

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Bradford</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C21</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Strengthening Community Participation and Resilience in Bradford through Global South-North Learning and Participatory Research</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Since the Bradford Riots in 2001, research at Bradford has helped to defuse underlying tensions between deprived, multiethnic communities and between them and the local state thus strengthening community resilience in the city. Building on global research, particularly in Latin America, we have introduced participatory and peace-building methodologies into the locality, but with implications beyond it. The Programme for a Peaceful City enhances our impact through academic-practitioner reflection spaces. Our research with rather than on communities fosters their voice in policy, contributing to a non-confrontational response to the EDL in 2010, 2012 and 2013 and bringing community activists from Bradford's diverse communities together to co-create the ESRC-funded Community University (Comm-Uni-ty) in May 2013.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>In the 1990s and early 2000s we conducted research on civil society, social movements and NGOs, with particular reference to Latin America (1). The research output critiqued the incorporation of grass roots agency into state and international donor driven agendas to the detriment of pro-poor change, critical social agency and institutional innovation. In 2000, the intellectual and practical relevance of this research from the global South to social change amongst poor, multi-ethnic communities in a de-industrialised Northern city (Bradford) was recognised with the appointment of Jenny Pearce (Lecturer 1993-1995, Reader 1995-1999, Professor 1999-present) to a commission under Sir Herman Ouseley to explore community fragmentation in Bradford District. Pearce founded the Programme for a Peaceful City (PPC) in 2001 to channel research to the community, create 'safe space' for dialogue, build partnerships and enhance research impact. The International Centre for Participation Studies (ICPS) was established in 2004 as a research hub for Global South North learning, participatory social action and co-production of knowledge with community and institutional partners.</p> <p>The members of the research and action ICPS team include: Deputy Director, Dr Graeme Chesters (Senior Research Fellow 2005-present) who has critical theorising of non-state social action to the theory-practice experimentation of the ICPS; Dr Ute Kelly (Research Assistant 2000-2004, Lecturer 2004-present) has conceptual and practical interest in dialogue and deliberation; Heather Blakey (Research Fellow 2004-2008) focussed on participatory budgeting; Lisa Cumming (Programme Officer 2003-2005, Community Associate 2005-present) has expertise in facilitation and dialogue and bridges the academic-practitioner divide.</p> <p>Throughout the life of the ICPS/PPC, the interface between research and practice has been central. This methodology is highlighted in the REAP (Reciprocity, Externalities, Access and Partnership) approach to university-community engagement (2), a piece of commissioned research to measure such engagement and which sees the community as participant not recipient in a reciprocal relationship with the University. By experimenting with different process methods (e.g. community researchers; co-produced research), we have built connections to a range of community groups (3,4). This enabled us to create a feedback loop between the university, the community, statutory and council bodies, aimed at enhancing community voice. This innovative cycle of 'practice, reflection, practice' was implemented through co-producing knowledge with community activists in three Latin American and three UK cities for ESRC funded project on municipal innovation in non-governmental public action 2008-2010 (3); working with community researchers on Bradford's white estates on community participation (4); working with young Asian auxiliaries for research on the Bradford riot (5) and 'Power Talks' with community activists (6). These approaches have built trust with research participants, enhancing credibility with policy</p>

makers, demonstrated in our contribution to community resilience against provocations from the EDL 2010, 2012 and 2013.

The key messages from the underpinning research are that community and grass roots based organisations and movements generate knowledge for change, which can influence the effectiveness of policy, extend its reach and widen citizen participation. For community agency for change to be unleashed, institutions need to reflect differently on their relationships with citizens and the way horizontal relationships, rather than traditional top down policy processes, can improve their knowledge base and practice. The ICPS has disseminated these messages through our participatory methods and feedback processes, based on a strong foundation of funded research (over £500,000 of grant funding) in the locality, including grants from the major Research Councils (AHRC/ESRC) and the leading UK research funder on poverty (JRF). While this research emerges in the locality, we argue, it has significance nationally and even globally to tackling poverty, exclusion and conflict.

