piece of paper and built up a picture of the network by thinking through what they had done.

### ***III. Focus group***

Focus groups often follow a standard format with discussion facilitated in small groups. This had to be adapted in order to address the range of topics and the higher number of participants. Therefore, the focus group was a mix of facilitated exercises and discussion. The focus group activity had four objectives: to check the data captured from the individual meetings regarding networks and resources; to integrate the individual maps into the geographical space of the case-study area; to look at the strategic positioning of the participants within their networks and power structures; and finally to observe the group dynamic. The participants were asked to complete three exercises.

#### Exercise 1 – networks and resources survey (Appendix 4)

The transcripts of the interviews had been analysed for information concerning how and where network relations were initiated and maintained. A simple tick list was completed by the attendees identifying the methods and contexts which they used and whether they were used regularly or only sometimes.

The transcripts had also revealed a wide range of network resources sought by participants. These were synthesised and classified into three groups: ‘expressed/informal’ resources such as confidence, enthusiasm, aspiration; ‘institutional/formal’ resources such as strategic direction, formal support,

project delivery; and 'material resources' such as paid opportunities, project partners, buildings and equipment. The participants were asked if any more resources should be added to the list after which they were asked to individually code the resources according to the following key; green for resources that were sought and found in plentiful supply, orange for resources found but not enough, and red for resources sought but not found. For resources that were not sought no code was applied. This was a preliminary task to get participants to think about the range of resources they used. Following this, they were asked to prioritise the top five most important resources found (coded green) and the bottom five most important resources either not found or found but in insufficient supply (coded orange or red). The participants made their selection using stickers and the answers were collated on sheets spread around the room. Participants were given enough time to ask questions and discuss their choices with other members. The results of these tasks can be found in Appendix 5a and 5b.

### Exercise 2 – integrating the networks in geographical space.

For the second exercise a map of Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding areas (3m x 2m) was prepared with plastic flip chart paper which can be used like a whiteboard. On the map two nested boxes were drawn. On the inside box the six towns, Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton were placed in approximate geographical position. The space between the inner box and

the larger box represented the region. The space outside the larger box and the edge of the paper represented the UK and international links. Participants were given A3 copies of their individual network maps as a reference. They were asked to plot their position and draw lines between themselves and other organisations and people with which they were currently working, approximating spatially according to the town/region/outside of region. The purpose of this exercise was to see what pattern would emerge and if it would confirm the pattern that seemed to be emerging from the data. A discussion was recorded as people stood around the completed map. Photographs of the finished map can be found in Appendix 6.

### Exercise 3 – strategic ladders.

The purpose of this exercise was to understand how participants saw themselves in relation to other strategic levels of power which had come out of the preliminary analysis as a possible narrative theme. Participants were put in four groups: freelancers, creative businesses, arts organisations, and institutions. They were shown a model of a strategic ladder with European/global institutions at the top, and in descending order each rung represented a different institutional/strategic scale international: national, regional, local, hyper-local, and grass-roots organisations respectively. Along the sides of the ladder arrows pointed down one side and up the other represented flows of both power and resources.



Each group was given a blank piece of paper to draw their own strategic ladder and place themselves on it and then draw and discuss where and how they were connected to other strategic levels. Following this there was a group discussion about the exercise. Photographs of the maps are shown in Appendix 7.

#### ***IV. Research journal***

Throughout the research a journal was maintained to track observations, potential themes, and log decisions. During the data capture stage this was done manually into a notebook, at the data analysis stage, notes were logged in NVivo.

### **Conducting the Research**

The case study was a network of self-identifying, creative practitioners working in Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding areas between 2007 and 2011. The cases were chosen through snowball sampling. Following preliminary discussions with potential participants and colleagues in the Arts and Media Department of Staffordshire University, a first participant was approached to take part in a pilot test of the mapping exercise. The first participant had been

directly involved in the creation of networks both face-to-face and through social media. The meetings took place between October 2011 and March 2012. Following the first meeting and test of the protocol, other participants were recruited through recommendation. The first participant gave six recommendations. After the mapping exercise, participants were asked to recommend someone from their network. Most recommended more than one person and these recommendations were then followed with an e-mail invitation

The e-mail invitation gave an overview of the project. At the start of the one-to-one meeting the participants were given a pre-amble about the project and given the opportunity to ask questions. The e-mail and the meeting were framed without using the term 'social capital' so as to keep any *a-priori* knowledge about social capital theory to a minimum. The frame was taken from Jacobs (1961/93) in terms of how communities solve their problems by building networks and accessing resources. All participants were given the opportunity to opt out either before, during or after the exercise if they didn't want their data used in the research. The meetings took place at the researcher's home in 17 of the cases, at the participant's workplace in 12 cases and at the participant's home in one case. The meetings took between one and two and a half hours with the majority (18/30) completed in an hour.

After each interview the participant was asked for feedback on how they found the mapping process so that any changes could be incorporated. Every

participant was positive about the exercise and apart from a request for memory joggers, there was no change to the original protocol tested with the first participant. An interim analysis showed that the participants' recommendations matched the people most mentioned in the network maps but this did not influence the sampling process as those that were recommended were invited regardless of how many times they were mentioned in the maps. The priority was placed on the recommendation and not the quantitative analysis. The quantitative measures established that a network existed in terms of the repeated interconnections and names. The representativeness of the network cannot be guaranteed as there were people who were not interviewed. The repetition of recommendations within the sample indicated that some degree of representation had been achieved. The bias in the sampling process was an integral part of building the researched network in a way that mirrored normal practice. All those who were recommended by a participant were invited to take part with the exception of one person whose contact details were unavailable.

In total, 30 mapping exercises were conducted from a potential of 46 invites. The list of participants, classified into type (institution, organisation, freelance), and their particular activity or practice is given in Appendix 2. Age, sex, ethnicity, or socio-economic status was not a focus of the research and this information was not gathered. The first stage of meetings was closed in February although two more were conducted in March due to illness and to the

lack of availability. The decision to stop at this stage was based on a circularity of recommendations where participants were recommending people who had already been interviewed. Also, by this stage, sufficient narrative themes had emerged across the sample for analysis in the time period available.

The second stage of the process was the focus group meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 from 1-5pm, at the Etruria Industrial Museum. The venue was chosen as a neutral and central location for all participants. Although some participants did offer to hold the event it was feared that the frictions within the network might have been amplified if certain participants were seen to be appropriating the research by controlling the space. It might also have compromised the participants' sense of confidentiality and openness. The museum was also selected as a more informal space rather than using hotel conferencing facilities. This was felt to be important as the participants were meeting for the first time as a group, and the aim was to establish an informal dynamic, where people would feel they were contributing to a research exercise rather than a more formal training or institutional event put on by the University. All twenty-eight participants had expressed an interest in attending the event (two one-to-one meetings occurred in March which accounts for the total sample). Of those, eighteen people attended Stage Two although some were not able to stay to the end. The group engaged fully in all the exercises and the feedback regarding the event was positive.

As part of the reflective process, researcher subjectivity was monitored through the use of field notes and a research journal. Some of the power relation issues encountered in more formal methods of interviewing were avoided as the majority of meetings were held at the researcher's home where people were invited to have an informal discussion before going into the room where the camera and mapping activity was set up. The informal nature of this approach was to give the researcher and participant time to build some rapport, find out more about each other and to relax in their surroundings before starting the exercise. The fact that people did share openly and at length with the researcher demonstrated that this strategy worked. The researcher's neutrality in relation to the network, in terms of being an outsider, was appreciated by some of the participants. While the use of prompts gave the meeting some structure, the participants were free to narrate their stories in the way they chose. This approach again reduced the researcher's influence on the direction of the meeting and equalised the power relations to some degree. There was no particular question to get right or answer in the way the researcher wanted. When participants asked for reassurance that their narrative was 'right' the importance of it being their personal narrative was re-iterated.

At the group meeting, the intention was stated at the outset for the group to work collaboratively towards answering the research questions. The use of the exercises was to make the participants active rather than passive in line with the research approach of enactment (Law, 2004). The activities were used to

direct their attention to the research areas without extensive explanation from the researcher. The instructions for each activity were discussed with the participants and their suggestions incorporated into the exercise. In response to the third activity some participants disagreed with the strategic ladder framework which was indicative that the power relations between the researcher and the group were equal and they were not deferring to the researcher as 'expert'. There was open discussion but very little open conflict or open contest between the participants which reflected some of the themes that had been identified in the preliminary analysis. It was not the purpose of the event to draw out these conflicts but to observe the group dynamic.

### ***Limitations and risks***

The use of case-study can be seen as limiting the claim to universality. This issue has wider implications in terms of the ontological and epistemological claims for knowledge. The research stance following Law (2004) rejects claims for universality and independent truths. Further the interpretative stance taken in the analysis forgoes the idea of single interpretations and language is seen within a context of constructed meanings between interlocutors. In addition, the purpose of the research was to re-insert context into the conceptualisation of social capital and to focus on the particular. Therefore, the case study was an integral part of the design and no claims for universality are made. The research site and the cases were chosen for their particularities and not as a

universal representation of social capital. This does not reduce their external validity if the insights gained from them contribute to our understanding of social capital in particular contexts (Yin, 2004). The limitations of using case study exist but are not significant given the research objectives.

The research strategy and design were exploratory and aimed to find new insights into social capital, seen through the lens of Jane Jacobs, as opposed to the mainstream social capital theorists. This necessarily meant putting to one side *a-priori* frameworks and existing theories. By using different methods it was expected different information would be gathered. This strategy incurs a risk that new methods do not work or fail to provide new insights. The first risk was mitigated through pilot testing. The second risk was not encountered.

The snowball sampling technique is inherently biased as participants are not chosen randomly. This was not seen as a specific limitation to this research as the aim was to reproduce the network through the practice of personal selection and bias. What was deemed more important was that the sample represented enough of the network to be credible. There was a risk that the network would be skewed by one particular grouping for example if freelancers only recommended other freelancers. This risk was monitored and the split was roughly equal across the sample where institutions were represented in 9 cases, freelancers were represented in 12 cases and organisations were

represented in 13 cases. This adds up to more than the sample size as some cases were active in more than one category.

There were multiple risks to adopting the very open and undirected style of 'interviewing'. The participants may have had difficulty with the lack of instruction, or in doing both the mapping and narration at the same time. This risk was monitored throughout the exercise and did not need mitigation as all the participants produced both a map and a narrated transcript. Some participants sought more reassurance than others in terms of 'doing it right' but there were no particular difficulties and no refusals or withdrawals. This could be explained by the fact that most of the participants were creative practitioners and familiar with creative outputs. It was also a risk that participants would not remember their activities or the people they had come into contact with especially given the long time period (2007-2011). This was a problem for a minority of the participants but while they may not have remembered the name of someone they did remember where they were and what they were doing if it was significant. It was agreed between the researcher and the participants that the map was not meant to be an exhaustive representation of the network. The aim of the exercise was not an exact record of the network but a narrative of the processes.

There was also a risk that participants would go off track completely. However, following Mishler (1986), this was not discouraged as the narrative flow was



privileged. The researcher was interested in what experiences the exercise would elicit and if the participants had the time to expand on details then this was seen as a positive element. Although some meetings went on a long time, there was very little data which was totally irrelevant. The map, the prompt sheet, and the camera seemed to act as a focus for the interview without much intervention from the researcher. The use of innovative methods proved successful in eliciting rich description and reflection on the participants' practices. These methods may be limited to creative practitioners but this would need to be demonstrated in further testing.

The main limitation was on the quantity of time spent in the field and the lack of other researchers to do peer review or triangulation during the analysis stage. The interpretations of the researcher have to be seen as only one possible alternative. In spite of member checking, transferability across the study, and an explicit data to construct protocol, there remains inherent interpretation bias. The understanding of research as a political process (Law, 2004), recognises that subjectivity is part of research and cannot be eliminated. The responsibility and challenge for the researcher is not in trying to erase subjectivity, which is impossible, but to be explicit about the effects of that subjectivity on the research and particularly, in this case, the interpretations. This will be taken up further in the discussion.

## **Analysis**

### ***Data Handling***

The use of digital recording devices (recorder and camera) meant that the participants' narratives could be captured in full and in duplicate. As the participants' heads were not filmed facial gestures were not captured but the footage did show how the network emerged over time. The narratives were transcribed according to Gee's (1985) suggestions where pauses and false starts are included. The researcher's comments and questions were also recorded and transcribed as the process was seen as dialogic where, 'form and meaning emerge between people in social and historical particularity, in a dialogic environment' (Riessman, 2008: 107). This draws on Bakhtin (1981) where understanding is seen not as straightforward process of information exchange through language. Instead each word is infused with its own history depending on the interlocutor and new meanings are given in a two-way process between transmitter and receiver.

The maps were photographed and copied onto A3 paper to make them easier to manage although the originals were available as a back-up. The map contents were transcribed onto an Excel spreadsheet where all the individual names, organisations and projects were listed. This was then used to monitor the sampling process to make sure that the network was being sufficiently

represented by participants. The maps were also used as a back up when names could not be transcribed correctly from the recordings. The film footage was stored on a hard drive but did not form part of the analysis as the transcribed narratives captured the process sufficiently.

### ***Narrative Analysis***

The thesis sets out to explore narrative as a way of reconnecting the understanding of social capital with context. The decision to adopt narrative analysis emerged as a result of the data collection process where the integrity of the participants' narratives became an important consideration in the adoption of a suitable analytical instrument. Grounded Theory was considered as another possible approach because of the attention it pays to everyday practice. The development of grounded theory responded to 'the overemphasis in current sociology on the verification of theory, and a resultant de-emphasis on the prior step of discovering what concepts and hypothesis are relevant for the area that one wishes to research' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 1f) Social capital research has suffered from this dissociation from the field. Glaser and Strauss offer an alternative way of looking at data whereby, 'the trick is to line up what one takes as theoretically possible or probable with what one is finding in the field' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 253)

Grounded theory provides a structured method for analysing qualitative data that allows theory to 'emerge' as opposed to the later 'revisionist' version adopted by Strauss and Corbin (1998) which follows a more prescriptive approach. However, the decision to adopt narrative analysis was taken because it privileges the integrity of the narrative. The process used in Grounded Theory of line-by-line coding was felt to be too disruptive of the narrative and also risked diluting the data into a single voice rather than a system of individual voices. Narrative analysis was chosen for its potential to give voice to the participants with less intervention from the researcher.

Wiles *et al.* have identified the interest of narrative to geographers by highlighting, 'the way that spaces and social relations are reproduced through talk' (Wiles *et al.*, 2004: 91). While narratives abound within geography, narrative analysis has had much less attention with narrative and narrative analysis often being conflated (Wiles *et al.*, 2004). Narrative analysis pays attention to the ambiguities, messiness, fragmentation and functions of talk in a way which other methods often seek to either mitigate or ignore completely. Mishler (1986) was an early critic of research interviewing, the analysis of qualitative data using thematic coding, and the ideals of positivist models of stimulus-response experiments. Instead, Mishler saw the interview as 'a narrative event' where identities are being formed through story-telling and in the context of the interview (Riessman, 2008: 16). Narrative analysis has been

developed in response to an appreciation of meaning as a dialogic process which requires an exchange between the researcher and the interviewee.

There are a number of analytic approaches to narrative which relate to how talk is understood. Labov's (1972) structural analysis distinguished a number of elements which had to be there for a fully formed narrative. Gee's (1986) work responds to the structure of the narrative and how it is told; meaning is represented through the use of poetic stanzas. This method breaks the narrative into units that focus on the performance of the story-telling including pitch, intonation, false starts, hesitation, and other aural interruptions or interventions. The speech act as performance is informed by Goffman (1963, 1969, 1981) and analyses talk in terms of actors, the scene, who is performing, and who is it being performed for (Riessman 1993, 2008). One of the strengths of a dialogic approach is the attention it lends to the wider contexts in which the narratives are set (Riessman, 2008). Given the research focus on performance/enactment in context, the dialogic/performance approach was followed. While there is very little standardisation in narrative analysis the dialogic/performance approach focuses not only on what is said but, 'intersubjectivity and reflexivity come to the fore as there is a dialogue between researcher and researched, text and reader, knower and known. The research report becomes "a story" with readers the audience, shaping meaning by their interpretations' (Riessman, 2008: 137).

A dialogic/performance approach takes into consideration 'the profound importance of context in the construction and performance of the narrative' (Riessman, 2008: 137). Once the context is understood the analysis turns to agency. This refers to the agency of the narrative in the sense of what happens within the story and how the narrative is understood in the wider context. Sense-making through narrative and story is pluri-vocal and occurs at multiple levels: individual; organisational; institutional; cultural; political and so on. Narratives are not simple acts of representation describing 'reality'. They are enactments where individuals give an account of themselves and their community (Browning, 1991). The performance of each narrative or narrative fragment carries import, as does the context in which the narrative is given, and the motivations behind what is being said i.e. who is saying it and what they are saying it for.

This approach pays less attention to the structure of the narrative, its beginning, middle, and end, privileging instead the agency and intentions of the story teller (Moch and Fields, 1985). The narratives reveal how certain actions enabled or constrained the achievement of desired outcomes for the participants within an interdependent system. In pulling these fragments together,

'[t]he analyst's task is telling the 'collective story' experienced by a sociologically constructed category of people that is placed in the context of larger sociocultural and historical forces' (Richardson, 1988: 200-201).

This means answering how the exercise of social capital at the micro-level further affects and is affected by the wider system?

Exploring narrative as a system follows insights from organisational studies which views the organisation as constructed and performed by many fragmented, in-situ discursive acts (Boje, 1991, 1995). The analysis presented here is one interpretation of a system which can only ever be partially captured. The narratives presented offer an interpretation of how the network of individuals, organisations, and institutions make sense of their personal and collective experiences.

Thematic analysis was used in the first instance to capture emerging themes. Narrative themes emerged in response to the question, 'how was the exercise of social capital enabled or constrained by mediating relationships?' The use of themes in narrative analysis is different to other qualitative methods such as Grounded Theory. What is most important is the 'case-centred commitment' where narratives are kept in tact and themes are used without separating the data into fragments (Riessman, 2008: 74). The purpose was to look for narratives that answered the question and assess if the emerging themes around constraint and enablement were repeated in other cases. Six narrative themes were identified that demonstrated either that the exercise of social capital had been enabled or constrained by the mediating relations. These will be analysed in Chapters Five to Seven.

Following the emergence of the themed narratives all the transcripts were read again, and the cases which contained these narratives were noted across the sample (see Appendix 8). The cases which best reproduced the themed narrative in terms of how the exercise of social capital was enabled or constrained were chosen for further analysis using the dialogic/performance approach.

## **The Case Study Area - Stoke-on-Trent city and its surrounds**

This section presents the rationale for selecting Stoke-on-Trent, and its surrounding area, as the research site. To understand its relevance to the research aims, it is first necessary to position Stoke-on-Trent within the wider context in terms of its industrial history, its economic development, its political stability, and its cultural infrastructure. The aim here is not to give a detailed exposition of context but instead to capture the essential characteristics which make Stoke-on-Trent a particular kind of city for researching socio-spatial processes.

Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding area is often referred to as 'The Potteries' because of the area's domination in ceramic production from the mid-eighteenth



century onwards. Coal, iron, and steel production were also central to the rapid development of the local economy. The dependence on these industries has been highlighted as an inherent weakness of the area which continues to experience the twinned effects of de-industrialisation and globalisation (Imrie, 1991). From a Jacobsian viewpoint, Stoke-on-Trent fits into the definition of a 'supply region' which is overly concentrated and specialised in export production (Jacobs, 1985). For Jacobs, when the income generated through exports is not invested into generating city diversity through import-replacement processes, then export production has to pay for all import requirements. When export revenues dry up, as was the case during the de-industrialisation of the 1970's onwards, there is no capital or revenue to start the transitioning process from specialisation to diversification. Having failed to make a successful transition to a service economy (Jayne, 2004) Stoke-on-Trent is now taking on the characteristics of a 'by-passed' region which fails to attract investment and without germane assistance will continue to decline (Jacobs, 1980).

In the context of 'cityness' and its materiality, Stoke-on-Trent faces many of the challenges of 'blight' identified by Jacobs: large A roads and ring roads cutting the city off from its periphery; out of town retail parks which draw activity away from the centre; a large stock of old buildings which have fallen out of use and are boarded up; large parks which are deemed unsafe even in the daytime; and multiple disused sites awaiting redevelopment which are fenced off and act as 'border vacuums' (Jacobs, 1961/93: 336). The problems of the physical

infrastructure are coupled with planning decisions which make city cross-use even less probable: zoning of 'quarters' to designate certain activities; limited city pedestrianisation schemes coupled with high parking charges; and a public transport system which fails to motivate cross-city mobility. From a Jacobsian perspective Stoke-on-Trent has none of the generators of diversity which contribute to city vitality (Jacobs, 1961/93). This makes it an interesting site to question how city vitality emerges (or not) through socio-spatial relationships which systemically combine materiality, mobility, and usage.

From a statistical perspective, Stoke-on-Trent displays many of the characteristics of socio-economic deprivation. The Audit Commission gives the following summary,

'Stoke-on-Trent is an area with significant deprivation, due in part to the historic decline of traditional industries. Unemployment is higher than regional and national averages and earnings are relatively low. Housing is relatively affordable, but there is a fairly high proportion of non-decent housing in the area. The health of people in Stoke-on-Trent is generally much worse than the England average, and there are health inequalities across the area. Although improving, mortality rates are an issue in Stoke on Trent, particularly among infants.' (Audit Commission Website, based on Comprehensive Area Assessment carried out in 2009).

Stoke-on-Trent is similar to many cities in the north of England and the West Midlands which have suffered from de-industrialisation. What makes Stoke-on-Trent different is that its regeneration programmes aimed at promoting cultural development have been relatively unsuccessful (Jayne, 2000, 2004). In terms of participation, Stoke-on-Trent is in the bottom twenty Local Authorities (DCMS, 2010) with only 34.2% of the population accessing an arts activity three times within a twelve month period between 2009-2010. Ray Johnson, a local film archivist and academic, writes that Stoke-on-Trent, 'has always seemed a place to get away from in order to get on' (Johnson, 1993: 284). While documenting many of the local arts activities he concludes, 'the adherence of loyalties to the smaller societies, the communities and particular towns within the city means that the Potteries as a whole may not be symbolised by its culture' (Johnson 1993, 286). This intimates a relationship between space, place and culture that makes Stoke-on-Trent an interesting site for the purpose of looking at how cultural development is enabled or constrained through mediating relationships.

Stoke-on-Trent as a city is also unique in its geographical and political structure. Stoke-on-Trent gained city status in 1925 as a confederation of six towns, aligned from north to south: Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton (see Fig. 1). This linear formation is unique to a British city and although Hanley is the designated city centre the usual city-periphery relationships of a radial city do not exist. As Edensor notes,

'[t]here is in the Potteries, more markedly than in other towns, an enduring competition for resources between the city's towns, a contestation that reveals a political tendency to achieve the best for towns at the expense of the city' (Edensor, 2000: 13).



Fig 1 Map of Stoke on Trent (<http://www.visitstoke.co.uk/get-around>)

The relationship between these towns and their neighbouring district council, Newcastle-under-Lyme, has been one of enduring conflict dating back to the first troubled developments of local government in the middle of the eighteenth

century (Briggs 1993: 130). Industrialists, residents, workers, councillors, government commissioners, and community groups have fought, and are still fighting for status, leadership and power. Despite being an area of rapid development and industrialisation throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century; 'a combination of intense parochialism, simple reluctance to part with funds, together with all the elitism of property-owning meant that the local community was slow to produce the institutions of local government' (Briggs, 1993: 138).

This inter-town parochialism has been played out historically in leadership battles between Burslem, Hanley and Stoke. Each claimed superiority on different grounds which made comparison difficult. Burslem, which was the first to gain Borough status, had the industrial might as the 'mother town' of the potteries. Hanley's claim was based on sheer size after merging politically with nearby Shelton. Stoke, which was barely a village, made claims on the basis of ecclesiastical importance as the sight of the ancient church. To demonstrate their worth the leading figures of each area embarked on building projects to give their towns the services of a market hall. Inter-town competition was rife but even within the towns there was disagreement. The new market at Stoke was shunned by local traders and a separate market was built close by. Burslem, with two town halls by 1834, built a third in 1911 in an urgent disbursement of borough funds following the forced federation of the six towns

in 1910. The Borough of Hanley built two town halls and then settled in 1884 on a former hotel for its administrative centre. Tunstall and Fenton, only designated Urban Districts, had their own town halls and municipal buildings as did Longton. As Hawke-Smith points out, these grand municipal buildings 'stand out in almost complete isolation amidst a sea of modest working class streets' (Hawke-Smith, 1985: 74).

These buildings externalised the influence-seeking desires of their patrons and were a physical representation of power and status. The thirteen town halls built in this period attest to the historical machinations of the powerful and wealthy. However, the story does not end with the confederation of the six towns in 1910. The conflict between these towns and the same parochialism featured in the early development remains. Currently the city council plans to move its operations from the original Stoke town hall to Hanley as part of the creation of a Central Business District with the council as anchor tenant. There have been protests by the local retailers and businesses which see this as striking the death knell for Stoke town. Elsewhere in the city, the new University Quarter revitalises one part of Shelton while other parts are left derelict. Burslem competes with Hanley's 'Cultural Quarter' to be home to the city's creative pursuits. The prevailing cultural and political infrastructure of Stoke-on-Trent as a unique confederation of towns suggests a connection between space and social relations. The relational geographic imaginary put forward by

Massey (1994, 2005) can be explored in the context of a place which does not conform to pre-conceived ideas about how a city should behave.

Issues within local government are also relevant to the period of study, 2007-2011. In 2009 two council officials, the elected mayor and a Conservative councillor were arrested on suspicion of corruption. The scandal, which surrounded the closure of a local swimming pool, was finally resolved in 2013 after a BBC investigation and Freedom of Information request forced the release of documents which the council had previously withheld. A high-profile local business man also brought a lawsuit for breach of contract which ended up costing the council £44,000 (BBC, 2013). It is difficult to measure the damage an incident like this does to the relationship between a local authority and its constituents. However, trust in institutions has been identified as a key indicator of differences in social capital when comparing countries (Rothstein, 2005). The political context in which the study is placed provides an opportunity to understand how the exercise of social capital may be affected by institutional trust.

As set out in Chapter One, sites of contention and failure which have been excluded from theory, can be re-inserted into a conceptualisation of social capital. This focuses our observation on what *is* happening rather and what *should* be happening following Jacobs' methodology (Jacobs, 1961/1993). Stoke-on-Trent is a place which appears to be failing in terms of cultural and

economic development. In Jacobsian terms the city is being overwhelmed by its own problems. Therefore the research asks in what ways and particularly what processes are being enabled or constrained through the exercise of social capital. While the case study is a network of cultural and creative practitioners the research looks at cultural development as part of the wider context in which the network is operating: historical, industrial, economic, political, cultural and geographic. The research asks to what extent is the spatial configuration of the city affecting the exercise of social capital? Similarly, to what extent is the political/historic formation of the city as a collection of towns affecting the exercise of social capital? This pertains to the stronger form of context (Fine, 2001) in which time and place are factored into the research. The next chapter begins the teasing out of the contextual detail as it relates to the network and the participant narratives.



## **Chapter 4 Setting the Scene(s)**

### ***Introduction***

The purpose of this chapter is to set the scenes in which the narratives and the networks are performed. This presents the contextual background through which participants understand, construct and maintain their networks. It is a pre-cursor to the detailed contextual narrative constructions presented in Chapters Five to Seven. The narrative scenes are set in two ways: in terms of how the general characteristics of the network are described by those who actively participant in its performance; and in terms of the resources actors seek through network relationships. As Foley and Edwards state, social capital is 'networks (access) plus resources' and while there is some argument about what else social capital might be, according to other theorists, this basic definition provides an analytical starting point (Foley and Edwards, 1999: 166).

Three sources of data have been used to draw out the common characteristics of the network. The first looks at the similarities between the process of creating a map and those required to establish a network. This reveals some of the general patterns and processes through which actors find people and resources. Secondly, the methods of establishing contacts and their associated patterns of usage will be analysed. This comes from the survey completed in

Stage 2 (Appendix 4). Lastly, the participants' evaluation of network patterns will be drawn from the transcripts. These findings are compared with the theory presented in the critical review and from other sources of scholarship on creative and cultural networks.

The mobilisation of resources link network relationships to outcomes, and indicate how the exercise of social capital can move actors towards their goals. It is important not to conflate resources and power (Allen, 2003). Power effects are played out through a process mediated by relationships whereas resources are assets that are related to power only through those specific relationships. The relationship between resources and power and the modalities of exercised social capital will be looked at in the following three chapters. This chapter will look at the demand for, and supply of, particular resources. The results are taken from the Stage 2 'Resources' exercise (Appendix 5b). The analysis looks at patterns of resource prioritisation shared across the group and contested areas where resources were available to some actors but not to others. This sets the scenes in terms of the kind of resources, formal and informal, that participants hope to find within the network.

## Networks

### *Creating a network map*

A preliminary caution comes with the use of 'network' as a term which could possibly make concrete something which exists as a dynamic assemblage of people, materials, spaces, ideas, identities, subjectivities and so on. The network maps are snapshots in time and as always the map is not the territory. There is an inherent difficulty in capturing a network as there is no defined end point or closure. The overlap of names of people across the individual networks (shown in Appendix 2b) and the sampling method demonstrated that there were key players that were recommended repeatedly by other members but this does not mean that there is one network. This was highlighted at the Stage Two event by one participant,

'This is a particular slice of the creative city that we're looking at – because like you say it hasn't involved the content producers like... theatres and whatever - so actually what this is representing as much as anything else is sort of a bohemian – slightly bohemian tilt to – it's sliced across like that and all we've got is one of the slices' (Participant 016).

Therefore, in referring to the group of practitioners as a network it is not to be taken as a defined entity in itself but a loose association of people, relationships, materials, practices, spaces and places that have inter-connected at different times for different purposes. For the purpose of the analysis, the

map is not the network, and the network is always in the making, but similarities in process and pattern can be identified.

Starting with a blank piece of paper and a short list of prompts [2007-2011, people and organisations, resources, spaces, what worked and what didn't work] the participants were faced with the initial challenge, 'where to start?' This question is relevant not only to the exercise of creating a map and making a representation of the network but also the act of creating a network. Each participant put some thought into making their initial mark as they questioned how their network was arranged, intrinsically to them, and extrinsically in the real world. The participants' maps (Appendix 3) show the uniqueness of each personal network, at the same time there are similarities in the pattern of associations; actors and their relationships defined by connecting lines and relative positions on the paper and in the network. The process of resolving questions about starting positions, proximity and distance to other members, relative significance of contacts and projects, as well as other characteristics were integral to the map-making exercise. These were displayed on the map and the process captured in the accompanying narratives. While the map is an artefact representing a partial snapshot the network, the process of creating the map has a similar organisation to the creation of the network itself.

