Durham E-Theses

Citizenship and community participation: government and the voluntary sector in North East England

Reay, Eitta-Marlid Terhikki

Abstract

The main aim of this research has been to examine how the voluntary sector organisations and small local community groups particularly, have perceived and responded to the Government's initiatives of 'better relationship' and 'more community participation'. As local government has been modernised, the local authorities who provide public services, have had to adopt different working methods. They have to enter into partnerships with other stake holders in order to find solutions suited for the area, and they have a duty to consult those who will be affected by their decisions. There appears to be a wider meaning of citizenship in place, as participation in Government-initiated consultation has been accepted as an indication of active citizenship. Consequently there is a discussion of the central government policy papers and the changing concept of citizenship. The largest part of the thesis is made up of the case studies and the main themes arising from the interviews which were conducted. For the purpose of gathering evidence, twelve persons were interviewed from various organisations which are faced with the issues of deprivation and social exclusion, both in the public authority and voluntary sectors. The findings in general support the views of other researchers reported in the literature survey: there appears to be a lack of trust between the partners and even some problems with the ownership of the new thinking and working methods of both sides of the table. The initial enthusiasm for the process of consultations has faded away and the community group representatives would prefer to get on their actual work rather than attend meetings where the competing agendas are handled.

Citizenship and Community Participation: Government and the Voluntary Sector in North East England.

Eitta-Marlid Terhikki Reay

Master of Arts

Department of Politics
University of Durham
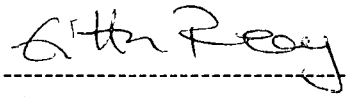
2004

This thesis is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others is credited to the source in the text. The thesis conforms to the prescribed word length for work submitted for examination for the MA degree. The thesis is 42,545 words in length.

Signature

Date

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

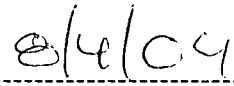|	
ACU	Active Community Unit
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CSP	Citywide Strategic Partnership
DETR	Department of Environment, Transport and Regions
EU	European Union
GfG	Going for Growth
GONE	Government Office for the North East
GVOC	Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council
HO	Home Office
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NBBRSG	North Benwell Black Residents Support Group
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NERS	North of England Refugee Service
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SAS	Scotswood Area Strategy
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
URC	United Reform Church
VONNE	Voluntary Organisations Network North East
WERS	West End Refugee Service

Chapter One:

Introduction: The Problem to be Investigated

Since 1997 the Labour Government has been involved in major changes in the system of national and local governance. This has been concerned not only with administrative restructuring to improve efficiency, but a conscious effort to 'modernise' the delivery of public services and to increase the participation of both the public at large and also those groups and organisations which might be viewed as 'stakeholders'. As far as local government is concerned this has been marked by two major statements of government policies Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People [1], and the partnership with the voluntary sector which was first set out on a national level. Compact – getting it right together [2] was published and soon after it was implemented on a local level as well. It is expected that the combined effect of these policies would result in better opportunities for participation and more contribution towards policy initiatives from the individuals and organisations which operate in the communities.

This thesis sets out to investigate these sets of developments with particular reference to the North East of England. It examines the ideas which are involved in notions of citizenship, community, participation, and accountability. It then assesses the application of these theoretical concepts by some case studies in local government and the voluntary sector in the North East region. The organisations in question are operating in an environment which is concerned with matters of social exclusion. The focus of this thesis is on the marginal groups which may be lacking the opportunity, skill or will to participate for various reasons. For example, they may not be included in the electoral register because they have changed address often or they may not want to be included or perhaps because they are not allowed to vote because of their status as non-citizens. Particular attention has been given to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

The work has been organised as follows: Chapter One will start with the Literature Review where there is an overview of the two policy papers. These have laid the principles for the modernisation of the local government and its role in its workings with other agencies, particularly voluntary sector ones. After that, some problems, with the notions mentioned above, will be highlighted. It will be shown by the examples from the literature that regardless of the Government's aims, the problems remain unsolved. Despite the efforts, the aspects of the two policies which are of interest in this context, do not penetrate civil society where the ownership and trust would germinate but instead remain skimming the surface where professionals operate to Government-directed orders. This will be supported by the evidence from the interviews in the chapter on case studies. Chapter One will conclude with the description of the methodology used and explain how the empirical evidence was gathered.

---

[1] Department of Transport and Regions [DETR] Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm 4014).
[2] Home Office Compact – getting it right together (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm 4100).

In Chapter Two the Central Government policy papers <u>Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People</u> [3] and the <u>Compact – getting it right together</u>[4] will be looked at. The first paper expects the local authorities to involve citizens during the decision making process which is thought to help in patching up some of the evident accountability deficit. At the same time, 'being in touch with the people' is accepted as a simulation of participation although it is not initiated by the individuals from the communities, and also, it is being used for rating the performance of the public services. Whether this is a sincere attempt to increase the participation in the communities or just to boost the figures of active citizens by the performance-obsessed government, it nevertheless appears that citizenship has been re-defined loosely by the Government in order to cover population more widely.

The second paper <u>Compact</u> lays out the objective of a new and better relationship between the Government and the Voluntary Sector who have agreed to work more jointly. Whether this has improved the position of the Voluntary Sector and hence that of community groups, is another matter, but at least the Government organisations have had to pay more attention to this sector and what it can contribute to the public good. Chapter Two will be concluded with an overview of the Voluntary Sector in order to demonstrate the complexity of it. Because it is not a homogeneous group of organisations, it is impossible to assume that working methods of 'one fits all' could be applied to it. One of the most inherent discrepancies is that because voluntary action and the state action are differently motivated, it may be difficult to see how they can successfully approach the same goal from such different angles.

In Chapter Three the problems with the notions of citizenship, community, participation, and accountability will be explored in more depth. The evolution of the citizenship will be looked at and it will be demonstrated that citizenship is under scrutiny again before the pressure from various directions. It will be shown that the notions above have been used for communicating the requirements of the Government to the community representatives but not necessarily vice versa, which is a problem if the aim has been a relationship of equal partners. The evidence in support for the matters of concern in this chapter will be looked at in Chapter Four which consists of two parts. In the first part the interviewed organisations will be presented briefly and in the second part the themes arising from the interviews will be analysed. There will be an evaluation at the end of Chapter Four which completes the thesis.

Literature Review

This review will give an overview of the ideas in the two government policy papers and how they have been reviewed in the literature. The first part of the literature review concentrates on the issues covered in Chapter Two on policy papers and the latter part on the issues in Chapter Three (citizenship).

---

[3] DETR, <u>Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People.</u>
[4] Home Office, <u>Compact – getting it right together.</u>

<u>Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People</u>[5] sets out a strategy for modernising local government which are expected to 'be in touch with the people, provide high quality services and give vision and leadership for local communities'.[6] From the point of view of this thesis the most interesting part of the policy paper is where it says that 'the government wants councils to ... engage more fully with local people and work in partnership with other agencies and communities'.[7] In this, the Government has seen it useful to include the Voluntary Sector as it may be able to help with the aim of widening the population base from which the ideas and support for the objectives of the modernisation can be drawn. One of the reasons for the need for modernisation is the lack of political accountability of the elected representatives. Due to the low turn out in the elections it is seen as necessary to try other methods which are hoped to stimulate and/or simulate public participation and thus, increase the validity of the public operations. It is hoped that these methods would appeal particularly to those parts of population which the elected representatives do not reflect i.e. ethnic minorities, young people and women as most of those elected are white middle aged males. Adolino[8] has shown that only 1.6 % of all local councillors in England are from the ethnic minorities whilst the ethnic minority population counts 5.5 % of the population (in Census 1991). In Census 2001, the 'proportion of minority ethnic groups in England rose from 6 % to 9 % partly as a result of the addition of mixed ethnic groups to the 2001 Census form'.[9] Adolino argues that 'the geographic concentration of the ethnic minority populations ... has made ethnic minority problems remote from the daily lives of most British citizens.[10]

Some other reasons for lack of accountability lie in the fact that policy making is increasingly led by the Central Government and that the number of un-elected or partially elected bodies has increased.[11] In an attempt of trying to reduce these problems, the Government is encouraging more active citizenship and more joint working among all the stake-holders. However, this process has not been left to happen on its own but instead, various types of consultations have been used as a device in seeking the advice from the individuals and various communities.

Dibben and Bartlett[12] have noted some problems with this approach to consultation. Depending on the method, they have recognised different levels of improvements on the lives of those who have been consulted. They also argue that 'the effectiveness of consultation is limited by cost structures and by the predetermined choices and preferences of senior managers'.[13] The ability to participate in consultation is effected by the capability to understand the policy making process. As the policy makers tend to be the

---

[5] DETR, <u>Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People</u>.
[6] DETR, <u>Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People</u>
[7] Robinson F. et. al. <u>Who runs North East... now?</u> (Durham, University of Durham, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, 2000).
[8] Adolino, J. R. <u>Ethnic Minorities, Electoral Politics and Political Integration in Britain</u> (London, Pinter, 1998) p.45.
[9] National Statistics, Census 2001, 'People and Places Census results on ethnicity, marriage and families' <u>http://www.statistics.gov.uk</u> 13 February 2003, accessed 25 October 2003.
[10] Adolino, Ethnic Minorities, p. 30.
[11] Weir, S. 'The quangos just grow and grow. <u>New Statesman</u> at <u>http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m0FQP/4532_130/74886360/p1/article.jhtml 9 April 2001</u>, accessed 15 June 2003.
[12] Dibben, P. and Bartlett, D. 'Local Government and Service Users: Empowerment through User-Led Innovation' <u>Local Government Studies</u> Vol 27 No 3 (2001) pp. 43-57.
[13] Dibben and Bartlett, Local Government and Service Users, p 57.

first ones to get the information from their own expert resources, in contrast to this it can be difficult for an individual from a community to give carefully considered feedback on the public issues without such information and experience. One of the problems with the consultations is that whilst it is said that they are for the benefit of the communities, the people in the communities may feel inadequately equipped to give feedback or they may see the consultations as waste of time because in their experience nothing concrete and beneficial ever comes out of them (see Chapter Four). This kind of consultation-apathy may be due to the fact that the consultations are predominantly authority-initiated rather than springing from the community. This is due to the fact that there is a *duty* to consult, i.e. artificially involve the public in decision making or at least in the process leading to it.

There is also the problem with the definition of a community. There are different types of communities, both social and geographical. If the community is perceived as something where everyone is likely to be similar in some ways or has something in common, we are already starting to lose contact with the reality of many situations. These kinds of problems make it difficult to assume and make generalisations based on consultations. This matter has become clear from the literature and it is supported by the evidence from the interviews.

Taylor and Langan[14] explain that voluntary sector organisations 'are supposed to be closer to the user and community.' They see that 'the voluntary sector as a whole offers a potential for users and marginalised communities to become actively involved as volunteers and management committee members' which clearly is an opportunity which is not available elsewhere. This may be one of the reasons why the Government has reached out to the voluntary sector. After the publication of the Deakin report Future of Voluntary Sector in July 1996, the Labour Party published the Building the Future Together in February 1997. After they had reached government office, they agreed the Compact: Getting It Right Together[15] with the voluntary sector.

Kendall[16] has analysed existing circumstances which led to the publication of the Compact. He has indicated three facts which show that the third sector has truly been moved higher up on the Government's agenda. First is the launch of the Compact in 1998, second is the change in the taxation of charities, and last but not least, a commitment by Tony Blair in a speech in January 1999 to upgrade significantly and invest in the human and financial resources of the Active Community Unit (ACU).[17] Kendall has come to a conclusion that 'the primary initial political impetus behind the new developments reflects party political maneuverings, rather than think-tank led initiative'.[18] This could be interpreted as a suggestion that there may a problem with the sincerity of the promotion of the Voluntary Sector. At first

---

[14] Taylor, M. and Langan, J. 'Map of the new country' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations (London, Routledge, 1996) p. 29.
[15] Home Office, Compact – getting it right together [ncvo-vol.org.uk/main/gateway/compact.html] accessed 7 January 2001. There had been national compacts negotiated between the Government and voluntary and community sectors also in Wales and Scotland since 1997.
[16] Kendall, J. 'The mainstreaming of the third sector into public policy in England in the late 1990s: whys and wherefores' The Policy & Politics Vol 28 (2000) pp. 541-562.
[17] ACU was formerly the Voluntary and Community Unit. (Kendall (2000), p. 542.)
[18] Kendall 'The mainstreaming', p. 555.

the idea of partnership appears quite new. However, as Lewis[19] has pointed out, the Government has started to use the word partnership in characterising government's proposals for the public services more generally. The same year as Labour entered the office, the 1997 Local Government (Contracts) Act was put in place which, in the opinion of Geddes and Martyn exhibits considerable continuities with public sector reforms which had been introduced by Conservative governments of the 1980s and early/mid-1990s.[20] They also believe that the new Best Value regime covers even more local authority functions than the previous Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT).

Which ever stand one takes to the Compact, it has now been established and is supposed to be a working paper which will evolve, and one would hope would bring the Government and the voluntary sector closer together. In contrast to the Government's idealistic vision for partnership, Craig et.al.[21] have detected four other kinds of scenarios underlying the impetus for Compact process:

1. *Senior partner*, where the voluntary sector would re-establish its long lost position and where national and local government would seriously be interested in the idea of community government.