### 3. References to the research

1. Chesters G, Welsh I. (2006) *Complexity and Social Movements*. London: Routledge
2. Pearce J, Pearson M, Cameron S. (2007) *The Ivory Tower and Beyond: The University of Bradford at the Heart of its Communities The University of Bradford's REAP approach to measuring its Community Engagement*. Bradford: University of Bradford.
3. Pearce J. (ed.) (2010) *Participation and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century City*. Non-Governmental Public Action Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
4. Pearce J, Milne EJ. (2010) *Participation and Community on Bradford's Traditionally 'white' estates. A Community Research Project*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, [www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Bradford-participation-community-full.pdf](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Bradford-participation-community-full.pdf)
5. Pearce J, Bujra J. (2011) *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning: The Bradford Riot and Beyond*. Bradford: Vertical Press
6. Pearce J. (2013) Power and the Activist: From the Neighbourhood to the Square. *Development and Change* 44(3): 639-664

#### Grants:

##### Local Government:

Safer Communities Partnership, 2004-2006, £30,000. *The Bradford Riot*. Pearce, ICPS.

Bradford Council, 2011-2012, £20,000. *Evaluating Bradford's Response to the EDL*. Pearce, ICPS.

##### Research Charities:

##### Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF):

*Minority in Minorities: Beneath the Surface of South Asian Participation*, 2005- 2006, £25,000. Pearce, ICPS and School of Health.

*Participation and Community on Bradford's Traditionally 'White' Estates'*, 2007-2009, £63,309. Pearce.

*The Impact of Recession, Poverty and Sustainable Communities in Bradford*, 2010, £50,000. Chesters as part of an Oxfam UK/ICPS bid.

##### Research Councils:

##### Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC):

*Municipal Innovations in Non-Governmental Public Participation: UK/Latin America*, 2007-2008. £229,963. Pearce.

*Comm-Uni-ty: A Community University on Power and Participation*. Knowledge Exchange Award, 2013-2014, £70,000, with 50% funding from JRF. Pearce, ICPS, PPS.

##### Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC):

*Power in Community, Scoping Study Connecting Communities Programme*. March 2011-October

2011, £32,691. Pearce

#### 4. Details of the impact

Our impact is not about a linear thread between outputs and outcomes, but an iterative and cumulative influence on ways of recognising agency for change, the importance of community participation and voice in decision making and community resilience against external provocations. ICPS research has combined with the PPC's innovative knowledge exchange and peace-building practices, thus enhancing impact. The partnerships we have built with formal and informal community organisations and individual activists (e.g. Schools Linking Network, Tenants Federation, All Keighley Communities Together, Diversity Exchange, Manningham Sports Centre Coaching Group; Democratise the Mosque Group) statutory bodies (eg Police, Youth Service); Council Officers and others, have generated relationships which have facilitated receptivity to our research messages and new thinking and practice amongst these actors around community participation and responses to threats of urban conflict.

##### *Building Community Voice*

Working with community researchers has enabled activists and residents in communities not only to gain new skills but to be heard by decision makers (a). The importance of this message was recognised by JRF which commissioned a local playwright to write and direct a play from the research (b). This was performed three times in Bradford in 2010 to local residents and policy makers followed by discussion on stage between them, and once in Birmingham in 2011 as JRF rolled out work on 'white estates'. A long term partnership was formed from this research with activists from Braithwaite Estate trying to reactivate the District Tenants Federation. Our AHRC funded research on Power in Community was used by the latter to stimulate discussion on power, and in July 2013 the theme of power in community was the focus of their reactivation conference for which Professor Pearce was the keynote speaker. The leading activist in this effort is now a member of the Community University Council and two other housing activists are participants in the Community University. This work on community voice fed into the regional Yorkshire and Humber Empowerment Partnership, a network bringing together around 50 community groups, to a role of 'reflecting back' on community presentations to a regional Empowerment Commission in 2008 and to an invitation to write the forward to the collected essays on the Partnership's work (d).

##### *Thinkspace and the Community University: Fostering New Learning and Practice*

The ICPS and PPC have worked together on knowledge exchange spaces for many years (11 'Thinkspaces' held between 2009 and 2013) where academics and practitioners share thinking and practice about dialogue, participation and peace-building, underpinned by the REAP approach to University-Community Engagement (c) and commissioned research on dialogue (d, e). Interviews with Schools Linking Network (an innovative project to connect Bradford's 'segregated' schools, now rolled out nationally which supports young people, schools and local authorities in exploring identity, diversity and equality in communities) and Council Officers evidence this impact (d). The philosophy and methodology of co-producing knowledge encourages partnerships; for instance it brought 16 community participants in the Power in Community Project to a feedback session in February 2012. The idea of the Community University was born there; a successful partnership around a co-designed proposal led to ESRC/JRF funding and Comm-uni-ty was launched with a Kickstarter Day in July 2013, bringing community activists from 'white' estates, the inner city Muslim communities, and more professional backgrounds together with academics to co-construct a space for learning about power and participation (f). Rarely does such a mix of Bradford citizens work together on new learning. The idea of building a 'Community University' has potential significance beyond Bradford; activists, academics and policy thinkers outside the District have been invited to act as friends and associates to facilitate this wider impact.