Participants reflected on this process as they made sense of their maps. For one participant, the map has to show more than the key network moments

because to get to those people and those moments a lot of other actions and relationships were necessary:

‘I’m looking at this and I’ve been thinking – I’ve put all this big network of people ...and I’ve kind of just sat back and looked and actually – you benefit from everybody but which have been the key moments? I could have come in and just put four or five names on and gone – they are the people who have made the most impact in my networking’ (Participant 005).

The map represents the amount of networking activity necessary to create the network.

‘It makes you realise the amount of networking you had to do’ (Participant 005).

Participant (002) reflected on how the map represented both how he felt at the time and how much activity was involved in creating a network.

‘For me to start off from scratch... and to do all this again - I probably wouldn’t want to do it because even this paper – everything that I’ve put down on this paper now is looking very hectic and busy and unmanageable and that’s what probably what it felt like over the four years...it did feel like I was all over the place and so I think that has come out on the paper’ (Participant 002).

These quotes hint at the amount of activity which is very difficult to capture in social network analysis because much of it is unaccounted for in terms of the outcomes it achieves. The process is on-going and requires continuous effort with no way to predict at the outset which networking activities will prove worthwhile.

Another important element of map-making, in terms of understanding the process of constructing the network, is the intentionality in choosing the contents of the map. Participants did not attempt to name everyone they knew,

‘I’m tapping onto the people that I’ve proper interacted with – that I don’t just know them. I’ve been sitting here thinking I haven’t got many names on here but I’m not putting names down for names sake’ (Participant 005).

This was repeated by a number of participants which indicates that networks are not just about making connections as a quantitative exercise of knowing as many people as possible. There is a qualitative difference, expressed by the participants, between those people deemed part of their network and those that were not. This quality is difficult to account for in social network analysis where questions about the frequency of contact are often used to denote the relative importance (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). The degree of importance placed on the relationship by the participant was both complex and context dependent. These will be analysed in more detail and in their specific narrative contexts in the following chapters. What can be drawn from the transcripts and map-making exercise is the amount of time and energy needed to build the particular relationships which enable social capital to be exercised.

### ***Establishing and Maintaining Network Contacts***

The preliminary analysis of the transcripts showed that participants sourced their network contacts using a wide variety of methods and contexts which contrasts with the narrow contextual analysis found in the social capital

literature. In Putnam's (1993, 1995, 2000) work the focus is on associational activity and informal socialising. Coleman's (1988) study looks at schools and their surrounding communities made up of faith organisations and parent-teacher organisations. The variety of methods and contexts from which network members draw to establish contacts was further analysed to see if there are any particular patterns to this activity.

A list of the methods/contexts was collated and prepared for participants to verify in the second stage of the field work. The tick list is reproduced in Appendix 4 and the results are shown in Appendix 5a. This shows the breakdown in terms of whether the participant was freelance (out of a total of nine freelancers) or part of an institution or organisation. While there were some variance between the two groups these differences mirrored general patterns of usage. The frequency of usage was also split although this categorisation did not produce any significant differences. Table One below gives a summary of the methods/contexts used by both groups as a total and ranked in descending order

The preliminary analysis of transcripts also indicated that many practitioners were working outside the area. To verify the extent of this activity some categories were split into methods/contexts used either 'inside Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-Under-Lyme' or 'outside Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-Under-Lyme'. This differentiation responds to criticisms of the social capital literature

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Method/Context</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Method/Context</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	Introductions made without previous contact	20	22	Voluntary Organisations	15
2	Previous Projects Inside SOT+NUL	19	23	Research networks	15
3	One off Events Inside SOT+NUL	19	24	On-line General eg Facebook, Twitter, Youtube	15
4	Introductions made through other contacts within your network	19	25	Keele University	15
5	Funders – via an application process	19	26	Friends and Family	15
6	Cultural Development Teams/Performing Arts Services/Arts Development Officers	19	27	Media Platforms Inside SOT + NUL	14
7	Staffs University	18	28	Formal Learning Outside SOT + NUL	14
8	Professional Organisations	18	29	University Departments/People Outside SOT + NUL	13
9	Previous Projects Outside SOT + NUL	18	30	Shared location/spaces eg residents associations, live-work, parks	13
10	Online – Specific eg Creative Stoke, Pits and Potts, Blogs	18	31	Schools Inside SOT + NUL	13
11	Arts and Cult orgs outside SOT + NUL	18	32	Employment Outside SOT + NUL	13
12	Arts and Cult orgs Inside SOT + NUL	18	33	Youth Orgs Inside SOT + NUL	12
13	Social Events Outside SOT + NUL	17	34	Media Platforms Outside SOT + NUL	12
14	Social Events Inside SOT + NUL	17	35	Council Departments/People (County/City/District/Borough etc)	12
15	One off Events Outside SOT + NUL	17	36	Schools Outside SOT + NUL	10
16	Employment Inside SOT + NUL	17	37	Elected Members	9
17	Shared Interest groups/Shared Purpose Groups eg open-mic nights	16	38	Council Leaders/Portfolio Holders/Cabinet Members	9
18	Formal Learning Inside SOT + NUL	16	39	Youth Orgs Outside SOT + NUL	7
19	Economic Development/General Funding officers/Regen Departments	16	40	Faith Organisations	6
20	Commercial Organisations (eg Chambers of Commerce, Trade groups)	16	41	Political organisations	5
21	Charitable Organisations	16			

**Table 1 Summary of network method/context usage**



presented in Chapter One where flows of social capital between areas cannot be accommodated by an understanding of space as a container (Cannone, 2009; Häkli, 2009)

With regard to where activities take place, the results show that there is considerable activity outside the area. For institutions/organisations the split was, inside the area 55% to outside the area 45% [this indicates the use of a method/context either inside or outside as a percentage of the total number of uses for that category]. For freelancers the split was similar, inside 57% to outside 43%. These results require further analysis to understand what motivates this activity, as it takes more effort to network outside the area and involves an increase in cost and time when activities are site-specific e.g. attending an event. This is followed up in Chapter Six in terms of the availability of opportunities inside the case study area and as an issue of the value that locally produced work is being given by local decision makers.

At the top of the table is 'introductions made without previous contact or cold calling'. This does not figure in any of the theoretical explanations for social capital and points to an oversight in social network analysis which places importance on contacts already in the network. The next eleven categories are instrumental methods/contexts in that they refer to specific activities or places. These are reported because there is an instrumental use or pay-off. The

majority of the methods and contexts mentioned by participants were of this nature and this highlights an intrinsic difficulty with collecting this kind of information. Activities go un-reported when they were not used for a specific outcome but these activities may have resulted in social capital being exercised. These activities and contexts are captured in part by the categories 'social events', 'friends and family' and 'chance encounters' but this list is not exhaustive.

The problem is also associated with the use of social capital to mean a number of differently defined phenomena: individual social capital (Bourdieu, 1986); household social capital (Coleman, 1988); and community, regional or national social capital (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). This makes these categories of social capital arbitrary unless the analysis combines the network method or context with the mobilisation of resources and the outcome i.e. to what end was the social capital exercised. The combination of context and agency is necessary to understand how social capital is exercised. This will be elaborated through the narratives presented in the following three chapters. Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) gives prominence to associational activity and generalised informal social activity as proxy measures of community social capital. There is nothing to support those claims in this network. The results show that social events inside and outside the area, shared interest groups, charitable organisations and voluntary organisations are used but they do not figure in the most used methods/contexts. Chance encounters are used by 16

out of 30 participants which in some way supports Jacobs' (1961/93) inclusion of informal 'sidewalk' contacts between strangers. Coleman's (1988) work in an educational setting places importance on faith organisations and parent-teacher associations. Again, there is no evidence of their importance in this network which is unsurprising when the outcome of educational achievement is absent. This highlights the difficulty in making any claims for a particular method or context without looking at the intended outcome.

The high use of council officers with a cultural remit and funding organisations points to the importance of institutional power for mobilising resources (North, 1990; Rothstein, 2005; Skocpol, 1995; Skocpol *et al.*, 2000). As an institutional player, Staffordshire University is placed high in the table with participants also using Keele University but to a lesser extent. The narratives highlight a number of different ways in which relationships with institutional players both enable and constrain the mobilisation of resources which will be explored further in Chapters Six and Seven. The usage of links from project-based work both inside and outside the area is higher than links from past employment. This indicates the importance of project-based work within the cultural and creative sector which is often overlooked in social network analysis focusing on inter- and intra-firm networks (Watson, 2012).

The total usage for both groups of 'elected members' and 'political organisations' are some of the least used methods; ranked 37<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup>. The

lower engagement with political groups and representatives might be indicative of a wider network issue connected to the accusations of political corruption referred to in the description of the case study area. Given the importance both Jacobs (1961/93) and Woolcock (2001) place on linking connections to political power this may have an effect on resource mobilisation. This will be taken up further in Chapter Six in terms of strategic development. It also corresponds to findings presented in the next section in terms of strategic resources which are sought by network members but not found.

Another category appearing in the bottom of the table is the use of 'shared space'. This could indicate a number of different issues; a lack in quantity of shared space; a lack in quality of shared space; a resistance to using shared space; or wider spatial issue for example poor transport links. Jacobs (1961/93) highlights the importance of the physical environment for providing opportunities for people to make informal contacts and to enable cross-use. These issues will be explored further in Chapter Seven which looks at Stoke-on-Trent as a unique city configuration.

As crude quantitative indicators the results show possible avenues of exploration but the qualitative importance of different methods and contexts to different people is not revealed. For example the experience of participants in dealing with funding associations and council officers varies from positive collaboration resulting in the enablement of outcomes, to extreme frustration

where resources are not accessed and the mediating relationships are negatively affected. It is the qualitative nature of these methods and contexts which need to be explored to understand how social capital is exercised and to what end.

### ***Understanding the Network***

In the process of creating a network map participants reflected on what their network meant to them and how they understood it both personally and as part of a wider organisation of people, organisations and spaces. The themes identified by participants that came up repeatedly will be explored further in the narrative analysis. The following quotes show how different participants recognise and understand their networks as a collection of complex processes, actions, choices and outcomes.

The sampling method employed in the research presupposes that some network members would know each other and that there would be overlaps, otherwise there would be no discernible network. However, the degree of this overlap and the degree to which members know or are in relationship with each other is a defining characteristic of this particular network.

‘I’m looking at all of these people on here now and I think pretty much everybody knows everybody else – I can’t actually see many people who don’t know at least one other person in these other groups’ (Participant 008).

The next quote identifies the process by which this happens,

‘It’s like everybody knows everybody...and because you go to other peoples projects and you’re working on joint projects you tend to meet people as you are going through - and you remember - and when your paths cross again it’s just weird how it all just crosses again’ (Participant 024).

The next participant reflects on how things happen in practice as a non-linear process,

‘I know it was good to write it out actually – I think this shows how – because you don’t sort of think – you try and think of things in a linear way don’t you - and actually things don’t happen linearly’ (Participant 004).

The impression given by these quotes is the essential criss-crossing, flow of network-making and as before, the amount of activity that is involved.

Particular to this network is the feeling that everybody knows everybody else which comes up in the narratives that follow as both a positive and negative factor in enabling resources. For some it means connection for others it means exclusion because sometimes knowing people is not enough for the exercise of social capital or the achievement of goals. At the same time a number of participants alluded to a difficulty in finding people and how networking activity was needed just to find out what was going on,

‘Finding everyone is the difficult thing – what’s striking is how much – under the radar activity there is – but it’s not particularly connected up – in a way perhaps there’s no reason why it ought to be’ (Participant 020).

The amount of networking is also an interesting element which participants recognise in terms of how both the amount and type of connections work together across space,

‘It doesn’t really come from any one place ...it’s a kind of – you know one person, it might not be just knowing that person that makes the difference but knowing then several people that are connected to or with people that you start – it’s once you’ve got the network spread out a little bit that you really start to connect’ (Participant 015).

This relates to qualitative nuances in how the network is understood; where the network comes from; how people are connected; and how the network is configured spatially. These inter-acting processes infer there are emerging qualities that cannot be reduced to their component parts. Similarly, a process of becoming is evoked,

‘I think that’s the way you have connections with people... you go onto a network and then you become a network’ (Participant 005).

The participants also recognise that there is a balance between networking and actually producing work,.

‘I find it counter-productive to try and get involved with too many people – because you never end up doing any work ... you know some people just network and network and network – perhaps they make money out of that but I’m not just interested in making money – I’m interested in making something. I’m interested in making films and so you actually have to put some work – you have to sit at your desk and do the work sometimes’ (Participant 022).

These participants express the idea that after a certain amount of activity the nature of these relationships change and this points to the importance of time as a contextual issue, highlighted by Jacobs (1961/1993) and to a lesser

degree by Putnam (1993) in his study of Italy. The last quote indicates that there is an opportunity cost to networking and a choice to be made about how much networking activity is undertaken. This indicates that networking is instrumental, it's not an end in itself and it needs to be productive. One participant relates this directly to the investment made in networks,

'I think that they [networks] are just about investment – they're just about actually giving yourself the time to invest in them ...and just investing in the time – your own resource and actually allowing there to be no agenda when we go to these meetings is quite – there's the flexibility for all this to click into place' (Participant 004).

The investment however is not measured solely by economic pay-offs. As the following two quotes and the next section on resources show, non-economic motives and resources are sought and found which make networking worthwhile to the participants. The following two participants drew attention to the value of belonging to a group and the peer support it offers in difficult times,

'There's not many people in life who just want to live a solitary life do they? They want to have a connection – they want to have a network – you want to have a place where you feel you belong to something. And that's what it's all about isn't it – you find a group of people who are into the same sort of things as you and you make a connection and you make things happen – even if it's just going the pub. (laughs) but you do something together – collectively – either put on an exhibition or do an event or start a choir or whatever you want to do' (Participant 024).

'It's just... thank God there's somebody else to share the woes with – you know somebody else that really appreciates just how down to the knuckle it gets. And that's an important part of a creative network as much as anything – just having a bit of peer support – whether or not you work in a professional capacity - is just knowing that there are other people – kind of striving for a similar thing to you' (Participant 008).

The importance of place belonging is found in Schaefer-McDaniel's (2004) work on young people. The importance of shared goals mentioned in the last quote



aligns with Putnam's (1993, 1995, 2000) work and later work undertaken in education (Field, 2003). Further exploration is needed to understand what goals are shared and by whom in order to understand whether there is a level of consensus across the network or if goals are contested. This is drawn out in the narrative analysis in the next three chapters.

The prevalence of project work in the cultural and creative sector requires a different approach to resourcing and networking where reputation is critical for selecting project partners (Blair, 2001). As projects are repeated 'project ecologies' form over time which inter-connect firms, organisations, individuals, technologies and spaces (Grabher, 2001, 2002). This means that network actors build reputations and are known to each other through previous collaborations. This is important when new projects arise for which certain skills are sought. One participant reflected on how this manifests in their network,

'I work a lot on personalities and you know if I like somebody and I like their work then somehow I get back to them or involve them in something that I'm doing' (Participant 019).

This next quote comes from an institutional actor,

'And I do know that the best systems that work for the role that I am trying to do are the ones where you have a slight friendship combined with some previous history together where you've managed to work and broker something that's produced a positive outcome. But that means you've got to have those individuals really – I'm restrained sometimes on how I do that or who I do it with' (Participant 030).

The condition for this way of working is having certain people already in your network. These project ecologies are beneficial to the players, in terms of

lowering search costs, reducing the risk of failure and by-passing the more time-intensive trust-building exercises that would be normal in continuous employment (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1998; Grabher, 2001, 2002, 2004; Staber, 2004). However, restraints are put on institutional players in terms of whom they can work with, as indicated by Participant (030). This theme is repeated in the narratives exposing a tension which occurs when self-sustaining project ecologies become impenetrable to new entrants. For institutional players in the public sector, there is a tension between supporting local practitioners, developing new talent, and bringing in fresh perspectives by sourcing from outside. These are in addition to the legal frameworks which control public procurement.

The recent scholarship from economic geography on new media and the creative industries has contributed to our understanding of project-based work although more is needed to understand the social, cultural and political dimensions at the micro-level (Watson, 2012). This case study comprises of a network of individuals, organisations and institutions with very different motivations and goals: economic profit; community development; social impact and return; public service; and artistic production and innovation. These different motivations are contested in the competition for resources. The themed narratives presented in Chapters Five to Eight will address how the network operates in context and how actors affect and are effected by the exercise of social capital.

## Resources

This section sets the scene(s) for the narrative analysis in terms of the resources which participants sought from their networked relationships. While it is certain that the composition of resource requirements will be different for each participant the purpose here is to understand which resources were prioritised across the network. These general patterns, like those found in the network characteristics above, are used to inform and support the thematic directions of the narrative analysis.

The full results of the member checking exercise in Stage Two can be found in Appendix 5b which gives the resources which were prioritised and either accessed, accessed but not in sufficient supply, or not accessed. Table Two below, represents the most frequent responses i.e. resources prioritised by three participants or more. The resources are categorised as 'material' (including human resources), 'informal/expressed', and 'institutional'. These categories are quite fluid and participants were given opportunities to question the categories before and during the group exercise. The purpose of the exercise is twofold: first to understand which resources were most in demand, and second to gauge whether or not the demanded resources were found in sufficient supply. The column on the left represents the resources that were both prioritised and were found in sufficient supply. Those that were prioritised but not found in sufficient supply or not found at all are grouped together in the

Supplied		Material Resources	Insufficient Supply	
I/O	F		I/O	F
3		Funding	2	2
		Paid opportunities	1	4
	1	Long-term opportunities (3+ years)	3	4
		Medium-term opportunities (1-3 years)	1	3
4	3	Creative Collaborators		1
6		Project Partners		
		Audience	2	2
		<b>Expressed/Informal Resources</b>		
3	6	Ideas		
4	5	Enthusiasm		
2	6	Friendship		
1	2	Advocacy		1
		<b>Institutional/Formal</b>		
1		Vision	1	4
1		Strategic direction	1	2
		Formal support - financial	1	2
2	3	Formal support – non-financial		
2		Scale to deliver larger projects		4
		Risk-taking	1	5

**Table 2: Demand and supply of network resources (I/O – Institutions/Organisations F- Freelancers**

right hand column. Where a category has three or more responses in one column but also responses in the opposite column this is shown as it indicates a possible conflict. The category 'Funding' is such an example where three

participants have categorised it as an important resource which they have found but four others haven't found enough of it. This indicates a consensus on funding being an important resource but differences in its availability to different members. 'Scale to deliver larger projects' is another such category. This will be explored in terms of the strategies employed by different actors in Chapters Five and Six.

The largest grouping of demanded resources supplied by the network is in the 'expressed/informal' category where ideas, enthusiasm and friendship have been picked by both institutions/organisations and freelancers. In the 'material' category the demanded resources which the network supplies relate to the expressed resources by being human resources, i.e. creative collaborators and project partners. This represents a link between what is expressed and who is expressing it. In the 'institutional' category the most important found resource was non-financial, formal support. This category relates to support which formally validates the practitioners' activities for example the promotion of a project through institutional channels. Again this relates to the importance of support as an expressed resource which cannot be accounted for in purely financial or economic terms but is deemed important to participants.

Those resources which were deemed important and either not found in sufficient supply or not found at all, are located across both the 'material' and the 'institutional' categories although the fluidity of the groupings must be taken

into consideration. The financial resources which are lacking include, 'funding', 'paid opportunities', and 'formal support – financial'. Although the first two of these are categorised as 'material' resources they could potentially come from institutional sources. Similarly, the reported lack of 'audience' as a 'material' resource in terms of revenue potential can also be seen within an institutional remit for the cultural development of audiences in an area which has low participation rates. These groupings, prioritised from a long list of potential resources, indicate a pattern of insufficient supply of material/financial resources which also emerged in the narrative themes. The fluidity of categories points to a question which will be further elaborated in Chapters Five and Six regarding where participants source resources. This requires the narrative detail of both context and agency in order to uncover these practices.

'Long-term opportunities of more than three years' duration were chosen the most times as lacking by both institutions/organisations and freelancers. This relates to the narrative theme of 'stop-start', presented in Chapter Six, where activities are undertaken on a project by project basis and many of these are very short-term, lasting only a matter of days or weeks. The issue of duration and temporal orientation are linked through the understanding and construction of context which is addressed in each of the narrative themes.

The institutional resources which were in insufficient supply, 'vision', 'strategic direction', 'risk-taking' and 'scale', point to a strategic issue which also emerged

in the narrative theme, 'strategic vacuum'. These institutional deficiencies may also explain the low usage of network methods/contexts which connect practitioners to political parties, council members and higher ranking officers. The issue of 'capacity trust' (Ettlinger, 2003) which defines one party's confidence in another party to do a particular job will be explored in Chapter Six in the context of a perceived 'strategy vacuum'.

The patterns of resource allocation found in this exercise are taken as indicators of larger processes of enablement or constraint. Resources are not ends in themselves so the purpose of the exercise is to understand both the network and the networked resources as elements of a system which is dynamically organising, and always in the making. This follows Allen's (2003) caution against conflating resources with power. It is also necessary to look for the 'unaverage' (Jacobs, 1961/93) and the 'othered' categories (Law, 2004) which point to resources which are taken-for-granted or less obvious. A systemic approach looks at emergent effects which cannot be determined by looking at the individual parts. This is suggested in the narrative theme of 'silence', presented in Chapter Six, where a need to protect oneself is expressed. This is not easily defined as a resource or isolated as a measureable variable. Instead it is a systemic effect which is dependent on the actions of a number of network members. The aim then is to understand systemically how actors looking for resources enable or constrain the exercise of social capital in the pursuit of goals. The first step has been to understand

how the network is constructed and what resources are sought to gain some initial insights into the particularities of the case study. The next three chapters will present the six narrative themes which emerged from the data.



## Chapter 5 Making it Happen

### *The six narrative themes*

The preliminary analysis presented in Chapter Four sets the scene by introducing two essential components for exercising social capital: the existence of a network with particular characteristics, and the demand and supply of networked resources. In the next three chapters, context and agency are linked through narrative constructions illustrating how the exercise of social capital is enabled or constrained in practice. The transcripts were first analysed for narrative constructions which illustrated how the exercise of social capital was either enabled or constrained by mediating relationships. From these narrative selections six themes emerged: 'self-sufficiency', 'the ideal', 'stop-start', 'strategy vacuum', 'silence', and 'city/towns'. The six themed narratives are representative across the network and each transcript contained a median of three out of the six possible narratives (Appendix 8 shows a matrix of narrative presence across the transcripts).

Following Boje (2006) each narrative theme is read as part of a wider system where the actions in one narrative are seen as affecting the actions taken in another. The selection of texts is based on the degree to which they illustrate how mediating relations affect the exercise of social capital and how this relates

to the wider system. The narratives have been placed in three groupings; this chapter looks at relationships which enable the exercise of social capital expressed in the 'self-sufficiency' and 'ideal' narratives. In Chapter Six, three narratives are grouped around relationships that constrain action, 'stop-start', 'strategy vacuum' and 'silence'. Chapter Eight explores the 'city/towns' narrative which contains a mix of constraining and enabling relationships relating to particular contextual constructions of space, place, and city. Examples from a range of participants were taken with the objective of showing how different narratives were constructed and contested within the network. As the individual narratives were very long it was not feasible to re-produce the texts in full, therefore selections were chosen and presented with minimal editing. Some editing has been required to facilitate comprehension. There are also times when participants struggle to articulate a feeling or experience and the intention is not to eliminate these speech acts but rather to capture how the texts are spoken and convey this in its raw state, as a moment of tension for the narrator and audience.

Chapter One demonstrated how the dominant social capital theories erase context, agency, and the specificities of real world practice. The first task then is to analyse in what context the action is taking place, what is happening within the network, and for what purpose. Each narrative is analysed in terms of three elements; the network conditions and context; the agency of the networked actors; and the outcomes achieved. Once this is in place, and following Allen

(2003, 2004, 2011), the modalities and spatialities of exercised social capital will be analysed in terms of how power is mediated through relationships and the extension and reach of the network in relation to the case study area.

The narrative selections are presented in numbered boxes. While it was the intention to keep the narratives as whole as possible the need for editing was necessary to maintain a focus on the exercise of social capital and to keep within the word limits of the thesis.

The following symbols are used:

(XXX) : participant identifier

(000) : researcher identifier

- : breaks up the sentence for ease of comprehension

~ : pause of more than 2 seconds

... : words removed from the same narrative passage

// : break in narrative

() : other verbal sounds – laughs, sighs etc

[] : Words added by author for additional context or confidentiality.

## **Self-Sufficiency**

In Box 1 ‘Building something together’, the narrator emphasises the importance of the ‘peopleness’ and the ‘personalness’ of the work they do. This orientation

is expressed in terms of what they want to achieve, the people they work with and how they collaborate with people inside and outside their network.

### **Box 1 Building something together**

[Referring to a difficult time for the organisation]

It brought it home to us that it wasn't just about being professional people it was about the peopleness of it – it was about the personalness of the work that you do.

//

We're not held back by that notion of local – what we are concerned with is that we build some ambition and we build some experience and we build some vocabulary with people locally and that's one of the key things – because what we are very worried about is that people have got quite limited horizons living here and because there isn't that big ... the flow is only out – the flow is just to leave, the flow isn't – I go out, I go do stuff and I come back - and I think that's been our strength and the strength of some of the other people that you've already interviewed... just that being somewhere else and doing some other stuff is just really, really important. And meeting other people and bringing them in – and there's nothing wrong with that and we think that's all great. It just has to keep flowing otherwise you just become a little island of people with no friends and nobody to look after you when bad things happen. And no energy to do things when your council falls apart or they won't talk to you forever.

//

We never liked working with people in isolation so another thing that happened to us more recently was we started to do projects funded through the [Funder Name] programme. So we now have just done [Project Name] which is a seven country partnership...What [Funder Name] do is they send you – you can apply to go on a 'get together' in some European city and you go there and you go 'I'm looking for a partner' – everybody's looking for partners and you just kind of squidge together with people who you like and people who interest you and you get on with and you think – 'let's do a project woo hoo' - and you build yourselves a programme which lasts a couple of years and you do lots of exchanges and go to see them and they come to see you and you are doing something all the time.

//

We never want all the people we work with to work in isolation and we – again the point of being a mass – and the point of being a company...is that we – what's the word – we can join up – we're the glue – so if the work is about anything on a global sense it's about sticking people together and giving reasons for people to stick together and giving people shared history so that

they can stick together rather than everybody sitting in a fractured heap bickering and fighting – so on a very sort of global level I suppose that’s what the work’s about.

*Participant (021)*

In Box 2 the narrator talks very specifically about survival and having the means to nurture and sustain oneself and the community in very real terms. This raises the challenges that the organisation faces in the current climate, in the case study area particularly, and as artists who need to make a living from their work. The story links what is happening in the institutional environment and the impact that has in terms of how the organisation has had to adapt by being self-sufficient. The potential problems this causes for the organisation are also highlighted in terms of communication and linkages to political actors and institutions.

### **Box 2 Self-sufficiency – survival as an artist**

I got very driven about the whole notion of how people are sustaining themselves – it’s interesting, we had a conversation with [Name] as part of her [Project]...She said to us – ‘oh difficult times are coming and ...what if Arts Council doesn’t come up with the goods?... And how will you put bread on the table?’ And we just went, ‘Well we’ll make our own bread’ and we’ve just taken that rather literally really (laughs). I just got obsessed by how can you help yourself? How can you – you can’t just sit around and wait for people to do things for you and that’s the big lesson of living somewhere like here – the other big lesson is ‘Why not?’ ...And in a way, the danger of that is that we are completely – we completely forget to communicate with the city and we completely forget to communicate with [Council] because they’ve never been able to help us. So why do we waste our time going to do anything for them, or with them, or try to talk to them about anything - that probably makes us less politically successful than other people – like [Name] who remember to go and talk to the Cabinet. Wouldn’t even remotely remember to do that now.

//

I mean in my world, people would be able to have their hands on, not just the means of production – you know plates – who gives a shit about that, but actually being able to feed

themselves to nurture their families and to look after one another, and that's what that work's about – the question is how we make money out of that? How we survive as artists because this is our job – we don't have another job – there isn't some other lurking job that I'm about to bob off and do because that would be fine – this is what I do and making this work and finding a way through this to make a living – I don't think that's an unreasonable notion really.

*Participant (021)*

The final excerpt in Box 3 is included to illustrate how the meaning of 'self-sufficiency' is being influenced by the context. This shows how the process of becoming self-sufficient has evolved over time and has been made as a direct result of actions that were taken in order to mobilise resources.

### **Box 3 Self-sufficiency – giving up asking for things and 'jam tomorrow'**

(000) I just get a feeling that you - because you've been doing this a long time and you know how to do it, that there isn't anything particular that you are looking for from outside in order to be able to do what you want to do. Is that fair?

(021) That sounds like, 'oh I don't need anything'.

(000) No, no – it's not meant like that.

(021) And that's not true.

(000) It's meant like, you find what you need and you bring it in.

(021) And I think the danger of that is that we get too good at that and we forget – as I said before – we forget to either bring maybe local authorities along with us or bring other people along with us, just because we're good at getting on with stuff and we're good at making things happen. So this – it would have been a lot easier to do some of these shows if we'd had more support – just basic stuff from the [council] – so for example ...[Name of Project] that's happening at the [council owned place] because I think that's how the [council] are going to be able to support it ... and we're making it as easy as possible for them to help us – whereas we looked long and hard for venues for shows and performances and things to do – we've give up asking for things. It sounds awful but we've stopped asking for things – because it's been such a waste of time and energy and I just think... for things to be different – we'd have to have a big mental shift and then we'd have to see – I now feel like I'm counselling people with relationship issues – you'd have to see things be different ...I'd have to see something else happen to actually believe that it's not just jam tomorrow...You just can't keep resourcing things.

*Participant (021)*

## ***Conditions and Context***

The conditions and contexts in which the 'self-sufficiency' narrative operates are referred to in terms of how the organisation works and in considering the wider environment. The 'peopleness' and the 'personalness' of the work allows the organisation to be get by in hard times and when institutional resources cannot be accessed due to problems within the council. The people factor comes in again when choosing partners to collaborate with, 'people who interest you and you get on with.' The network of people that supports the organisation is referred to as the friends needed to get by. These connections are maintained and nurtured by the organisation so that they do not find themselves working in isolation. This is the condition or context they wish to avoid: being isolated; being fractured; bickering or fighting. The point of being a 'mass', which the narrator explained earlier in the interview, was a reason for incorporating as a company. This allows them to be the 'glue' for other people to stick to. This idea of joining up runs through the narrative which gives a sense of the importance of the relationships as a pre-cursor for making things happen and through which ideas and resources can flow both out of the organisation and back into the organisation and the community.

In terms of the wider environment there is mention of the institutional context and the geographic location. The 'big lesson to living somewhere like here' refers to the ability to look after yourself without the expectation of outside help.