2. *Incorporation* of the voluntary sector into government agenda in order to control it.

3. *Thin end of the wedge*, where local authorities hold on to their position under the duty to enter into partnerships with various players, when faced with possible increase in the shift of power to voluntary organisations.

4. *Irrelevance*, where the Compact is seen as a piece of paper to which one doesn't need to react.

In Chapter Three it will be argued that according to the evidence from the interviews, none of these visions has materialised so far. However, it can be accepted that similarly to the opinion of Craig et al.[22], who have seen these scenarios as the driving force behind the Compact development, some of the interviewees would agree completely, or to some extent, with the points number two, three and four. From this it is easy to see why there is still much suspicion toward the Compact progress. In the second annual meeting of the Compact Working Group October 2001, it was noted that there were some challenges facing the Government and the Voluntary Sector.[23] They are

1. local government involvement in implementing Local Compacts,

---

[19] Lewis, S. R. 'Reviewing the Relationship Between the Voluntary Sector and the State in Britain in the 1990s.' VOLUNTAS Vol 10 No 3 (1999) p. 264.

[20] Geddes, M. and Martin, S. 'The policy and politics of Best Value: currents, crosscurrents and undercurrents in the new regime' Policy & Politics Vol 28 No 3 (2001) pp. 380.

[21] Craig et.al. Contract or trust? The role of compacts in local governance (Bristol, Policy Press, 2002) p. 2.

[22] Craig et.al. Contract or trust?.

[23] Home Office and Compact Working Group Compact getting it right together Report of the Second Annual Meeting [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/comp2am.pdf] 2000, accessed 23 October 2003.

2. the need to overcome the lack of capacity and infrastructure within the voluntary and community sector across grass roots,

3. the need to engage traditionally excluded community and BME groups.

Craig et.al.[24] have come across the lack of mutual engagement in the Compact work and have identified factors contributing to this. There are issues with the availability of time, fitting with other initiatives, trust and the need to represent diversity and review, to mention a few. The risk is that the Compact remains just a piece of paper unless there is an honest commitment to it. Unfortunately, according to some of the interviewees in Chapter Four, this is a reality in some of the Compact working relationships.

It has also been pointed out that there is a difficulty in defining what constitutes voluntary organisation or even volunteering. Chanan[25] has looked at various facts and figures which reduce the very positive looking figure of financial support from the Government to the voluntary sector to a more questionable size because not so much of this aid reaches what can be thought as genuine 'community' groups.

In Chapter Three, some of the problems with the Government's promotion of the idea of the community and active citizenship will be explained. It will be shown that concepts, such as community and citizenship, can be used for the purposes which suit the state rather than necessarily benefit individuals in the communities. These concepts have been used for indicating inclusion and/or exclusion in the past and are being used again in the 21st century. This will be demonstrated by using Marshall's analysis of citizenship and capitalism and by explaining how the citizenship rights have developed. In the 1940s Marshall had distinguished three types of citizenship rights, which had developed in a historical progression.[26] They, however, have now been challenged by Mullard[27] who sees Marshall's definition of social citizenship in need of up-dating to match more accurately the conditions of modern society. Mullard accepts that Marshall's view of social citizenship was emancipatory but argues that the welfare state did not iron out all of the inequality problems but instead added some new ones with regard to the relationship with women, immigrants and the elderly.

In recent times, citizenship has been under scrutiny again. For example Faulks[28] has argued that 'during the Thatcherite years in Britain, active citizens came to be seen as those who were able to assert their market rights of consumer choice, inequality and conspicuous consumption'. Economic activity became the criteria for being qualified as an active citizen, a situation which automatically excluded for example most single mothers from this citizenship. Faulks[29] sees that this trend has continued under New Labour and argues that 'many of the "solutions" offered by communitarians and conservatives risk negating some

---

[24] Craig et.al., Contract or trust, p. 22.

[25] Chanan, G. Taken For Granted Community activity and the crisis of the voluntary sector Research and Policy Paper Number 13 (London, Community Development Foundation Publications, 1991) p. 5.

[26] Castles, S. and Davidson, A. Citizenship and Migration: globalization and the politics of belonging (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000) p. 104.

[27] Mullard, M. 'Discourses on citizenship' in Bussemaker, J. (ed) Citizenship and welfare state reform in Europe (London, Routledge, 1999) p. 13.

[28] Faulks, K. Citizenship (London, Routledge, 2000) pp. 66-67.

[29] Faulks, Citizenship, pp. 67 and 72.

of the positive steps towards emancipation made by women, for example'. Faulks[30] has argued that whilst the Communitarians have a right to emphasise a greater sense of citizen responsibility, he believes that this should not happen at the expense of rights. He argues that the developments 'that Etzioni and others identify as negative, such as the sexual liberation of the 1960s and changes in family structures reflect the struggles for equal citizenship by women and sexual minorities'. These kinds of connotations do not help when the aim is to build an inclusive society.

The difficulty of defining what is a 'community' is also raised by Favell. [31] In a sense he uses a very similar idea as Mullard when he looks for an 'overlapping moral consensus' which would enable citizens from different cultural and ethical backgrounds to co-operate. Although Mullard[32] argues for a 'citizenship as resistance', a term which sounds negative, he also argues for a creation of circumstances where individuals can feel part of the community without necessarily conforming to it. This would enable an individual to experience a sense of community, which is what the Government is hoping for. Flint has quoted Kymlika and Norman, (1994) in describing what is needed for citizenship: 'Individual's sense of community and their willingness to participate in the political process to promote "public good"'.[33]

If a sense of community is needed for citizenship, is citizenship required in order to have a sense of community? It clearly is not and this is why the Government has taken steps in its policy papers in moving away from the concept of legal or passport-citizenship. They are hoping to create a sense of community which would help to reach the communities and enable them to experience the modernisation process and not just be observers of it. However, from the quotation from Hirst who advocates associationalism, it can be seen that

> the problem for classical liberal democrats is that democratic government based on accountability to the individual citizen means little if the great bulk of economic affairs are controlled by large privately-owned corporations, and if the great bulk of other social affairs are controlled by state bureaucracies. The space for real democratic government is then small, and 'civil society' becomes vestigial, confined to marginal groups and peripheral areas of social life with little influence over the real decision-makers.[34]

This crystallises the major reason why the Government may be set to fail in its attempt to create a Communitarian-influenced inclusive society.

---

[30] Faulks, Citizenship, p. 109.
[31] Favell, A. Philosophies of Integration Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain (London, MacMillan Press, 1998) p. 16.
[32] Mullard, Discourses on citizenship, p. 13.
[33] Flint, J. 'Return of the Governors: Citizenship and the New Governance of Neighbourhood Disorder in the UK' Citizenship Studies Vol 6 No 3 (2002) p. 246.
[34] Hirst, P. Associative Democracy New Forms of Economic and Social Governance (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994) p. 22.

Methodology

The primary source of material for this research was generated from face-to-face interviews, where the interviewees from the voluntary sector were asked about their opinions and experiences in response to the two government policy papers. The other sources of primary information were the actual policy papers and other government reports and statements, including local government responses.

The aim of the interviews was to create an opportunity for the representatives of the organisations which were dealing with clients who are likely to be faced with deprivation and social exclusion, to express their opinions, fears and satisfaction with regards to the recent policy developments. This way, it would be possible to form a view in some matters of interest in this context. For example; does it appear that the consultations have enabled the Government now to be more in touch with the people? Has the relationship between government organisations and the voluntary sector improved? Has partnership working increased the opportunity for community groups to be more involved in making decisions which affect their circumstances? It was deemed most appropriate to ask questions directly from the people who work in such environment and who would be willing to share their experiences. At this stage it is important to point out that the aim has not been to study the various participation models and theories, nor various schools of citizenship (for example liberal and/or feminist citizenship) but to be able to form an opinion of whether the opportunity for participation has improved.

All the interviewees were chosen mainly by two methods: One, skimming through various lists and directories of community organisations and two, by their appearance in a recruitment section of the local newspapers. This was taken as an indication of a contemporary investment by an organisation toward the matters of concern in this context and as such it was deemed an excellent starting point. A letter explaining what was the aim of the research project and the questionnaire was sent out to a limited number of targets. (Sample enclosed in the Appendix). This was repeated until it was felt that there was plenty of material from a variety of organisations which represented different types of activity and worked with different kind of groups.

Interviews, which lasted up to an hour, took place over the period from spring 2001 to summer 2002. As explained, the questionnaire had been sent to the interviewee in advance. The questions varied slightly depending on the organisation and they had been designed to act as prompts for an interviewee to be amenable to share information on selected issues. Interviews were recorded in the form of written notes. A tape recorder was not used because it was seen as more appropriate to hand write a summary of the opinion rather than the actual verbatim. Therefore most of the interview comments have been transcribed from the handwritten notes soon after the interview and constitute a summary of the main points. The words 'user' and 'client' have been used interchangeably because the interviewees used both. The identity of the interviewees cannot be disclosed because some individuals preferred to remain anonymous, particularly at some point of the interview. Therefore, a letter of the alphabet has been issued to each of the interviewees in order to distinguish between them. However, these have been

selected randomly and do not signify anything. Should someone need to see the list of corresponding names and letters, it is available upon request from the author.

The questionnaire had two sections. The first part was to discuss the organisation and its relationship with its users in this context. This section, which can be called an 'internal relationship', was there to give an indication of the organisational priorities for the needs of its users. It provided an idea of how much the users can participate i.e. have a say in choosing the activities and to what extent they are involved, for example, in the management of the group.

The second section of the questionnaire, which can be called 'external relationship', was about the organisation and its relationship with any other organisation, whether public, private or voluntary. The importance of this section should materialise in providing an idea of any changes and improvements in the relationships since the publishing of the Compact and since the modernisation of local government. The aim of this section was to find out how the Government's aim towards 'more and better' relationship, particularly between the local government and the voluntary sector, had materialised and hopefully turned into a partnership (see Chapter Two for Compact).

In order to further the author's understanding of one of the mechanisms of community participation in the North East, one community consultation event was also attended as an observer. In addition to exposing some of the problems with the community consultation process itself, this experience helped to illustrate the existence of the problems which have been highlighted in the literature.

Chapter Two: The Central Government Policy Papers

Introduction

In this chapter the government papers Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People[35] and the Compact: Getting It Right Together[36] will be considered. This enables us to establish the necessity of the modernisation and the reasons why these developments have taken place at this particular point in time. There will be an introduction to the voluntary sector in order to show its versatility, and in particular, its growing role in service provision. Some of the complexities with definitions in this area are highlighted. The focus of this chapter is on what these policies are offering to the voluntary sector and through that, for the people participating in the community organisations. A particular interest lies in the flexibility of the Government's definition as to who are the 'citizens' they want to be in touch with, and what is considered as active citizenship. The ideas have not been clearly defined in these papers and hence they offer opportunities for minorities to participate without excluding people by their citizenship status. It is important because minorities can include people who are legally British citizens - but might be assumed to be foreign by other people because of their ethnicity- as well as resident non UK nationals.

The first of the policy papers the Modern Local Government, among its other goals, expects the local authorities to involve citizens during the decision making process. This is in order to patch up some of the evident accountability deficit and also to provide the authorities with feedback from the service users, which in practice is a performance measurement required by the Government. The second paper Compact is an agreement between the Government and the Voluntary Sector. Its objective is to build up a partnership between the two. A joint effect of these two papers should materialise in more input in decision making process by the individuals and community groups.

Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People

The White Paper Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People sets out a strategy for necessary changes in modernising local government. Local governments are expected to 'be in touch with the people, provide high quality services and give vision and leadership for local communities'.[37] As the local authorities are the main providers of the public services, it is seen that they should be more effective, responsive and accountable when dealing with the needs of the public and using public money. In order to achieve this, 'the government wants councils to be less paternalistic and less inward-looking, to engage more fully with local people and work in partnership with other agencies and communities'.[38]

---

[35] DETR, Modern Local Government In Touch with the People.
[36] Home Office, The Compact.
[37] DETR, Modern Local Government In Touch with the People.
[38] Robinson, Who runs North East... now?

There are some problems with the state of accountability in local government. The turnout at local elections is relatively low, on average 40 %, and 'as a body, councillors do not reflect the makeup of their communities'.[39] It has been recognised that the form of democracy where public accountability is achieved by casting a vote, has lost its popularity. For example, in recent local elections Sunderland had the second lowest turnout in Britain with a mere 19.2 % voting.[40] In the 1997 general elections in the North East region the turnout ranged from 57.1 % in Tyne Bridge to 77.5 % in Hexham. In the 1999 European Union (EU) elections only 19.5 % of the North East electorate voted. While alternative modes of casting a vote can help to increase the numbers of people voting; for example, in Gateshead the percentage increased from 30 % to 46 %, in Middlesbrough from 29 % to 34 % and in South Tyneside from 27 % to 46 %[41] it still is not enough to ensure the democratic legitimacy of representatives. In addition to this, if one considers the profile of the people who have been elected, either on a national or a local level, they are not representative of the population. For example only a quarter of them are women and only half are employed or self-employed.[42] Most of the elected representatives are white and middle aged.