##### *Addressing Urban Conflict, Building Peace and Resilience: Responses to the EDL Protests in Bradford District (2010, 2012 and 2013)*

In 2010 the PPC undertook a series of peace-building interventions when Bradford faced the English Defence League, which included the largest policing operation in a city since WWII. This drew on learning from the 2001 riots research (b), and built on long term work with the Bradford

police including an exchange programme with the community police in Medellin, Latin America (2002-2006) (g,h).The PPC participated in over 20 discussions between activists, the Council and Police which led to a successful channel of communications on the day and a series of practical agreements. The PPC also negotiated the use of 'street mediators'. The PPC recruited, informally trained and facilitated the 'Stop It Kicking Off Network. This led to the request to the ICPS to evaluate Bradford's response. A feedback session of the draft report brought together over 40 people at all levels of activism and policy making in the District (including the Chief Executive) in December 2011. The value of the report was formally recognised by the police (h) and the ICPS/PPC can claim that they have helped change the culture of policing potential unrest in Bradford, securing institutional support for grassroots peacekeeping and encouraging inner city youths to see themselves as part of resilience efforts. The PPC disseminated the evaluation research via Thinkspace in a workshop attended by 20 people, further enhancing the impact on practitioner thinking. The report secured acceptance of street mediators with real influence, leading to the PPC's 'Stop it Kicking Off Model' being used in a regional EDL demonstration in Keighley in 2012 and in Bradford 2013. Council Officers recognised the report's role in 'cascading learning' (e). The research has national significance, evidenced by requests from the CEO of Croydon Council to share the report with senior Council and police officers (i), and the invitation to the PPC officer to be a Director of a national consortia of Far Right specialists, known as Concilio.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a. Skinner S, Taylor M, Wilson M. (Feb. 2013) *Review of JRF Involvement in Bradford*, unpublished report. "We used the research to influence thinking about how we change our mindsets towards people" (p.8, quote from local Incommunities housing officer)
- b. Conor Ibrahiem, (2010) "Estate of Mind", Arakan Creative. [www.arakancreative.co.uk](http://www.arakancreative.co.uk). Play Commissioned by JRF from the White Estates Research. This play highlighted and disseminated key messages from the research on 'white estates' and fostered on stage discussion about controversial aspects between residents, council officers and ICPS research. The play was also performed in Birmingham feeding into JRF's efforts to promote wider research and national discussion on 'white estates'
- c. Hart A, Northmore S. (2011) Auditing and Evaluating University-Community Engagement: Lessons from a UK case study. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65(1): 34-58.
- d. Yorkshire and Humber Empowerment Partnership (YHEP). (2011) *Empowerment Reflections from Yorkshire and Humber*. Yorkshire and Humber Empowerment Partnership. <http://www.yhep.org.uk/resources/empowerment-reflections-yorkshire-and-humber>
- e. Twigg L. (2013) *ICPS/PPC: Interviews with User Groups*, unpublished report, Bradford. An Adviser to the Schools Linking Network summed up the importance of the ThinkSpace: 'it's not about telling, it's about the sharing of knowledge from all sides - which is remarkable' (p.10) A Council Officer said they were 'helpful because I can stop being a Council Officer...I can bring back learning ...and share it with staff in Council who can't attend but are struggling with issues'(p.10)
- f. Community University website [www.brad.ac.uk/ssis/comm-uni-ty/](http://www.brad.ac.uk/ssis/comm-uni-ty/)
- g. Abello Colak A, Pearce J. (2008) *From State Centred to Community Centred Policing: Lessons from Bradford/Medellin Community Police Exchange*. ICPS Working Paper 9. This paper has also fed into editorial discussions 2012-2013 on the UNDP Human Development Report for Latin America on Violence and Security (forthcoming, 2014) and is referenced in it.
- h. Email from Detective Superintendent, North East Counter Terrorism Unit (19/1/2012)
- i. Email (12/9/2012) from the Head of Corporate Equality and Community Relations, Croydon