The context in which the organisation finds itself influences what they can do and how they approach their goals. Repeated requests for help from institutional actors, such as the local councils, have failed and over time this option has been given up as a 'waste of time and energy'. The capacity of the institutional actor to mobilise resources is questioned. This may indicate a number of problems: 'capacity trust' (Ettlinger, 2003) which is based on the competences and abilities of a partner to co-operate; reputation (Blair, 2001) in terms of a judgement based on previous history; or institutional trust where actors no longer expect those in authority to carry out their duties in a fair and equitable manner i.e. without corruption (Rothstein, 2005). When the council 'falls apart' and 'stops talking' to its partners then it is understandable that further collaboration will be affected by this experience. This shared history is important in the relationship as future decisions will be made on the basis of past experiences. These experiences and consequent decisions can be difficult to reverse, as described by the narrator, 'I'd have to see something else happen to actually believe that it's not just 'jam tomorrow'. 'Jam tomorrow' refers to empty promises where organisations have been told 'there will be jam tomorrow' but tomorrow never comes.

These beliefs and experiences form the context in which decisions are being made and actions taken. What is made clear in Box 3 is that the local institutional context would be better if they could get the help they needed in the way they wanted it. This suggests the kind of communication issues Jacobs



(1961/93) highlighted in her analysis of social capital regarding the political flow of resources and information between decision-makers. The actions the organisation takes are as a result of their experiences over time which again points to Jacobs' emphasis on the importance of the long term for social interactions to accumulate and develop (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985). The wider context in which this is set is indicated with reference to the Arts Council which announced a cut of 29.6% in 2012 (Arts Council England website). The narrative is set in a context of public sector funding cuts affecting both the local authority and other quasi-governmental organisations.

### ***Agency and Resources***

The specific actions the organisation takes to achieve its goals include: going out to other places and coming back in; meeting other people and bringing them in; looking for partners; building a programme; joining up and sticking people together; exchanging with partners; and doing something all the time. The narrator also mentions actions which are avoided: sitting around and waiting; wasting time and energy on asking for things; bickering and fighting. Together these actions enable the flow of resources through the mediating relationships. This could be the flow of funding to the organisation, the flow of resources between the partners, and the flow of resources out to the wider community with which they are working. The self-sufficiency narrative is one of mediating relationships which are purposefully built to enable resources to flow and

outcomes to be achieved. The processes involved occur over time and will be dependent on many contextual factors. The organisation has built up experience, skills, and knowledge in navigating these processes so that they understand where and how to look for partners and resources. This has been critical to their success and their strength as an organisation. They have become self-sufficient through practice and where possible creating the conditions which enable them to act. This is the case when there are barriers to unlocking institutional resources. The organisation enables the council to help them in the way that the council find easiest i.e. giving them access to a building.

The importance of agency, and the actual behaviour and practice of network partners is highlighted in Box 3 where the narrator says that for beliefs to change it would be necessary to 'see something else happen'. It implies that the existence of a network connection is not enough in itself or the promises of future resource allocation. There has to be demonstrable evidence that something has changed. These experiences influence future actions and therefore time, context, and memory are inherent in agency in terms of how actors choose to exercise social capital for particular outcomes.

## ***Outcomes and Goals***

The narrator states the organisation's aim is to build 'ambition', 'experience', and 'vocabulary' with people locally 'to give them reasons to stick together'.

Referring to a 'global sense' of the work, the goals go beyond the outcome of a single project or collaboration. This global view informs their choice to be a 'mass' and is integral to their process of joining people up through their collaborations and bringing ideas, resources, and people back into the community. For this activity to succeed, it must also provide them with a living for their work as artists and this is understood as 'not an unreasonable notion'. As such, survival as artists and sustainability as an organisation are embedded in their goals. This contrasts with the narratives presented in Chapter Six where sustainability and a shared sense of purpose are felt as problematic. The narrator highlights the potential downfalls of being, 'good at getting on with stuff and good at making things happen' in terms of not bringing other people with them or communicating successfully with political actors. Although the organisation has succeeded, their success is not a self-evident process, in that if you do 'x' (network) you get 'y' (successful collaborations). Their continued survival is better understood as a feat of persistence, skill, and passion rather than an exercise of join-the-dots. What it demonstrates is one approach to enabling the exercise of social capital given the context with which the organisation is faced.

## The Ideal

The 'ideal narrative' describes how one project succeeded through a network of local, regional, and national collaboration. The larger transcript contained several similar examples of projects which followed this successful pattern. The demand for work comes from outside the organisation and following a critical project development phase the project achieves resonance at the local, regional, and national levels. The organisation has had sustained success in achieving national accolades and being contracted and funded by outside organisations requesting their work. This contrasts with the more common funding model where an individual or organisation has an idea for a project and then seeks funding. The label 'ideal' was given to this narrative because there is no evidence of a constraint which has affected the achievement of the shared goal.

### Box 4 'Getting the right kind of relationships in place'

It was a massive thing called [Project Name] and again it related to the domestic violence work. A few years back I'd done a piece of work in Stoke, it was with a group of Asian girls who contacted the [Organisation] – they were all at college and they were part of something called BME [Black and Minority Ethnic] – [Project Name]... and we did a piece with them called [Project Name] ...and they called and they said, 'We want to do something about what it's like to be a young Asian growing up in Stoke-on-Trent – a young Asian female. We get loads of grief, ever since September 11<sup>th</sup> and it's really hard for us – people don't really understand what it is to be a Muslim – they think that we are just some kind of sad women who are bossed around by men or they think that we are terrorists.' So we created a piece that was based around their poetry. And it won a regional Global Ethics Award...so I said, 'OK – it's amazing what you've achieved...if you were going to do anything else what would you want to do?' And they said

that they wanted to do something about honour violence and forced marriage. I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. So they explained...We started exploring a piece called, 'Four Weddings and an Honour Killing' ...Now it took me from that project up until 2009 I think it was – yeah it was 2009 to get the right kind of relationships in place in the community – with organisations including the police, housing and everybody else before we were in a position then to write...a bid to the Forced Marriage Unit – which is a combination of the Home Office and the Foreign Commonwealth Office ...Again all of these other partners – Stoke, Newcastle, East Stafford Borough Council, Police the Domestic Violence Team all supported us and put match funding towards us achieving a quite significant bid which was to create a piece of documentary theatre which toured all over and ...to have a National Conference held here – which brought frontline people up and the Home Office went for it ... I can't remember exactly how much money – but with all the combined money it meant that we could employ the actors, design the delegate packs and it was absolutely amazing because ...we got [the] Chief Crown Prosecutor for the UK, and [the] woman who set up Carmen Nirvana which is a big refuge in Derby and other places which are specifically for women escaping from Forced Marriage and Honour Violence. And... from the Metropolitan Police ... the lead detective investigating the first recognised honour killing in the UK – so those three came up and we had 200 delegates who were frontline workers from the police, social services, education, and a team from the Forced Marriage Unit also came. So as well as the launch of the play – we had the experts in the field who were delivering workshops ...there was an evaluation and we got I think it was something like 160 evaluations back out which is amazing... So all but two said that they felt better placed and better informed to deal with forced marriage and honour based violence. This piece then toured again and during the tour Refuge went out with us which was great ... so they were on the ground and as a consequence of that first tour – eight forced marriage orders were taken out on behalf of young women. [the detective from the Metropolitan Police] said, 'The [Organisation] is saving lives' ...there had been none up to date – and it was the highest across the UK as a direct result. There were two young Afghani girls who saw the play but whose friend didn't see the play – but those girls went and spoke to their friends and got the support to them – and they wrote a letter to the theatre and said – 'Please can you thank the actors – marriages had been organised for us this summer and we didn't know there was anything that we could do about it.'

*Participant (028)*

In Box 5 the importance of collaboration is stressed again, in relation to the wider community and how these relationships enable the flow of funding and expertise to the project.

### **Box 5 'Proper work in the community'**

...like [Project Name] which was a big one – it started off with the girls but I knew that there was no way I was going to do an issue-based thing like that without doing some proper work in the community – and then realised – ok so you raise awareness and they leave home – who's going to help them? Where are they going to go? They need housing? We need the police to be aware.

(000) It's very integrated isn't it, the way that you work?

(028) So we start off with – round a table like this and then we talk about who's missing - who do we need in there and by pulling people together – one you make sure that it's exciting and people are interested and they will lend their support by giving you ways in and helping you out. And giving you pointers – because you know there are people on the ground much more than we are – so we can use their expertise and their way in. And then each of them – if they've got a little pot or they hear about something - then the opportunity ... to start with nothing but then bit by bit you pull it in. And also when you are looking at funding – when you can demonstrate that there are all these other people that are interested in supporting it in different ways – that looks much more robust.

(000) So you start with the collaboration?

(028) Always...It's about getting the right people around the table who want to make things happen and not letting money get in the way

*Participant (028)*

### ***Conditions and Context***

The conditions and context of 'the ideal' narrative start with a shared history of collaboration and success from previous projects, in this case the BME women's group. This previous work had won accolades which can also be seen in a context of reputation building with both current and future collaborators (Blair, 2001). The narrator stresses the importance of embedding the projects in the community which required relationships and exchanges in

both directions. Several times in the interview the narrator made this point of not wanting projects to be 'hit and run' where aspirations would be lifted but only for the length of the project. The narrator refers repeatedly to the other organisations and people needed to make the collaboration a success and the 'right kind of relationships' as a starting condition. What is also part of the context is an appreciation that these processes take time and cannot be rushed and the project had to wait until these relationships were in place. This was a condition in terms of sourcing the necessary inputs to the project and the scale of the project. Time was needed to build the relationships that informed the activities and were instrumental in sourcing funding. Other conditions relating to the project are given as 'excitement' and 'interest' and how this is connected to the willingness of partners to get involved.

The issues of forced marriage and honour killing are seen first in the local context where Asian women growing up in Stoke-on-Trent identify the problems they face and want to do something about it. The fact that other organisations recognise the significance of these issues is an important condition for the project. The issue is recognised by the Home Office, the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Forced Marriage Unit who can facilitate delivery organisations to come up with creative responses to policy. Placing the project within the wider context allows the organisation to gain support from organisations outside the local area and to make links to political institutions with much bigger resources. Without these political linkages the project would

not have been able to scale up to the national level. This scaling up of resources and power mirrors the socio-spatial processes Jacobs identified as being critical for communities wishing to draw down assistance in times of need (Jacobs, 1961/93).

### ***Agency and Resources***

There are two main groups of activities described in the narrative, the first involves the building of relationships and securing of funds to enable the project to happen, and the second is the subsequent delivery of the project in terms of the creative outputs and community participation. This first set of actions involve: responding to requests for collaboration from people external to the organisation; working in the community to find the necessary expertise; getting the right people round the table; questioning who needs to be there; pulling people together; hearing about and pulling in funding; and finding 'ways in'. This activity is summed up, 'getting the right people around the table who want to make things happen.' While the intention is clear, as in the self-sufficiency narrative, the results are not a foregone conclusion given the experience and skill required to deliver a project on this scale. What is also implied is that the people who want to make things happen have the capacity to do so. This proved to be the case with this project which won awards and is going to tour nationally for the third time in 2013.



In addition to the specific actions, the organisation has developed a strategic approach to financial constraints which informs how they develop their activities. Projects are initiated through collaboration around a particular issue which excites and interests project partners to get involved. The focus is on the activity and the collaboration, not on the funding in the first instance. What is also significant is the extension of the project into the community so that the creative work is never delivered in isolation. The involvement of the police, social services, housing, the justice system, advocacy groups, education services, the council, and community groups is key to both the project's wider impact and in making the project 'robust' in the eyes of funders. This allows the project to scale up by providing match funding from a diverse group of organisations simultaneously making the project more attractive to funding organisations that often require both partnership working and community empowerment. These strategic approaches inform the actions the organisation take and are repeated because of past experience and success. This strategic approach contrasts with the 'stop-start' and 'strategic vacuum' narrative explored in Chapter Six.

### ***Outcomes and Goals***

The wider organisational aims are to work with people who are marginalised so that their voices are heard, their issues are understood by other members of the community, and their value to society is recognised. These goals are integrated

into each project so that there is a consistent link between what the organisation is doing and what it hopes to achieve. This is not always the case in cultural organisations where goals can be more or less dominated by the current funding context which is apt to change. At the level of the project the positive evaluation of the conference demonstrates the achievement of the organisation's goals in terms of raising awareness and enabling frontline workers to support people affected by the issue. The point of doing 'proper work in the community' goes beyond raising awareness and seeks to enable those affected by the issues to find help. What is also evident is the sense that the organisation's goals are shared by their collaborators and by the people facing these issues. The work is successful in securing funding because the organisation responds to a need which benefits communities and addresses policy at local, regional, and national levels. If the organisation's goals were not translatable into policy outcomes then the projects would not be viable. The organisation's goals translate institutional funding criteria into deliverable projects for community groups with particular problems.

## **Modalities of Exercised Social Capital**

Allen (2003, 2004, 2011) conceives power as an effect of mediating relations that is always spatial. His approach to questioning the modalities and spatialities of power can be applied to social capital which is also mediated by

relations. Modalities refer to the practices by which power is deployed and the spatialities refer to the extension and reach of these practices into and through space. Allen (2003) asks 'how does power place us?' This thesis asks, 'how does social capital place us?' In the two narratives above, where resources are mobilised through enabling relationships, the modalities are what Allen (2003) refers to as 'associative'. These differ from the modalities signified by an unequal relationship where one party has power over the other and can mediate power effects through domination and force. The associative forms require actors to build relationships on the basis of equality and mutual respect as there is no legitimating capacity to force actors against their will. These modalities are therefore more negotiated and less institutional as they do not rely on rules of government or contractual enforcement. They are made through contact, discussion, and information exchange in various formats and settings.

In the first narrative social capital is facilitated through the institutional provision of a pre-funding 'get together'. Partners are free to make associations and find people who they want to work with and who want to work with them. This process appears to work on a modality of attraction where each partner 'likes' and 'gets on' with each other. The partners generate excitement and interest in working together and this motivates the relationship. This may be generated by previous history or reputation or in the moment of contact. Following the formation of the relationship the modality appears to switch to a continuous

negotiation and exchange of ideas and resources so that a programme can be built and then delivered. The 'personalness' of these relationships indicates that the modality of friendship informs these collaborations where organisations collaborate with the same individuals on a regular basis.

In the second narrative the process is similar where the action of 'pulling together' people 'who want to make things happen' relies on the collaborators having a specific interest in achieving a shared goal and generating excitement around this. The discussion 'around the table' leads to discussions about who needs to be involved and negotiations about how collaborators will contribute.

In the second narrative, the group is very diverse and while individuals are involved, many of the partners are named in terms of their institutional function, i.e. the police, social services, housing etc. The narrator makes reference to these organisations supporting the bid through match funding which is different to the partnership funding found in the first narrative. Match-funding is leveraged so that projects can scale up. For example, if a project raises £50,000 in matched funding then it can apply for £50,000 from the leading funder if the match is at a ratio of 1:1. This means that the more match-funding that is found the bigger the eventual bid will be.

Funding requirements often require a lead organisation to perform the managing, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation function on behalf of the other partners. These requirements can make collaborations more political in terms

of how resources and funding are shared between partners. However this was not mentioned by the narrator in terms of this project or elsewhere in the transcript. The key modalities here are persuasion and negotiation to facilitate the exchange of resources in the pursuit of a shared goal. The relationships appear to be more oriented towards the project than towards the organisation itself. In the first narrative the relationships indicate the first orientation is towards each other as they have to get on and like each other before deciding to work together.

Choosing collaborators is an assemblage of emotional, rational, embodied and remembered experiences (Ettlinger, 2003). The choice will be oriented toward the completion of future goals and actors are free to participate or not. The decision is influenced by the actors' ability to attract partners, generate enthusiasm, convince others of their ability to deliver, persuade organisations to allocate resources, and negotiate ways for this to happen. In these narratives of successful collaboration social capital is exercised through associative modalities. The contexts in which the organisations operate are part-given and part-determined by the actors so that their experiences within the network vary according to the strategies they choose.

## **Spatialities of Exercised Social Capital**

The spatial context in which the two narratives operate could be defined in terms of the organisations' physical location. This would fall into the trap of methodological territorialism found in both Coleman's (1988) and Putnam's work (1993, 1995, 2000) outlined in Chapter One. Both organisations are situated in Newcastle-under-Lyme, but their network connections connect across the case study area and out regionally, nationally, and internationally. As can be seen in the network maps (Appendices 3 and 6), political boundaries do not represent the real flow and exchange of resources between neighbouring organisations although they do have an effect on funding decisions. This was mentioned by both participants in the transcript and will be looked at in terms of the strategic implications in Chapter Six and the city's geography and identity in Chapter Seven.

In the first narrative the narrator makes a statement about space and place saying, 'we are not held back by that notion of local'. The statement refers to the previous passage in the transcript when the narrator was asked about their network connections outside the case study area. Being 'held back' is contrasted with their own approach which is about 'going out', 'being somewhere else' and bringing people and ideas back in. The language seems to answer an unspoken attack on this position when they say, 'there's nothing wrong with that'. The idea of being 'held back by a notion of local' refers to a

discourse which was repeated across the narratives. It relates to two conflicting desires among participants where people do not want to be isolationist or (seen to be) parochial, but at the same time there is an expressed resentment about the imposition of people and ideas that come from other places. This will be explored further in Chapters Six and Seven. In this instance the organisation states clearly that they value the input from outside and the benefits it brings to the organisation.

The organisation's spatial strategy is necessary if they are to avoid a context where the organisation becomes a 'little island of people'. This movement to other places, and the resultant flow, is deemed as an important safeguard for bad times. The narrator mentions elsewhere in the transcript, 'it's part of our DNA to be abroad and to travel and to see ourselves as part of a big international community.' This starts to connect identity with space and belonging which is constructed by the organisation through their practice which spans international borders. Their activity has a 'global sense' in terms of connecting and joining people together. The flow out and back is made possible through the collaborations which enable social capital to be exercised across political borders at different scales: local, regional, and national.

The self-sufficiency narrative also infers a spatial pattern where the organisation closes down some avenues of communication in terms of not bringing other people or the local authority along with them. It is described as an effect of

being good at making things happen and is a condition for self-sufficiency. As mentioned above this situation has evolved over time and as a result of remembered experiences where time and energy have been wasted on asking for help. As a result of finding ways to bring resources into the organisation and becoming self-sufficient there is less dependence on other organisations. This is in contrast with other organisations and individuals that have not reached that level of independence and are in the 'stop-start' cycle described in the next chapter. The focus is on bringing the resources into the organisation and managing the work through their own processes and partnerships. While the organisation is open to collaboration there is a sense that this activity is directed from within the organisation. This is echoed in the second narrative and indicates that the 'mass' or hub of the organisation provides a benefit which would not be experienced by freelancers.

The 'ideal' narrative is less explicit about the approach to space but the organisation is working across local, regional, and national boundaries in terms of both the content of the project and the collaborators that have been pulled in to work on it. That directional sense, of 'pulling in' gives the impression of a centre into which resources can flow. At the same time, work is done 'in the community' which infers going out to where the expertise can be found. The importance of being in one place physically is repeated as the need to get people 'round the table' implies that face-to-face contact is an important part of the process which Storper and Venables (2004) refer to as creating 'buzz'. The



work places the organisation nationally in terms of the tour and internationally in terms of the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the accolades coming from a 'Global Ethics Award'. The extension and reach of the social capital exercised responds to the context of the project and where the issue is being experienced and addressed. While the project starts with an issue which is felt by a minority group at the local level, it scales up to connect the organisation at regional, national, and international levels. This scaling up is enabled by the strategic approach of the organisation which takes the time to get the right relationships and funding in place before making contact with institutions working at national levels.

In both cases, the spatialities of the social capital are driven by the actions of the organisations. They are not accidental or haphazard and they are determined by the capacities of the actors setting out to achieve their goals in collaboration with others. The spatial extension of exercised social capital enables the organisations to pull in resources to deliver projects that they could not have achieved independently. These relationships are dynamic and are continuously in the making so that the context in which the organisations operate is not fixed. To some extent this confirms Jacobs' emphasis on the importance of openness and movement both within the city (Jacobs 1961/93) and in her later work looking at exchanges between cities and nations (Jacobs, 1970, 1985). The inference is that without this mobility and exchange these organisations would lose advantage.

The actions of the organisations show that they are both shaped by and are shaping the spaces and contexts in which they operate. In this way the exercise of social capital is placing them differently depending on the goals and projects they are working towards. At times they will be in a mass or central place to oversee activities and the flow of resources into the organisation, at other times they will be outside bringing their resources to other places. As with the network connections and resources, presence alone does not determine the exercise of social capital. There must be agency for resources to flow between actors and spaces (Yeung, 2005). The title of this chapter, 'making it happen', refers to this agency and the enablement of strategies for exercising social capital. However, the capacity to act can also be constrained in practice and the next chapter will explore the narratives where goals could not be achieved in the same way.

## **Chapter 6 Going Round in (small disconnected)**

### **Circles**

#### ***Introduction***

The narratives presented in this chapter are 'stop-start', 'strategy vacuum' and 'silence'. The 'stop-start' narrative emerged from across the participant group as a frustration with the number of projects that would be initiated and then disappear or struggle to get going due to a lack of resource. The 'stop-start' narrative is explored in the context of the wider strategic system through the 'strategy vacuum' and 'silence' narratives combined. What becomes evident is the connection between the long-term sustainability of projects and the strategic environment in which these projects are launched. What was identified across the group was a strategic vacuum where the expectations of grass-roots and community practitioners were not being met by institutions with a strategic remit for the city. This was confirmed in the Stage Two exercise on institutional resources (Table 2, p.150) where strategic vision, direction, risk-taking and the scale to deliver larger projects were highlighted as important resources either not found or not found in sufficient supply. This widening out of the process to observe other systemic effects illustrates how the actions and rationalities in one sphere constrain or enable agency in other parts of the network (Ettlinger,

2003). In this context the 'silence' narrative is presented as a contributing factor to how the system is maintained and how potential transformation is thwarted.

## **'Stop-Start'**

The 'stop-start' narrative was evident in nineteen of the thirty narratives (Appendix 8) and described projects that either had got going but not continued or struggled to get going due to a lack of resource. The PechaKucha project, described in the selected narrative, was referenced by a number of participants as typical of a project which generated a lot of enthusiasm and interest but had to stop when the project partners who were resourcing it unpaid, found paid opportunities. Box 6 describes how the project generated the initial excitement and interest.

### **Box 6 Initial Enthusiasm**

I mean some of the largest things that I've been involved in, and helped with, have been PechaKucha events which was kind of like set up in Stoke a few times as a kind of informal networking/gathering kind of event, where people can kind of do presentations for people to people... the idea or the invention was dreamed up by two architects with their practice in Japan...And... in that very small time period - people were saying that, 'I didn't think anything like this would happen or be in Stoke - this is something that would happen or seem to happen in Manchester or Birmingham or London' - and people getting quite excited about that. And also then realising that it's connecting to... on the list - 'PechaKucha Stoke-on-Trent' was the first event in the West Midlands, and then I think Wolverhampton, then Birmingham started, and then a few other West Midlands joined in... What was happening with that network was that it was connecting to all these networks in Stoke, but also connected outside of Stoke nationally and internationally. And people were getting as excited over there in San Francisco as people

were in Stoke, and so you know on the list of events – it kind of read out San Francisco , Tokyo, Melbourne, and then Stoke – and people were going ‘Stoke, where’s that?’ – as if it was not something to be ashamed of but surprised by - and my kind of interest in this whole networking thing was that – ‘Why not stoke?’ and what’s the difference in having it in Stoke or Sydney or Hong Kong?

*Participant (002)*

The next box explains why the project could not continue and the effects the stop-start pattern has on practitioners.

### **Box 7 Burn out**

(000) and is that [PechaKucha] still going?

(002) No – that’s not at the moment .. because I helped set that up with [Organisation Name] artists which then linked in to [Name] helped out with it. Again we all became so busy trying to manage our own freelance work and just to make a basic living .. what was happening was the cause of the unbalance again – (drawing figure of eight) that we didn’t seem to be getting the support you know. (big sigh)

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because there’s only so much that an individual person can do until they actually mentally and physically burn and tire out ... and within my small network, I felt that we were all doing way too much, and not really getting much back or not much out of it.

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A lot of things seem to be busy, and good, and active at the time ... but ... bringing it back to the balance, of the kind of longevity of things lasting.... it wasn’t for this long (draws long line) it was kind of long for that long (draws much shorter line) so it kind of stopped, and then did a bit, and then ended.

*Participant (002)*

## ***Conditions and Context***

PechaKucha events use a particular format for people to gather and present their ideas to groups of other interested people. It is open to anyone who wants to run an event according to the PechaKucha format of presenting 20 slides each lasting 20 seconds. The PechaKucha project in Stoke-on-Trent places an informal local project within a regional, national, and international context. The idea originates from Japan and connects organisations across the globe through both the PechaKucha nights and a website ([www.pechakucha.org](http://www.pechakucha.org)). The narrator references the importance of placing Stoke within this national and international context and challenges the perceptions of and expectations about what happens in the city. Delivery of the project places Stoke-on-Trent first to be listed on the PechaKucha website in the region, ahead of Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The narrator then places it in a national context with London and Manchester and in an international context with other large cities such as San Francisco, Melbourne and Tokyo.

The narrative brings the cultural context to the fore by questioning how Stoke can be seen as somewhere to be 'surprised by' as opposed to be 'ashamed of' and how this context is relevant on both a local, national and international level. If, as the narrator suggests, people do not expect this kind of event to happen in Stoke-on-Trent then the cultural context may act as a constraint for cultural

practitioners, where negative identifications with the city are preventing innovation happening from within.

Excitement around the project is derived from the novelty of the idea and in being the first to run a PechaKucha event within the region. Like the 'self-sufficiency' and 'ideal' narratives, excitement and interest are necessary conditions for getting people interested in a project. The gathering is described as 'informal' and this may place the project outside of institutional or strategic contexts. This is also implied by the fact that the project was run voluntarily by two freelancers and an independent organisation. In terms of time, the context is project-based and short-term – a single PechaKucha event lasts a couple of hours. There were two events held in Stoke-on-Trent in November 2009 and March 2010. This is referenced by the narrator as a 'very small time period' before the project stopped.

The narrator repeats throughout the transcript and in the selected narrative a context of 'unbalance' which is physically enacted through an overlapping figure of eight representing the experience of going round in circles. The 'unbalance' occurs when there is too much to do and not enough resource or support to do it. It is also associated with the longevity of projects where things which start and then stop create more unbalance. The effort to get things going, when there is only a small network of people and minimal resources, has a direct impact on the capacity for action. When individuals tire or burn out there is a

depletion of resource in the city which further affects the context in which projects are initiated.

### ***Agency and Resources***

The activities surrounding the project are not described in detail but the general purpose of the event is stated as informal networking, gathering, and presenting. To get the project off the ground a connection is made to the originators of the idea in Japan and some promotion is indicated by the expressions of surprise and excitement reported by the narrator. The activity of putting on the event is described in terms of 'being involved in' and 'helping out with'. The resources which were necessary to put on the event are also not mentioned specifically in terms of what they were or how they were accessed. Two actions are mentioned as important: realising that connections were being made, and getting excited about the project. The narrator makes reference to the connections being made both inside and outside the city. These were made possible through the informal networking at the event and through the PechaKucha website which is referred to as the list of events.

When it comes to continuing the project, actions are constrained by a lack of support. A conflict arises between trying to manage freelance paid work with unpaid work. The choice is made to leave unpaid work in order to 'make a basic living.' The narrator is aware of a limitation to what an individual can



achieve and the inherent risks of trying to do much; mental and physical exhaustion. Even with this understanding, people within the 'small network' were doing 'way too much'. What is not explicit is what support the narrator is looking for and where that support might come from. It is also not clear if support was sought to continue the project. What can be inferred is that there was enough initial support and resource to get the project going but not to sustain it. This contrasts with the 'ideal' narrative where the organisation waits until all the right relationships are in place before starting the project. It is also in contrast to the 'self-sufficiency' narrative where earning a living is taken as a condition for the work and not an 'unreasonable notion'.

### ***Outcomes and Goals***

The short-term outcome of being first in the region and putting on two PechuKucha events is achieved. The question of 'why not Stoke?' has been raised and by putting on the event perceptions of Stoke-on-Trent have been challenged. What is not expressed is how this fits into a longer term or more strategic plan for the people directly involved or for the city. The individuals and organisation involved are left with a choice of either continuing to resource the project themselves or taking paid work and earning a living. The narrator refers to the network, 'not really getting much back or not much out', which infers that goals are not being achieved but the exact goals are not clear. There is a desire for things to last which would bring more balance to the network and

prevent the predicted burn out. The achievement of this outcome would change the context in which projects were undertaken. The 'stop-start' pattern would be inhibited in a context where longer-term, well-resourced, and therefore sustainable projects were the norm and where activities were directed towards achieving long-term strategic goals.

The stop-start experience was described by participants as: 'exhausting'; 'demoralising'; 'frustrating'; 'soul-destroying'; 'like hitting a brick wall'; 'like swimming through treacle', 'being wrung out', and 'spat out'. Many participants expressed the experience of reaching a point where they felt like giving up trying to make things happen in Stoke-on-Trent. This was due to a combination of factors: the lack of support; a feeling their work was being under-valued; their personal lives being affected; a lack of paid opportunities within the city; and locating paid opportunities outside the city. The emotional burden of cultural and creative work is interesting in terms of the individual practitioner's vocation and what they are prepared to put up with in the pursuit of self-expression (Gill and Pratt, 2008). However, following Jacobs (1961/93) the 'stop-start' narrative has to be placed in the wider cultural, economic, strategic, political and institutional context in order to observe the systemic processes in operation. In the wider context the emotional and artistic spheres are connected to the political and strategic spheres which have different rules of engagement and goals.

## **'Strategic Vacuum' and 'Silence'**

The 'strategy vacuum' narrative appeared in twenty-two of the thirty narratives and produced over one hundred pages of transcribed material. The 'silence' narrative is treated as interconnecting as it appears as an element which maintains the strategic vacuum through a lack of open communication.

In Box 8 the narrator describes attitudes which affect how strategic decisions are taken on where investments are made.

### **Box 8 'Growing our own' versus 'bringing outsiders in'**

There was a bit of friction between this grouping and this grouping [grass roots and institutional/strategic players] ... there was at the heart of that ...this idea that things that were rooted and developed locally weren't somehow as valuable as things that could be imported and I feel very strongly about that ... of course you need a balance of both and I'm sure everybody who worked in those strategic positions feels the same, but it never felt like that from my perspective.

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[Stoke-on-Trent] needs to find ways - connecting with the best and bringing the best in and being involved and connected with the best - but it's not to the detriment and not before... investing heavily in supporting grass roots creativity because it's not able to get past that first base development in my experience. So there's kind of a few key players that seem to be the exception to the rule. And it's ridiculous again, that defensive culture really – or how it feels – [Organisation] and [Organisation] are examples of two people who have managed to establish themselves and it feels that they are – that they've had to maybe be a bit closed to keep themselves developing and sustaining ...and kind of felt like there was a bit of a cartel, a local cartel that seemed to be a little bit impregnable

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there's an assumption that because the grass roots stuff is so grass roots and so non-established - on the face of it or under-resourced or basic - that the quality of the people and the level of experience isn't up to working at a strategic level and we have to ship people in.