The under-represented group which is of interest here is the BME population. This group is extremely heterogeneous ethnically and culturally although easily generalised as 'other'. The BME group includes those immigrants who have moved to England from the (former) colonies in Asia, West Indies, and Africa or their descendants, who may have differently acquired full British citizenship. It also consists of refugees who have arrived here more recently from eastern or central Europe or from the Islamic countries, seeking asylum and who do not have British or EU citizenship. Another group of BMEs are people who have acquired EU citizenship in another country than the United Kingdom. This hybrid of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds makes it difficult for the BME groups to achieve a common voice using the traditional methods of political participation, for example, voting for a councillor or a MP. They also are in various stages of 'integration' to the British society and therefore have different needs and interests, and also attitudes just like the rest of the population, toward other later arriving migrants and minorities.

Adolino[43] has estimated that only 1.6 % of all local councillors in England are from an ethnic minority group. This compared with the 1991 census when the ethnic minority population was 5.5 %. This fact enforces the need for other kind methods on influencing policy making especially when 'the geographic concentration of the ethnic minority populations', as Adolino argues, 'has also made ethnic minority problems remote from the daily lives of most British citizens[44] (a fact that has facilitated the minimization of these problems by policy-makers). Even though there is a low number of ethnic minority people living in the North East, there are denser areas of BME populations in some places. They often live in more

---

[39] DETR, Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership.
[40] Robinson, Who runs North East... now? p. 3.
[41] Wintour, P. and Carter, H. 'Postal voting boosts turnouts in local polls' The Guardian Wednesday 1st May 2002.
[42] Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership. DETR 1998.
[43] Adolino, J. R. Ethnic Minorities, Electoral Politics and Political Integration in Britain (London, Pinter, 1998) p.45.
[44] Adolino, Ethnic Minorities, p.30.

deprived areas, which legitimises their presence on the government's regeneration and social inclusion agendas.

Another aspect of the lack of accountability and unrepresentativeness lies in the existence of three fully or partly un-elected governing bodies in the North East. All three cause some reduction of powers of elected local bodies and a growth of influence of central government in local policy making. In 1994 the Government Office for the North East (GO-NE) was established to supervise the implementation of government policies in the region, a function that reduces the freedom and flexibility of local authorities in setting their own locally defined goals. Another establishment, which is the Government's representative in the region, is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) One NorthEast. It has a task of working with other organisations in the region to deliver development and regeneration programmes. One NorthEast is run by a board which is appointed by the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). The third one of these bodies operating at the regional level is the North East Regional Assembly, previously the North East Regional Chamber. It has a task of advising One NorthEast and to represent the interests of councils in the North East. Some are also hoping that it would become a predecessor for the future regional government. All three organisations have variable levels of accountability in terms of being elected and representative but the North East Regional Assembly has more elected members and is more open to the public than the other two. Next, some of the ideas on the modernisation agenda will be examined from the aspect of how these would improve accountability, one of the reasons why the Government is pressing for the modernisation of local governance.

In order to be accountable, local governments need to be in touch with the people and know what the people think and want from the authorities. Without this knowledge, no authority can measure its success in reaching the population of the area. There are many ways to be in touch with the people. Traditionally councillors have represented the electorate with whom they engage in discussions between the elections. This indirect method has many disadvantages but it is well established. This accountability is tested every three to four years in the elections which are less popular than before (see above). The electorate depends on the chosen councillors and their activity and responsiveness to voters. Yet councillors are faced with old and new challenges, i.e. party hegemony and new roles for councillors. These new arrangements make them feel that they are increasingly losing powers to central government. This sense of loss of power is further increased by the rise of mainly un-elected regional bodies (see above).

The aim of the Government has been to shake up the old style governance where a high number of councillors took part in many meetings and in which many decisions had already effectively been taken elsewhere. The new idea is to reduce 'the number of committees, the number of councillors involved in each meeting and the number of meetings'[45]. This will be important as the councillors would have more specific role as backbenchers or executives. Backbenchers would interact more with the community and act as a check on the decisions of executive councillors. Currently councillors can be excluded from the

---

[45] DETR, Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership [No place, 1998, no number].

12

effective decisions even if they represent the ruling party. The new role as a backbencher would be to strengthen the scrutinising role and hopefully give them a better position and therefore enable them to challenge the decisions. Although there is evidence that many councillors 'wish to spend much more time in direct contact with those they represent'[46] rather than in meetings, those councillors who have to take the role of a backbencher, may feel that their executive power has been reduced. On the other hand, this would clarify who is responsible for the decisions taken and why they have been taken. Councillors would be saved from explaining decisions in which they had no part. How this would enable the councillors to challenge any decisions their electorate is expecting them to, is not clear.

The Government's current modernisation suggestions include a choice of three models of council structure:

- A directly elected mayor with a cabinet;
- A cabinet with a leader;
- A directly elected mayor and council manager.

This wish for change has been initiated by a series of referendums in which people have voted on their preferred model. In the recent referendums there has not been much support for the election of mayor in the North East as 'most of the 25 local authorities in the region have adopted the cabinet and leader style of government'. Whilst 'electorates of North Tyneside, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough have voted in favour of a mayor, voters in Durham City, Berwick, Sunderland and Sedgefield rejected the proposal'.[47] In some cases, in the hope of making the activities of the council more appealing to the electorate, a high profile personality or a prominent campaigner had been used during the election.[48]

With regard to the consultations, it has not been specified who are the people the government wants to be in touch with. Neither can it be assumed that the Government would be in direct contact with each individual. Therefore, the author has taken the liberty to interpret that 'being in contact with the citizens' in practice means that the Government wants to be aware of what the people in the communities think about its policies and what they want from the public services. It has been assumed that this kind of information can be generated by any of the willing individuals who are in contact with the particular locality and not just by those who possess a citizenship or those who have lived there a minimum period of time.

In general it appears that the consultations are considered as a form of active citizenship. Local government is 'seeking the views of the citizens' by various methods:

- Citizen Jury, perhaps 12-16 citizens who are representative of the local community

---

[46] DETR, http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/lgwp/5htm , 1998, accessed 7 January 2001.
[47] Government Office for the North East (GONE) [http://www.go-ne.gov.uk] 17 January 2002, accessed 4 April 2002.
[48] Two new mayors have used unusual publicity for their advantage; Stuart Drummond in Hartlepool with a monkey costume and Ray Mallon using his reputation as a former senior police officer in Middlesbrough.

- Focus group, 12-20 people, to give in-depth responses to a particular question, service or problem.
- Conferences, larger than focus group
- Opinion polls[49]

These kinds of 'participation' opportunities are on the increase and do offer a chance to express opinions. However, increasingly consultations are also used as a performance measurement in a context of a certain policy area, for example housing services or in rating health care services. Consultations do not make the local authorities legally bound to follow the advice or recommendations which has been extracted during these consultations. It is difficult to measure how this kind of participation would materialise as social capacity or even empowerment in the communities.

If the Government's suggested consultations take place in connection with elections, as is sometimes suggested, this would limit the sections of the population being consulted and also the frequency of them. If getting to other types of venue requires travelling, some of the consultees would not participate because of the financial cost, lack of time or maybe of fear of unfamiliar places. In order to overcome this obstacle, consultations must take place in a venue nearby and known to the public. However, it would make it difficult to estimate if people would arrive in sufficient numbers in order to draw conclusions from such events. Therefore some consultations are done at the door step where the disadvantage is that the introduction and information must be repeated over and over again. These kinds of difficulties make consultations costly and time consuming depending on the form and frequency of the method.

Dibben and Bartlett[50] have recognised different levels of improvements in the lives of those who were consulted depending on the method. And further, they argue that 'the effectiveness of consultation is limited by cost structures and by the predetermined choices and preferences of senior managers'.[51] In order to participate actively in consultation, some level of capability in understanding the process of policy making is required before one is able to give informed feedback on the authority's suggestions. The latter problem is now partly being addressed as there is funding available for training for groups and individuals to improve their participation skills.[52]

Another time and money saving method of consultation is to consult interest and focus groups which can be considered as possessing 'concentrated information' about their particular area of interest. These may be the reasons why the Government wants to reach towards voluntary and community sector, which according to Taylor and Langan, 'are supposed to be closer to the user and community. The voluntary sector as a whole offers a potential for users and marginalised communities to become actively involved

---

[49] Adapted from DETR, Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership.
[50] Dibben and Bartlett, Local Government and Service Users, pp. 43-57.
[51] Dibben and Bartlett, Local Government and Service Users, p. 57.
[52] GONE [http://www.go-ne.gov.uk].

as volunteers and management committee members which is not available elsewhere.'[53] This will bring us neatly to the next theme, the Government's project of building a relationship with the voluntary sector.

Background leading to the Compact agreement on a national level

The relationship between governments and the voluntary sector has fluctuated throughout their shared history but never before in recent times has the voluntary sector been given such a prominent part to play. Now it has a dual role as providing services in the community but also as representing the voice from the communities in various regeneration programmes. If one looks back to the early twentieth century when charity and volunteering already played an important role in meeting social needs, it can be seen that different classes possessed different views on this matter. Conservatives were ready to support voluntary action if that helped to restore traditional 'Victorian' values and improve the morale amongst some of the working class.[54] After the Second World War when the welfare state replaced much of the functions of the voluntary sector, its role was reduced although not completely removed.

In the 1960s and 1970s the voluntary sector saw a new dawn in a form of new organisations which were founded 'to tackle a whole range of perceived inadequacies in welfare provision'.[55] This process became threatened in the 1980s when the Thatcher administration dismantled the powers of the local government in service provision with an aim to 'roll back the frontiers of state'. But the Conservative Government was faced with a fight at the local level:

> 'municipal socialist' authorities introduced a distinctive new set of polices - economic development, equal opportunities pursued through the creation of women's committees and race relations units, restructured housing departments, and measures for decentralisation of services and 'contract compliance'. The new left-wing leaderships reached out to the voluntary sector for both ideas and political support, and particularly to the community groups in which many of them had learned their politics. This led to the construction of what became known as the 'rainbow coalition', in which politically acceptable voluntary bodies were supported by generous funding but with strings attached: local authority conditions of employment and trades union membership. Black groups, their needs often overlooked in earlier collaborations between statutory and voluntary sectors, were among the conspicuous beneficiaries of these new policies. ... [the government] set themselves to grind the life out of the enterprise, by a range of measures: cuts in resources; limitations on powers to raise money and spend it (capping); new forms of inspection and review (the Audit Commission) ... The local authorities fought back and in so doing sought to enlist their client voluntary

---

[53] Taylor, M. and Langan, J. 'Map of the new country' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations (London, Routledge, 1996) p. 29.

[54] Smith, D, Rochester, C & Hedley, R. (eds) An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector (London, Routledge, 1995) p. 1.

[55] Smith, Rochester and Hedley, An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector.

organisation in the campaign. This created a difficult situation, especially for coordinating bodies, both nationally and locally.[56]

This was a confusing time for the voluntary sector. In some ways it was punished for the actions of others but at the same time it was looking towards new 'partners' and options. The relationship between the local authorities and voluntary groups was based on recognition of the complementary role they could play. 'Local authorities had the overall responsibility for service provision and provided the formal mechanism for democratic involvement'[57] whilst voluntary groups would supplement this pattern by identifying and meeting new needs, by suggesting improvements and by giving voice to those whose expressions might not be heard. This may seem a fair role for the voluntary sector, but in reality, it can also be seen as an attempt to silence the sector and enable the local authorities to get on with the important business. In practice, this recognition of the complementary role, may have rarely materialised in any significant consultation activity with the voluntary sector, apart from those organisations which were well-established and relied on professional paid staff and hence, were able to lobby at the national level.

When moving towards the 1990s, the eagerness of the Conservative Government to adopt a contract culture in service provison was backed by legislation clarifying and defining the position of local authorities in the realm of contracts. For example:

- The Local Government Act 1988 introduced the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) for selected local authority activities.
- The Housing Act 1988 limited the role of local authorities in housing provision, yet expanded the role of housing associations and other landlords.
- The Education Reform Act 1988 reduced the role of local authorities in the educational setting.
- The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 put in place controls on local authorities' interests in companies.[58]

These were based on a number of assumptions which encouraged the Government promotion of the contract culture. Four of these main propositions perfectly reflect the change in the relationships between the local authority and voluntary organisations as it was believed that:

- The market and competition provide an efficient mechanism for reducing costs and improving quality.
- Contracts are a better form of funding relationship than more informal partnerships. Standards and expectations can be made more explicit and

---

[56] Smith , Rochester, and Hedley, An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector p. 59.
[57] National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO) Contracting In or Out the contract culture: the challenge for voluntary sector (London, NCVO, 1989) p. 4.
[58] Adapted from the NCVO Contracting In or Out the contract culture: the challenge for voluntary sector, p. 5.

achievement can be monitored more effectively. Accountability can be enhanced.

- A pluralistic pattern of provision provides the consumer with greater choice than monopolistic state provision and therefore a greater chance of finding a service which meets his/her needs.