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And it feels that one of the biggest resources they [the decision makers] have, which are many of these people on the ground [that] somehow aren't part of the strategic balance sheet of either the [strategic/institutional players] – in my opinion – they don't see these people as really – not really part of the resource. That can not only be part of, but could potentially drive and generate the regeneration, particularly in a climate like it is now where there is a whole need to reinvent what's valuable and what resource means and galvanise that. So in a way these people have been doing it without any resources for, certainly from 2007 – or very scant resources so they are great players now in this current climate.

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So there seems to be a disconnect between the upper and lower tier in the city's community but that is further exasperated... when regional influence and players are sitting round the table with either of these (Institutional/strategic) partners or both – you need to bring further outsiders in to do this ... then [outside organisation] win the tender for [Project] and it's here we go again and again. I just think this – growing our own and then finding a way of ratcheting that up into a consolidated infrastructure seems to be the problem here.

*Participant (012)*

In Box 9 the narrator reflects on the how the issues of disconnection and distrust are related and combine to constrain development.

### **Box 9 Disconnection and distrust**

So I think there's a leadership vacuum or a culture around leadership which is not about nurturing and development in my experience – there's a fundamental lack of understanding about how that works and I think it's really simple on one basic level it's about honesty and openness and that leads to trust and I think that time and time again it feels that there's been a – there is a distrust in some of the city's culture around some of these grouping and re-groupings.

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Somehow in other places there seems to have been more coherence to the way those groupings have come together to mutual benefit... those fledgling activities that consolidated slowly but surely and have become the new wave of more established galleries or individual artists that are leading specific agenda in other places ... It feels like we are scared of success in this city so it gets to the point where you think ...everybody's pushing the proverbial rock up

the pinnacle, cartoon-like and you think it's going - and it just stays - and then it's in danger of coming back and crushing you rather than it going over the other side so – it feels like there is another level of development that hasn't happened or joint working.

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There's all of the ingredients that in my experience you need – different organisations and representatives – there have definitely been opportunities to find ways of pulling that together and take it to the next level but it gets to the point where it connects and then it falls to pieces again. Maybe that being scared of succeeding at a strategic level might be something to do with it. It might ...just be however that the place is fundamentally fragmented.

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The amount of money that's gone into the more mainstream arts and creative industries mapping and audit in this city is unbelievable – so much money, so many consultants, so much work has gone on about what's there and who - and the development strategies and the rest of it - and yet I've never known a place that's more opaque and unaccountable from a strategic point of view...that kind of overview of how much money is spent in the city, and on what, and to what effect is the most important thing for me...but until there's more of a clear idea of what the resource is – but in particular the investment – that's incredibly important and I have no idea what that bigger picture cake actually is and how it's used currently.

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There isn't going to be any collective – any accountability stroke responsibility collectively until that's exposed...it's attacking and suspicious but I think that's the problem there's a lack of clarity which leads to people working in an isolated way and a protective way and a suspicious way and ... that's the sadness for me about my experience of that.

***Participant (012)***

In Box 10, Participant (029) reflects on how things could be different and what needs to change in terms of connecting 'up' to strategic players. This connects back to the 'stop-start' narrative in terms of how the strategic decision makers have an effect on what is happening or not happening at grass roots level.

### **Box 10 'Going up the strategic ladder'**

There is such a lot of work that's going on out there, in so many different ways on quite a small scale sometimes and you think, if we did pool all of that and it was all under one banner of what we could achieve. We could feed that strategically into what the city council is doing – that kind of sense of strategic importance to this work – and that's what we are really interested in – we are interested in strategic change and how bits of activity can teach us stuff that should make a difference to the way we do it next time and that means going up the strategic ladder sometimes to the people who make decisions. And it would be really fab to be able to work with some colleagues up that strategic ladder better than we do currently... Colleagues within the city and the county's cultural thing – either we're not plugged in enough to those networks – and I'm not even really sure where they are as a thing – information about where those conversations are happening. If they are happening I don't know about them. If they are not happening and I still don't know about that either (laughs).

(000) Yeah, where could they happen?

(029) Yeah where could they happen? How could we help to make them happen because we want to? We really do want to help make those conversations happen but something, something has got to – there is an element. At the top of this strategic ladder – if people are going to bother having conversations about what's happening up here at the top of the strategic ladder that [Chief Executive of Stoke City Council] would know about and be able to make decisions about and blah, blah, blah that would significantly change the experience of people living in Stoke-on-Trent then we've got to be able to see the – how us doing stuff down here and talking about it in a network of creative practitioners would actually go up that strategic ladder and actually make a difference because I think it's when things – when you're working away like crazy and all you can see is nothing happening up here that's got any relevance, that's when you start to lose heart and well that network is not worth being part of because it hasn't changed anything. And these people at the top of the strategic ladder actually haven't noticed and don't care - or haven't noticed and ~

(000) Don't understand?

(029) Don't understand – which I think is more the case. Or it's described as being nice – aren't we all having a jolly time – look at this lovely festival – aren't the ceramics pretty! And you think yes they are but what does it mean? Let's have a conversation about what it means and what we're going to do about our city and how does – have we actually been impacted, has it affected our thinking in any way? And if these people's thinking is not affected by this stuff down here [grass roots] then it becomes very disheartening.

***Participant (029)***

## ***Conditions and Context***

These narratives are set in the economic, political, strategic, and cultural context. The economic context is referenced as the 'climate as it is now' with regards to valuing resource when there are significantly fewer resources to go round due to the public spending cuts. The political and strategic contexts contrast what is happening at the grass roots level with what is being decided at the political, institutional, and strategic levels. These levels are placed on a strategic ladder with the grass roots activity at the bottom and the decision making at the top. Both narrators perceive a disconnection between the levels.

The first narrator sees grass roots activity as non-established, under-resourced and under-developed, the second narrator mentions small-scale as a way to define the activity. In Boxes 8 and 9 the narrator refers to a '*local cartel*' or groupings within the grass roots activity that are closed and that work in isolation. This is the perspective from outside the 'self-sufficiency' narrative where it appears that organisations that have established themselves are working in isolation. Inside the 'self-sufficiency' narrative, avoiding isolation is one of the key drivers although the decisions being made about how the organisation connects do not privilege the local. This may indicate that there are subjective qualities to the experience of isolation and exclusion within the network, highlighting how context is subjective and experienced differently by practitioners (Ettlinger, 2003).

Going up the strategic ladder there is a third political and strategic level, the 'regional influence and players' that affect the decision-making process of local institutional and strategic players. This puts the decision-making process and context at a further remove from the grass roots organisations working in the community. The political and strategic infrastructure appears to the narrators as fragmented and unconsolidated with creative practitioners experiencing hierarchical boundaries as a political disconnection from the higher levels. When the narrator questions whether Stoke-on-Trent is 'fundamentally fragmented' this could refer to the political, strategic, cultural or geographic context and will be explored further in the next chapter.

The cultural context is referenced directly in Box 9 around the issue of a leadership vacuum at the strategic and institutional levels. The cultural context is described in part as a set of conditions which lead to the emergence of distrust: a lack of openness; a lack of accountability; opaqueness in terms of investment; and a lack of honesty. At the same time the cultural context is expressed in terms of development which is seen as lacking a coherent infrastructure, lacking the necessary understanding of development processes, and lacking collectivity and joint working. This development failure is associated to a perceived fear of success held at the strategic level. It is not clear where this cultural context originates but the lack of openness is



confirmed in the 'silence' narrative where participants expressed a reluctance to question the dominant agendas for fear of reprisal and further exclusion.

The local context is also affected by, 'this idea that things that were rooted and developed locally weren't somehow as valuable as things that could be imported.' This is a context which appeared first in the self-sufficiency narrative as *'the notion of local'*. It is described here as a tension between the need to connect to the 'best' and at the same time recognise and nurture what is available locally. The definition of 'outsiders' is not clear but in the context of the narrative appears to refer to people that are brought in from outside by decision-makers to do a specific task and not people from outside Stoke-on-Trent in general. In Box 10 a question is raised in terms of, 'the sense of strategic importance' that strategic players attribute to the work being done at grass roots level by local practitioners. The process and criteria by which cultural and creative work is valued directly affects the support practitioners receive and their financial viability.

The 'strategy vacuum' narrative places these processes in a context of 'distrust' and attributes this to a lack of understanding by those in strategic positions. This lack of clarity regarding decision-making and investment amplifies the suspicion and distrust experienced by those practitioners who are excluded from the process or the 'local cartel'. The context is maintained by a lack of communication both up and down the strategic ladder. The paucity of

communication from the top of the ladder is attributed to a lack of recognition in terms of not noticing the work that is being done, a lack of care about the value of the work, and a lack of understanding in terms of the impact of the work. As referenced in the 'self-sufficiency' narrative, institutional players are seen as not talking to practitioners and this has a direct effect on the context in which projects are undertaken. Practitioners at the grass roots level refrain from communicating negative messages up the ladder as these may be perceived as attributing blame. The 'friction' between the groups affects the extent to which resources can be mobilised through network relationships as shared experiences and memories affect decisions about future co-operation (Rothstein, 2005).

### ***Agency and Resources***

These narratives offer two perspectives on agency and resources in terms of exercising social capital through mediated relationships. The first relates to the current practices that are constraining the capacity of mediating relationships to mobilise resources. The second perspective relates to the actions which practitioners feel need to be taken to create a context in which relationships would enable the mobilisation of resources. The strategic vacuum is perceived as a lack of appropriate strategic action and infrastructure. Actions are taken at the strategic levels but they have not enabled creative and cultural practitioners to achieve their goals. As in the myth of Sisyphus, who was punished by the

gods for his trickery, the metaphorical rock can never make it over the pinnacle, and despite things connecting up momentarily the situation 'falls to pieces again'. Strategic decision-makers, acting on their own assumptions about the value of local experience and quality, direct resources outside the area by importing ideas, shipping people in, and commissioning 'outsiders' through the tender process. This is seen as constraining the development process which instead needs to be consolidated through nurturing and developing locally grown talent. The strategic investment choices and allocation of resources appear to be in direct opposition to the needs of grass roots organisations. The actions of the strategic decision-makers are constraining the capacity of grass roots organisations to achieve their goals. Where organisations do manage to become established there is a need to defend and protect their positions from attack and suspicion.

The perception expressed in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative is that there is a preferred local grouping to which resources are directed. However in the 'self-sufficiency' narrative there is a perception that local institutional and strategic players have not been able to provide necessary support. Both narratives confirm an element of closure within the networks and a lack of communication from institutional players. This is what Jacobs observed as the lack of germane assistance from decision-makers who are too far removed from the everyday problems of city neighbourhoods (Jacobs, 1961/93).

The capacity to act can also be perceived through an analysis of activities that are not happening, that constrain actions elsewhere in the network and keep the situation from transforming. This strategic vacuum pertains to a number of activities which are necessary but not present at the strategic level:

understanding the development process; balancing the need to bring people in from outside with investing in and nurturing locally grown talent; galvanising investments in the local resource base; recognising, understanding and caring about the value of grass roots activity; being transparent, accountable and responsible in terms of strategic decision making processes and investments; designing development strategies in partnership with grass roots organisations; and allowing two-way communication up and down the strategic ladder.

At the grass roots level there is also a set of actions which need to be taken: a pooling of activity under one banner; finding and plugging into strategic conversations; making those conversations happen; driving and generating the regeneration from the ground up; finding ways of connecting with 'the best'; and re-inventing what's valuable in the current climate. While there is recognition by grass roots practitioners of the problems strategic disconnection causes, there is little evidence of recognition at the strategic and institutional levels. This is further exacerbated by a culture of distrust in which honest reflection and open communication is inhibited and a mandate to be positive is enforced. This forced positivity chimes in direct contrast to the fatalistic and hierarchic attitudes found in Jayne's (2004) research of the area.

The narratives illustrate that the capacity to act is tied to both the mediating relationships and the context. The disconnection between the grass roots groups and the strategic decision-makers constrains the flow of information and resources and affects the ability of practitioners to exercise social capital at the higher strategic levels. The necessary relationships to facilitate the formulation of shared goals are not in place or only in place within particular groupings. In a context of distrust and suspicion certain ways of working are found which are less open to attack. Context and agency in this case interact to amplify certain patterns of exclusion and further entrench the conditions which have a negative effect on the system as a whole. These patterns of disconnection are, on a smaller scale, similar to the social traps experienced in Eastern Bloc countries, where widespread corruption has limited the capacity of the administrative systems to establish effective institutional norms (Rothstein, 2005). What it demonstrates is the fragility of the relationships on which important city functions are based. In the context of slum clearance, Jacobs' understood the risk to these relationships and functions from institutional failure and ignorance (Jacobs, 1961/93).

### ***Outcomes and Goals***

In the 'strategic vacuum' narrative the outcomes for the creative practitioners are mostly negative because mediating relationships have not enabled the flow

of resources towards the achievement of goals. The goal presented in the Boxes 8 and 9 refers to 'getting past first base development.' This has not been achieved and is perceived as a consequence of two combining factors. Firstly resources have been directed to bringing in expertise from outside, and secondly there has been a lack of investment in the development of grass roots infrastructure. It is not clear to the narrator what this strategic allocation of resources has achieved due to the lack of transparency regarding the investment 'cake' and process. The outcomes expressed are negative both in terms of the impacts for grass roots organisations and at the personal level in terms of the sadness the narrator has experienced working in this context.

For the second narrator the goal is to, 'significantly change the experience of people living in Stoke-on-Trent.' For this to be achieved it has to be given strategic importance and be discussed at the top of the strategic ladder so that understanding and learning take place about how things change. Those conversations are currently not happening, the work at the grass roots level is going unnoticed and thinking at the top of the ladder appears to be unchanged. This process not only becomes emotionally 'disheartening', it leads the participant to question the value of the network of creative practitioners. The resources that exist in the two disconnected networks cannot be mobilised through the exercise of social capital if the relationships that would mediate the exchange are not existent. This is in direct contrast to 'the ideal' narrative

where the focus of attention is on getting in place the right relationships which enable collaboration and project delivery.

The importance of shared goals is highlighted in both narratives. In the first narrative the goals of the institutional players are not clear and appear to be at odds with the narrator's goals in terms of ground-up regeneration. This perception is based on the narrator's experience, gathered over time, of strategic players' repeatedly bringing in ideas and people from outside. While the narrator acknowledges the need for connecting to outside talent and ideas, it is felt that this has been done at the expense of local development. In Box 10, the narrator questions the process of developing shared goals, in terms of first understanding what activities actually impact and change the city. The 'festival' refers to the British Ceramics Biennial which is supported by the City Council, Arts Council England and the local universities.

The narrator highlights the difference between instrumental goals which are achieved by delivering the project and transformational goals which are achieved when the impact of the project is measured by a change in thinking. If grass roots organisations are not involved in the decision making process because of a disconnection between groups then the development of shared goals will also be affected. In the absence of specific and agreed shared goals the exercise of social capital will be constrained when conflicts arise from different groups trying to achieve different goals with the same pool of resource.

The lack of communication from the top of the ladder about the strategic direction further complicates the process leaving grass roots organisations to set their own agendas. Both narrators express a need for collectivity and pooling together at the grass roots level but this seems unlikely in the current context.

## **Modalities of Exercised Social Capital**

The same modalities are seen in the narratives of 'self-sufficiency' and 'the ideal' as in 'stop-start', in terms of generating excitement and interest in the project. For the organisers, this has been mediated through existing relationships and negotiated on the basis of equality and freedom to participate. The people involved are voluntarily entering into a process to deliver a project with their own resources. There are no contractual or institutional obligations to which they are tied. The modalities of social capital are 'associative' and rely on persuasion, influence and negotiation (Allen, 2003). When the organisers can no longer manage the activity in addition to their fee-paying work the project ends. There is no sense in the narrative of coercion or force. The project is initiated and delivered in a short timeframe, enabled by the relationships which already exist and the shared history held within them.



However, these relationships were only effective in getting the project started, when more resource was needed, it could not be sourced through the existing relationships. This illustrates time as a resource in terms of having enough time available and the ability to manage time in relation to an activity. In 'the ideal' narrative the organisation is able to take the time to get the relationships in place before starting a project and then manage the time available to deliver the project. As a resource mediated through relationships, time is treated differently in the 'stop-start' narrative; getting the project started is prioritised over the long-term future of the project.

In 'the ideal' narrative, the impact of the project over the long-term is prioritised which means establishing relationships which are not solely about the delivery of the creative output. These relationships with the wider community and larger scale institutions allow the project to draw down more resources when they are needed. The modalities of these relationships, while still associative, may be tied to more formal methods of control and monitoring via the funding process. The 'stop-start' narrative raises an issue for creative practitioners who want to work flexibly and informally. Where this work is unpaid and with scant resource there are often no formal contracts between partners. This risk of project failure will be higher as partners are under no obligation to continue donating their time and resource. Where this leads to experiences of project failure the exercise of social capital will be affected by these experiences and shared history. Initiating projects that are not sufficiently resourced may become more difficult

in the future. The experience of being frustrated when projects end prematurely or burning out from overwork risk making the informal associative modalities of social capital needed to get projects off the ground less effective in the long run.

The modalities of social capital in the 'strategy vacuum' are exercised via a hierarchy where decision makers are at the top of a strategic ladder and grass roots practitioners are at the bottom. The existence of a hierarchy implies that the power relations between actors in the network are not equal and therefore the associative modalities will be less effective. The inequalities in the hierarchy are experienced by practitioners in various ways: the value being put on their work by decision-makers; their strategic influence in decision-making processes; the amount and quality of information they receive from strategic players; and the amount of resource they receive from institutional players. If respect, equality and mutuality are absent from the relationships then grass roots organisations will be less able to exercise social capital through influencing, persuading and negotiating with strategic decision-makers. This is evident in Boxes 8 and 10 where both narrators refer to their inability to influence strategic decisions or the 'strategic balance sheet'. What makes this situation intractable is that the conversations needed to facilitate the exercise of social capital are not happening. Without opportunities for this kind of communication there is little chance of social capital being exercised through associative modalities.

In the absence of opportunities for associative modalities and in a local context which features distrust and disconnection, social capital is being mediated through power relationships, where one party seeks to control and direct the actions of others. This is referenced elsewhere in the transcripts as a 'divide and rule' strategy. The decisions taken at a strategic level exclude some of the grass roots organisations and instead direct resources either to their preferred groupings or away from the local area to outsiders. This creates negative impacts for the local network: those in favoured groupings become open to attack and accusations of favouritism; the amount of potential collaboration between groups is reduced; and those outside the favoured grouping become suspicious of all institutional behaviour.

When work goes to outside organisations this results in an imposition of ideas and people on local delivery mechanisms. These negative effects combine to produce the frictions and distrust surrounding the strategic decision-making process and the local infrastructure. The strategic decision-makers use their power to act without consultation and exercise their social capital through relationships which are influenced by regional players and in accordance with assumptions about the value of grass roots activity. A lack of confidence or 'capacity trust' (Ettlinger, 2003) in grass roots activity translates to a practice of exclusion. The lack of openness, transparency and accountability maintains the status quo where the goals of actors are unknown to each other. The experiences of practitioners working in this environment become muted

because challenging those in power risks punishment by exclusion. The use of domination modalities through a divide and rule strategy is possible because power is mediated through relationships where strategic players use their access to resource as a way of coercing behaviour. Those that are favoured stay isolated from the larger collective and those that are excluded are not given an audience. These modalities prevent the processes which would lead to a higher degree of collectivity and potential mutual benefit.

## **Spatialities of Exercised Social Capital**

The spatialities of exercised social capital in the narratives above are constructed on three different scales; inside and outside Stoke-on-Trent; across local, regional, national, and international boundaries; and up and down a strategic ladder. The 'stop-start' narrative explores the perception and experience of being inside Stoke-on-Trent by asking 'why not Stoke?' and 'what is the difference between Stoke and other places?' For Participant (002) the perception of Stoke-on-Trent as a place to be ashamed of is challenged although it is not clear where this perception originates. This is similar to the questioning found in the 'self-sufficiency' narrative where the value of connecting to the wider world means not being 'held back by a notion of local'. In the 'strategy vacuum' narrative similar inside/outside patterns are expressed but 'outside' is perceived differently. While the narrator acknowledges the need

to connect to 'the best' outside of Stoke-on-Trent, this activity is also understood as a potential risk to local development.

The relationship between inside and outside is configured differently in terms of the value that outsiders can bring and in terms of the opportunity costs of investments made 'outside'. When strategic players favour bringing outsiders in to deliver projects this creates an imbalance in development. It inhibits the development of locally grown talent, with the wider impact expressed as an inability to get to 'the next stage of development'. This perceived lack of balance produces an unequal flow of institutional resources out of the city, thus reducing the amount of investment and opportunity for people inside the city. This reduction of opportunity within the city forces local practitioners to go further afield to find fee-paying work. This was confirmed in Stage Two by both the amount of networking which takes place outside the area, and the identification of insufficient long-term paid opportunities within the area. If home grown talent is forced outside the city and institutional resources are also being directed outside of the city then it follows the net flow of resources is out, leaving the city with fewer resources with which to achieve its goals. The paucity of resource and the lack of value placed on local work means that import replacement processes do not get started and local adaptations to imports cannot be tested (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985). The exercise of institutional social capital is placing both resource and people outside the city.

The 'stop-start' narrative configures space using local, regional, national, and international boundaries. Exercised social capital places and connects Stoke-on-Trent at each level as a result of the PechaKucha project. In this narrative Stoke-on-Trent is placed on a par, and connected to, much larger cities around the world: Tokyo, Melbourne, and San Francisco. The social capital exercised as a result of the relationships surrounding the project enable resources to travel across a virtual network from Japan to Stoke-on-Trent. The extension of social capital is not limited to the local area but the shortage of available resource limits the continuation of the linkages. This contrasts with 'the ideal' narrative where more available time has lead to more extensive reach of the exercised social capital.

The strategic ladder described in Box 10 and confirmed in the Stage Two exercise represents a spatial construction where resources are seen as held at the top of the ladder. The exercise of social capital would ideally enable practitioners and organisations to move up the ladder in order to access and draw down resources. At the same time decision-making at the top of the ladder would be better informed of local problems through a movement of information up the strategic ladder (Jacobs, 1961/93). The disconnection and distrust between the groups within the city creates the effect of closing down the potential exercise and extension of social capital between groups as they are forced to work in isolation. Spatially this segregates groups from each other and creates an environment in which institutional trust is threatened due to

behaviour which is seen as impartial. Rothstein (2005) highlights these processes as becoming vicious circles known as a social trap because once the trust in institutions is gone it is very difficult to reverse the process.

In the 'Strategic Ladder' exercise, freelancers, independent organisations and institutional players said they were more likely to find funding and partners at the international level. This can be seen as a spatial adaptation to the context where practitioners by-pass the local institutions to exercise social capital at levels where there is more possibility for exchange and shared purpose. This connects up the local and hyper-local work they do, via funding organisations, to organisations doing similar work in other countries. The resulting spatial pattern diverts social capital around the local strategic vacuum to strategic decision-making units at the national and international levels.

The exercise of social capital becomes limited to the boundaries that have been socially constructed and maintained by strategic decision-makers. Decisions about future collaboration and co-operation are informed by past experiences, memories and subjectivities about the expected behaviour of other network members. Practitioners excluded from the decision-making process and doubtful about the intentions of other practitioners and institutions will be less likely to co-operate on future projects (Rothstein, 2005). The question is raised in Box 9 as to whether it is the attitudes and behaviours of strategic decision-makers which stifles development or if the place is 'fundamentally fragmented'?

This leads to the next narrative which questions how Stoke-on-Trent is constructed as a place: spatially, historically, politically, culturally, and emotionally.



## Chapter 7 Tales of Two Cities

### *Introduction*

The narrative in this chapter illustrates how Stoke-on-Trent is understood by participants from a multiple of perspectives: spatial; socio-economic; political; cultural; and personal. The 'city/town' narrative highlights the conflict between these competing understandings where in some spheres Stoke-on-Trent is seen as a confederated city made up of six towns without a city centre, and in others the view holds that Stoke-on-Trent is a radial city with its city centre in Hanley. While there was a general consensus that the divergence of views presents a problem for the city, opinions were divided about what the solution might be.

The challenge starts with a question, 'how is Stoke-on-Trent best understood as a city?' which is constructed in Box 11. Boxes 12, 13 and 14 present competing conceptualisations of how the city is understood by participants: a city made up of five or six towns that have their own identity and purpose; a city of confederated towns with one town as the cultural hub; or a radial city with one commercial and administrative centre in Hanley. The narratives presented in Chapters Five and Six operate within these different and at time divergent interpretations of context. This raises a question; is there is an underlying

problem affecting the capacity of groups to exercise social capital and achieve their goals, whether, as Participant (012) states, ‘the place is fundamentally fragmented.’

## ‘City/Towns’

In Box 11 the problem of how to understand the city is constructed between one participant and the researcher. The narrator reflects on a number of inter-related processes; cultural and creative practice; council planning strategies and decision-making; the geography of the place; and the internal competition for resources.

### **Box 11 How is the city best understood?**

(000) What [do] you think in terms of the city and the networks and the city?

(006) Oh it’s all very contradictory – in some ways I think there’s a fantastic creative energy in the city – you know and that’s down to a number of very, very committed people...The activity is a bit like the city – a bit dispersed and difficult to pull together and maybe that doesn’t matter.

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I’m not a town planner but I know that the plan is to make Stoke a bit more like a conventional city with Hanley as it’s centre ... and I just can’t see that ever working...I just think it goes against the nature of the place... If it was up to me I’d say – no, don’t call it Stoke-on-Trent, call it The Potteries and embrace the fact that it’s a string, a linear string of towns.

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It’s crazy – every time the city is presented as a city – as a concentric city – nobody can make sense of it – it’s actually bewildering – geographically it’s bewildering isn’t it?

(000) Yep, when I first arrived I couldn’t drive it.

(006) Yes, but the minute – and it takes ages – before somebody informally explains – look it’s a string of towns and it runs from Longton in the South East up to Tunstall in the North West.

And then you look at a map and you go 'oh right – yeah that makes sense.'... Maybe it is impossible to make each of the towns, individual towns thrive as individual towns – but city centres are dying all over the country.

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(000) Do you think that affects also the way people network?

(006) Yeah, I think it does and there's so much confusion about how things are branded and badged – so on the one hand you have the Cultural Quarter in Hanley – doesn't really mean an awful lot – but it means at one point somebody said – strategically 'let's try and concentrate culture here' – but of course while they were doing that all this creative activity was bubbling up in Burslem...and then why would you not support that, when that's happening down there? So you've got these lovely live-work units down in Burslem, you've got the School of Art, you've got a group of young, dynamic creative people who are working their socks off with very little support.

(000) And who want to do something with Burslem, not somewhere else?

(006) And then are they are suddenly competing with [Names] in Hanley – for resources? That's really difficult. And then [Name] comes along and goes down to Stoke – and starts doing things there...Really, it's wonderful but it's more difficult to manage and how does the local authority work with things bubbling up organically in different places at different times?

(000) It's a good question (laughs)

(006) How does the local authority have a strategy to deal with something like that? But that actually is the way things happen – and particularly it's the way the creative industries happen.

In Box 12, two participants present their argument for treating the city as a collection of individual towns, each with their own identities.

### **Box 12 'A kit of parts'**

The city has always and constantly been made up of – it's a kit of parts – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts - it's always been historically five stroke six towns and Newcastle-under-Lyme and different in reality – communities' foci have emerged on top of that but it's never had that focal point and however much planners have tried to do it, post-war, of saying this is a radial city, it's around Hanley city centre – no it aint – [Hanley's] just a town on steroids at the end of the day *Participant (012)*

My current thing about the city is that it should de-construct itself as a city because I think that's an industrial Victorian model that is no longer relevant and we should go back to being – which sounds horrendously reactionary and backward looking but actually it might give us more strength to go back to being a set of towns that have got lots of nice green spaces between and everyone just get on with – yes you can share things and you can talk to each other, for goodness sake of course. But don't try and maintain, it's back to this mass thing – I don't actually see what the benefit of a mass called the City of Stoke on Trent is – and I think it's leading us up all sorts of very unhelpful alleyways when it would be better perhaps to focus very much more locally into smaller neighbourhood working ...and for people to think of themselves as just this town, and this is my space, and I can influence, I can do something about this.

***Participant (021)***

In Box 13 the narrators reflect on the competition between different towns to be the cultural hub or centre and the cultural, economic and demographic context in which this competition operates.

### **Box 13 Competing for position**

It's quite difficult, because it's polycentric because there are so many different views – still very old views, traditional, old views of Stoke-on-Trent, it's very difficult for us – for example if there was something going on in Stoke – trying to get someone from Longton to come over to it – so engaging audiences on that level is difficult because there's that territory, and they don't want to particularly stray out of it...But it's difficult as – if it was one centre like Sheffield or Manchester – I think people are trying to turn it into Manchester but then you've then got to regard Burslem and Hanley and everything as just districts and actually what they are trying to do is centralise it in Hanley. I don't think it will ever work – there will be too much resistance from the other towns that feel like we've got an equally valid voice.

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[The creative centre] it's going to be Stoke or it's going to be Burslem and we win at the moment because we've got more creatives there and we've got the live-work units there and I think in some ways it's like – oh my god, the fact that we're all competing or there's several of us competing – several towns competing to be the primary one – is in some ways a bit daft – because we could all just work together and make Stoke-on-Trent a creative city but at the same time there's something about having a zone that adds credence. And every town in Stoke-on-Trent is striving to get their own personality and their own identity and sometimes I

wonder whether there's enough people to go round ... to tap into it if you know what I mean. I don't know how you get round that ... it's a really, really weird city. **Participant (008)**

The demographics of Stoke just don't support somewhere that's based on the economy of selling art and selling artistic endeavours – you know, look at the number of charity shops around and empty shops and you realise that people don't buy things that they actually need never mind things that look nice but don't perform a practical function. So it is a real challenge and I don't know – I don't think there's an obvious answer other than to probably support what already works.

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And it's really hard for the city council to come up with a view on it and then impose that on people because... if you impose a vision of what you think the space should look like and how it should work, that rarely is how ... people's networks actually do function – and it may not be the obvious most practical most logistically sensible way of doing things that is the way that actually ends up working. **Participant (017)**

[Business owners] want people to come to the city centre obviously so they can make money for their business and we want to do the same thing to get people into the city to develop our audience and that's one of the main things that doesn't really work for this city is the infrastructure which is under-developed and not right and obviously the unique thing about the city is the six towns... it's a good thing because it's unique but it's also maybe a bad thing because people don't move between the six towns – like people in Newcastle won't come to Stoke really... So it's getting people to move around the city which is quite bad and then Hanley's got that ring road that just cuts off people from the University and everything else – and if you are not near the Potteries Shopping Centre it's really hard for businesses and shops to make any money because people that come to the city just go to the shopping centre.