- Private sector and voluntary sector provision is likely to be better than public sector provision. The profit motive and the voluntary ethic of 'active citizenship' are seen as more powerful motivations than a commitment to public service.[59]

Increasingly, there was an emphasis on minimising the state's role in service provision in the name of cost efficiency and allowing for variety which aroused some worries about growing selfish individualism and a reliance on market forces.

This idea of 'formalising relationships' has continued to create interest. In the Deakin report Future of Voluntary Sector which was published in July 1996 it was argued that the government should have more understanding of the nature of voluntary action. Government should understand that 'those voluntary organisations are not just contractors, but are embedded in civil society with goals of their own'.[60] In the report on Voluntary Sector, Building the Future Together which the Labour Party published in February 1997 the word 'partnership' is used as it had been used by the previous Conservative government. What is different according to Lewis[61], is that now the word has been used to characterise government's proposals for the public services more generally. The same year as Labour entered office, the 1997 Local Government (Contracts) Act, which confirmed authorities' powers to enter into contracts, was put in place. This Act, Geddes and Martyn[62] argue, exhibits considerable continuities with public sector reforms which had been introduced by Conservative governments of the 1980s and early/mid-1990s. According to them the new Best Value regime, (which has been compared to the CCT), covers even more local authority functions.

But why then, has the time come to include the voluntary sector into public policy? There have some suggestions been put forward by Kendall and Craig et.al. In his paper, Kendall[63] analyses the developments before and leading to the publication of the Compact. He has indicated three facts which show that the third sector has been moved higher up on the Government's agenda. First is the launch of the Compact in 1998, second is the change in the taxation of charities, and last but not least, a commitment by Tony Blair in a speech in January 1999 to upgrade significantly and invest in the human and financial resources of the ACU, a unit which is specifically charged with dealing with the third sector

---

[59] Voluntary Sector Working Group on Contracting Out, convened by NCVO (1989) p. 6.
[60] Lewis, 'Reviewing the Relationship', p. 264.
[61] Lewis, 'Reviewing the Relationship', p. 264.
[62] Geddes, M. and Martin, S. 'The policy and politics of Best Value: currents, crosscurrents and undercurrents in the new regime' Policy & Politics Vol 28 No 3 (2001) pp. 380.
[63] Kendall, 'The mainstreaming of the third', pp. 541-562.

issues. Kendall has used Kingdon's[64] 'multiple streams' approach to explain this unparalleled and fast policy development, which he argues not to have been coincidental but 'a calculated attempt to establish for the first time a proactive and significant "horizontal" policy position towards the sector'.[65]

Kendall argues that 'the primary initial political impetus behind the new developments reflects party political maneuverings, rather than think-tank led initiative'[66]. For evidence of this he presents the differences between the Conservative and Labour attitudes towards the third sector. The Conservative Government was seen to be reluctant to give a major role to voluntary sector although it recognised the value of the sector. Instead, markets were seen to be better at providing services in exchange for reward, and family and individuals were relied on to provide services voluntarily.[67] In contrast to this, the Labour Party on its way to becoming New Labour had reviewed its policies and now started to emphasize the role of the voluntary sector. After ideological adjustments, i.e. steering away from statist principles, New Labour was able to pursue the marriage between markets and communitarian ideas.[68]

The Compact

As explained above, there has been a change in the relationship between local government and the voluntary sector. This has placed new demands on both parties. Altruism is being replaced by new dictates of efficiency, and at the same time old strains of financial dependency and imbalance of power remain. The new Labour Government wanted to move the relationship forward from contractual relationships and give the voluntary sector a more prominent role in tackling social exclusion. In response, the voluntary and community sector took this opportunity to renegotiate worsening funding mechanisms and its changing role with local authorities.

The Compact agreement of 1998, between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector, aims to build a partnership between the two. These two parties have agreed that they share many aspirations like such as the pursuit of inclusiveness, dedication to public life, and support for the development of healthy communities.[69] In the foreword of the Compact[70] Tony Blair states:

> 'The work of voluntary and community sector is central to the Government's mission to make this the Giving Age. They enable individuals to contribute to the development of their communities. By doing so, they promote citizenship, help to re-establish a sense

---

[64] Kingdon, J.W. Agendas, alternatives, and public policies, (New York, HarperCollins, 1995).

[65] Kendall, 'The mainstreaming of the third', p. 555.

[66] Kendall, 'The mainstreaming of the third' p. 555.

[67] This reliance on family and individuals, usually women, to provide services for example such as care for free, is being criticised on its own right especially by the feminists.

[68] For a longer analysis of this development, please see Kendall's article where he also explains the important role of policy entrepreneurs and trust in this process.

[69] Home Office (1998) [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vcu/compact.pdf], accessed 18 April 2002.

[70] Home Office and Compact Working Group Compact getting it right together Report of the Second Annual Meeting [No place, no publisher, no date].

of community and make a crucial contribution to our shared aim of a just and inclusive society.'

In July 1997 there was a conference held by the leading Voluntary Sector umbrella organisations and at the same time the Working Group on Government Relations was set up. They worked together on the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) initiative for Compact. Following this, the consultations on the draft Compact started in October 1997 and finished in February 1998 and the Compact was agreed in November 1998. In the 1999 subgroups on the following five categories were founded: funding, consultation, Black and Minority Ethnic organisations, volunteering, community groups. Each subgroup started to draw up a Code of Practice for the Compact. In May 2000 there was the first Compact meeting between four government ministers and the Working Group on Government Relations. The implementation of the Compact was finally started by a ten-point action plan with the main goal of making the Compact known within the government and the voluntary organisations. This would be achieved by raising the drafts and consultation papers of the Compact in the meetings of appropriate government departments and ministers. Similarly, they would be made known in the meetings between various members of partnerships, and discussed at any suitable occasion and event at the local and regional level.

When the Government and the Voluntary Sector signed the Compact agreement, it was meant to establish a partnership relationship between the two. In order to make the Compact operational, five codes were drawn up to clarify the position of each of the partners towards the others. Eventually, when the Compact would be made operational at the local level, the partners should be guided through the process using the codes. In contrast to the Government's idealistic vision for partnership, Craig et.al.[71] have detected four other kinds of scenarios underlying this push for Compact process:

1. *Senior partner*, where voluntary sector would re-establish its long lost position and where national and local government would seriously be interested in the idea of community government.

2. *Incorporation* of voluntary sector into government agenda in order to control it.

3. *Thin end of the wedge*, where local authorities hold on to their position under the duty to enter into partnerships with various players, when faced with possible increase in the shift of power to voluntary organisations.

4. *Irrelevance*, where the Compact is seen as a piece of paper to which one doesn't need to react.

---

[71] Craig et.al., Contract or Trust, p. 2.

From the interviews with the voluntary organisations it has become clear that none of these scenarios has materialised. In the views of the interviewees' the most likely scenario to prevail would be one of the three last ones or a mixture of them. The first scenario, where the voluntary sector would be considered as a senior partner in provision of community government, seems the least realistic at the moment. The impression is that the voluntary sector representatives are not convinced that local authorities genuinely want to promote community government even if they want to promote community activity to some extent. According to the interviewees, there is not much evidence of that either.

With regards to the scenario of *thin end of wedge*, from the interviews, it has not been possible to acquire an impression that this scenario prevails. It does not appear that the local authority officers are worried about voluntary sector 'taking over' because officers have been very busy with other modernisation and performance business. They do not feel the need to resist the risk that the voluntary sector would have greater role than they have in governing. Officers know that they are running the administration now and in foreseeable future. They agree it to be possible in the future that the voluntary sector might take some functions from the local authority in the name of cost efficiency, but this will not happen very soon as the voluntary sector and especially small community groups are not yet equipped sufficiently. Nor would it be in line with the organisational purpose of many voluntary and community groups.

The unlikeliness of scenarios one and three can be summed up by a further observation. As the Government increasingly appears centralised, why would they seriously bother with community governance which needs more support in getting established? Is it that the Government is anticipating an increase in centralisation which would contribute towards a growing distance between the Government and the communities? A creation of Regional Government would be another tier between government and the people. In some cases it would replace the local governance when councils would be merged into a unitary council. This is a real worry for the local authorities rather than a fear of the voluntary organisations 'taking over' as has been suggested in scenarios one and three. However, it is mildly surprising that the local authorities have not been lobbying more actively for political support from the communities as they did under the previous threat by the Conservative government.

Scenario number two which suggests that the Compact is merely a tool to incorporate the voluntary sector into government agenda in order to control it seems improbable. It is clearly impossible to control thousands of organisations based on a theoretical agreement. It would take more to 'control' this sector. It would be foolish to assume otherwise and underestimate the strength and capability of the voluntary sector. From the interviews it has not been possible to come to such conclusion that the authorities or the Government even wishes to control something so hybrid as the voluntary sector. In addition to this, scenario four where the Compact is seen as a piece of paper to which one does not need to react, it would be greatly unfair to the authorities to claim that they see the Compact in this light. They have reacted to it and established local compacts with codes of practice. However, it can be argued that the success of the compacts will greatly depend on the officers in the civil service, local authority and the individuals in the voluntary sector. And furthermore, although there is no evidence of the aim to 'control' as Craig has

suggested, there is sufficient evidence that the Government wants the local authorities to be in the lead position. Whether this suffices as control is another matter.

Local Compacts

Originally the Compact was planned to operate at the national level. But as the Government had planned to modernise local government, it was thought to be good idea to extend the Compact to cover local authorities as well. As the local authorities are the main providers of many public services, it is believed that they should be more effective, responsive and accountable when dealing with the needs of the public. In order to achieve this, local authorities had to become more involved and engage more with local people and work in partnership with communities and other agencies.

In 2000, the Compact Working Group had surveyed the needs and suggestions of over 150 voluntary and community organisations. The survey showed the voluntary sector's confidence in the Government's role as a funder, but at the same time it exposed the worry about local government's funding arrangements. This worry may be rooted in the experience of pre-Compact working relationships between the parties and which should be diminishing after the codes on funding have been implemented. The other worry by the sector was caused by the shortcomings in the government consultations. These should be rectified by the implementation of the codes on consultations based on the suggestions made by the sector. The general outcome after studying the results of the survey was that if there was a local compact in place it would

- benefit community
- help to realise the organisational objectives
- help to improve relationships in partnerships
- help to use external funding better, and
- involve local groups in best value and community planning[72].

Local compacts are thought to benefit communities through the development of relationships primarily between the local authority and different kind of groups at the grass root level. When a local authority engages in consultations it will gain useful information about the circumstances of the community it is operating in. Therefore policies emerging should be better suited to those whom they concern and this in return would be shown as an improved local authority performance on the Best Value and other auditing evaluations. On the other hand, community groups will have more access to and contact with the local authority. Voluntary and community groups can assume that they will be kept more up to date about policy developments. This should result in relationships which enhance policy development and improve the content and delivery of services.

---

[72] The Compact at [ncvo-vol.org.uk/main/gateway/compact.html] accessed 7 January 2001.

Secondly, a local compact will help the organisation to realise its objectives. When there is a wider awareness of who does what, organisations can focus on their specific activities. There is not as much need for explaining why they exist. Ideally, they would be able to pool their resources with others and each could specialise in one area and try to fill any recognised gaps in the services.

The third benefit comes in the form of better relationships in partnerships. Of this there is clear evidence in the surveys and from the interviews. Two-way communications through personal contacts, formal or informal is better than the previous formality where the local authority used to dictate the nature of the relationship. The voluntary sector representatives are more willing to share their specific knowledge and experience if they have been listened to in turn. Another advantage of the well functioning partnership is that some of the overlapping can be reduced when there exists some kind of sense about what is going on and who is doing what and with whose money.

Fourth, due to a local government's modernisation process, funding has possibly become the biggest worry amongst voluntary and community groups. Now there is some hope that the financial uncertainty, which was increased by the contractual relationship with the local authorities, could be improved. Clarifying the rules and criteria, which must be openly presented, and explained would allow applications to be compiled accordingly. Funders must understand the applicant organisation's values which may be different from theirs, and respect their need for independence. It would be important to acknowledge why funding has not been granted and how it would be possible to obtain next time around. Currently, there is a condition attached to some funding that it must be given to such groups who are including BME and other difficult-to-reach groups.[73] This hopefully promotes 'shared-vision' working methods rather than 'me-first' attitude amongst those groups who are bidding for funds.

The fifth benefit is the involvement of local people in planning of the community. They are the best source of information in this respect as their daily lives are affected by decisions made in the councils and local authority. Conversely, involvement should increase the understanding of public funds and where they come from, thus enhancing responsibility and interest in public life. One may achieve a sense of meaningfulness if it is possible to contribute towards planning in the community. It may be especially true if one knows that there is money available for particular projects which would benefit the neighbourhood. People in the localities have been able to contribute towards Best Value consultations already. When it comes to community groups, they should have more say in the methods and evaluation criteria used in the best value regime as there is a possibility that a similar regime will be extended to the service the voluntary sector provides.

---

[73] Cook explains the problem with definitions such as 'hard-to-reach-groups' as they often are definitions of the officials and not those of the people themselves who are thought to be difficult to reach. They may not want to be consulted or it may be that the officials do not like what they hear and so decide that these people are hard to reach if they do not want to comply with request by the officials. Cook, D. 'Consultation, for a Change? Engaging Users and Communities in the Policy Process' Social Policy & Administration Vol 36 No 5 (2002) pp. 516-531.