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I think if there were more [cultural/creative activities] in one place – rather than being scattered in the city – it would maybe work better. ... If it's all in one place people don't have to walk that far or travel that far to go and see an exhibition – because people are lazy and don't want to spend the time walking around or travelling they just want to go in and out and see really... It would create more of a buzz as well I think. **Participant (013)**

In Box 14 the argument for one city centre in Hanley is presented as a response to the problem of scale in which the towns are seen as draining the centre of

resources. The city centre is understood as a place which attracts a certain demographic via its commercial and leisure activities.

#### **Box 14 'One city centre'**

We need one city centre – you know, what city has all these little towns and that? ...They're just going nowhere – who would want to open a shop in Tunstall High Street? You know, you wouldn't really want to – and what shops would you open? A bargain shop or a hairdressers – or whatever – you don't need high streets as big as what they've got – also we've tended to have a lot of things on people's door steps – you know we had libraries every two seconds and swimming pools everywhere.

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The city centre, and 'City Sentral' – which is like the development, is going to be so important because all these young cultural and creative types - you know trendy, quirky cool people – are like annoyed that there isn't a Yo Sushi or a Wagamamma's or somewhere like that, that they can go and eat. That's why so much money gets spent outside of the city – and that's why the Potteries Centre [a shopping centre in Hanley] ...for years has been happy to just tick along as it is – and if I go into the Potteries Centre I want to cry – I have literally been tearful because it's like that bad – you know, it's cut price jewellers, computer games shops, HMV and other crap.... If you want something slightly more aspirational like a Zara or an Allsaints you've got to go to Manchester or Birmingham. Also it hasn't even got a food court - or when it did have a food court it was embarrassing – what has it got – it's got Tea by the Tree in the market – great for the elderly community – but for the younger people who are going to drive this city forward through jobs and working hard ...it needs that hook to keep people here – and we are the thirteenth biggest city and... we don't even have a Pizza Express – I'm talking about these food things – but I think you can judge a city and it's aspirations based on what food outlets it has – and we've only recently got Starbucks – you know we got Subway probably in 2007 – so we need that city centre destination – with a higher aspirational shopping venue and better places to eat which will keep the money in the city.

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To drive this city forward we need to just get rid of the crap – the old shops that are just rotting – that look terrible and that are doing nothing for our city and concentrate on having the best things but just one of them or two of them. So one amazing city centre library – one amazing shopping centre – one amazing swimming pool – we are a seven by five mile – or seven by two mile or something ridiculous – we are a tiny, tiny, area... to have ten libraries and to have this many whatevers is ridiculous. **Participant (026)**

## ***Conditions and Context***

The narratives present the different and often divergent ways in which the context of the city is understood. This begins in Box 11 with the spatial arrangement of the city. The narrator says when it is 'presented' as a concentric city, it doesn't make sense because the spatial reality is that of, 'a linear string of towns', running from the South East to the North West. While this is the best way to make sense of it for Participant (006), what might appear geographically immutable is contested politically in the repeated attempts to 'present' Stoke-on-Trent as a concentric or radial city centred on Hanley. The necessary conditions for this presentation are in conflict with the geographic reality. The context of disconnection between the grass roots and strategic decision-makers described in Chapter Six, and between grass roots organisations in different locations, is further amplified by an understanding of Stoke-on-Trent based on place-based affiliations to individual towns. This lack of social and political connection across the city would indicate a reduction in the potential exercise of social capital according to Jacobs' model (1961/93) where informal contacts are made through cross-use and special interest groups travelling between city districts.

The view of Stoke-on-Trent as a radial city is attributed to the local authority planning function and is positioned historically within the narratives as both 'Victorian' and 'post-war' indicating some discrepancy as to the origins of the

plan. The city-centre perspective seeks to centralise or concentrate a focal point in Hanley. The political context seeks to manage and direct activity by creating certain conditions that influence behaviour, for example 'branding and badging' a cultural quarter in Hanley. In this context, activity on the periphery is less likely to be supported, and activity that bubbles up organically cannot be managed or controlled. For those on the periphery, the selection of one town as the 'city centre' is resisted as it challenges the equality and validity of the other towns (Box 13).

The radial city view is understood as an imposition by the local authority which attempts to over-ride the spatial and historical context of Stoke-on-Trent, making it 'more conventional' and like other cities such as Sheffield or Manchester. An alternative political strategy, put forward in Box 12, would be to 'go back to being a set of towns' and put the focus 'very much more locally.' It is argued that this would give people more influence over the development issues at the neighbourhood level and facilitate a dispersal of political power. The disagreement between groups' understanding of the city in a political context mirrors the findings in Chapter Six where a disconnection exists between grass roots and strategic decision-makers. The exercise of social capital will be constrained by the divergent understandings of the city, as the different perspectives create different and opposing strategies for resource and power allocation: dispersal versus concentration.



In terms of the socio-economic context, Stoke-on-Trent is positioned as a place whose demographics cannot support an 'economy of selling art and selling artistic endeavours.' This is felt in terms of the capacity of Stoke-on-Trent to support more than one cultural centre. This represents a constraining condition for cultural practitioners wishing to develop an audience or market from within the area. In the economic context, where art is seen as an unnecessary luxury, the development of cultural activity must compete with the provision of more basic needs and services. This intensifies the competition for resources that are already scarce in an area of socio-economic deprivation. The competition between towns for primacy of place is referenced by Participant (008) where winning is understood as having more 'creatives' and 'the live work units' which are rented to artists and creative businesses.

Participant (017) makes reference to the city's economic infrastructure in terms of the number of charity shops and empty shops and in Box 14 it is understood by the lack of aspirational shopping and eating destinations. A demographic of 'young cultural and creative types' and 'quirky cool people' is identified that choose to go outside the city for commercial consumption. There is a sense that money is being lost to other places because the city cannot provide for this demographic.

Stoke-on-Trent as a post-industrial landscape is evoked in Box 14, 'we need to just get rid of the crap – the old shops that are just rotting – that look terrible

and that are doing nothing for our city.’ This is placed in the wider national economic context with the observation in Box 11 that city centres are ‘*dying*’ across the country. The socio-economic context in which the city is placed, recognises the economic challenges of cultural and creative provision given the lower disposable incomes of city dwellers, the intensification of competition for resources between groups, and the combined effects of a prolonged lack of investment in the infrastructure.

The cultural context is brought to the fore in Box 13 with reference to the ‘traditional old views’ of residents and the relationship they have with their ‘territories’. The feeling that people do not want to ‘stray out’ implies a cultural boundary between places where going outside is to ‘stray’ from home, from what is familiar and safe. This is referenced again by Participant (013) who comments on the lack of mobility between the towns but this time it is attributed to laziness. The infrastructure, in terms of the ring road that cuts off parts of the city, is offered as another possible explanation for the lack of movement. The emotional, cultural, and physical infrastructure are combining to reduce both the motivation, opportunity and ease with which city dwellers can cross the city and this according to Jacobs inhibits the city’s vitality (Jacobs, 1961/93)

The cultural identity of each town is also contested. For Participant (008) ‘identity’ and ‘personality’ are being fought for by each town. The ‘uniqueness’ of the six towns is not presumed. Although the towns are presented as having

an equally valid voice, this is constructed as a resistance to one place (Hanley) being given more 'credence' through zoning. The reference to 'five stroke six' towns already intimates that one town (Fenton) does not carry the same weight as the others. This cultural aspect and the importance of place-belonging is perceived differently by the participants. Where some value the independence of each town as a strength and an opportunity for development, others see it as a constraint that holds back the city by dispersing activity and resources. Relationships that operate in this context make use of place affiliation to exercise social capital. However, exercising social capital by linking across the city is likely to be constrained if there is little reward or motivation for 'straying out' of one's locality (Jacobs, 1961/93).

The multiple contexts in which the narratives are positioned are not separate, the political, socio-economic, spatial, historical, and cultural inter-act systemically. The narratives illustrate how they are understood from multiple perspectives and subjectivities. The task of sense-making is a common theme across the selection of narratives. The challenge to understand the context is important in determining suitable strategies. The narrators describe the city as 'contradictory', 'very, very, weird', 'bewildering', 'difficult to pull together', 'dispersed', 'ridiculous' and 'challenging'. These terms indicate a struggle to understand the city and make sense of how the city works. Underlying the different perspectives are conceptual oppositions; logical versus instinctive; cultural versus commercial; uniqueness versus convention; traditional versus

post-industrial; organic versus planned. Understanding the context is critical to the formulation of strategy and the capacity of actors to achieve their goals through the exercise of social capital.

### ***Agency and Resources***

In Box 10 the narrator likens the pattern of activity in the city to the city itself, 'a bit dispersed and difficult to pull together.' There is a tension between different sets of actors: the creative practitioners; the city planners; and the residents. The activities of practitioners are described as 'bubbling up' at 'different times and places.' This activity is seen as organic and emerging from the ground up which makes it difficult to accommodate or manage in strategic plans. This non-strategic or 'organic' activity infers that it is place-based and only works at a local level to gain advantage for a particular place. The impression given is that the activity is difficult to pull together and does not have a city-wide focus. The activity of the city planners is described as 'making' and 'presenting' the city as 'more conventional', 'radial' or 'concentric'. This is manifested in strategic decision-making about where to place activities and resources i.e. cultural services in the 'Cultural Quarter' in Hanley. The idea of establishing a focal point is employed in the narratives. For the city council the focal point is Hanley as the city centre, placing the other towns on the periphery. For the individual towns different foci have 'emerged' over time. This activity is a continual striving to create identity and personality for each place.

With regards to the residents of Stoke-on-Trent, there is some consensus on their perceived immobility and reluctance to move between towns. This affects practitioners who struggle to pull in audiences from across the city. Another absence of activity is indicated in Box 13 by the lack of a market or economy for 'art and artistic endeavours'. If residents of the city are not willing or able to move to cultural events, and not willing or able to make purchases for non-essential items, then this inhibits the development of a market for cultural and creative activities. In Box 14, the narrator attributes mobility to a group of 'young, creative types' where they are going out of the city to spend money and access more aspirational destinations. The idea of value being perceived outside the city is echoed in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative but this time the perception is attributed to a segment of the population interested in consumption and not the investment decisions of the council.

The different activities of groups illustrate how a particular understanding of the city influences behaviour and decision-making thus creating oppositional forces for the allocation of resources and the exercise of social capital. Those working from a particular place or town try to draw resources out from the centre while those working at strategic levels attempt to concentrate resources in one place. The actions of the city planners are resisted by local residents who are striving for their own identity. The divergence in understanding of the city context is mirrored in the behaviour of groups. This indicates that social capital is being

exercised in at least two different ways to gain advantage: by groups working within towns to create an advantage for their particular place; and between strategic decision-makers and the groups at the centre where resources are being directed to create a concentration of activity. What is not evident is the exercise of social capital between groups across the city which for Jacobs was the vital link to diversity and cross-use (Jacobs, 1961/93).

### ***Outcomes and Goals***

One goal appearing across the narratives, is to identify what works best for Stoke-on-Trent. However, the widespread disagreement illustrates the lack of a shared view of the city and its goals. There is a recognisable difference between what 'should' work via 'logical or sensible' reasoning and what is happening in practice. The logical or economic view presumes that a concentration of resources would benefit the city by reducing duplication and increasing economies of scale at the centre. However, in practice, this is resisted by those that perceive it as a cultural imposition which reduces the political power of each town.

The construction of goals is dependent on the subjective and particular understanding of the context. Activities are continued in spite of the disagreement and regardless of the constraints that opposing views have on the capacity of actors to achieve their goals. This is true for practitioners, in

terms of getting support for their place-based projects, and for the decision-makers, in terms of getting buy-in for their plans. Resources are mobilised through the exercise of social capital within groups but the flow of resources between groups and particularly from the centre is likely to have been constrained. This is further entrenched by the disconnection between the grass roots organisations and the decision-makers described in Chapter Six.

The goal of competition between towns, described in Box 13, creates winning or losing outcomes for competing places. The competition is between Burslem, Stoke, and Hanley as it appears Fenton, Longton, and Tunstall have already lost out. This was confirmed in the Stage Two mapping exercise as will be seen below. This inter-town competition is contrasted with 'making Stoke-on-Trent a creative city' which would require everyone to work together. The barriers to collaboration were raised in Chapter Six, and the competitive nature of the towns evidenced here confirms that city-wide collaboration processes like 'the ideal' are the exception rather than the rule.

The cross-district interchange and contact which Jacobs (1961/93) advocated as an inhibitor of containment and generator of diversity is neither incentivised by policy nor pursued for its own rewards. The kinds of niche services a city population can make viable have not emerged. Instead there are multiple small groups affiliated to particular towns, such as the many amateur dramatics societies and choral groups.

In Box 14 the goal, 'to drive the city forward' is attributed to a certain group of 'young creative types' who will achieve this through 'jobs' and 'working hard'. The aim here is to stop money going out of the city with regard to domestic consumption. This is in addition to the perceived net flow of resources out of the city as a result of strategic decisions presented in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative. In Box 13 the profit-making goal for businesses at the commercial centre is aligned by one narrator with the cultural goal of developing audiences. The degree to which groups see their outcomes and goals as shared will influence the likelihood of collaboration and the exercise of social capital (Field, 2003). However, building a consensus is dependent on communication between groups which is negatively impacted by the cultural and political fragmentation described in Chapter Six.

## **The Modalities of Exercised Social Capital**

In the 'city/towns' narrative there are a mix of both associative and authoritative modalities of exercised social capital. Where groups are working together to create an 'identity' and 'personality' based on an affiliation to a particular town then this is on the basis of associational modalities because the activity is voluntary. This would be similar to the modalities of the 'stop-start' narrative, although rather than project-based relationships, they are place-based. There



is no formal requirement to engage in these activities so the exercise of social capital is dependent on modalities of influence, attraction, negotiation, and reciprocity. A shared sense of purpose is generated from place-belonging and fixes the focus at the local level. The lack of support and resource attributed to these activities could impact the degree of participation given the 'collective action problem' where the high costs of participation are seen to outweigh the perceived but uncertain benefits (Rydin and Pennington, 2000).

The competition for resources described in Box 13 indicates that social capital will be exercised to influence, convince, and motivate group members to take part in activities based on identity-building and the empowerment for a particular town. This can be achieved through establishing a 'common threat' where in this case, the centralisation of resource in Hanley is seen as weakening the relative position and power of the towns (Rydin and Pennington, 2000). This activity may also involve advocating and lobbying to groups with resources either inside or outside the area. A current example is where the Prince's Trust Charities have responded to petitions and become involved in a project in Burslem to maintain Burleigh Pottery's two hundred year old production processes. The relationships established through joint working have been used to exercise social capital on other local issues.

At the local authority level and particularly in the planning function, the strategy of concentration around Hanley as the city centre involves both associational

and authoritative modalities. The reference to planners 'presenting the city' in a particular way intimates the need to influence or convince an audience of this particular perspective of Stoke-on-Trent. The relationship between the different audiences and the local authority will determine the degree to which the exercise of social capital is based on associative modalities. For example, when this view is being presented to outside organisations in bids for investment, the extent of influence may depend on previous history or reputation. This may put the local authority on a higher or lower ranking compared with other bidders.

The need to convince outsiders that Stoke-on-Trent operates like a conventional city indicates that there is a value placed on this by the local authority and conversely there is less value in being a confederation of six inter-dependent or independent towns. This may be part of a city boosterism strategy where local authorities compete with other global cities for investment at regional, national, and international levels. Stoke-on-Trent has lost in recent bids to become an Enterprise Zone in 2011 and to house the first 'green' investment bank in 2012. The focus here is on attracting inward investment rather than the supporting the development work which would lead to a redistribution of energy towards the replacement of imports as advocated by Jacobs (1970, 1985). It resembles the same attitudes to development criticised by Jacobs in Pittsburgh's attempts to change its image (Jacobs, 1970).

The concentric city perspective of Stoke-on-Trent is formalised by the local authority in 'branding and badging' exercises which concentrate resource in Hanley through the creation of place-based identities such as the 'Cultural Quarter'. Residents and practitioners are free to acknowledge or refute the denomination. As heard in the narratives these actions are regarded both positively and negatively. Where it is seen positively, social capital can be exercised in pursuit of the common goal of concentration by both businesses and cultural producers. Where the strategy is seen as an imposition of authority to instruct, direct, control or command actors in a specific way, it is unlikely that social capital will be exercised to facilitate the strategy. Instead, the response is one of resistance to giving one place more 'credence' by the creation of a zone.

There is also an inferred opposition that does not come through active or planned resistance, but from the way that network members function independently of each other and in pursuit of their own agendas. The 'organic' activity that 'bubbles up in different places at different times' infers that social capital is exercised through relationships outside of the control of the local authority and without a consensus view. The network members and their mediating relationships will be continuously navigating a sea of environmental change to make the best use of the opportunities that arise. This activity may put them at opposition with each other at different times, in different places, and with different subjective interpretations of the best course of action. The

associational modalities highlighted in the stories where people have come together to achieve a shared goal do not represent all the possible permutations. What has been left unsaid, through the 'silence' narrative for reasons of self-preservation, are perhaps the more aggressive tactics that a context of competition would also stimulate. These might be modalities of coercion, collusion or misrepresentation which, not surprisingly, were not admitted.

The exercise of social capital through mediated relationships will be affected by the disconnection experienced between the local authority and local practitioners described in the previous chapter. This impacts the likely success of the planning strategies due to institutional distrust (Rothstein, 2005), a lack of capacity trust (Ettlinger, 2003), negative experiences in their shared history (Blair, 2001) and a lack of shared purpose (Field, 2003). The divergent subjectivities regarding how Stoke-on-Trent is best understood as a city create a significant constraint on the exercise of social capital.

Scholarship on participation in local planning strategies indicates that power imbalances exist in relationships between local authorities and community groups where more weight is given to businesses and formal public partners (Taylor *et al.*, 2005; Sinclair, 2011; Sullivan, 2005). Taylor and Stoker trace the inequalities to the need for community groups to, 'have something to trade' (Taylor and Stoker, 2011:7). Those groups that can provide policy solutions in

terms of relevant policy evidence, implementation strategies or the capacity to reach certain demographics are more likely to be included in the consultation process (Holman and Rydin, 2013). The lack of perceived value strategic decision makers place on grass roots activity, presented in Chapter Six, mirror these findings and will affect both participation rates and the exercise of social capital between these groups. This points to a lack of reciprocity within certain parts of the network, identified by Coleman (1988) as a required norm for social capital.

## **The Spatialities of Exercised Social Capital**

This 'city/towns' narrative places the exercise of social capital differently according to the way the city is being constructed by network members. For those seeing Stoke-on-Trent as a 'kit of parts' or as a city of competing towns, social capital is exercised most successfully at the local level. The exercise of social capital within localities enables identity formation and place-affiliation based on a historical understanding of Stoke-on-Trent as a confederation of towns, each with a set of unique attributes. The historical and cultural contexts combine to create spatialities of exercised social capital which concentrate activity and resources within designated territories. The lack of population mobility between towns further reinforces this pattern as there appears to be little motivation or interest in cross-use or exchange between the locales. The

local authority's planning strategies seeking to centralise resources in Hanley are perceived as a threat to the power and autonomy of the individual towns. This perceived imposition is resisted and the exercise of social capital is constrained between these two groups who have different understandings of the spatial context and different goals.

The pattern that this activity creates can be seen in Figure 2 which was created in Stage Two of the research. This photograph shows the active connections between participants in February 2012. There are two clear concentrations around Burslem (the top right hand side) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (midway down on the left). Stoke and Hanley lie between these two areas and have less activity. Fenton and Longton to the South, and Tunstall at the bottom, have very little activity in their locations or connections to other places. The conversation which took place around the map confirms the pattern.

#### **Box 15 Conversation round the map – 'going where they feel'**

(021) I think that's the big shock really...to look at that and think – that's supposed to be the city centre and that it's... you know thin – isn't it, the lines that are swirling around there.

(015) They are all kind of passing it really – aren't they, to get to...

(008) I think it's interesting really because it's the people that have dictated where the cultural centres are and cultural quarters are – rather than the council – it's like people are just disregarding that and they are going where they feel.

(004) I also think ...it's down to the strategies that the city council have put in place for these types of places – they said that they had a Cultural Quarter Strategy – yet actually what they did is – it's always been about shopping, so their communication lines, in terms of, having cheaper space and having artists make work and work in those kind of spaces, have sort of been limited because what they want is retail, footfall, and other alternative visitor tourism attraction.

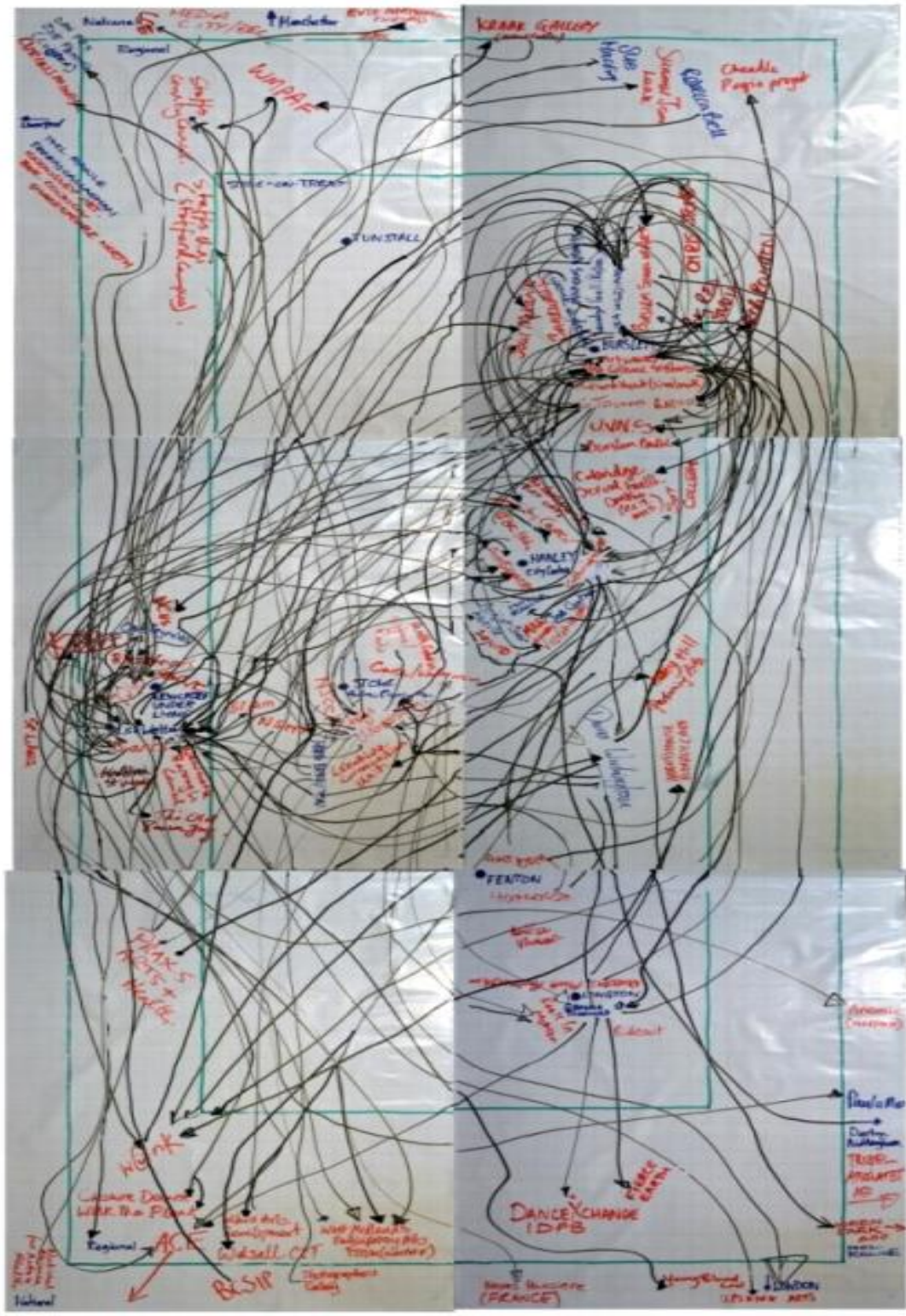


Fig. 2 Results of mapping exercise to show current connections February 2012.

The map, the conversation around the map, and the 'city/towns' narrative combine to answer the question, 'how is exercised social capital placed in Stoke-on-Trent?' The participants' relationships place them outside of the city centre and activities are concentrated in two towns, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Burslem. The presentation and branding of Hanley as a cultural quarter has not directed activity towards it, at least from the perspective of local cultural and creative practice. What is also evident is that Fenton, Longton, and Tunstall have very little activity or connection.

The construction of Stoke-on-Trent as six unique towns with their own identity and personality is not obvious from this map or the transcripts or the network maps where nobody from Fenton, Longton, and Tunstall were named in the sampling process. There are limitations to the exercise in terms of the possibility of bias and having only one slice of the network. However, the narratives in both 'strategy vacuum' and 'city/towns' highlight clear differences in perspective between the local authority and that of grass roots organisations and practitioners. These differences are borne out in how social capital is exercised in the city with people choosing to place themselves and their practice according to their own subjectivities and not solely on the basis of access to resources. This creates a paradox where resources are directed to areas where there is less interest in cultural and creative activity. Participant (004) posits this is due to a fundamental difference in how the city understands



cultural activity in terms of commerce and how creative and cultural practitioners understand it in terms of working and making work.

If exercised social capital is placed in specific areas, is it also true that the exercise of social capital places people in these locations? In other words, how easy is it for practitioners to move around the city and exercise social capital in other places? The 'strategy vacuum' narrative indicates that practitioners were not free to establish relationships wherever they wanted due to the disconnection at a strategic level and the distrust generated by a perceived 'local cartel'. In the 'city/towns' narrative a further disconnection is described in terms of local affiliations, competition for resources, and a by-passing of the centre. This would appear to place people in their own circles and outside the circles of other people. The inside/outside spatiality used in reference to Stoke-on-Trent as a city is replicated inside the city boundary where people are positioned either inside or outside their own town. Connections across the city are possible and can be motivated by particular projects, places or partnerships but intense cross-use, as advocated by Jacobs does not seem to be a particular concern for practitioners or the local authority. It would seem that on the ground, Stoke-on-Trent behaves like a collection of towns which for Jacobs was anathema to city vitality (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970).

From the planners view, Stoke-on-Trent has a city centre and a cultural centre in Hanley but this is experienced more as a designation than a destination. The

question remains whether the city planners can 'make' the city behave like a conventional city or whether it will always be a 'kit of parts'? On the basis of the narratives presented here, both the physical and social disconnections between groupings are likely to negatively impact the exercise of social capital and consequently the achievement of goals. This creates an opportunity for understanding how space and relationships are co-constituted through both grounded systemic observations, following Jacobs (1961/93, 1970, 1985), and through contemporary relational imaginaries, following Massey (1994, 2005). The arguments presented in Chapters One and Two for a reconceptualisation and re-narration of social capital along these lines will be discussed in the following chapter.

# Chapter 8 The 'Stories so Far' of Exercised Social Capital

## *Introduction*

This thesis opened with the challenge of finding a different way to think about social capital in the context of a city. A critical review of the literature in Chapter One highlighted the need for a re-introduction of context, agency, space, place, and power into a re-conceptualisation of social capital informed by contemporary geographical imaginaries. A positive, instrumentalist conceptualisation of social capital endowed with agency, while popular with certain political ideologies, has been criticised in the academic literature (Amin, 2005; Bebbington *et al.*, 2004; Cannone, 2009; DeFilippis, 2001; Fine, 2001, 2007, 2010; Häkli, 2009; Holt, 2008; Mayer, 2003; Mayer and Rankin, 2002; Portes, 1998, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). The use of proxy measures produces analytical circularity and masks causal mechanisms within a black box (Häkli, 2009; Mohan and Mohan 2002; Radcliffe, 2004).

The argument put forward in this thesis is threefold: to re-imagine social capital in terms of contemporary geographic imaginaries; to return to Jane Jacobs' work on city processes to investigate social capital from the ground up; and to engage with narrative forms as a way to reveal linkages between context and agency. An alternative conceptualisation of exercised social capital as a power

effect of mediating relationships following Ettliger (2003), Yeung (2005) and Allen (2003, 2004, 2011) was proposed which also accommodates relations of protest (Mayer and Rankin, 2002; Nagar, 2000; Rankin, 2002). The exercise of social capital is then observed as a process in the specific context of a single case study and analysed in terms of its affect on goal achievement. The question to consider in this chapter is how this approach challenges or changes the way social capital is understood in the context of a city?

The scene setting in Chapter Four and the narratives presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven reveal a range of perspectives on how social capital is exercised and not exercised in the Stoke-on-Trent area. Each narrative is analysed as part of a narrative system to understand how context, agency, and goals produce different effects when social capital is enabled or constrained by networked relationships. The processes of exercised social capital produce patterns of modalities and spatialities which can be observed within the particular context. In this chapter these patterns will be discussed from a systemic perspective, drawing on Jacobs' work and her understanding of the city as a system of organised complexity (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985). The purpose is to understand if, and how this perspective offers a more grounded approach to social capital research. The discussion will follow a similar pattern to the previous chapters by looking first at context(s) and the city; the relationship between context, agency, and goal orientation; power and the modalities of exercising social capital; and the spatialities and topologies of

exercised social capital. The final section will ask, with intentional provocation, what this means for a city 'like' Stoke-on-Trent?

## **Constructing context(s) in space and time**

For social capital theorists, and also present in wider geographical debates, the importance of context is often reduced to a range of specific socio-economic measures or political territorialisations. The treatment of context in this reduced form affords the conclusion that one place has more social capital than another place (Putnam 1993, 1995, 2000), or that one kind of community has more social capital than another kind of community (Coleman, 1988), or that one class has more social capital than another class (Bourdieu, 1986). This thesis shows how context is much more than the co-ordinates of a space; more mobile, dynamic, multiple, subjective, and complex. The stories of social capital must begin with context, for without context the actions taken and their ensuing consequences have little meaning or grounding. For Jacobs (1961/93) working inductively, from the ground up, the unavoidable question of context is privileged so that answers are found from critical observation and not theoretical assumption.

The case study shows how context is understood differently by the participants even though they operate in the same geographical area. These

understandings are based on myriad interconnecting experiences, memories, feelings, subjectivities, and knowledge(s) formed over time. These findings align with Ettlinger's (2003) idea of multiple subjectivities in multiple spheres. Participants hold conflicting views about how best to understand the city depending on what goals they are trying to achieve in particular contexts. This conflict appears as an internal cognitive polyphasia, where two conflicting views can be held by the same person simultaneously e.g. where a participant wants to see the city develop through collaborative efforts but also wants their particular town to 'win' the battle to be the creative hub. These findings contrast with theories, emanating from sociological economics, based on rational choice and utility maximisation (Coleman, 1988) which do not appreciate the messiness of real world contexts. Such complexity and messiness can be understood through a Jacobsian lens of specificity, in terms of how a particular city understands itself. The research reveals the complexity and the internal logic(s) of a particular city where heterogeneous meanings compete for primacy. These meanings are inextricably linked to context which is a more fluid construction than the assumptions of the dominant social capital theories afford.