When it comes to these expected benefits, some progress has been achieved, but some new challenges have been created. In the second annual meeting of the Compact Working Group October 2001, in their joint foreword, Angela Eagle, the Minister for Voluntary and Community Sector, and Sir Kenneth Stowe, Chair of the Compact Working Group have agreed a number of challenges facing government and the Voluntary Sector.[74] These are

- local government involvement in implementing Local Compacts,
- need to overcome the lack of capacity and infrastructure within the voluntary and community sector across grass roots,
- need to engage traditionally excluded community and BME groups.

In some local authorities there has been some unwillingness detected in working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.[75] Another problem lies with the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). High hopes which the voluntary sector had placed on the local compacts are feared to have been lost by and replaced by the aspirations of the LSPs. To some extent, LSPs can be seen to be competing with the aims of Compact rather than complementing it because of the number of organisations participating. Craig et.al.[76] have come across the lack of mutual engagement in the Compact work and have identified factors contributing to this. They are the issues of available time, the fit with other initiatives, trust, the need for champions, resources, the need to represent diversity and review. The issue of resources is being targeted at the moment by the Community Empowerment Fund which will help but has its limits. It is clear that a lot of time is needed so that the 'champions' and 'policy entrepreneurs' can build trust between all partners. There is a risk that Compact will remain just a piece of paper unless there is an honest commitment to it. This commitment must start from the every day interactions between the governing bodies and voluntary and community sector and reach managers who will lead with an example by accommodating the agreed goals into administration.

Voluntary and Community Sector

The Voluntary and Community Sector is formed of organisations and groups of various sizes, all with their own individual aims and purposes. They have various levels of financial independence, community activity and a varying numbers of volunteers and employees. For example, they cannot be defined as run by volunteers when the organisations function with a paid workforce and may not use any volunteers (e.g. housing associations). Some, especially small community groups, rely solely on volunteers (e.g. neighbourhood watch). Some organisations make some profit, some do not. But a common denominator between them can be the fact that they do not have owners who are entitled to a share of any profits and

---

[74] Home Office and Compact Working Group Compact getting it right together Report of the Second Annual Meeting [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/comp2am.pdf] [No place, no publisher, no date].
[75] Home Office and Compact Working Group (2000), p. 16.
[76] Craig et.al. Contract or Trust, p. 22.

thus do not distribute it to shareholders.[77] This variety of organisations makes it difficult to find a simple definition for this sector.

The same goes for the terminology. In the UK there are several terms used interchangeably describing this sector; the 'third sector', 'non-profit' and 'not-for-profit' sector whilst in the European context the term 'social economy' is used.[78] Some political scientists (Berger 1981; Lehmbruch and Schmitter 1982) 'have conceptualised the third sector as an intermediary zone between market and state ... in which third sector organisations act as mediators between the organised economic interests of market firms, labour and the political interests of state agencies and their constituencies on the other'.[79] From the Neo-corporatist perspective,

> the third sector offers a buffer zone between state and society and mitigates social tensions and political conflicts. Third sector organizations take on functions which the state, for various reasons, cannot fulfill or delegate to for-profit firms (Heinze and Olk 1981; Hilbert 1988). ... Consequently, Seibel (1987, 1989) argues that an essential function of the third sector is the institutionalisation of organisational responses to "unsolvable" problems. Finally, Reese (1987) approaches the delegation of functions to the third sector from a different angle. He asserts that voluntary associations compensate for functions no longer fulfilled by the family which finds itself less able to integrate individuals into society and to provide services for them (Becher and Pankoke 1981; Gross 1982; Offe and Heinze 1986).[80]

Whatever the position of the sector as a whole, Chanan's observations on the 1990 Home Office Scrutiny show 'that of 16 government departments buying services from the voluntary sector, 15 do not apply any criteria of whether the receiving organisations simulated or even used voluntary activity'.[81] Chanan has looked at how the Home Office has distributed £2.2bn and found that

> half goes to housing associations, and the next 25 % to training schemes. Urban Aid, the main source for local projects in disadvantaged areas throughout Britain, gets 4.3 % (95m), and 70 % of this is earmarked for capital projects and economic development rather than social projects. A small margin of the remaining £362m may reach genuinely voluntary groups; the bulk goes to professional 'voluntary organisations'.[82]

---

[77] James, E. 'Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector: A comparative perspective' in Anheier, H. and Seibel, W. (eds) The Third Sector: Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990) p. 21.

[78] Research Solutions, The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector to the Economic Life of the North East Region ,Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE), November, 2000. p. 7.

[79] Seibel, W. and Anheier, K. 'Sociological and Political Science Approaches to the Third Sector' in Anheier, H. and Seibel, W. (eds) The Third Sector: Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990), p. 8.

[80] Seibel and Anheier, 'Sociological and Political Science Approaches to the Third Sector', p. 14.

[81] Chanan, Taken For Granted , p. 5.

[82] Chanan, Taken For Granted, p. 5.

Throughout the 1980s the Government's willingness to fund the voluntary sector, lay in its capacity of delivering social policies and services economically on behalf of government rather than supporting activities in communities. For example Etherington has observed that

> central government spending on the voluntary sector has been falling with one significant exception, housing associations. If these are seen as part of the voluntary sector, then government spending has increased substantially, for housing association spending constitutes over 85 % of central government spending on the voluntary sector. Indeed, some would argue that has gone too far, and what was previously part of the voluntary housing movement has become state agency, with all but its governance being determined by central government policy.[83]

In response to a Labour Party document, Labour and the Voluntary Sector – A Consultative Document 1990, Chanan has pointed out problems with this:

- There is an assumption that the conventional definition of the voluntary sector adequately covers community activity as well.
- Most government funding of the voluntary sector consists of the purchase of services from professional non-profit organisations. Little of this is specifically to do with volunteering and even less is to do with independent local community activity.
- Community activity is part of the continuous unpaid work that people do. Unpaid work is half or more of all society's work. Its importance is marked by the conventional definition of 'economic activity'.
- Independent local community groups are the largest and least-funded part of the voluntary sector. They arise primarily from community activity, not from national voluntary organisations.
- Definitions of volunteering usually exclude most unpaid work and informal community activity, for example caring for family, relatives and friends.[84]

When one looks at these problems and compares them with the steps taken in the Compact to rectify them, it can be seen that community activity has been given more emphasis and funding in order to build capacity amongst small local groups. One big problem still remains, definitions of community activity and volunteering.

Chanan's device for recognising the level of community activity involved is divided into four groups:

i. independent local groups;

---

[83] Etherington, S. 'To the millenium' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations (London, Routledge, 1996) p. 10.
[84] Adapted from Chanan Taken For Granted, p. 1.

ii. professionally-run or nationally-standardised organisations which have local branches using volunteer labour, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Women's Royal Voluntary Service or Red Cross;

iii. umbrella groups or interventionist projects, such as Councils of Voluntary Service, community development projects or resource centres, which stimulate, support or coordinate other local organisations;

iv. Professional non-profit organisations which provide a specific service for a fee, such as most housing associations and training schemes. These often use mainly paid staff.[85]

Chanan[86] divides local level functions into two; *service* functions and *development* functions. Service functions which are to do with paid work are provided by the professional organisations (iv). A lot of the service functions are to do with unpaid work, caring for others, which is not defined as community activity. Yet it is an important aspect of keeping dependent people supported and in touch with the rest of the community, a function which should be considered as community activity. It may not be because it is not done in groups but as individuals, or because there isn't any organisation that organises the relationship between the provider and receiver. When it comes to development functions, they are slightly easier to define as community activity.

Development functions appear to have the primary purpose of getting people together to solve a problem, for example post-natal depression, housing conditions, employment opportunities, care of the disabled etc.

> In these cases there is less distinction between the volunteers and the beneficiaries, although some people are centrally involved and others only peripherally. A main benefit is in the participation itself because this is what enables people to emerge from their isolation, gain a greater sense of independence and interdependence, gain social contacts, pick up information and intervene actively in decisions affecting the whole locality.[87]

It is about preventing and reducing the effects of social exclusion by getting people together to help themselves and others with similar difficulties and concerns. However, there appears to be a requirement to influence and persuade some groups before activity is classed as community activity by stipulating a certain criteria to the groups. This leaves an undefined grey area where people are considered as inactive even if they are not. Similar difficulties can be seen with the definition of volunteering.

According to Chanan[88] most research on volunteering adopts a definition which excludes 'help given to family and friends'. In doing so a fundamental area of people's own life-support strategies are excluded

---

[85] Chanan, Taken For Granted, p. 8.
[86] Chanan , Taken For Granted, p. 11.
[87] Chanan, Taken For Granted, p. 11.
[88] Chanan , Taken For Granted, p. 10.

from volunteering, but supporting other people (well-motivated people donating their time to others whom they see as less fortunate than themselves) is considered as volunteering. For example, if you give a bath to your disabled mother, it is not considered volunteering nor working (or community activity) as it is not paid or organised by someone else. If this same person gives a bath to her neighbour's mother twice a week it is considered volunteering particularly if it has been organised through an organisation. In this sense the approach of Reese (quotation by Seibel and Anheir above) that voluntary associations compensate for functions which are no longer fulfilled by the family seems an adequate definition. Thus the definitions of what is included in voluntary sector, volunteering and community activity are often restrictive and insufficient.

The contribution of the voluntary and community sector to the North East economy has been estimated to be at 3.8 % of regional GDP which is much higher than the estimate of 0.6 % of GDP on a national level. The national figure is based on 'the narrower definition of "general charities" and excludes estimates of the value of volunteer effort'.[89] In the same report it is estimated that the sector is also an important source of employment; 4.4 % of workforce in the North East region work for the sector (2.2 % at a national level).[90] This may reflect the state of the affairs in the North East, i.e. there is a higher than national average of deprivation, which is partially left to be tackled by the voluntary organisations. For example, in the same study it is argued that the sector is contributing significantly to key areas of regional policy. This includes the development of an adaptable and highly skilled workforce as it helps to break down barriers to training and education opportunities experienced by socially and economically excluded groups within the region. It also enables communities to help themselves by empowering them. 49 % of the organisations were involved in education and training in some capacity and 29 % offered economic and/or community development.[91] Nearly half of the responding organisations (49 %) named direct service provision as their main function. In many cases (29 %) this activity takes place within the immediate neighbourhood only, which makes them genuine community organisations. More than half of the organisations (57 %) expected an expansion in their activities within next five years.

Conclusion

The assumption is that the Government aims to be (or at least provides the impression that it is) more in touch with the people. This should be achieved via various types of consultations and via voluntary organisations who are thought to be directly connected with the people and knowledgeable about any burning concerns in the community. The methods of acquiring information and feed back have been amended and extended to reach as much of the population as possible. This should improve the accountability of the governing bodies or at least make them more informed about needs of the people. Perhaps un-consciously, the Government is admitting the great need for social support as it has agreed to promote the voluntary sector which has taken over many of the functions previously provided by the local

---

[89] Research Solutions, The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector, p. 5.
[90] Research Solutions, The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector.
[91] Research Solutions, The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector, p. 11.

authorities. For example housing associations may be considered as voluntary organisations but is it reasonable to consider providing accommodation as a voluntary action? It may be convenient for the government to count in such organisations as it paints a portrait of a more inclusive government.

However, there are some underlying facts that may hinder the desired progress. As the Government refrains from giving back more powers to the local authorities, and at the same time the non-elected bodies are gaining a prominent role in delivering regeneration programmes, these render the rhetoric about an inclusive society open to question. The voluntary sector and the 'active' individuals do not have the skills and resources in place to take a major leap forward. It also has been pointed out that there is a problem with a genuine commitment by some of the participants in the regeneration programmes and partnerships. This may be due to the fact that the objective of creating a sense of community has not materialised.

Chapter Three: Citizenship and Community Participation

Introduction

In the previous chapter the Government policy papers were considered. One of their aims is to improve the opportunity for individual participation in voluntary and community groups and more so the opportunity for these groups to work with local government and other partners around joint projects. In this chapter, the evolution of citizenship will be explained. It will be argued that there are pressures to widen the meaning of citizenship in order to make it open to more people and more valid to the conditions of post-modern multicultural society. This will be demonstrated by two contradicting approaches to citizenship: the one which is imposed from above, as will be argued, in order to control people and force them to comply in an uniform manner, conveniently with the majority. The other emerging approach to citizenship is a 'subjective experience' which expects the acceptance of individuality. And we shall see that New Labour 'Third Way' ideology, which tries to appeal to a sense of community, is problematic for various theoretical reasons. Toward the end of the chapter we should be able to answer such questions as 'Is it possible to impose active citizenship from above?', 'Is participation genuine if it does not take place on citizen's own terms?'.

We begin by exploring how the term citizenship has evolved and become more readily applicable to most sections of society. After that we will review some of the literature which will sufficiently demonstrate the nature of some of the occurring problems.