The construction of multiple contexts by practitioners is an on-going, always in the making process of 'stories so far' (Massey, 2005: 9). In 'the ideal' a context of collaboration was established upfront and informed all ensuing activity. In the 'city/towns' narrative a context of competition is understood as the driver,

and this operates on at least two levels; between the confederated towns and between Stoke-on-Trent and other UK cities competing to win inward investment. The homogenisation of space into fixed territories assumes context as given in the social capital literature. The research reveals the degree to which context is understood as both derived from the wider context and created by the participants through particular strategies. For some, contextual insight is drawn from the current climate of economic hardship, meaning resources are scarce and the context is seen as competitive. This is related specifically to the context in which creative outputs are sold or marketed and raises questions for practitioners: is there enough money to justify more than one creative hub; is there enough interest to develop an audience for cultural offerings; and is cultural development a luxury when basic provision is being cut? In contrast, both 'the ideal' and 'self-sufficiency' narratives construct their understanding of context from within the organisation.

For 'the ideal' this means work always starts with collaboration and 'not letting money get in the way'. In the self-sufficiency narrative the expectation that an artist can earn a living through their work is deemed reasonable and not based solely on prevailing environmental or economic factors. This perspective is combined with another condition by which the context is constructed; 'not being held back by the notion of local'. This strategy enables the organisation to reframe, at least to some extent, the local economic context taken as given in the other narratives. By going out and finding other ways to collaborate, build

partnerships, and secure funding, the organisation changes the context in which they operate. This does not change the context for everybody, as highlighted in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative where these practices are seen as exclusionary. The understanding of context as a creative construction opens up possibilities for academic research to uncover the contexts which are most productive; socially, economically, politically, and culturally for particular groups and particular endeavours. The research reveals how shared understanding(s) of context enable the exercise of social capital.

Jacobs' view of the city as an organised system draws on studies of biological sciences (Jacobs, 1961/93). The analogy is useful but when taken to an extreme starts to become paradoxically deterministic and harks back to debates in which the social sciences rely on the 'hard' sciences for validation (Massey, 2005). The first point to draw out is in differentiating the processes of organisation from 'organised' to organising. There is no end-point or final equilibrium to be achieved in social systems. The organising processes create the difference and multiplicity in often unpredictable ways, what Jacobs' referred to as '*drift*' (Jacobs, 1985). These processes are on-going and the future is therefore always open to novelty. Innovation and novelty are critical to Jacobs' view of how cities prosper and the importance of time for 'development work' is a recurring theme (Jacobs, 1970, 1985). Time and context are inextricably linked and this case study shows that different orientations to time produce different effects on the exercise of social capital.



Participants rely on memories of shared history to devise strategies for action. Histories are shared by groups, organisations, institutions and by the occupants or users of a space or place. The temporal context of shared memories place participants within certain trajectories and these perspectives are then linked to the narrative timelines of particular actions and strategies. Evocations of Burslem as 'the mother town' relate to the eighteenth century domination of ceramics and entrepreneurial success in this particular area. This narrative contextualises time in terms of past achievement to validate the argument of future dominance. By contrast, the present day consumption of leisure is called upon to envisage a new city centre of 'trendy, cool, young people' enjoying the fruits of 'hard-work' in contemporary landscapes where 'all the crap' has been erased. This narrative situates strategies in the present-day, not the near or distant past. Multiple narrative histories create multiple trajectories and diverse possible futures; this research confirms that there is no single narrative or single context (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Massey, 2005).

Time is both contextual and significant for the exercise of social capital. The narratives reveal how time is understood in terms of the different temporal orientations of participants. In both 'the ideal' and 'self-sufficiency' narratives, the long term goals of the organisation inform the orientation of the activity towards building programmes that can be sustained over the medium to long term. 'The ideal' narrative identifies having enough time as a critical condition

for getting the right relationships in place before delivering the project. In the 'stop-start' narrative, the orientation is towards the short-term and getting the project up and running. Participants run out of time when competing demands are made and basic survival has to be prioritised. What is noticeably absent in the narratives is an institutional view of time. While there have been repeated attempts at creating plans for the city several participants commented on the amount of consultation which the city undertook but has never acted upon (Jayne, 2000, 2004). This absence may present a further constraint on negotiating a shared understanding of the temporal context in which actors have to decide strategic directions.

Time has to be invested in networking practices and can also be wasted in failed attempts to mobilise resources. The precarious nature of project work adds to the complexity of deciding where to apply effort and invest time (Christopherson, 2002, 2011; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010; McGuigan, 2010). This raises the question of how best to understand time in terms of enabling the exercise of social capital? The research shows that the longer-term orientations appear to better enable the exercise of social capital and the achievement of goals. However, this cannot be taken in isolation as temporal context also relates to goal-sharing and some short-term projects would probably not benefit from long-term views. What is pertinent is that time orientation is an integral part of the construction of context mediated through networked relationships. When grounding studies in everyday experience the

contextual translation of both time and space become fluid and therefore need a more nuanced treatment than that offered by theories based on static, universal abstractions (Sheppard, 2011).

There is a paradoxical tension between creating an open future of multiple possibilities and time-bound orientations and goals. Setting a timeframe in terms of understanding the city's history and its near or far-off future may be another starting point for negotiating context. What is demonstrated in this thesis is that there is more than one treatment of time, and these treatments produce different effects for practitioners and consequently the city. In Coleman's work (1988), time is simplified to a snap-shot, for Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000), time is simplified by a single narrative of progress which erases the different histories and trajectories within regions. In Bourdieu's work (1986), time is understood as a relationship between generations and largely closed to outside influence. The treatment advocated on the basis of this research and following both Massey (2005) and Jacobs (1961/93, 1970, 1985) is one that acknowledges different trajectories through time, with different starting points, orientations and effects. In particular, the exercise of social capital is contingent on both having and taking the time to build relationships and this depends in part on a shared understanding of time within its particular context.

## **Context, Agency, and Goal Orientation**

Yeung (2005) stresses the importance of agency for relational geography and this is echoed in the criticisms of social network analysis (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994) which privileges the network structure and an actor's position within it. For Jacobs the focus is on the processes within systems of inter-relating parts. From a narrative perspective, without action there is no momentum and therefore no possibility for change. The case study shows how participants devise strategies for action based on both their understanding of the context and their desired goals or outcomes. While this may appear to be a simple linear progression, to get x do y, the evidence shows that this is not the case on the ground. Notwithstanding the complexities of understanding the particular context outlined above, there are always other factors to consider plus a host of unknowns that have the potential to impact actors in any number of permutations.

This messiness is inherent in social systems and administrative attempts to reduce the complexity to numeric values in two variable analysis was fundamental to what Jacobs saw as the problem with city planning (Jacobs, 1961/93). For Jacobs who observed city neighbourhoods like Boston's North End re-generate from within, the adherence to statistical analysis represented a refusal to understand the ingenuity of city processes and the multiple possibilities for innovation. The research within this thesis shows that agency

is fundamental to city processes and a relational view without agency is like a story without action, that is to say, lifeless.

The actions participants take to exercise social capital are dependent on context and also productive of context. These strategic actions are numerous and require a plethora of skills: to attract and establish networks and partnerships; to build collaborative projects and programmes; to locate and access resources; to negotiate the exchange of resources; to create, negotiate and agree shared goals; to resolve conflicts when they occur; to assess partners and projects on an ongoing basis; and to deliver projects that can be sustained in the current climate. This is a rather positive list and the case study also reveals actions which are seen as exclusionary or protectionist. All actions are to some extent countered by the need to maintain reputation and avoid negative consequences. This is demonstrated by the 'silence narrative' where some network members admit to not asking difficult questions when they feel that to do so would put them at a disadvantage.

Certain of these behaviours allude to Coleman's (1988) norms of reciprocity that work through fear of reprisal or sanction. However, unlike Coleman's theory, the narratives cannot be understood solely in terms of utility maximising behaviour or methodological individualism. The importance of non-economic benefits to network membership are clearly demonstrated in the list of resources sought (Table 2, p.150), where enthusiasm and friendship are

prioritised alongside both material and financial resources. As argued in Chapter One and proven in the neurosciences economic rationality does not account for the way human's make decisions in real life situations (Damasio, 1994). Holt, one of the few geographers to engage with 'social capital' has argued for the importance of 'beyond conscious, habitual, embodied and non-reflexive elements of practice' which give a 'more nuanced understanding of agency' (Holt, 2008: 232). Holt *et al.* suggest 'that social 'capital' is, at heart, largely based upon emotional and affectual relationships that exceed rational agency' (Holt *et al.*, 2013: 2). The degree to which emotion is the basis of 'social capital' cannot be confirmed by the case study but the inclusion of affect in concepts of agency is certainly supported.

A common theme running through both the narratives and the literature on creative and cultural practice highlights the importance of excitement and buzz (Gill and Pratt, 2008). Excitement is repeatedly reported as one of the conditions for action and is instrumental in getting relationships and projects off the ground. It would be difficult to quantify the value of buzz or the economic return on excitement. This is also true of the vocational nature of creative and cultural work where 'passionate engagement, creativity and self-expression' are also outcomes valued alongside economic benefits (Gill and Pratt, 2008: 18). When observing agency within a social system it is necessary to look at interactions that resist simple categorisation under the headings economic, social, political, cultural, personal or emotional. Observing behaviour as

'enacted realities' as an assemblage of many categories, may be more useful if the purpose is to understand how the system is working or not working (Law, 2004).

From a systems perspective what can be observed is that the actions of practitioners although not always predictable are not haphazard or random. Taking each narrative in turn, coherence is evident between the particular understanding of context, the desired outcomes, and the actions which link them together, regardless of their actual success. Similarly, where goals are not achieved, certain actions are reported as absent. In the 'strategy vacuum' narrative, conversations are not taking place because relationships between the local council and some grass roots organisations have not been established. In a context of disconnection and distrust, behaviour is affected and this in turn affects the exercise of social capital and the achievement of goals. Behaviours can be affected by policy and as Jacobs argued social capital can be destroyed if relationships and people are treated as interchangeable or insignificant (Jacobs, 1961/93). It is real people who choose how to respond to the actions of others by using their experience, skills, memory and any number of subjectivities garnered in multiple spheres (Ettlinger, 2003). In this research a range of strategies and processes have been demonstrated which are irreducible to purely economic gain or 'rational choice'. These multiple, contested and competing strategies, which are absent in the social capital

literature, are critical to understanding the exercise of social capital and the mobilisation of resources.

The sharing of goals is identified as important in the social capital literature (Coleman, 1988; Field, 2003; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). However, in Putnam's communitarian approach it is masked by a rather positive view of a civic consensus, and in Coleman's focus on households it is reduced to the mother's expectations of educational success. The narratives demonstrate that goal sharing as a process is informed by context; goals have to be negotiated and are much less certain than the social capital literature suggests. In the 'city/towns' narrative the divergent understanding of contexts produce a variety of competing goals; to be the creative centre of Stoke-on-Trent; to establish or preserve the uniqueness of independent towns; to present Stoke-on-Trent as a conventional city to potential investors; to draw audiences into the centre for both cultural and economic consumption. Some of these emerge from the ground up while others are created via policy.

The different narratives and discourses around goal-setting and goal-sharing are contested and this produces a fragmented cultural landscape where groups engage selectively with partners that share their particular vision. This fragmentation of exercised social capital is shown in the map of connections in Chapter Seven. If, as both the literature and the empirical evidence suggests, shared goals are important to the exercise of social capital, then the



disconnection between top-down policy and grass roots activity points to a potential systemic fault. If communication cannot pass between the neighbourhood and decision-making powers then this affects the city's capacity for prioritising action and allocating resources in times of need (Jacobs, 1961/93). This capacity to solve the problems which cities generate through the exercise of social capital is fundamental to what Jacobs saw as city vitality. The social relationships which criss-cross the city are the means of communication, without which neighbourhood problems, isolated from the strategic decision-makers, continue and worsen.

City vitality is dependent on the creation of strategies which anticipate and resolve problems. This process is dependent on the existence of city-wide networks which mediate the exercise of social capital. This research indicates that the networks and strategies formed in a context of disconnection and distrust do not provide the strategic decision-makers with the means of communication to prioritise and allocate resources across the city. More open communication would be a starting point to understanding how goals are being set, how resources are being allocated, and how these are intended to benefit the city and resolve problems experienced by city residents. These processes are inextricably linked to power relationships which we turn to next.

## **Modalities of exercising social capital: enabling power relationships.**

Some of the most vehement critiques of social capital theory respond to the absence of power and its effects on the ability of actors to mobilise resources. Putnam's (1993, 1995, 2000) presumption of consensus-building excludes social and political protest both within and between social groupings. As Mayer and Rankin (2002) contend, social protest is in itself a source of social capital as people come together to work towards shared goals. Woolcock's (2001) addition of 'linking' social capital recognises that vertical links to power work differently than intra-group 'bonding' and inter-group 'bridging' social capital (Putnam, 2000). In this vein, Rankin (2002) shows how the liberal foundations of social capital theory are found in micro-finance development programmes aimed at women's solidarity groups. Following a Marxist interpretation of social capital, and following Bourdieu, she re-inserts the importance of socio-structural perspectives and draws attention to the importance of context. Her analysis recognises that social capital gained from associational activity is not as consensual as it appears within Putnam's model.

Jacobs, an activist with first-hand experience of taking on city hall and winning, understood the importance of linking up to decision-makers as an essential component of social capital, without which there could be no effective

mobilisation of resources when city neighbourhoods became overwhelmed by problems (Jacobs, 1961/93). This function of networked social relationships was effectively tested by the city's capacity to solve emerging problems; that is by directing the attention of power-brokers and consequently resources and germane policy towards areas of need. In Jacobs' conceptualisation of social capital, associational activity, while potentially productive, was not the end goal for city residents and neighbourhoods (Jacobs, 1961/93). Social capital was seen as a device for communicating up, down and across the city in times of need when solutions were dependent on decision-makers who might be at a distance from the particular neighbourhood problems.

The conceptualisation, put forward in this thesis, of exercised social capital as an effect of power relationships draws on Jacobs (1961/93), Allen (2003) and Yeung (2005). This requires an appreciation of nuance given that the exercise of social capital is not a straightforward story of domination and submission or authority and control. Social capital is positioned on what Allen refers to as 'the quieter registers of power' (Allen, 2011: 296). It is necessary to understand these processes within the wider political system and this research suggests that the exercise of social capital as a power effect of networked relationships has its own modalities. The modalities of exercised social capital are revealed through the particular relationships which mediate power in this particular form.

The distinction Allen (2003) makes between the modalities domination and authority and those that are associative lies within the quality of the mediating relationships. For domination modalities to be effective, an inequality will exist within the relationship where one has *power over* the other and can force a desired behaviour or outcome. This capacity can be drawn from institutional and legal authority in terms of legitimating power or through less formal routes which rely on relative judgements about one partner's strength or dominance. By contrast, the associative modalities are effective when partnerships are established on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Consequently each party is free to choose whether or not to participate as there is no legitimating force or control. This research shows that the exercise of social capital operates via associational modalities which enable partners' collective actions and give them the *power to* achieve goals collaboratively. These goals would not be possible (or would be much more difficult) to achieve independently which provides a motivation for collaboration.

By analysing the narratives in terms of particular actions and behaviours the research reveals a number of consistent patterns to these modalities. As a precursor to establishing network relationships, modalities of seduction and attraction generate interest and excitement at the prospect of working together. This is followed by modalities of influencing, negotiating, convincing and persuading as forms of exchange and goal sharing are established. In some cases this may lead to other modalities coming into play. Modalities of support

may be required to nurture the relationship, project or individual through difficult times. Exercising social capital in networked relationships depends upon a host of skills which enable different actors to work together without resorting to force, domination, legitimising authority or control. The effectiveness of these modalities is evaluated on an on-going basis by the participants where the influence of a partner may wax or wane depending on their relative performance. The transcripts were replete with examples of projects and relationships which had come together and been sustained through the associative modalities of social capital.

By contrast, where power modalities of domination and/or authority are present the exercise of social capital is perceived to be constrained. This can be seen particularly in the 'city/towns' narrative where the views of the city council, regarding the representation of the city, are seen as a cultural imposition. Yet, this is not a simple case of one party's power over another because the city council are not able to force residents or practitioners to subscribe to its view. The council are seen to employ domination modalities: the edict from above e.g. 'the Mandate for Change'; selective resource allocation policies favouring Hanley or disadvantaging other towns; and spatial strategies which concentrate activity in Hanley's 'cultural quarter'. Despite the mobilisation of resources to achieve the council's vision, practitioners have largely ignored, resisted or challenged the imposition by choosing to work outside of the city centre or outside of the city. What this indicates is that the exercise of social capital

cannot be achieved by dictate, in so much that people are free to choose with whom they collaborate and where to direct their efforts.

This is an important finding if the exercise of social capital is deemed beneficial for the city as a mechanism by which the city communicates up and down strategic decision-making hierarchies. If policy-makers or city officials want to understand what is going on in their constituencies, at the ground level, then these relationships need to be taken seriously as city assets. The seemingly intractable socio-economic problems observed and experienced in Stoke-on-Trent might be symptomatic of a systemic failure in recognising the value of grass roots organisations and vertical communication/power linkages.

The 'strategy vacuum' reports a perceived disconnection between groups which is grounded in a context of distrust and partisan power plays which appear to serve a 'divide and rule' strategy. Grass roots practitioners experience a devaluing of their input by the city council, and a corresponding exclusion from the strategic decision-making process. The first condition of exercising associative modalities, i.e. equality between parties, is not being met. This is compounded by a lack of respect or 'capacity trust' (Ettlinger, 2003) which practitioners reported as a lack of certain institutional resources such as leadership, vision, and risk-taking (Table 2, p.150). These institutional failures have become part of the shared history of cultural development in the city and will inform future behaviour and trajectories. In the 'self-sufficiency' narrative it

results in a by-passing of local power structures. In the 'stop-start' narrative it results in projects not scaling up and practitioners feeling frustrated. In the 'city/towns' narrative it means that competition between factions in the city are intensified as there is no perceived reward for cross-city creative endeavour.

This leaves some grass roots organisations in a precarious position; if they are not seen as trusted or preferred partners they cannot climb the strategic ladder and are isolated from strategic input. At the same time the local authority loses the potential of these relationships to increase the exercise of social capital across the city. Drawing on these findings the question of power and the exercise of social capital can be reframed as one of enablement; how can the city enable the exercise of social capital? For Jacobs (1961/93) the process starts on city sidewalks with informal contacts being made which infer no unreasonable leverage or obligation for either party. It then scales up through associational activity and city cross-use which is achieved through various diversity generators. It is fully actualised when city problems are addressed through these mechanisms and germane policy is informed by ground reality.

As detailed in Chapter One, the social capital literature focuses on the importance of generalised trust for associational activity most often measured by survey data and proxy measures. The importance of trust for industrial development has also been given extensive attention in economic geography where trust is understood 'as a complex social phenomenon or process shaped

by knowledge, emotions, reputation, appearance, gender identities, place-specific institutions, and power relations' (James 2006: 430). Banks *et al.* (2000) combine Beck's (1992) treatment of risk with Giddens's (1990, 1991, 1994) concept of 'active trust' to provide a framework for understanding the importance of these processes for cultural producers. In terms of the case study trust comes up with reference to particular relationships. In 'the ideal' and 'self-sufficiency' narratives participants talk about trust-building with partners. In the 'strategy vacuum' and 'silence' narratives it is the lack of trust which is highlighted. However, elsewhere in the transcripts trust is rarely mentioned (a total of eleven occurrences). On the face of it the concept of trust does not appear to be playing a significant part in the narrative construction of meaning. However, this finding is not conclusive as trust may be inferred or interpreted in other ways. Placing the analytical focus on what the exercise of social capital achieves in terms of the narrative performance avoids the difficulties in building *a-priori* conceptual frameworks for operationalising multiple complex processes.

With regard to power and its modalities, the exercise of social capital in Stoke-on-Trent is constrained by the use of ineffective modalities which attempt to direct behaviour through the use of domination and control. As a result decision-makers are by-passed and this results in the fragmentation of the cultural infrastructure, where groups or islands of activity are not connected to each other or strategic influence. This is preventing the exercise of social capital between decision-makers and those on the ground. The absence of



equality and respect which would provide the starting point for relationship-building maintains the current impasse, as does the 'silence narrative' where dissent is not voiced for fear of reprisal.

This paints a bleak outlook for the city if it were not for 'the ideal' narrative which illustrates that this is not the only story. There are occasions when organisations work together with local councils and scale up using institutional delivery and funding mechanisms to produce sustainable cultural programmes. The point to stress is that this strategy relies on getting the right relationships in place first and is constructed in a context of open collaboration. This approach enables social capital to be exercised, obstacles to be overcome, and shared goals to be achieved. The organisations that displayed 'the ideal' characteristics are seen as 'trusted partners' by the local authorities and this standing is informed by shared history and success.

The activity in 'the ideal' is directed by the organisation not the local authority or funding institution. The organisation finds ways to translate policy into successful bids for the work that they want to undertake and for which there is a demonstrable local need. In this way they become the delivery mechanism for institutional outcomes. This skill in policy translation was mentioned across 'the ideal' narrative and may be at least as important as the exercise of social capital. The policy translation function that has been developed by some

organisations brings together the context, agency, and shared goals which enable activities to be financially viable from an institutional perspective.

Putnam (2000) refers to general skills accumulated through associational activity whereas Jacobs (1961/93) explicitly refers to the skills citizens need to navigate political and administrative protocols and processes. 'The ideal' narrative provides an alternative story for cultural development which is already grounded in the realities of working in Stoke-on-Trent and not imported from outside the area. It comes with its own contextual constructs where relationships are privileged over purely economic outcomes and both time and goals are oriented towards the long-term. It shows that the associative modalities of social capital can enable organisations to work with institutional structures when the mediating relationships are based on equality and respect. For local authorities wishing to enable the exercise of social capital the starting point suggested here is to better understand how the quality of their relationships are mediating power, whether through domination or association.

## **The spatialities of exercised social capital: folding, knotting, and cutting topological space.**

Chapter One put forward the argument that the exercise of social capital is an inherently spatial phenomenon. The geographical starting point for the thesis

responds to certain simplifications and reductions made in the social capital literature and in wider debates regarding how space is understood from different disciplinary perspectives. This informed the conceptualisation of exercised social capital as a power effect which, following is 'always already spatial' (Allen, 2004: 30),. Mohan and Mohan (2002) argue that social capital has its own spatialities according to different patterns of government intervention, volunteerism, participation, and economic development. This leads them to question the spatial scale at which social capital operates and to look for disaggregated measures. However, this approach encounters the same problems encountered in neighbourhood effects research where the correlation between pattern and process cannot be reliably demonstrated (Van Ham and Manley, 2012). By observing the exercise of social capital as a process, this research reveals those spatialities by drawing out both *how* and *where* it places actors.

This draws upon contemporary geographic imaginaries which understand space as co-constitutive of society and means reformulating our conceptions of both time and space,

'recognising crucial characteristics of the spatial: its multiplicity, its openness, the fact that it is not reducible to 'a surface', its integral relations with temporality. The a-spatial view of globalisation, like the old story of modernity, obliterates the spatial into the temporal and in that

very move also impoverishes the temporal (there is only one story to tell)' (Massey, 2005: 88).

The recognition of many stories, multiple trajectories and an open future is understood as 'stories so far' by Massey (2005: 9). The multiple narratives of exercising social capital presented in the previous chapters illustrate this understanding of space and its co-construction in a real world setting. This research contributes empirically to our understanding of these processes and brings what can appear abstract and theoretical closer to lived experience.

Jacobs' understanding of space starts from the ground up; where lived experiences happen. For her, space is understood through usage in terms of what functions neighbourhoods perform for the city (Jacobs, 1963/91). In this way, streets, parks, and buildings are understood as integral to social processes operating to produce or destroy city vitality. Drawing on Jacobs to understand social capital processes means incorporating an understanding of place and space which is neither homogenised nor frozen by methodological territorialism. This approach sends the observer onto the street to see what is happening in reality and in its own spatial specificity. Jacobs pulled her observations together into a 'system of thought' to show that cities were always in the making, and with the 'right' conditions, could be incubators for social and economic innovation (Jacobs, 1963/91). The research reported in this thesis draws on Jacobs' city observations by taking the critical gaze down to street

level in the form of participant narratives. These are the eyes on the street which simultaneously create and make sense of real city contexts.

The participant narratives illustrate the multiplicity of experiences in the city and how these produce different spatialities and topologies of exercised social capital. The topological frame encourages the conceptualisation of space as more than a flat surface, understood only in terms of distance or proximity (Allen, 2004, 2011). Different spatial patterns emerge from the exercise of social capital and indicate possibilities for employing the topological frame. Instead of fixed political boundaries or nested spatial hierarchies, space can be understood in relationship to the participants' strategies for exercising social capital.

In 'the ideal' the strategy is based on relationships which bring in resources and expertise from the community and is understood as simultaneously local, regional, national, and global. The spatial context is co-constructed by the issue at hand: racism; homelessness; juvenile crime; disability etc. Starting with the issue, relationships are established with partners who both recognise the significance of the problem and share a willingness to collaborate. At this point, the limits of a locally defined problem are extended into other spaces and these spaces are pulled closer together. Distance is mediated by the process of interaction and relationship. This is not the same as the erasure of distance by communication technology although this may facilitate the process. It is

specifically in the relationship-making where this particular story of space is constructed. The topological imaginary might represent this as a folding in of space as if pleating the space between the organisation and its partners (Allen, 2011).

In the 'self-sufficiency' narrative social capital is exercised by 'going out' and 'bringing back in' and responds to a concern that the flow of ideas, people and resources is predominantly out of the city. This mobility responds and is a challenge to a notion of local which is seen as restrictive or constraining. The sense of being part of an international community is important and space is connected through relationship and shared identity. For the organisations that reach self-sufficiency, their independence frees them from local constraints whilst they remain committed to a vision and objective for nurturing their locality. In this sense, space is shared by a community of practice. Artists in Stoke-on-Trent expand their notion of local through their relationships and sense of shared purpose with artists in other locations. This creates a different notion of local based on the mobility of practitioners.

The notional spatial limitations are dissolved by an imagination of relationship not dictated by physical distance or political boundaries. This connectedness ties groups together to form different topological knots which change over time; any point on a string can be brought closer to another point through different knotting behaviour. The strategy is selective and is not totalising i.e. it does not

attempt to connect to everyone. This is a concern in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative and to some extent in the 'city/towns' narrative where self-sufficiency is understood in terms of exclusion or isolation from the local.

The 'stop-start', 'strategy vacuum' and 'city/towns' narratives categorise the topologies of exercised social capital as disconnected islands of activity cut off from each other and the wider context. The social capital exercised in these stories is described in terms of spatial fragmentation and disconnection. The flows and patterns produced by these relationships can be seen in the map of interactions in Chapter Seven which shows areas of intense activity and areas which are only very thinly connected. In the 'stop-start' narrative, the temporal pattern of activity is sporadic, relationships are brought together for short periods and are then dispersed. This is due in part to the nature of cultural work but is further compounded by the social and spatial fragmentation where strategies, projects and people are not connected across the city. Stoke-on-Trent, in this case, behaves like a collection of towns and for Jacobs (1961/93) this type of social containment was anathema to city processes. This research contrasts to the benefits of clustering found in Banks' *et al.*'s study of Manchester's cultural production where 'dense social and spatial matrices of internal and external, social and professional ties situated within a small area of the city centre and city fringe... encourages networking and cross-sector fertilisation' (Banks *et al.*, 2000: 462)

The city relationships and the spaces they co-create add to the vitality of the city as a whole when they are open, mobile, dynamic, and diverse. City residents need reasons to travel and connect to other city neighbourhoods; to form relationships with people outside their immediate vicinity, to encounter new people and to exchange ideas. Jacobs' (1961/93) conception of social capital brings a grounded spatiality to the process. Putnam's (2000) idea of 'bridging' social capital where relationships are defined as inter-community links and contrasted with intra-community 'bonding' social capital does not capture the importance of mobility in these relationships. City relationships through which the exercise of social capital produces sufficient buzz and excitement, draws people out of their homes and neighbourhoods onto lively city streets. These streets perform functions for the city in terms of safety, entertainment or informal sociality.

In the case study, these relationships are either absent or contained by territorial allegiances. If people will not travel between towns then following Jacobs' understanding of city vitality, the city of Stoke-on-Trent is set to continue on a path of socio-economic decline as a region by-passed by investment and lacking the internal infrastructure necessary for the incubation of innovation (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985). However, this fatalistic outlook (which was found in Jayne's 2003 study of Stoke-on-Trent) pre-supposes a singular trajectory for cities and a single narrative, where a city is either more or less developed. Understanding space in terms of multiple stories and the



relationships that produce them provokes the question, is there an alternative story for Stoke-on-Trent given its unique spatial configuration and its co-constituted relationships? If the exercise of social capital and other city processes co-create the city, then to what extent can these be understood, predicted, or even managed, and in what ways does this understanding change the way we think about cities?

## **What does this mean for a city 'like' Stoke-on-Trent?**

There are at least three provocations inferred in this question. The first refers to making sense of the research in terms of what it means and for whom the interpretations are true. The second refers to the 'cityness' of Stoke-on-Trent which has been challenged by the research findings. The third refers to the use of the word 'like' which infers that one city is like another and that these similarities produce systems of understanding or ways to read the city which can be generalised. This is often deemed a methodological issue but Massey's conceptualisation of space as a collection of multiple and unbounded stories raises an ontological problem in understanding the city as a single entity, and as capable of recognising and understanding itself (Massey, 2005). To acknowledge these three provocations as specifically relational issues, and not merely semantic distractions, means addressing them as an interconnected problem.

With regard to interpretation of research, the most obvious tension is the power relationship between the researcher and the researched. The question of interpretation is problematic as the writer of the thesis is evidently not the same as either the researched group or the city. However, there is a wider question about sense-making and the city. In the case study, the city is represented by thirty respondents who each have a stake in how the city is understood. The multiple constructions of context and their corresponding strategies are evidence of a tension where different and potentially competing meanings result in different outcomes for participants. The question of how the city is understood by different groups is neither insignificant nor unambiguous. It impacts the research author's responsibility in drawing conclusions because there is no single 'city' to speak for and no legitimating authority to speak for 'it'. A narrative approach affords multiplicity which has been represented in part by the selection of narrative themes and narrators, but who speaks for the city or how the city is understood must be left open.

Jacobs drew authority from direct observation and what was instantly recognisable to city residents. Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) and Coleman (1988) draw on scientific measurement which can be scrutinised for statistical rigour. In a study of narrative, interpretation is drawn from the participant experience which is subjective, multiple, contradictory, and on-going. This multiplicity is a finding in itself; the city does not have one meaning, one story, or one

trajectory. It is through the power relationships and emerging discourse that one finds how different interpretations are being played out. The exercise of social capital provides an example of how these power relationships and modalities make a difference to outcomes in the city for different groups.