Citizenship

First it will be argued that citizenship has evolved and become 'deeper' in meaning and 'wider' if measured by the coverage of the population. The status of citizenship has deepened from legal membership of a certain nation/city/state to a political status, where one's political aspirations are represented through institutional mechanisms, and then further to a social status with entitlements. The widening of the various statuses of the citizens, as will be explained below, has only taken place after the deepening has developed through great social, political and economic struggles. It could be argued that the deepening has ceased and there can be some resistance detected on how much rights one should have for example in regards with state-provided financial entitlements and health care. Furthermore, it can be argued that the widening is currently taking place, because there has been an interest expressed in the possibility of including persons of a lower age in the general franchise.

The need for a 'wider' citizenship has been raised because of the lack of accountability and representativeness of political actors and because of the increasingly multicultural post-modern society which is the result of continuing migration, due in part to previous economic labour policies and the process of EU enlargements. Looking carefully, one can notice contradictory elements appearing. For

example whilst the Government is placing emphasis on legal citizenship as a passport to entitlements, at the same time they are encouraging full inclusion and active citizenship of the communities which are based on wider categories.

Entitlement to citizenship and the link with gender, ethnicity and position in society

The link between the nation state-building and increased economic activity will be briefly explained as this has been an important development leading into the idea of modern citizenship. The major influence on the western idea of citizenship can be traced back to two of the ancient governing styles: democratic, which prevailed in ancient Athens (rule by the people, although selected, but then politically equal) and republican, rule by government, which prevailed in republican Rome and later in the Italian city-states[92] and which represents the 'whole' community (monarchy, aristocracy and democracy). In both of these, the citizen, usually a man with property and/or other prominent status in society was allowed to cast a vote on certain issues. Foreigners, slaves, women and minors were not included in this form of governance except as subjects. This kind of governing prevailed largely into the period when modern states were being formed.

As states grew in size and wealth, and 'spilled over' to the regions around them, conflicts over territory and resources were fought out. These interdependent areas developed into early nation states which sought to defend their increasing wealth and territory against other similar areas which were seeking to increase their resources. As the nation states developed, they recognised no greater authority than their own, hence the increased importance of warfare[93] and the polarisation of 'us', the nation, and 'others' who are the enemy outside. This assumption has become more and more complex as mass movements of people in the modern world have disturbed previously simpler arrangement of states where the nationality was largely based on the place of birth.

As Caragata explains:

> Leaving the management of the state and its affairs to a 'few' was once less problematic. In societies with a single ethnic identity, a common religion, a set of moral views which derived from the common religion, and one set of dominant cultural practices – the 'few' – could be counted on to represent, more or less, the views of many. Citizenship was thus both a means of creating coherence, unifying a people who would then share these common values and a common social order, and an end, a desired outcome, a marking out of belonging and connection.[94]

---

[92] Li, B., Republicanism and Democracy, in Perspectives, Vol 1 No 2, (1999). http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/2_110299/republicanism_and_democracy.htm. Accessed 16 April 2003.
[93] Adapted from Braudel, F. The History of Civilizations (Paris, Penguin Books, 1987) pp. 319 – 321.
[94] Caragata, Lea, 'The privileged public: who is permitted citizenship? Community Development Journal Vol 34 No 4 (1999) p. 283.

Citizenship as a legal status

Citizenship status as a legal membership of a state guaranteed some economic opportunities such as a right to abode, to practice a profession within that area, a right to trade with another area and a right to have one's property protected. This created a need to defend the state and individual resources which required manpower and finances. These were secured by collecting taxes and serving military duty. Due to the citizenship qualifications being linked with such life situations where males had more opportunities than women, such as war and owning property, women were denied citizenship, or at least the franchise, in most European countries until the 20th century.

The Bill of Rights of 1689 in England was followed a hundred years later by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in France in 1789. Both of these revolutionary declarations had their own distinct developments. These individual circumstances are still reflected in different ideas of modern citizenship in England and France. However, regardless of their differences in practice, they were both based on opposition to the claims of any natural right to rule by monarch and church in medieval Europe.[95] The 18th century Enlightenment, the growing interest in reasoning and science, a new belief in abilities of man and questioning the God-given powers of monarchy, had led into some degree of political awakening and a momentum for republicanism.

Citizenship as political status

In contrast to absolutism, where one class or person rules, republicanism 'emphasises the importance of a mixed government stabilised by incorporating the preferences of various classes of the society'.[96] Only in this way would the government be legitimate as the interests of a great majority of the society will be represented. These classes were made of free men (but not necessarily all men) who were equal citizens. This idea of representation and incorporation of interests was restrictive as the other half of the population, women, were excluded from the political citizenship. This was regardless of their interests being voiced by early feminists such as Wollstonecraft, and especially Olympe de Gouges in France who declared the Rights of Woman and Citizen in 1791 in response to Rights of Man. However, there was then published a 'revised Declaration of June 1793 [which] stated: Public assistance is a sacred obligation [sic]. Society owes subsistence to unfortunate citizens, whether in finding work for, or in assuring the means of survival of those incapable of working.'[97] This accepts to some degree that women are citizens, but at the same time that they are not worthy or capable of active citizenship as they do not work in the same sense as men do. This revised declaration clarified the position of republican thinkers and leaders that woman's work is not of same value as man's is although many women did work in professions and in service. As with the exclusion of slaves, and the restrictions on male franchise through property

---

[95] Li, Republicanism and Democracy.
[96] Li, Republicanism and Democracy.
[97] Davies, N. Europe a History (London, Pimlico, 1996) p. 714.

qualifications and other tests, the theory of republican citizenship and incorporation of various interests appears very selective of whose interests were represented.

This is not surprising at all in the light of Dahl's observations that the beginnings of representative government

> are to be found, notably in England and Sweden, in the assemblies summoned by monarchs, or sometimes the nobles themselves, to deal with important matters of state: revenues, wars, royal succession, and the like. In the typical pattern, those summoned were drawn from and were intended to represent the various estates, with the representatives from each estate meeting separately.[98]

Republicanism appears 'naturally' linked with monarchism and aristocracy and therefore guarantees the continuity of the privileges of elite and the interests of the state institutions. On the other hand, this classical republicanism appeared honestly representative rather than democratic. It becomes clear from the language used above that the representation was meant more for the benefit and ownership of the property and other interests, than for the benefit of the workers on that estate.

The deepening and widening of citizenship from passive legal membership into politically more active and democratic forms did not take place without counter reactions. The call for 'freedom, brotherhood and equality' was greeted by disillusioned feminists with distrust as explained earlier. It was greeted with horror by Burke, the father of conservatism in England who thought that all the talk of equality and revolution was against the natural order of history and that it could not and should not be forced. And many nineteenth century liberals had doubts and hesitation about citizenship rights and duties. John Stuart Mill, did not see it as wise to give voting rights to everyone and thought that 'more votes, should be allocated to those wiser and more talented'.[99]

The engagement of liberalism and republicanism helped provide the opportunity for the industrial revolution; republicanism by helping to bring down the absolute power and repression by the few, and liberalism by emphasising individual's right for freedom in his or her choice of life activities. This opportunity and freedom opened up channels for economic entrepreneurship which created a growing bourgeoisie. This was a new class who could afford time for, and who had a stake and interest in public affairs. In France, the bourgeoisie had overthrown the monarchy and aristocracy, but did not share power with peasants. In Britain, the bourgeoisie became allied with the majority of the aristocracy, which both supported the free market and liberalism. Republicanism guaranteed them a position in political elite of the republican governance through which they could reject any further distribution (deepening and widening) of rights and wealth to other parties. This can be seen to be followed up by the next development in citizenship as a political status.

---

[98] Dahl, R. A. Democracy and Its Critiques (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989) p. 29 quoted by Li, B. in Representative Government and Democracy Perspectives Vol 1, No 3. at http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/3_123199/representative_government.htm. Accessed 16 April 2003.
[99] Li, 'Representative Government'.

In the 18th and 19th century the industrial revolution had created a new class, the bourgeoisie who enjoyed, at least, male political citizenship. It also had created another new class, masses of working people who were not included in political citizenship, but who arrived from the countryside to towns and cities to work in the new dangerous factory environments and lived in cramped conditions.[100] During 1831-2, the middle class had been admitted into the British parliamentary system[101] but the working classes had not. This was seen as a betrayal of a large section of society which in turn led to the rise of the Chartist Movement. This development was further fuelled by the New Poor Law of 1834 and injustice on the working class activity which was barred from some of the public places[102] which the middle class was entitled to use.

These historical events are particularly important in regards with the context of this research interest for two reasons. First, the roots of organised voluntary movement (associationalism) lay in this era when the working class started to strengthen its position. Secondly, the early utopian socialist and communitarian ideologies which had been experimented with from time to in Britain, emphasised the idea of community which we return to later. The working class was forced to find premises of their own in which to congregate. These kinds of concentrations of people in close proximity, who shared problems strongly enough to form groups, had previously been less usual. In the UK communitarian workers formed cooperatives, trade unions and other support organisations to alleviate the effects of poverty and alienation. The need for self help and improvement of existing conditions was coupled with enough literacy and the formation of press which together enabled an increase in political awareness amongst masses. In response to this threat of a politically active working class and the 'immorality' of some of its activities, middle class (especially ladies) groups started to organise preventive and ameliorative events for the working class and poor people. However, these parallel developments created the voluntary sector which was largely organised by the class. This division can still be seen although there has been an amalgamation due to a disappearance of working class activities in their traditional sense and the changing image of the bourgeoisie voluntary activity.

As the Industrial Revolution had raised mass interest in political citizenship in Britain, it was further fuelled by the revolutionary pressures abroad and later by the equalising effects of both of the World Wars. The political elite became alarmed by the threat of socialism and also realised that male citizens who were fighting the wars needed enfranchisement. The structure of social classes started to change, as did the position of women in society especially after the Second World War. These events contributed to the completion of political citizenship as we know it now.

---

[100] This kind of treatment of workers arriving from abroad may still takes place in many European countries. It has been particularly true in the past in England where the immigrants from India arrived and after that Pakistani and Bangladeshi people. Many Indian people have made their fortunes by renting rooms for Pakistani people who later on did the same to Bangladeshis. In this context one should also mention the Chinese labourers who lost their lives in Cornwall recently.
[101] Roberts, S. 'Protest and Reform' http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/society_culture/protest_reform/chartist_03.shtml. Published 1st May 2002, accessed 16 April 2003.
[102] Allum, P. State and Society in Western Europe (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995).

Citizenship as a social status

In Britain, after the 2nd World War, the government was looking into a different way of rebuilding the country. As a result, Beveridge 'published his report in 1942 and recommended that the government should find ways of fighting the five 'Giant Evils' of Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.[103] This led to the establishing of the Welfare State. This was seen to be necessary as the volunteer-based system was deemed to be insufficient, nor were the local authorities able to cope with the demand for social support.

Along with humanitarian impulses the welfare state combined the prudential concern that a certain level of living standards would iron out poverty and therefore remove the threat of revolutionary tendencies. It could be used as a tool to manage the pressure to remove the ruling political elite. In the 1940s, Marshall put forward his influential analysis that there were contradictions between citizenship and capitalism. 'He claimed that class was the principal source of inequality in capitalist societies while citizenship, on the contrary, was a source of equality'.[104] He argued that social rights, provided by a nation state, would equip people better than if they are left in a state of economic inequality.

Marshall distinguished three types of citizenship rights, which had developed in a historical progression.

1. Civil rights, emerged in the eighteenth century as 'negative rights': individual freedom from unlawful infringement on private property, personal liberty and justice by the state. (Freedom of speech and religion.)
2. Political rights emerged in the nineteenth century as active citizen could take part in opinion formation and political decision making. (For example rights to vote, stand for office, freedom of assembly and association.)
3. Social rights, emerged in the twentieth century when citizens were guaranteed a certain basic standard of economic and social wellbeing, either through the right to work or through welfare provision.[105]

Marshall's view has been recently challenged by Mullard who sees Marshall's definition of social citizenship as dated and needing to be upgraded to match the current conditions in modern society. Mullard argues that the existence of the welfare state has not ironed out inequalities as Marshall expected. The welfare state has not foreseen the need to tackle such challenges as the abuse of minors (i.e. children and elderly), violence against women and racial harassment.[106] One could argue that these problems are not distinctive to conditions in modern society only, but have always existed although they have not been discussed as problems in public. Mullard accepts that Marshall's view of social citizenship was

---

[103] http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/beveridge_william.shtml Accessed 22nd May 2003.
[104] Allum, State and Society in Western Europe, p. 7.
[105] Marshall, 1950 and 1964 cited in 'Being a citizen' in Castles, S. and Davidson, A. Citizenship and Migration: globalization and the politics of belonging (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000) p. 104.
[106] Mullard, Discourses on Citizenship, p. 13.

emancipatory at the time and that the welfare state ironed out some of the inequalities, but at the same time, it created its own problems (relationship with women, immigrants and increasing number of longer-living elderly) and also failed to cater for situations like recession and unemployment. Perhaps it would be a fairer criticism of Marshall to suggest that as the traditional challenges such as political and economical inequality have been tackled to some extent, now it would be time to dig deeper into social problems.