In the 'stories so far' of Stoke-on-Trent there is no clear winner or single interpretation. The multiple stories are all fighting for airspace and it is difficult to assess whether this is itself a constraint on the exercise of social capital or whether this produces a different pattern which could be productive of city diversity. While it may be tempting to advocate for a single story with a single voice, attempts at this route by the city council have so far been unsuccessful. This is the mistake Jacobs attributes to city planners when they look from a distance and see what should be there rather than what is actually happening on the ground. However, what is actually happening in Stoke-on-Trent, based on the diversity within the narratives remains contradictory. There are experiences of disconnection and suspicion within the network at the same time as collaboration and support.

The difficult question, raised in the 'strategy vacuum' narrative, is whether or not Stoke-on-Trent is fundamentally fragmented? If this is the case, then the social relationships which co-constitute the space would also be defined by fragmentation. In Jacobsian terms, this puts the 'cityness' of Stoke-on-Trent under scrutiny and asks whether a collection of towns can ever behave like a

city? Jacobs wrote in support of cities as engines of economic growth and while she eschewed any idea of a city blueprint she was adamant that cities and towns were categorically different (Jacobs, 1961/93, 1970, 1985). The reasoning for this is based on the way cities have to accommodate large numbers of strangers and at the same time keep citizens and particularly their children safe.

The city processes which function as safeguards rely on Jacobs' key diversity generators: mixed primary use, short blocks; high population density and a mix of building age (Jacobs, 1961/93). These conditions create the context in which both the 'eyes on the street' and 'informal sidewalk contacts' function as self-organising city processes. These conditions afford sufficient opportunity and motivation for people to be out and about at different times so that strangers can be assimilated into city neighbourhoods without fear. In towns or suburbs these fears are allayed by the fact that people know each other, strangers are identifiable as such and can be more easily scrutinised which makes them less of a threat. According to Jacobs, it is the combination of social relationships and space which create different urban forms; up-close and personal in self-contained towns, at a distance and private in open cities (Jacobs, 1961/93).

If this is the case, it should be possible to categorise Stoke-on-Trent's urban form in terms of its co-constituting social relationships and space. With the exception of 'the ideal' there is a continuous theme of containment within the

narratives; inside/outside Stoke-on-Trent; inside/outside the six towns; inside/outside the 'local cartel'; and inside/outside the strategic decision making process. Social capital is exercised within these groupings and this indicates that social relationships maintain the existing urban form of independent towns rather than co-creating an integrated city. This aligns with contemporary geographic imaginaries in which 'space-time' is understood as 'a configuration of social relations' (Massey, 1994: 3). It follows that certain configurations of relationships can be identified with particular kinds of spaces. Drawing on both Jacobs and Massey, social relationships must be taken seriously if urban forms and social processes are to be understood as co-constitutive.

Stoke-on-Trent's unique spatial configuration co-constitutes social relationships that are contained within the towns. When looking at the space in terms of a city this creates the perception of fragmentation, as the independent towns do not appear to join up. This challenges the view that the city is somehow fundamentally fragmented and situates the problem in the co-constitution of the space through social relationships. The case study shows how fragmentation is co-constituted by the relationships whereby groups do not agree on a shared understanding of context. The city council adhere to a one-city vision while practitioners prefer a narrative of independent towns. The essential lines of communication between groups are perceived as either broken or non-existent. The social relationships necessary to co-constitute an integrated city do not appear to exist in the network. The co-constitution of the space as a collection

of towns is not institutionally resourced. The possibility of creating a new or unique trajectory for Stoke-on-Trent as a 'city' remains open but the social relationships which will co-constitute this story are not apparent within the case study.

To make sense of a space via its social relationships challenges the traditional way of thinking about cities in terms of their political or geographic boundaries, population size, or economic output. It means taking the 'relational' seriously; not just the existence and structure of network relationships but their relationality and agency (Yeung, 2005). This thesis uses the exercise of social capital to illustrate the importance of relational processes and the need to foreground them in their specific contexts. The 'stories so far' of Stoke-on-Trent must be understood in their own terms and through the social relationships and space by which they are co-constituted.

Despite the dominance of city boosterism agendas and the creative city literature (Florida 2002; Landry, 2006, 2008) there are other possibilities for understanding cities. The future is always open to novelty and surprise (Massey, 2005). Putting the co-constitution of social relationships and space at the foreground of these debates forces the re-insertion of place, context, agency and power. This means telling stories about the socio-economy which cannot be reduced to simplistic economic models or static geographic imaginaries. It starts with understanding the relationships between actors in

their everyday lives and, following in Jacobs' footsteps, working from the ground up, looking for the very particularity of those spaces and those contexts in which patterns will emerge dynamically. Jacobs understood this method as a systemic way of understanding cities which still holds true today. Drawing on Jacobs' method and applying it to a post-industrial British urban context produces new insights into the grounded social relationships which perform the city (Jacobs, 1961/93). To understand what this means for a city like Stoke-on-Trent starts with understanding those relationships: where (context), how (agency) and why (goals) they are constructed by actors; how (modalities) and where (spatialities) they place those actors; and how these processes co-constitute the spaces in which they are performed.

## **Chapter 9 Conclusions: making space for space-making stories.**

Following the research aim, the inductive methods developed by Jane Jacobs in her observation of American cities in the 1960's were adapted for an academic study and applied to a contemporary, post-industrial, British setting to reveal new insights into how social interactions relate to city vitality. The objectives for the research set out in the introduction will now be revisited to ascertain what has been learnt from this approach.

The first objective, 'to provide a framework which re-imagines social capital as inherently spatial, as constituted in and by space, and as an effect of the mediated social and power relations found in networks' has been resolved in two ways. The first was to reconceptualise social capital using a relational framework derived from contemporary geographic imaginaries of place, space, agency, and power (Allen, 2003, 2004; Ettliger, 2003; Massy 1994, 2005; Yeung, 2005). This framework afforded a different understanding of social capital as an effect of power relations rather than as a static fund and directed attention to the socio-spatial practices of actors in exercising social capital through their mediating relations. The second resolution is produced by the analysis of the participant narratives which shows in what contexts, places and spaces the exercise of social capital is enabled or constrained by mediating relations. The analysis demonstrates how in a complex system the spatialities



of exercised social capital are co-constituted by interacting components: the mediating network relationships; the agency, goals, and strategies of actors; the multiple constructions of context; and different power modalities. This allows the thesis to conclude that the process of exercising social capital is inherently spatial and can be understood as embedded in the space, place, context and mediating relationships of particular actors. This is a significant divergence from the literature on social capital which pays scant attention to the spatial embeddedness of social relations.

The second objective of the research was to explore in-depth the case study of a creative network operating in the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and its surrounding areas, between 2007 and 2011. This use of a case study responds to the need to understand the phenomena in the context of its production following Yin (2004). The choice of Stoke-on-Trent as a non-conventional city with its alternative geographical and political structure foregrounds how space is co-constituted in social relationships. It also allowed the research to explore ideas of cityness from the perspective of participants. The findings show how the particularities of Stoke-on-Trent produce certain behaviours, patterns, and strategies for participants when they attempt to exercise social capital. The research concludes that the spatialities of particular places and the co-constituting affect they have on mediating relationships can be explored close up and in detail through grounded empirical investigation. This confirms the multi-dimensional aspect of social capital (Woolcock, 2010) by exposing the

heterogenous agencies within a network and confirms Ettlenger's (2003) understanding of the multiple rationalities and dehomogenized trust which are brought to bear in different spheres at different times.

The term 'creative network' was employed as an open denomination loosely following Jacobs' idea of creativity as the work of problem-solving in cities (Jacobs, 1961/93). Participants were recruited through self-identification with the aim of the research as an exploration of creative and cultural networks in the city. As a result the criteria defining each case was largely determined by the participants and not by government classifications of 'creative industry' or Florida's analysis of a 'creative class' (Florida, 2002, 2005). As a result of conducting the research it became apparent that a wider appreciation of who carries out the problem-solving work of the city is needed if terms like 'creative city' are not to be misapplied. While many of the participants are engaged in the arts or creative practice, the work they do to solve city problems are directly related to outcomes that are not typically understood within the remit of 'cultural development': improved health and mobility; social cohesion and inclusion; civil and political engagement; economic regeneration; and increased employment for marginalised groups. The research finds that a broader understanding of creativity and the work that cultural and creative practitioners engage in affords a better understanding of their potential contribution to city development.

The third objective was resolved through the discussion in Chapter Eight where the academic conceptualisations of social capital were assessed in the everyday context of the case-study area. This assessment focussed on those areas which had been identified as missing from the social capital literature and the findings confirmed these omissions in terms of the importance of context, space, place, agency, and power for actors exercising social capital. The social capital literature is not rejected but rather amended and enhanced by the spatial and political dimensions found in everyday practice. It confirms the importance of networks, resources, and mediating relationships in the original conceptualisations by Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and contributes the context-specific and context-dependent elements of power and agency. In the context of the case-study area the academic conceptualisations provide a starting point for understanding social capital which has been enhanced by a relational, geographic imaginary.

The final objective of the research was to evaluate the on-going relevance of Jacobs' perspectives and how they inform our understanding of the role of social capital in post-industrial regeneration of cities. Although Jacobs' original work was written about the regeneration of American cities in the sixties her approach is systemic which means that the process for observing cities can be applied to other contexts: cultural, political, spatial, and temporal. Her understanding of the role of social capital is found to be particularly relevant in terms of the case study as it focuses on how cities behave as compared with

towns. The contribution this approach makes to our understanding of social capital is explored further in the next section.

Having met the research objectives the thesis concludes by stating its contribution to current knowledge. The first section questions the relevance of Jane Jacobs' work (1961/93, 1970, 1985), as applied in this thesis, to the way social capital is understood within the context of a city. The next section reviews the advantages of narrative methods for telling different stories about the socio-economy and the link between 'talk' and space (Wiles *et al.*, 2004). The third section considers what and how the thesis contributes to an understanding of the exercise of social capital in a real context. In the final section, future research directions are considered in terms of the possibilities for social capital research and contemporary geographical imaginaries to produce alternative narratives. This relates to the wider geographical debates presented in Chapter One regarding the current hegemonic neoliberal discourse and Gibson-Graham's (2008) political ontological project which calls for alternatives to the dominant narratives. .

## **Jane Jacobs and ground reality**

The phrase 'ground reality' is used when comparing what is planned, usually in a military exercise, with what is actually happening on the ground. In times of war or emergency, the ground reality is usually not fully known; the territory may be poorly chartered or intelligence may be distorted by enemy propaganda. In

political discourse the term is often invoked when the acceptance of ground reality is in question or being challenged by those who are personally affected by plans being made at a distance. Jane Jacobs was an arch advocate of the importance of ground reality and a vehement critic of those who wished to distance these realities from decision-making processes. The 'expert' and top-down, god's-eye view of city planning functions came under attack in her seminal work for exactly this sort of dislocation from ground reality. In '*Death and Life*' Jacobs (1961/93) described in detail the ground reality of American cities and drew together a 'system of thought' that was familiar to city dwellers and other interested citizens. The question to consider is whether Jacobs' methods for thinking about cities and ground reality are relevant for a post-industrial British city and if so what contribution do they make?

This thesis draws on Jacobs' (1961/93, 1970, 1985) in three ways: by using an inductive methodology which looks for what is actually on the ground rather than what should be there; by conceptualising social capital as one of a range of city processes which affects city vitality in a system of organising complexity; and as an author who presented other ways of seeing and understanding the city in its own terms. The principles of Jacobs' methodology as presented in '*Death and Life*' (1961/93) have been adapted for the purposes of academic research. Jacobs' methodology and direct observation could be loosely classed as ethnography but Jacobs is unapologetically unreflexive and partial. She writes a personal account of the city and this does not fit with academic

exigencies of social science (Glaeser *et al.*, 2000), therefore some degree of adaptation is required.

For this study, the role of observer and narrator is placed in the hands of those that live and act in the city. The requirement for researcher reflexivity is incorporated in the methodology through sampling and selection techniques which are monitored on an on-going basis and support claims for some degree of 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, see also Appendix 1a). Jacobs' methodology contributes to the research of social capital in terms of locating the ground reality (or realities) by focusing on socio-spatial processes in everyday accounts of lived experience. At the same time the impasse of quantitative circularity produced by proxy measures of social trust are avoided.

The thesis supports Jacobs' (1961/93) rejection of 'statistical people' and interchangeable relationships by analysing a network of real people and their practices in their own terms. Thus personal anecdote, which was Jacobs' literary tool, is transformed by the analysis of participant narrative. This allows the exercise of social capital to be observed up-close in the fine-grained particularity of unique exchanges. Uniqueness, messiness, and subjectivity are accommodated by observing the system's organisation as a whole. The narrative system reproduces the organisation of the network in terms of process and pattern so that the network can be understood in terms of the narrative

system. Jacobs employs the 'ballet of Hudson Street' (Jacobs, 1961/93: 66) as a particular story of how 'the eyes on the street' function systemically (*ibid*: 72). This thesis furthers Jacobs' methodology by contributing novel research methods to elicit the multiplicity of narratives which are enacted and performed on city streets and give voice to the citizens who make sense of the city on a daily basis.

Drawing on Jacobs' ideas about both social capital and the particularity of cities, this thesis contributes to the social capital literature by analysing how cities and social relationships can be perceived as co-constitutive. The social relationships within the case study network constituted Stoke-on-Trent as a collection of contained towns rather than a city. This was revealed in three ways: through the narratives via the construction of context; in the strategies that participants adopted to win advantage for their particular town; and in the spatial patterns of association found in the group mapping exercise. Further to Jacobs' understanding of cityness, the research shows that the 'city' is understood in a number of different and competing ways, and this is an on-going process with multiple narrative timelines. This highlights a potential limitation of Jacobs' work which defines cityness in particular terms and could be read as overly deterministic. The research supports Jacobs' definition of social capital as it relates to the very particular and unique social relationships at the heart of understanding the city. Jacobs' theories can be complemented with Massey's contemporary imaginaries of the city as a collection of 'stories so

far' (Massey, 1994, 2005). This understanding requires that cities have open futures and alternative trajectories. In this way the city can be read and written from diverse perspectives.

As a writer Jacobs wanted the city to be understood in its own terms by way of its streets, parks, buildings, roads, wastelands and attractions. This way of seeing is directly informed by how people use the city and the function these elements perform; streets as safety mechanism; parks as assimilators of social difference; older cheaper buildings as business incubators; large access roads as barriers to pedestrian mobility; wastelands as areas of unsupervised activity; and city attractions as district differentiators or institutional white elephants.

Jacobs brought to our attention the way the city is used and how this usage is determined by ordinary people going about their everyday business. Jacobs conceptualises social capital in terms of people moving around the city, meeting strangers, seeing friends, exchanging ideas, gathering information, and solving problems. Jacobs observed these relationships performing economic and social functions which enhance city vitality in terms of its ability to solve its own problems.

In the case study there is evidence of these functions being both enabled and constrained by different patterns of usage. The research confirms Jacobs' observation that social relationships determine the usage and therefore the function of certain spaces. This implies that without the social relationships that



make usage beneficial, building-based regeneration plans or edicts from above designating a 'cultural quarter' are unlikely to succeed. City boosterist agendas, driven by spectacular and iconic building projects, must be tempered with an understanding of how a city's social relationships will assimilate such novelty in terms of usage and the impact on the wider system.

The research confirms Jacobs' perspective on the importance of social capital processes in articulating a city's problems and communicating to decision-makers how the city is performing in practice. This case study contributes an empirical demonstration of how social relationships are necessary to mediate the exchange of information and the exercise of social capital in decision-making processes. In Stoke-on-Trent this is experienced as a deficiency of links between decision-makers and grass roots organisations. The wider implication of this research points to the possibility of understanding cities in terms of the social relationships which mediate city services and functions. Understanding the exercise of social capital as a socio-spatial city process provides a link from Jacobs' work to Massey's imaginary of the city as a particular 'configuration of social relations' (Massey, 1994: 3). This thesis concludes that Jacobs' work and the importance she placed on ground reality are still relevant to contemporary academic research into cities.

## Space-making-stories

The move to narrative as a way to understand the exercise of social capital is made on the basis of a complementary link between the absence of context and agency in the extant literature and its definitive presence as an identifier of narrative (Abell, 2004). Context and agency provide the link between what happens and how it is understood for both the narrator and the audience. The narrative approach reveals the causal mechanisms, the modalities, and the spatialities of exercised social capital. While there is no claim to a narrative's singular truth, the narrative system provides insight into how the network operates in its own particularity and as part of a wider system. In each narrative there is a coherence and internal logic between the construction of context and the strategies which are executed through agency. The research shows that narrative is a useful tool for revealing how social processes like the exercise of social capital are understood by practitioners working in complex environments. The system's complexity, which is often reduced in statistical analysis, is brought to the fore in the diverse constructions of context, the multiple strategic directions adopted, and the heterogeneity of outcomes for different actors.

The use of 'dialogic/performance' narrative analysis attends to another missing dimension of the social capital literature i.e. power (Reissman, 2008). Narrative is acknowledged as political and enacted in ways which further the actors' cause (Bahktin, 1981). Meanings are constructed in a dialogic process which

involves the participants with each other, the participants with the researcher, and the participants with the wider system. As stated above, the purpose was not to seek a singular truth or even a consensus. Instead the research sought to understand how the stories inter-relate in a narrative system. The narratives were inter-related through similarity and difference. What is perceived as self-sufficiency by one group is understood as isolation by another. The actions participants take are informed by their understanding of context and the narrative context is therefore productive of strategies. In this way, narrative works to reveal the underlying processes which link context to agency. However, these mechanisms are only relevant to the particular context and there is no simple equation by which the exercise of social capital can be formulated. The contribution of this thesis in re-inserting space, place, context, agency, and power to the understanding of 'social capital' as a process is delivered through a narrative approach. The narratives illustrate the different ways in which the exercise of social capital is enabled or constrained in the everyday lives of practitioners.

The use of creative methods pushes at the limits of representation (Holt, 2008). by capturing and replicating the participants' experience of the complex processes of network-building. Through enactment and performance the research assemblage attempts to replicate the experience of the phenomena. The creativity within the research process mediates between the complexity and messiness of the real life situation that is being explored and the

articulation of a narrative system which represents it. For this to succeed at more than representation the method had to be capable of displaying enough complexity and conflict to be isomorphic with the experience of building the network and exercising social capital. Participants had to get lost in their own network-making manoeuvres and take decisions on how to make connections. This is captured in the process even if it is not represented in the final narrative: the thought filled silences followed by the sudden ah-ha moments; the false starts; the indecision and frustration; the movements of the pen to represent actual movements in space and time; and the moments of reflection which do not become spoken articulations. While these moments can be seen as 'vexing the task of description' (Lorimer, 2008: 555) they must paradoxically, as Harrison forewarns 'fall short' of a new language of non-representation (Harrison, 2007: 603).

The methodology is not without limitations. The use of case study is often criticised for the difficulty in making generalisations from a single case. These limitations have to be accepted if, as with this thesis, the purpose is to explore a phenomenon in its particularity, where the purpose is to privilege context not erase it (Yin, 2004). Similarly the narratives collected from a segment of a particular network are only one thin slice of the many possible narratives of Stoke-on-Trent and its networks. Nevertheless, it is a starting point and while it may appear thin in the context of a whole city, the richness in detail compensates for the small sample size (Geertz, 1973). There are always more

stories to tell but even from a relatively small selection of narratives the particularities of a city 'like' Stoke-on-Trent are revealed. These particularities whilst unique in content can also indicate a wider pattern, what Jacobs referred to as 'unaverage clues' (Jacobs 1961/93: 574). The research shows the importance of social relationships and the functions they perform for cities. Stoke-on-Trent's 'unaverage' parochialism invites speculation, more generally, on how place-bound relationships make a difference at a wider scale e.g. inter-city trade or the connections of small cities to world cities. These are themes which can be analytically useful for research into other urban locations. This thesis contributes to a wider geographic interest in telling stories about the city by providing the rich detail of a particular case study and revealing narrative themes which could operate in other contexts.

## **Thinking differently about 'social capital'**

The argument, presented in this thesis, for thinking differently about social capital is a response to the treatment of space and place within the extant social capital literature. The roots of social capital theory found in sociology (Bourdieu, 1986), economic sociology (Coleman, 1988) and political science (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000) remain tied to imaginaries of space in terms of static and bounded containers. Boundaries are invoked through the use of notional political or territorial enclosures defined at the level of nation, region,

city, neighbourhood and so on. The latent assumptions of methodological territorialism, while criticised widely by geographers, remain inherent in the way social capital has been measured and attributed to different countries. These spatial simplifications erase certain contexts according to the ideologies for which the concept of social capital is appropriated. This creates spaces of homogenous consensus where a certain way of life is deemed to follow certain rules of engagement and all other forms are, by implication, made 'other' or made 'absent' (Law, 2004). This results in a reification of social capital that is attributed with agency but analytically divorced from the wider forms of context, structural inequalities and the effects of power. The re-conception of social capital put forward in this thesis addresses the analytical erasures by starting from a relational geographic imaginary that privileges the missing components: context, space, place, agency, and power.

The exercise of social capital is defined here as a power effect of mediating relationships and draws on: Yeung's (2005) criticism of social network analysis and the absence of power in relational geography; Allen's (2003) critical analysis of power as inherently spatial; Ettliger's (2003) proposal of a 'cultural economic geography' which acknowledges multiple subjectivities in multiple spheres; and marginalised perspectives of protest and resistance within development geography (Mayer and Rankin, 2002; Nagar, 2000; Rankin, 2002). This novel combination of frameworks re-positions the concept of social capital in a discourse of geographically sensitive power effects, space, practice, and

subjectivity. It foregrounds the spaces and places in which social capital is exercised and accommodates a much stronger form of context to include economic, social, cultural, emotional and political considerations (Fine, 2001). The complexity of the multiple spheres and subjectivities in which these processes operate is acknowledged by a systems approach following Jacobs (1961/93, 1970, 1985) rather than the input-output models of econometric analysis favoured in the literature to date. In this way the research has successfully met its overall aim to re-insert context, space, place, agency, and power to a re-imagined conception of social capital.

The question of power, a notable omission in the social capital literature, is addressed through the analysis of modalities of social capital, following Allen's treatment of power and space (Allen, 2003, 2004, 2011). The narratives demonstrate that the power effects of exercised social capital depend more on associative modalities, mediated by relationships based on respect and equality, than the use of domination and control which force certain behaviours. These findings demonstrate the need for grounded accounts of the exercise of social capital that respond to the particularities of the socio-spatial environment and how power is played out in social networks. This research contributes empirical support to Allen's (2003, 2004, 2011) theoretical discussion of the spatialities of power by providing real-world examples of those 'quieter registers' (Allen, 2011: 296) which have been ignored in the literature. It

contributes a demonstration of how the exercise of social capital is placed, and places participants, through the use of a topological framework (Allen, 2011).

The research design successfully captured the information required to answer the research questions (p.84-85). The complexity of the system is accessed through the isomorphic complexity of the participant narratives. When taken collectively the narratives reveal an inter-connecting system which is analysed using a thematic approach. The creative use of mapping methods to capture both the participant's network and the narrative of its construction obviates the need for *a-priori* frameworks taken from the social capital literature. This facilitates the research to think differently about social capital. The creative method mediates between the participant's internal model of organisation and how it is reproduced in the creative format i.e. the map. The onus on participant direction and narrative flow responds to Mishler's (1986) criticisms of question-based techniques and contributes to the call for the use of more creative methods within the discipline (Thrift, 2002). These novel methods contribute to geographic enquiry by going beyond representation and capturing complex processes through the creative replication of experience in and through space.

The research demonstrates how context, space, place, agency, and power are inter-acting elements of a system in which the exercise of social capital can lead to different results for different groups. The construction of context is always in the making and mediated by social relationships. The shared



understanding of context is a necessary starting point for other social processes which enable social capital to be exercised through agency. The neo-classical assumptions taken from economics, that context is the same for all actors working in a particular sphere, is refuted by the findings and the specificity of the case study draws out these contextual differences. These are the contextual nuances and heterogeneities that are erased in the social capital literature. This focus on practice and process contributes to an understanding of how social relationships co-constitute the context in which strategies are adopted and actions are made meaningful.

The key findings presented in this thesis point to a different way of not only understanding the exercise of social capital but of understanding the city in terms of its relationships. This represents a significant empirical contribution to relational geography and begins to fill gaps identified by Yeung (2005) on agency, Allen (2003, 2004, 2011) on power, and Massey (2005) on the co-constitution of space and society. This thesis advocates the re-invigoration of social capital debates by geographers and contributes both a novel framework and methods for analysing the exercise of social capital which privilege context, space, place, power, and agency.

## **Stories, space and ontological projects - bringing into being other possibilities**

This thesis demonstrates the need for further empirical research into the exercise of social capital in context in order to understand how context, agency, space, place, and power are inter-related into diverse systems which place people closer to, or further away from, their goals. The narratives presented here show how social relationships mediate actions and result in diverse outcomes: mutual benefit through collaboration; gaining advantage through successful competition; maintaining position through self-sufficiency; and failure to compete through exclusion or lack of resource.

Following on from this research, understanding both the modalities and spatialities of exercised social capital in context could reveal new insights into how particular groups mobilise or fail to mobilise resources in other contexts. These could include, but not be limited to, political elites, business cartels, criminal oligarchies, activist groups, large and small political parties, parent-teacher associations and so on. The importance of context must be emphasised by geographers so that spatial reductions seen in the social capital literature and the wider debates become more difficult to maintain. As a political project this breaks down the dominance of certain ideologies which only serve the interests of a minority.

This thesis aligns with Gibson-Graham's (2006, 2008) political ontological project and contributes to this research agenda by bringing alternative narratives of social capital into being; stories which are not pre-determined by the one-world context of a capitalist market economy. The research shows that within the narrative system decisions are informed by much more than purely economic gain. The exercise of social capital requires skill and diverse intelligences, economic, social, emotional, and political. The multiple subjectivities and spheres in which people find meaning via embodied experience, emotional responses, and shared memories are not reduced to simple economic calculations made in 'rational' isolation from real world complexity (Ettlinger, 2003; Holt *et al.*, 2013). Relational geography necessitates an approach which takes social relationships seriously and returns them to the contexts in which they are produced and in which they are productive. The research shows that in the context of cultural and creative practice, friendship, empathy, enthusiasm, and excitement inform strategic actions as do distrust, suspicion, and frustration. The principle of parsimony in neo-classical economics loses its explanatory power when faced with real world complexity. This thesis contributes one example of how geographic imaginaries can bring into being alternative narratives which challenge simple economic categorisation and ideal typologies. Further research is needed to understand how and where other economic experiments are producing different results for real people.

This thesis draws on Massey's (1994, 2005) geographic imaginary to understand how space and society are co-constituted and shows how this can be analysed empirically using a narrative approach. In this way it contributes to the wider geographical literature which calls for the use of narrative as a way to understand how space is produced by and through talk (Wiles *et al.*, 2004). Opening up the future to multiple stories and trajectories has an important implication for geographers; other stories have to be told if other possibilities are to be brought to light. The geographical imaginary must be open to different possibilities that go beyond what has already been established in the scholarship on for example world cities or creative cities. For a city 'like' Stoke-on-Trent, finding its own trajectory appears to have started with rejecting the imposition of narratives taken from other contexts and places. The taken-for-granted, capitalist economy narrative, which produces a single trajectory placing cities on a timeline of inevitable development, must be challenged by other possibilities (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Head and Gibson, 2012; Massey, 2005). Geographers play an important role, and arguably a responsibility, for granting academic attention to different stories. This thesis contributes to this agenda and calls for geographers to find other contexts where social capital is exercised so that other space-making stories can emerge.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1a Evaluation of Research Design

Baxter and Eyles (1997) set out guiding principles for qualitative research following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation criteria. There is an argument regarding whether such frameworks based on the idea of rigour in quantitative research, '*can potentially smother the creative elegance*' of qualitative research (Risteen Hasselkus, 1991: 3-4). Taking their work as a guide rather than a blueprint provides useful criteria for researchers to evaluate and report on several elements of the research: the rationale for the design and methods used, the research process in terms of how decisions are made, the way constructs have been built from data, and how the results can be verified. The purpose of using such a guide is to provide the reader with some sense of '*trustworthiness*' and to make the case that the research is '*worthy of attention*' (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 506). The four evaluative criteria put forward are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Table A1 reproduces Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria and definitions in the first three columns. The fourth column presents how the research strategy and practices meet the criteria.

In Table A1 the research methods and practices are summarised in terms of the evaluation criteria.

Criteria	Definition	Assumption	Strategy/Practice
Credibility	Authentic representations of experience	Multiple realities  Causes not distinguishable from effects. Empathetic researcher. Researcher as instrument. Emphasis of the research endeavour.	1) Sampling was monitored in terms of network coverage. 2) Cases were included that were only recommended by one participant improving the likelihood of other perspectives. 3) Researcher subjectivity was tracked through a journal. 4) Member checking of methodology, transcripts and concepts.
Transferability	Fit with contexts outside the study situation	Time and context-bound experiences. Not responsibility of 'sending' researcher. Provision of information for 'receiving' researcher	1) Thick description of methods and analysis (Geertz, 1973). 2) Transferability across the sample – pulling out narratives that occur in more than one case.
Dependability	Minimisation of idiosyncrasies in interpretation. Variability tracked to identifiable sources.	Researcher as instrument. Consistency in interpretation (same phenomena always matched with the same constructs) Multiple realities. Idiosyncrasy of behaviour and context.	1) Low inference descriptors - mechanically recorded data. 2) Full transcription of both participants and researcher responses including pauses etc. 3) Member checking of constructs. 4) Audit through supervision process.
Confirmability	Extent to which biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the inquirer influences interpretations	Biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer can influence interpretation. Focus on investigator and interpretations.	1) Audit trail through field notes. 2) Subjective statement of researcher (App. 1)

**Table A1 Evaluation of Research Methods and Practices**  
Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985)



Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue for an explicit rationale for the verification of the findings to, '*reveal what for the author, are the things about the study that make the findings worthy of attention*' (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 509). This research bases its verification on the validation of concepts through member checking, the richness of the data collected from participants which demonstrated equitable power relations between the participants and the researcher, the lack of inference needed from the data collected, and the consistency of themes found across cases. The appeal to the wider interpretive community will be made when the findings are disseminated through journal articles.

## **Appendix 1b Researcher Reflexivity Statement**

The purpose of the researcher statement following Preissle's definition is twofold,

*'to help researchers identify how their personal features, experiences, beliefs, feelings, cultural standpoints, and professional predispositions may affect their research and to convey this material to other scholars for their consideration of the study's credibility, authenticity, and overall quality or validity. (Preissle, 2008 Sage online)*

This exercise may appear to some as navel-gazing and Patai asks *'does all this self-reflexivity produce better research?'* (Patai, 1994: 69). By tracing the practices of reflexivity, Pillow (2003) understands critical reflection as a balance between the need to challenge our representations while acknowledging the *'political need to represent and find meaning'* (Pillow, 2003: 192). To this end, the following statement is an attempt to reveal as much as I know about how my subjectivities may have affected the research whilst accepting this is a one-sided and incomplete exercise. It is not an attempt at catharsis or as a negation of my subjectivities.