Faulks has argued that the welfare state 'failed'. This was not solely due to the change in society itself, but also due to the changing views and actions of governments, which contributed to this failure. For example, in seeking to 'roll-back the state', the neo-liberal Conservative government of the early eighties begun to cut down public services and emphasise the individual's own responsibility in providing for themselves. As Faulks explains: 'During Thatcherite years in Britain, active citizens came to be seen as those who were able to assert their market rights of consumer choice, inequality and conspicuous consumption ... Those who could not take advantage of the new opportunities were increasingly labelled as "work shy", or seen as part of a state-dependent "underclass"'.[107] This trend has continued during New Labour as can be seen from the ambiguous assistance for and stigmatisation of single mothers. They are encouraged to take up a job, even if it is low-paid or part-time, yet there is insufficient state provision for affordable child care which would enable parents to do lower paid work. In Faulks' words:

> Many of the 'solutions' offered by communitarians and conservatives risk negating some of the positive steps towards emancipation made by women for example. A return to traditional family structures risks recreating the division between women as carers and men as active citizens ... Women, the poor and ethnic minorities were most vulnerable to the dilution of their social rights and were more likely to lack the resources necessary to meet the government's demand that they take more responsibility for their own lives and for those of the their family and local community.[108]

Faulks sees that the Communitarians have a right to emphasise a greater sense of citizen responsibility, but he also believes that this cannot happen at the expense of rights and we should not attribute society's problems to the cultural sphere. He argues that these kinds of developments 'that Etzioni and others identify as negative, such as the sexual liberation of the 1960s and changes in family structures reflect the struggles for equal citizenship by women and sexual minorities.'[109]

It has been demonstrated here how individuals have achieved legal, political and social citizenship rights. This development has happened in a complex sequence of historical events. It can be argued that the deepening of citizenship has stalled as the demands for further entitlements have been rejected and therefore they have 'dried up'. For example, there is no longer any serious discussion about a 'citizen's salary'. In fact there are pressures to reduce the actual benefit entitlements as the public and private

---

[107] Faulks,Citizenship, pp. 66-67.
[108] Faulks, Citizenship, pp. 67 and 72.
[109] Faulks, Citizenship, p. 109.

sectors are tightening their budgets. An individual must prove that she or he is worthy of benefit rather than getting it outright. This means-testing of one's 'worthiness' began during the Thatcher years and has continued during the communitarian-influenced Blair administration. The production of proof of this worthyness appeals to our collective conscience, moral values and aims to encourage initiative. This is especially true in health care where Blair's government is planning to introduce a contract between the doctor and the patient, who promises to do what the doctor has recommended.[110] Similarly, the Conservatives have been planning to introduce The Patient's Passport[111] which clearly aims to narrow down the user-base, which in fact suggests that there are people who should not be entitled to treatments.

At the same time, it can be seen how the widening of citizenship, and particularly how an act of citizenship is conducted, is still taking place. The extension of the local franchise to resident EU citizens has already taken place under the Maastricht Treaty. There have been suggestions of lowering the age limit for the franchise in order to increase the voter numbers. This may not be a popular idea although pupils appear happy about new school councils.[112] In the future there may be suggestions of for example, giving more votes for those who are more entrepreneurial than others. Or for those who pay more taxes because they finance more public services than those who use them. Or maybe those who are more likely to use public services should have more say in how these should be provided.

Calls for changing the idea of citizenship

Traditionally citizenship has been understood as a set of rights, duties and functions which an individual is entitled to use if she or he wishes. But in a modern society, citizenship has become more of an experience of how one feels about 'fitting to the society'. A positive feeling of citizenship results if one feels comfortable with the rights one possesses and able and allowed to participate in various ways. Negative feelings of citizenship result if one feels that he or she does not have sufficient rights, or if he or she feels in some way prevented from using these rights, or if one feels so alienated as to not see any difference whether one votes or exercises other rights. This individual-oriented citizenship based upon perceptions (which may well have good objective grounds) indicates the difficulty of defining and promoting the content of citizenship.

Marshall's idea of social citizenship was based on services being administered by professionals who would know best. It assumes a 'certain homogeneity of people being treated in the same way: that is as members of a community'. But in contrast to this, Mullard argues that 'homogeneity creates forms of oppression and defines the outsider and the stranger'.[113] Mullard goes beyond the idea that the state is a body that defines citizenship and argues that the 'defining and redefining citizenship has to be located within people's life experiences – it has to reflect people's expectations, hopes and aspirations at a certain

---

[110] BBC News on-line, 3 June 2003. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2958148.stm 3 June 2003] accessed 15 June 2003.
[111] Fox, L. MP, a speech to Conservative Spring Conference.
[112] Year 9 pupils at St Bede's RC Comprehensive School in Lanchester shunned the idea of vote at 16. Advertiser, week ending Saturday, December 13, 2003.
[113] Mullard, Discourese on Citizenship, p. 19.

point in time'.[114] Mullard sees citizenship as resistance against the norm, the majority; in contrast he demands that citizenship includes the other, accepts plurality, diversity and the uniqueness of the individual. Mullard's idea of citizenship 'shifts the debate on citizenship from attempts at defining who is a citizen and who is excluded, to citizenship as a form of resistance which is awkward and which perpetually challenges the world as it is.'[115] This evolving citizenship celebrates acceptance, tolerance and freedom to be different. This capability gives a society its humanness and responsiveness and makes it a place where the matters and methods can be questionned and challenged. One does not have to integrate, assimilate and become incorporated into a real or imagined community[116] in order to be accepted and treated otherwise than as a threat.

Where the Government's papers (Chapter Two) appeared to put responsibility on individuals themselves in becoming more active and participating in communities, Mullard and Favell appear to be interested in creating a suitable atmosphere and space in order to enable the interaction of differently opinionated people. Questions with regard to 'the community' are also raised by Favell. He uses the same kind of ideas as Mullard in search for, what he calls 'overlapping moral consensus',[117] which would enable citizens with conflicting cultural and ethical beliefs to agree on what the principles regulating their social and political interaction are. This difficulty of finding a straight forward definition of citizenship in a more plural conception of society makes it understandable why inclusion to or exclusion from something has been used as the criteria for so long. That is why some writers use the term community as a framework in explaining citizenship. It makes it easier to locate the unifying quality, but of course leaves the problem of defining the appropriate communities.

Flint cites Kymlika and Norman, (1994) in describing what is needed for citizenship: 'Individual's sense of community and their willingness to participate in the political process to promote 'public good' are key concepts in theories of citizenship.'[118] Flint argues that increasingly, community is seen as a technique of governance as it has been thought that it is possible to transmit norms and regulate behaviour in the community by moulding a compliance to a dominant value of responsibility.[119] However, Flint argues that this perceived ability of community to be used as a technology of informal social control has failed. The first reason is that it relied on the sense of 'danger on the borders' which gives form to a community's sense of itself (Girling et al., 2000). Yet 'the danger' lies *within* the borders as crime is often committed by members of the same spatial community against other members of that community.[120] The second failure was that as the residents in deprived urban neighbourhoods, who were often excluded

---

[114] Mullard, Discourses on Citizenship, p. 12.
[115] Mullard, Discourses on Citizenship, p. 13.
[115] Mullard, Discourses on Citizenship, p. 20.
[116]. Mullard has distinguished five discourses on citizenship. He demonstrates that each of these five discourses, which challenge Marshall's idea of citizenship, emphasises a different perspective how citizenship can be experienced. He believes that these discourses contain elements which can be utilised in understanding the citizenship as resistance. Mullard, Discourses on Citizenship, pp. 14-19.
[117] Favell, Philosophies of Integration, p. 16.
[118] Flint, J. 'Return of the Governors: Citizenship and the New Governance of Neighbourhood Disorder in the UK' Citizenship Studies Vol 6 No 3 (2002), p. 246.
[119] Crawford, 1995 and Giddens, 1998, referred to in Flint, J., p. 249.
[120] Flint, 'Return of the Governors', p. 252.

from employment, education, quality housing and shopping opportunities available to other citizens, they became marginalised groups within this locality. Flint sees that those most marginalised have the least opportunities to influence their communities. Thirdly, there is no shared sense of community as many of the urban residents are likely to feel they have been 'dropped into' a city rather than as citizens who have grown into membership in cooperative enterprise (Dagger, 1997).[121] As a consequence, when people do not associate themselves with a community, they do not feel the need to participate in it. They may become isolated and according to Putnam, isolation feeds extremism.[122]

The problem with isolation and participation is not new. Nearly two hundred years ago Tocqueville had observed the following: 'It is difficult to draw a man out of his circle to interest him in the destiny of the state.'[123] Yet now we are living in an era of mass media and mass education. Never has the citizenry been as aware of the events near and far and never have masses of people been equipped with as much knowledge and capacity to be able to show interest in the state's affairs. (Perhaps it is due to the entertaining mass media that offers other possibly more interesting attractions.) As John Stuart Mill has contemplated 'the citizen who is without shared participation in public life "never thinks of any collective interest, of any objects to be pursued jointly with others but only in competition with them..."'[124]. Little has changed and it can be seen why Communitarians like Putnam are concerned about the lack of interest in public affairs. The economic politics of individualism and selfishness from the era of neo-liberalism in the 1980s emphasised the private person and his or her own life-goals. Some Conservatives, like Crozier (1975) have tried to attribute the problems of citizenship to 'too much democracy'. However, Faulks argues that 'the reverse is true. The elitist structures of government that confer rights have failed to develop the high level of political participation that is a defining characteristic of citizenship.'[125]

Hirst argues that

> the problem for classical liberal democrats is that democratic government based on accountability to the individual citizen means little if the great bulk of economic affairs are controlled by large privately-owned corporations, and if the great bulk of other social affairs are controlled by state bureaucracies. The space for real democratic government is then small, and 'civil society' becomes vestigial, confined to marginal groups and peripheral areas of social life with little influence over the real decision-makers.[126]

Although the Labour Government has established its policies of modernising local government and increasing its co-operation with other local agencies, participation is still being 'frozen' by the functions of increasingly centralised government. 'Britain has become so centralised that local authorities lack the fiscal or policy autonomy to create institutions of effective local economic regulation; it has also

---

[121] Flint, 'Return of the Governors', p. 253.
[122] Putnam, R. Bowling Alone (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000) p. 338
[123] Putnam, Bowling Alone, p. 337.
[124] Putnam, Bowling Alone, p. 337
[125] Faulks, Citizenship, p. 73.
[126] Hirst, Associative Democracy, p. 22.

developed a structure of restrictive legislation on union rights and public order, so as to render much activity oppositional.'[127]

For example with regard to the ethnic minorities, they have a high probability of belonging to socially excluded groups, as the result of a combination of class factors and racial status. Even though many people in such situations may have formal political rights, they usually lack real opportunities of participation in established political structures. Their voice is largely absent in such institutions as parties and parliaments, in which positions are mostly held by middle-aged, white males. This is a problem because these agenda setting and decision making bodies do not reflect the constitution of society as whole. Accountability is questionable, as is the will and capability of such bodies to understand and respond to the variety of needs. In addition to this, large numbers of the poor and ethnic minorities are not registered as voters, a situation which according to Castles and Davidson, favours conservative parties.[128]

It appears that Mullard and Favell are interested in creating a suitable atmosphere and space in order to enable the interaction of differently opinionated people. This kind of political atmosphere could benefit and help in the success of such ideas as those of Hirst and Putnam. They would like to see a greater role for the voluntary sector in co-existing and –operating with the public sector. Putnam puts his case forward for the strong role of voluntary organisations in filling the gap if there exists a lack of shared action in public life. He believes that 'churches, in particular, are one of the few institutions left in which low-income, minority, and disadvantaged citizens of all races can learn politically relevant skills and be recruited into political action.'[129] Putnam argues that this would be beneficial because he believes that when there is a lot of community involvement, the burdens on government employees – bureaucrats, social workers, teachers, and so forth- could be reduced. Hirst in his turn would opt for the associational approach, because 'associationalism makes a central normative claim, that individual liberty and human welfare are both best served when as many of the affairs of society as possible are managed by voluntary and democratically self-governing associations.'[130] He continues that

> associationalism attempts to construct a political framework within which individuals
> and the groups they create through voluntary association, one with another, can pursue
> different public goods whilst remaining in the same society. Plural groups share a
> limited, but common, set of public rules and regulatory institutions, which ensure that
> their differing goals and beliefs can be accommodated without undue conflict or the
> infringement of the rights of individuals and associations.

---

[127] Hirst, Associative Democracy, p. 40.
[128] Castles and Davidson, Citizenship and Migration, p. 109.
[129] Putnam, Bowling Alone, p. 339.
[130] Hirst, Associative Democracy, p. 19.

Conclusion

The problem with accountability and participation will continue regardless of the current government's policies for the reasons Hirst provides (see above) concerning the marginality of liberal democracy to many citizens faced with large concentrations of power, both private and public. From the interviews in the next chapter, it can be seen that Stewart is correct in arguing that 'participation generally remains a relationship, which - as opposed to a relationship of demand, pressure and protest - is initiated by the local authority. Public participation has tended to substitute management process for a political process.'[131] It also appears to be more of a tool for measuring the success of the local authorities than a sincere policy to facilitate a proper two-way communication to which Putnam has referred.