### ***My position in relation to Stoke-on-Trent***

I moved to Stoke-on-Trent to undertake the research and had no prior affiliation to either the research institution or the research area. For the period of the field

work I lived in Stoke town because of its proximity to my place of work. During the two years I was resident in Stoke I did not feel any particular affiliation to this town or any other particular place within Stoke-on-Trent. It was not my intention to stay in the area following my research. In terms of my relation to the research, this may leave me lacking in an intimate understanding of the historical and cultural context which one might assume from a protracted or personal engagement with the research context. At the same time, the alleged parochialism of the area is something that an outsider would be less affected by.

My first impression of Stoke-on-Trent was that it lacked any hubbub of activity or a designated centre. It was difficult to drive around because of the ring road system which cuts Stoke off from the other towns. I found myself directed by road signs towards a cultural quarter that did not appear. Eventually I found out that this area amounted to the roads between Regent's Theatre and the Museum and Art Gallery and was more a designation than a cultural destination. Once I realised Hanley was the 'city centre' I was still startled by the lack of people on the street. I had been living in Shoreham-by-Sea, a small town outside Brighton, which had significantly more street life during the day. The sparse number of shoppers might be explained by the number of retail parks situated just outside the town centres which also provide free parking. Parking in the city is expensive, especially considering the lack of attractions, limited range of shops, and absence of dining options. I understand that

nightlife is centred around Hanley for younger age groups but I did not explore this as it has a reputation for being typical of the UK's binge drinking city centres.

As a consumer of the arts and a hobbyist sculptor, film-maker and writer I was disappointed at the lack of opportunities for further education although a few courses were put on at the Burslem School of Art. The Independent Film Theatre run by volunteers and using the University's facilities was a notable exception in terms of long-standing provision of non-mainstream entertainment. Stoke Your Fires film festival was in its second year in 2012 and I took part in its short-film competition with two local film-makers. As finalists we were given places on a two day course, The Producers Lab, which I attended. I also went to the festival's opening premiere of a film made in Stoke and part-funded by the City Council. This event was very well attended but the other screenings I went to were poorly attended. As part of the Place, Space and Identity III Project, funded by the Arts Council England, I attended a number of public art interventions and a dance performance at Spode's disused factory site. I also attended a course for creative entrepreneurs where I met local practitioners. These experiences gave me some first-hand impressions of the local arts scene and led to meeting my first participants

I am not an enthusiastic theatre-goer which may lead to a one-sided view of arts provision, as there are five theatres in Stoke-on-Trent. Using the

opportunistic sampling mitigated for any preference I may have had towards the visual arts. As a consumer/practitioner I was frustrated by the lack of choice and opportunity for sustained involvement in the arts or cultural production. I don't listen to local radio which may have been a good source of local information. I also found that formal volunteering and the third sector did not seem to play a big part in the cultural scene which contrasted with my previous experiences in Brighton and Hull. In my conversations I found most of the practitioners to be aware of the problems but generally positive about change through cultural development. In terms of my approach to the research I feel my own experiences informed my understanding of the local arts scene although it was necessarily fragmented as I had only been in Stoke-on-Trent a year before starting field work.

In terms of how this relates to the research, I believe these experiences made me more empathetic to the struggles of practitioners trying to achieve their goals, and improve the city. However, there was no consensus view about how this should be done and I did not align myself with any one particular group or opinion. My own opinions about cultural development and regeneration are probably towards leftish ideas about access and opportunity i.e. that there should be cultural provision and that there should be equality of access to opportunities to take part. I am cynical of quick fixes or cookie-cutter responses that seek to replicate the winning formulas of other places. I take a Jacobsean approach to seeing the city systemically. I don't believe that cultural

development and economic development form a two-way causal relationship. I think things are much messier than that and I do not believe in a blueprint for either cultural or economic success. For the purposes of the research I was more curious about gathering stories of how people went about achieving their goals than on confirming or denying any political agenda. My opinions did not change during the research which I take as some evidence that I was not overly influenced by any particular group or individual.

As a resident of Stoke-on-Trent I experienced first-hand the parochialism of the six towns where people would often express explicitly that they did not want to go to the other towns. While living there for two years I got to know the names of my immediate neighbours but no-one else on the street and never felt like there was a neighbourhood community. I over-heard racist comments in public places on several occasions and found the local paper, The Sentinel, to perpetuate a feeling of them against us when it came to Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas. Public opinion seemed most vociferous in terms of the council which was accused of being ineffective and lacking transparency. A number of local debacles which emerged during my stay seemed to highlight the perceived distance between those who were responsible for managing the city and those that lived in it. The council seemed intent on sticking to a party line under their 'Mandate for Change' which held that Stoke-on-Trent was a good place to live and do business. My personal opinion is that Stoke-on-Trent is not a particularly good place to live, and that the council is out of touch with

its constituents. However, having worked with Local Authorities in the past I have some understanding and empathy for the difficulties they encounter. I positioned myself as a curious bystander wishing to find out more from those who had worked with, for, and outside the council. During the research when I talked to council members I felt I was not getting past the 'how it should be' story-line which I found frustrating. This may have led me to discount these narratives as less plausible.

In terms of my personal background I do not feel that being a white, female, aged 42 at the time of the research had much bearing on the responses that were given. I think the biggest possible influence on the research is my opinion that people who choose to earn their living in the arts have a tough job. This is especially true in the current economic climate and in a place like Stoke-on-Trent which has low participation rates. I admire their determination, commitment, and passion although I may not always appreciate their output. In this respect I was a willing audience for their stories of both success and failure. It is possible that someone not holding these beliefs may have interpreted the data differently. It also possible that respondents would have told different stories if faced with someone who represented more of a challenge to their practice in terms of questioning the justification for cultural development. In keeping their narratives in tact I hope that their stories will be represented without too much interference. The interpretations will be mine and informed by the subjectivities outlined above.

## **Appendix 1c – Ethical Considerations**

The research proposal was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Staffordshire University and there were no perceived risks or harm to participants from the research activities. The main ethical consideration under scrutiny was confidentiality of data and anonymity. The participants were told before participating in the mapping exercise what data would be captured, how it was going to be captured, and what it would be used for. The digital recording of the interview would be anonymous and their identity would be hidden in any published results. It was important for the research that participants felt free to talk about difficult situations and conflicts they may have encountered with other network members. The finished maps would be made available to the public and all participants agreed to this. Permission for the use of edited filmed footage and any direct quotes would be requested from participants. The data was stored on the university network and a separate hard drive both of which need passwords for access. All participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the project before and after the meeting.



## Appendix 2a List of Participants

Participant	Type	Activity
001	Institution	Arts Development
002	Freelance	Artist
003	Institution/Organisation /Freelance	Education/Artist
004	Freelance	Producer
005	Freelance	Photographer
006	Institution	Education
007	Institution	Development
008	Freelance	Producer
009	Freelance	Producer/Artist
010	Freelance/Organisation	Artist
011	Organisation	Producer/Artist
012	Freelance	Arts Development
013	Organisation	Producer/Artist
014	Organisation	Producer
015	Freelance	Artist
016	Institution	Development
017	Institution	Development
018	Organisation	Producer/Artist
019	Organisation	Arts Development
020	Institution	Development/Education
021	Organisation	Producer/Artist
022	Freelance	Producer
023	Organisation	Development
024	Organisation	Producer/Artist
025	Institution/Freelance	Education/Artist
026	Organisation	Education
027	Freelance	Development
028	Organisation	Producer
029	Organisation	Education/Development
030	Institution	Development

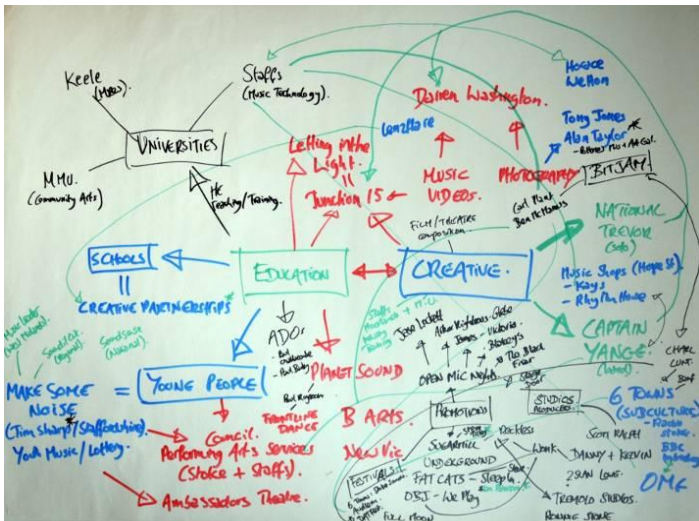
## Appendix 2b - Summary – most frequent names

Rank	Type	Participant/Non-Participant	Named By
1	Institution	Participant	19
2	Organisation	Non-participant	16
3	Freelance	Participant	15
4	Institution/Organisation/Freelance	Participant	14
5	Freelance	Participant	13
6	Institution	Non-participant	12
7	Freelance	Participant	11
8	Institution	Participant	10
9	Institution	Participant	10
10	Freelance/Organisation	Participant	9
11	Freelance	Participant	9
12	Freelance	Participant	9
13	Organisation	Participant	8
14	Organisation	Participant	8
15	Organisation	Participant	8
16	Institution	Participant	8
17	Institution	Participant	8
18	Institution	Non- participant	8
19	Freelance	Participant	8
20	Freelance	Participant	8
21	Organisation/Freelance	Non- participant	7
22	Organisation/Freelance	Non- participant	7
23	Organisation	Participant	7
24	Freelance	Non- participant	7
25	Organisation/Freelance	Non- participant	6
26	Organisation	Non- participant	6
27	Organisation/Freelance	Non- participant	5
28	Organisation	Participant	5
29	Organisation	Non- participant	4
30	Organisation	Non- participant	4
31	Institution	Participant	4
32	Organisation	Participant	3
33	Organisation	Participant	3
34	Organisation	Participant	3
35	Institution/Freelance	Participant	3
36	Freelance	Participant	3

## Appendix 3 Examples of participant maps



Institution – arts development



Institution - education



Organisation



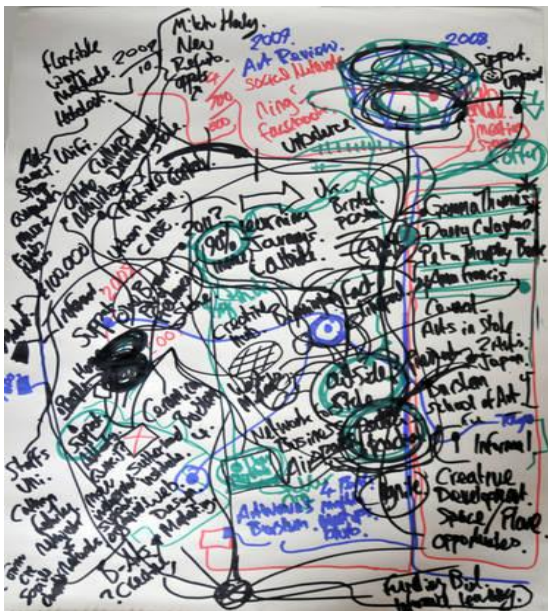
## Appendix 3 Participant maps (Cont.)



Freelance



Organisation/Freelance



Freelance

## Appendix 4 Networks and Resources Survey

		Regularly Use	Sometimes Use
1	<b>Introductions made without previous contact (cold-calling)</b>		
2	<b>Introductions made through other contacts within your network</b>		
3	<b>Online – Specific</b> eg Creative Stoke, Pits and Potts, Blogs		
4	<b>On-line General</b> eg Facebook, Twitter, Youtube		
5	<b>Funders – via an application process</b>		
6	<b>Council Departments/People (County/City/District/Borough etc)</b>		
	Cultural Development Teams/Performing Arts Services/Arts Development Officers		
	Economic Development/General Funding officers/Regen Departments		
	Elected Members		
	Council Leaders/Portfolio Holders/Cabinet Members		
7	<b>University Departments/People</b>		
	Keele		
	Staffs		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
8	<b>Schools/Local Colleges</b>		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
9	<b>Youth/YP Organisations</b>		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
10	<b>Arts/cultural organisations (eg Theatres, Galleries, Museums)</b>		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		

		Regularly Use	Sometimes Use
<b>12</b>	<b>Projects - past and present</b>		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
<b>13</b>	<b>Friends and Family</b>		
<b>14</b>	<b>Shared Interest groups/Shared Purpose Groups</b> eg open-mic nights		
<b>15</b>	<b>Shared location/spaces</b> eg residents associations, live-work, parks		
<b>16</b>	<b>Professional Organisations</b>		
<b>17</b>	<b>Voluntary Organisations</b>		
<b>18</b>	<b>Charitable Organisations</b>		
<b>19</b>	<b>Commercial Organisations</b> (eg Chambers of Commerce, Trade groups)		
<b>20</b>	<b>Faith Organisations</b>		
<b>21</b>	<b>Media Platforms for Networking</b> (eg radio, press, PR)		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
<b>22</b>	<b>One-off events</b> (Exhibitions, openings, conferences, briefings, festivals)		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
<b>23</b>	<b>Social Events</b>		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
<b>24</b>	<b>Learning</b> eg formal Courses, CPD, Informal meet ups, Mentoring/Coaching		
	Inside SOT + NUL		
	Outside SOT + NUL		
<b>25</b>	<b>Political organisations</b>		
<b>26</b>	<b>Research networks</b>		
<b>27</b>	<b>Chance encounters</b>		
	<b>Other – Please Fill in</b>		

## Resources looked for and accessed through networks

**G = Green – plenty, O = Orange – some but not enough, R = Red – none**

Material		Expressed - informal		Institutional - formal	
Funding		Ideas		Power	
Investment		Insight		Influence	
Loans/Finance		Enthusiasm		Leadership	
In-kind services		Energy		Vision	
Kit		Aspiration		Strategic direction	
Space		Ambition		Strategic development	
Buildings		Encouragement		Representation	
Skills		Advice		Formal support - financial	
Research		Reassurance		Formal support – non-financial	
Training		Confidence		Infrastructure services to assist delivery	
Project Management/delivery		Inspiration		Scale to deliver larger projects	
Evaluation/Valuation		Guidance		Decisions	
Paid opportunities		Someone to talk to - confidentially		Risk-taking	
Unpaid opportunities		Protection		Trusted partner	
Long-term opportunities (3+ yrs)		Friendship		A forum for debate	
Medium-term opportunities (1-3 yrs)		Advocacy		Engagement	
Short-term opportunities (under 1 yr)		Informed critique		Buy-in	
Creative Collaborators		A space to reflect		Accountability	
Project Partners		Openness		Transparency	
Peers					
Volunteers					
Audience					
Competition (healthy)					
Promotion					
Publicity					



## Appendix 5a - Summary of Network Methods/Context

### Key

SOT + NUL : Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme

I/O – Institution/Organisation

F – Freelance

R – Regular

S – Sometimes

How/where network contacts are made	I/O R	I/O S	I/O Total	F R	F S	F Total
Introductions made without previous contact (cold-calling)	3	9	12	4	4	8
Introductions made through other contacts within your network	11	0	11	6	2	8
Online – Specific e.g. Creative Stoke, Pits and Potts, Blogs	4	6	10	5	3	8
On-line General eg Facebook, Twitter, Youtube	6	2	8	5	2	7
Funders – via an application process	8	3	11	0	8	8
Council Departments/People (County/City/District/Borough etc)	4	2	6	3	3	6
Cultural Development Teams/Performing Arts Services/Arts Development Officers	5	6	11	2	6	8
Economic Development/General Funding officers/Regen Departments	3	5	8	3	5	8
Elected Members	2	4	6	0	3	3
Council Leaders/Portfolio Holders/Cabinet Members	2	3	5	0	4	4
Keele University	4	6	10	0	5	5
Staffs University	9	2	11	3	4	7
University Departments/People Outside SOT + NUL	6	2	8	1	4	5
Schools Inside SOT + NUL	6	2	8	1	4	5
Schools Outside SOT + NUL	3	5	8	0	2	2
Youth Orgs Inside SOT + NUL	3	4	7	1	4	5
Youth Orgs Outside SOT + NUL	1	5	6	0	1	1
Arts and Cult orgs Inside SOT + NUL	7	4	11	4	3	7
Arts and Cult orgs Outside SOT + NUL	5	6	11	2	5	7
Employment Inside SOT + NUL	8	2	10	4	3	7
Employment Outside SOT + NUL	5	3	8	3	2	5

<b>How/where network contacts are made</b>	<b>I/O R</b>	<b>I/O S</b>	<b>I/O Total</b>	<b>F R</b>	<b>F S</b>	<b>F Total</b>
Previous Projects Inside SOT + NUL	9	2	11	6	2	8
Previous Projects Outside SOT + NUL	7	4	11	3	4	7
Friends and Family	6	4	10	3	2	5
Shared Interest groups/Shared Purpose Groups eg open-mic nights	3	6	9	2	5	7
Shared location/spaces eg residents associations, live-work, parks	3	4	7	2	4	6
Professional Organisations	6	5	11	3	4	7
Voluntary Organisations	5	3	8	2	5	7
Charitable Organisations	6	4	10	2	4	6
Commercial Organisations (eg Chambers of Commerce, Trade groups)	4	6	10	1	5	6
Faith Organisations	2	4	6	0	0	0
Media Platforms Inside SOT + NUL	6	3	9	4	1	5
Media Platforms Outside SOT + NUL	4	3	7	1	4	5
One off Events Inside SOT + NUL	8	3	11	4	4	8
One off Events Outside SOT + NUL	5	5	10	2	5	7
Social Events Inside SOT + NUL	4	5	9	6	2	8
Social Events Outside SOT + NUL	4	5	9	4	4	8
Formal Learning Inside SOT + NUL	7	3	10	4	2	6
Formal Learning Outside SOT + NUL	5	3	8	2	4	6
Political organisations	3	1	4	0	1	1
Research networks	5	4	9	2	4	6
Chance encounters	5	3	8	4	4	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>251</b>

## Appendix 5b Resources Demand/Supply

**G = Green – plenty, O = Orange – some but not enough, R = Red – none**  
**G – Institutions/Organisations (BOLD) G- Freelancers (Italicised)**

Found	Material	Not Found
<b>GGG</b>	Funding	<b>AAAR</b>
	Investment	<b>AA</b>
	Loans/Finance	<b>R</b>
<b>G</b>	In-kind services	<b>A</b>
<b>G</b>	Kit	
<b>G</b>	Space	<b>AA</b>
<b>G</b>	Buildings	<b>AA</b>
<b>GG</b>	Skills	
	Research	<b>AR</b>
<b>GG</b>	Training	
<b>G</b>	Project Management/delivery	<b>AR</b>
	Evaluation/Valuation	<b>AR</b>
	Paid opportunities	<b>AAARR</b>
<b>G</b>	Unpaid opportunities	<b>R</b>
<b>G</b>	Long-term opportunities (3+ years)	<b>AAAARRR</b>
	Medium-term opportunities (1-3 years)	<b>AAAR</b>
<b>GG</b>	Short-term opportunities (under 1 year)	<b>AA</b>
<b>GGGGGGG</b>	Creative Collaborators	<b>A</b>
<b>GGGGGG</b>	Project Partners	
<b>GG</b>	Peers	
	Volunteers	<b>A</b>
	Audience	<b>AAAR</b>
	Competition (healthy)	
	Promotion	<b>AR</b>
	Publicity	<b>A</b>

## Appendix 5b Resources Demand/Supply (Cont.)

**G = Green – plenty, O = Orange – some but not enough, R = Red – none**  
**G – Institutions/Organisations (BOLD) G- Freelancers (Italicised)**

Found	Expressed - informal	Not Found
<b>GGGGGGGGG</b>	Ideas	
	Insight	<b>A</b>
<b>GGGGGGGGG</b>	Enthusiasm	
<i>GG</i>	Energy	
<i>G</i>	Aspiration	
<i>G</i>	Ambition	
<i>GG</i>	Encouragement	
	Advice	
	Reassurance	
<i>G</i>	Confidence	<b>R</b>
<b>GG</b>	Inspiration	
<i>G</i>	Guidance	<b>R</b>
<i>G</i>	Someone to talk to - confidentially	
	Protection	
<b>GGGGGGGGG</b>	Friendship	
<b>GGG</b>	Advocacy	<b>A</b>
	Informed critique	<b>A</b>
	A space to reflect	<b>AA</b>
	Openness	<b>AR</b>
	Connectedness	<b>A</b>

## Appendix 5b Resources Demand/Supply (Cont.)

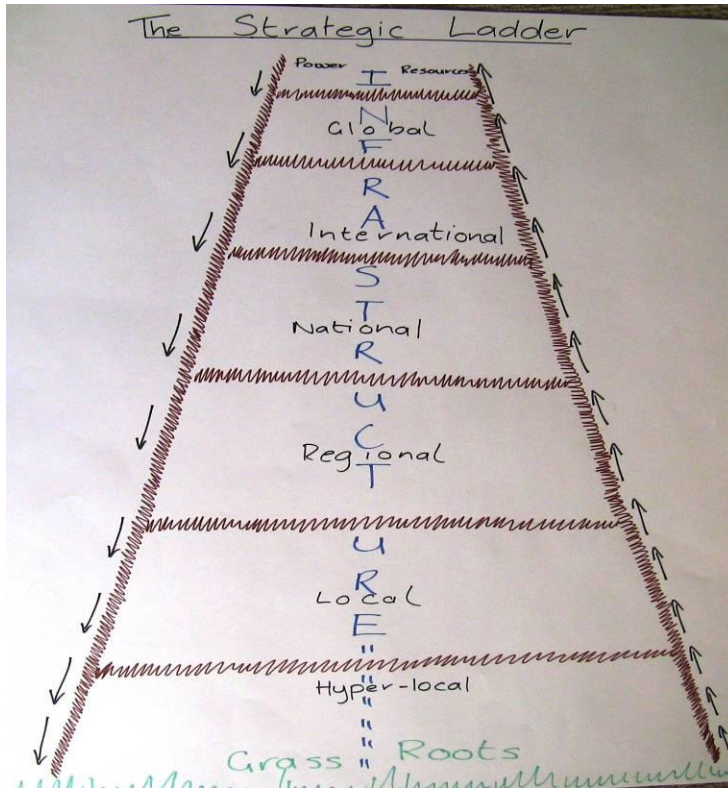
**G = Green – plenty, O = Orange – some but not enough, R = Red – none**  
**G – Institutions/Organisations (BOLD) G- Freelancers (Italicised)**

Found	Institutional - formal	Not Found
	Power	
	Influence	<i>A</i>
<b>G</b>	Leadership	<i>AR</i>
<b>G</b>	Vision	<i>AARRR</i>
<b>G</b>	Strategic direction	<i>RRR</i>
	Strategic development	<i>A</i>
<b>G</b>	Representation	<i>AR</i>
	Formal support - financial	<i>AAR</i>
<b>GGGGG</b>	Formal support – non-financial	
	Infrastructure services to assist delivery	
<b>GG</b>	Scale to deliver larger projects	<i>RRRR</i>
	Decisions	<i>R</i>
	Risk-taking	<i>AAARRR</i>
<b>G</b>	Trusted partner	
	A forum for debate	
<b>G</b>	Engagement	<i>A</i>
	Buy-in	<i>R</i>
	Accountability	<i>A</i>
	Transparency	<i>AA</i>

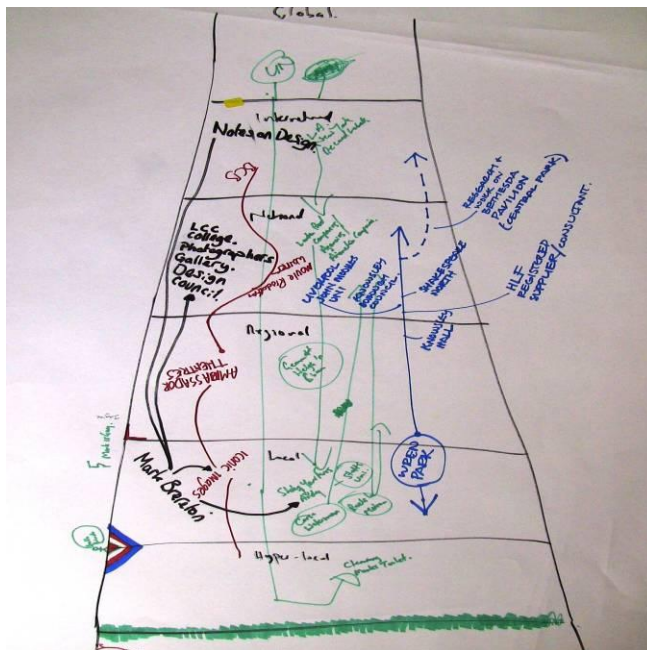




## Appendix 7 – Stage 2 Strategic Ladder Photos



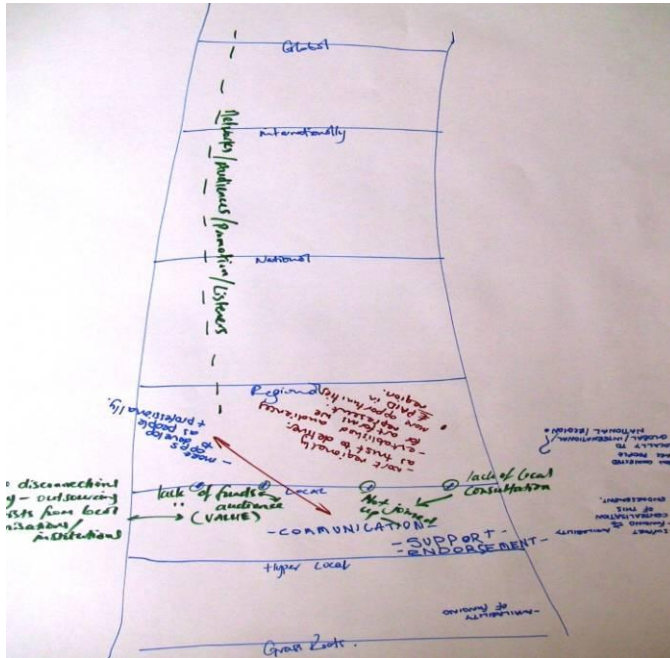
Template for Strategic Ladder Exercise



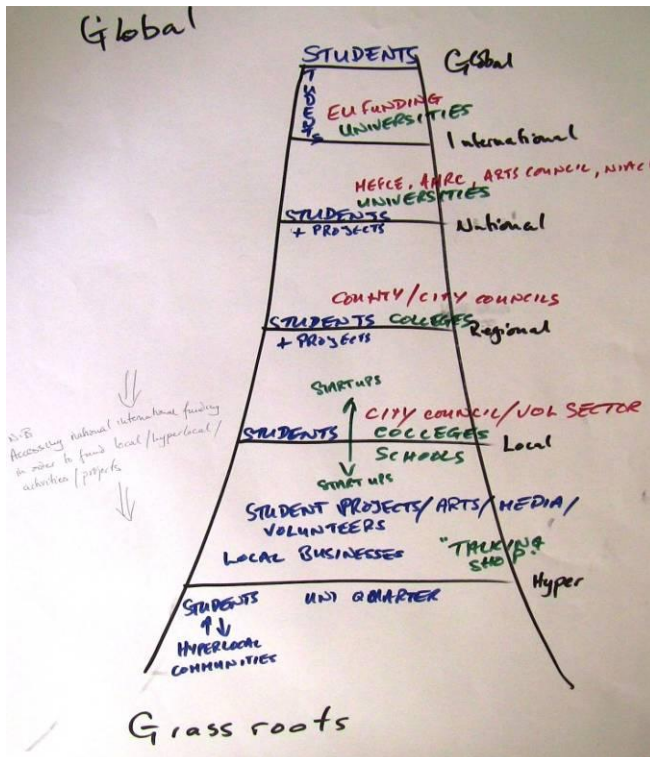
Strategic Ladder Businesses



## Appendix 7 – Stage 2 Strategic Ladder Photos (Cont.)

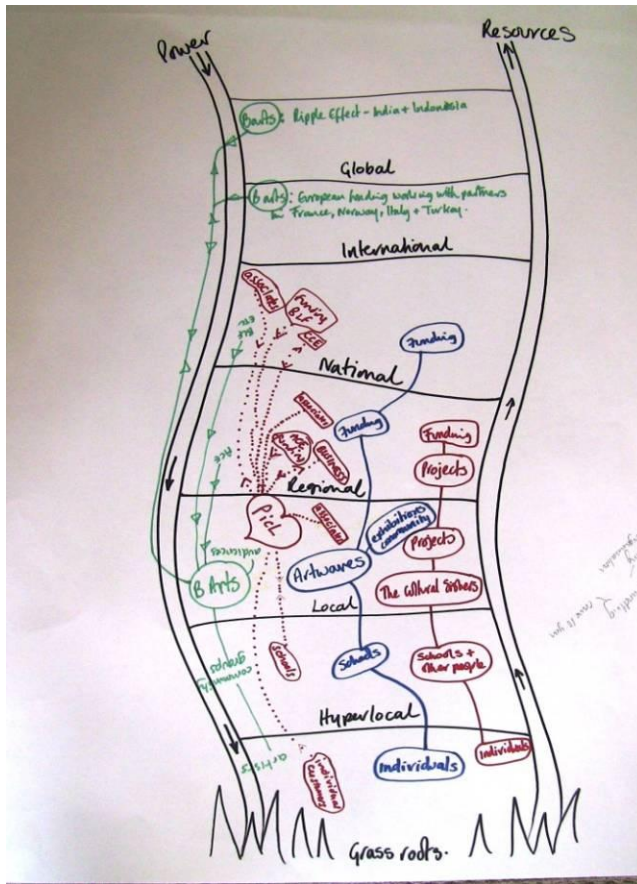


Strategic Ladder – Freelancers



Strategic Ladder – Institutions

## Appendix 7 – Stage 2 Strategic Ladder Photos (cont.)



Strategic Ladder - Organisations

## Appendix 8 Frequency of Narrative Themes.

### Key

X - presence of the narrative in the transcript

ID	Ideal	Self Suff	Stop-Start	Strategy Vacuum	Silence	City/towns	Totals
001		X		X	X	X	4
002	X		X			X	3
003		X	X	X		X	4
004	X		X	X		X	4
005			X	X	X		3
006			X	X		X	3
007	X		X			X	3
008	X		X	X	X	X	5
009	X		X	X	X	X	5
010	X		X	X	X	X	5
011			X	X	X		3
012	X		X	X	X	X	5
013	X		X	X		X	4
014	X		X	X		X	4
015			X	X	X	X	4
016	X			X		X	3
017	X		X			X	3
018		X	X	X	X	X	5
019		X				X	2
020				X		X	2
021	X	X				X	3
022			X	X		X	3
023				X	X	X	3
024		X		X		X	3
025		X					1
026		X				X	2
027	X		X	X		X	4
028	X	X		X		X	4
029	X	X	X			X	4
030	X			X	X		3
	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	