Faulks argues that the support of many conservative and communitarians for free market capitalism belies their alleged commitment to community. In reality, capitalism, with its emphasis upon short-term gain and the commodification of social relations, is unable to develop the kinds of obligations that conservatives and communitarians advocate. Instead, associative democracy aims at a manageable and accountable state, but not an undergoverned society. In Hirst's words, 'associationalism does not strip down and diminish the public sphere as economic liberalism does, but actually revitalises it and extends it.[132] In this, the New Labour project seems to fail because it cannot develop and sustain the trust of the voluntary sector and at the same time continue economic liberalism in its joint-workings with all of its partners.

---

[131] Stewart, J. Local Government: The Conditions of Local Choice (London, George, Allen & Unwin, 1983) p. 133.
[132] Hirst, Associative Democracy, p. 22.

Chapter Four: The Case Studies and Emerging Themes

Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts: First, the twelve interviewed organisations will be introduced. They represent a wide range of public and voluntary service provision. They all have a different purpose and motivations, yet they all have similar concerns due to the requirements of the Government's modernisation programme. In order to improve services and make them more client/user friendly, these organisations need to arrange consultations with people in the communities. In order to improve the overall performance and avoid duplication, these organisations have to work jointly with other organisations. These requirements have exposed some of the challenges these organisations are faced with. They will be looked at in more detail in the second part of the chapter which will be started by a brief re-capping of the policies (from the Chapter Two) to remind us how they have changed. This is followed by the transcribed interviews, through which the challenges will be discussed in groups by themes. They include the following issues which have been highlighted in the interviews:

- Capacity building,
- Involving clients/users in consultations,
- Different services for different people,
- The relationship between the voluntary sector and local authority.

In this part of the thesis, it will be shown that there is a problem with how far these organisations can go when they are involved in these issues. Partnership working in particular is a problematic issue because there is a severe inequality in resources such as time, funding, knowledge and experience. For example, small organisations can be quicker in responding to change which is an advantage, whilst large organisations may have better backing and plenty of employees to share the work load. However, they may not be able to respond to change quickly because there may be more bureaucracy or resistance within the organisation.

This part of the thesis will consist of empirical evidence of the challenges and how they are being dealt with. These will demonstrate the problems in community participation. And finally in the evaluation the evidence from the interviews is brought together with the literature in order to enable us draw some conclusions.

Part One: The Organisations

There are twelve case studies, which represent various sectors and different levels of joint-working. They will be looked at in the following order:

1   Public sector, i.e. local authorities who communicate with the voluntary sector.

2   Voluntary sector which is represented by the organisations from two operational levels:

           a.   Voluntary sector umbrella organisations and

           b.   Voluntary and community groups at the grass root level.

3   NHS Trust.

Local Authorities

Three of the interviewed organisations are councils: Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council, which are unitary councils and provide a full range of council services (social, housing, community, environmental, education, planning etc.). Durham City Council is operating in the two-tier system and only provides a limited range of services i.e. housing, planning applications and leisure services whilst Durham County Council provides the rest. In addition one of the community centres is part of the Gateshead council. However, this contribution has been used as well, as it was deemed valuable because of the opinions expressed. Another reason is that during the course of the interviews it became clear that the closer the links an organisation has with the council (e.g. funding relationship) the less critical they were about it. This -not to bite the hand that feeds- mentality has been pointed out in the literature as well. For example Etherington has estimated that 'organisations which are earning 80-90 per cent of their funds from the state have reached a level of dependency which makes them more part of the state than part of civil society.'[133]

These local councils have experienced problems caused by social deprivation after the loss of traditional livelihoods such as ship-building and coal-mining in the area. The one difference between these councils from the point of view of this research is that only Durham does not have dense populations of ethnic minorities. This has been evident during the project and for that reason it forms a valuable contrasting case. Through the interviews with these three councils, it is hoped that the Government's objectives can be seen materialising on a local level.

Newcastle City Council (Interviewee K)

Newcastle City Council operates as a unitary council providing all the council services for 540,500 people.[134] Overall, 69 % of its wards are amongst the 25 % worst wards nationally. However, there are great differences between the wards when it comes to housing conditions, employment levels and services. And according to the English Indices of Deprivation 2000, the North East seems to have relatively less housing deprivation than other English regions. There is no ward from the North East among the worst 100 wards in England. However, there are a number, or a substantial number of North

---

[133] Etherington, 'To the Millennium', p. 11.
[134] Newcastle City Council <u>Regeneration Plan Newcastle West End</u> July 2001, p. 11.

East wards among the 100 worst in many other domains such as income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training etc.[135]

Newcastle has a major regeneration plan 'Going for Growth' (GfG) which will be implemented by co-operating partners who have developed a Community Strategy. There are various partnerships in operation, for example Citywide Strategic Partnership (CSP) and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The consultation manager Michael Morris says that community participation is an integral part of the GfG. He admits that 'there's an acceptance that in the early days of GfG consultation could have been handled better'.[136] The key messages from the consultation were a concern about mass demolition in Scotswood and West Benwell, and the mismatch between what people said and the facts about the real state of communities,[137] amongst other conclusions. In consecutive consultations it has been possible to implement some improvements because of the evolving nature of the consultation process.

People living in the area of concern have been invited to particular events which have been revised by learning from the mistakes made in the first consultations. For example the information material has been presented in a clear manner and in different formats which have been adapted to users' needs, and one-to-one consultations with residents in some areas have taken place. In all, during the year 2000 there were over 100 consultation events which were attended by more than 3000 residents.[138] The revisions after the consultations include 'the greater focus on people i.e. the "softer" elements of regeneration (access to employment, access to services; improving health; tackling crime and anti-social behaviour; empowering communities)'.[139]

In response to the Government's requirement to modernise councils, Newcastle City Council has agreed A White Paper Working together with Communities.[140] It lays out how the local authority should and is going to operate with communities. Government has given councils new duties and powers. In addition to Best Value and the four Cs, (challenge, compare, consult and compete), the council must develop a Community Strategy to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the area. The council has a duty to lead the community planning process and it has been given powers to adopt new and more flexible structures including the formation of local Area Committees. These committees have a great importance in ensuring that the needs and aspirations are expressed when the priorities of that community are established. Area Committees must be representative and accountable to the local community.

---

[135] English Indices of Deprivation 2000 at
http://www.vonne.co.uk/Policy_Developments/Index_of_Deprivation/Report.htm updated 03 December 2002, accessed 30 September 2003.
[136] Michael Morris in Citylife (Newcastle City Council's publication) July 2001.
[137] Newcastle City Council Regeneration Plan, p. 15.
[138] Citylife (2001).
[139] Newcastle City Counci, Regeneratio Plan, p. 16.
[140] Social Policy Team, A White Paper Working together with Communities. Newcastle upon Tyne. [No date mentioned].

Newcastle City Council has also agreed a City Wide Tenant Participation Compact[141] and Community Participation Green Paper.[142] These publications explain how Newcastle is committed to its residents. The Tenant Compact is based on the national Compact and lays out the roles of both parties. The Community Participation Green Paper explains what the Council means by the participation and why it expects participation from its citizens. It does state that there is a duty to consult local residents. This consultation can be interpreted as 'participation' although residents may only have a choice between such alternatives which have been agreed earlier by other agencies. In the end, it will be the council that will act on the decisions.[143] The quality of this kind of consultation and participation has often been approached with some scepticism in the literature and practice.

Gateshead Council (Interviewee L)

Gateshead Council has been through an organisational restructuring as it has been modernised. It is a unitary council with a leader and a cabinet of councillors and serves a population of 191,151 people[144]. As a town, it has areas of high deprivation, unemployment and low quality housing. It also receives some asylum seekers, has a Jewish population and other minority ethnicities. In comparison with Newcastle and Durham, Gateshead fares worse in overall Multiple Index of deprivation. Of all the wards in Gateshead, 75 % are amongst the 25 % worst wards nationally.[145]

Gateshead Council has agreed a Compact with the voluntary sector and is involved with Gateshead Voluntary Organisations' Council (GVOC) and other umbrella organisations. The employees of the council, i.e. community workers and officers, are directly involved with community groups and individuals in the community. They work with groups like the Visible Ethnic Minority-group and a group for older black people. There appears to be a great emphasis on racially inclusive communities because many community centres, for example one in Bensham and another in Dunston, have a provision for ethnic minorities. And also, when they are interviewing a person for a post which will service BME groups, there will be a person representing views of the group among the selection team.

Gateshead Council provides a full range of services and has clients from traditional groups for social services, of which interviewee L says: 'we have old people, families, tenants and the black population which is not necessarily clients but we are trying find out why they are not using our services'. This is contrary to the impression that refugees/asylum seekers/migrants generally are coming to England and 'taking up all the services'. It would be easy to say that it is down to their cultural difference, i.e. different understanding of looking after own family (e.g. kinship). But more realistic reasons are for example that these people may not speak the language, or they do not think that they are taken seriously

---

[141] Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Tenants Federation City Wide Tenant Participation Compact [No date mentioned]. Also available at http://www.newcastle.gov.uk..

[142] Newcastle City Council, Community Participation Green Paper, June 2001. Also available at http://www.newcastle.gove.uk/cpgp

[143] Newcastle City Council, Community Participation, p. 8.

[144] Census 2001 www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages.

[145] Census 2001.

and because they may want medicine or treatment which they have back home or what is seen more appropriate in their culture. It may also be that they can not travel to surgeries or do not know that they can request an interpreter to be available free of charge during the consultation.

City of Durham (Interviewee J)

There is a two-tier system in place in County Durham which, however, may soon change as there is a possibility of a creation of an elected Regional Assembly. If the citizens of the North East will vote for it, it means that one layer of existing local government will be abolished. Durham County Council provides education and social services, whilst the district council (City of Durham) provides housing. There are 87,709 people in the reach of the City of Durham Council and 46 % of the wards are included in the overall worst 25 % nationally.

As the City of Durham Council operates housing provision, there is a great emphasis on tenants' needs. Therefore this council has agreed the Tenant Participation Compact[146] and works with various groups, e.g. tenants, residents, community groups and voluntary organisations. The local councillors in general find this co-operation benefitial as they find it easier to build relationships with other parties. In addition to this, staff increase their knowledge and it benefits the customers who are more informed about how to get the best use of council resources. There is only a tiny minority ethnic population in Durham but a large heritage of extinguished mining industry and peripheral declining villages where there used to be a great sense of community. These facts seem to have shaped circumstances as the BME groups do not appear to raise as much concern as in the other two councils.

As a result of 'the promotion of tenant involvement, the development of local compacts, best value reviews and performance plans'[147] which form part of the mosaic of initiatives and projects introduced by the government since 1997, the resident involvement has increased remarkably in City of Durham. For example in Ushaw Moor there have been resident groups since 1999, in Bearpark since 2001 and in New Brancepeth since 2000. In addition to participating in matters of housing, there are youth groups and police and councillors hold surgeries. 'Training has ranged from committee and fund raising skills to tenants participating in housing courses. Joint training involving tenants, staff and Councillors has concentrated on team building, communication and joint decision making.'[148]

Voluntary Sector Organisations

There is a matter which should be pointed out at this stage. The voluntary sector is called ambiguously 'voluntary' yet it is a sector which is operated by professionals in paid work although a lot of work is

---

[146] Tenants' Panel Tenant Participation Compact Durham, 2000-2002.
[147] DETR Tenant Participation in Transition: Issues and trends in the development of tenant participation in the local authority sector in England. By Ian Cole, Paul Hickman, Barbara Reid and Sue Whittle. Housing Research Summary, number 147, Crown Copyright 2001 p. 15.
[148] Tenants' Panel Tenant Participation.

done by volunteers. Also, in response to government interest in the sector, and a growing number of regional agencies, it has been seen as necessary to have a further tier in the system. This level is reaching towards government, the EU and regional agencies in search for new dimensions for the voluntary sector. However, this kind of an opportunity for executive networking and career progression is only adding a new layer to the existing ones. Some sceptics might see it as another body which is less than in touch with the grass roots level.

Two of the interviewed organisations are these so-called umbrella organisations. They aim to pull-together the existing mishmash of various organisations and represent the sector in other conjunctions. They enable communication at other levels as they are likely to have better access to them than a sole community group which may be run by volunteers. The Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC) wants to bring together voluntary organisations and community groups in that area. GVOC offer various services e.g. training in and the actual management of voluntary organisation's finances. The role of GVOC is to act as an enabler for the local organisations and bring them together particularly in such cases where the organisations may be benefiting from working together, networking and sharing knowledge and resources.

The Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE) is similarly an umbrella organisation. They do some research and act as a contact point and representative of the local voluntary community. Their aim is to establish the position of, and represent the North East in many directions when the voluntary organisations are in question. Representation can take place locally with the Association of North East Councils, with government bodies in the North East and among other regions within Great Britain and within the EU. Interviewee H also thinks that it is not appropriate for a regional organisation, which operates with the North East Councils rather than individual councils, to have a relationship with councils. At government level they have better links with some departments than with others. On European issues, a regional level organisation such as VONNE, provides a convenient way of representing voluntary organisation opinions and support. But the staff at VONNE have observed that they may not be representative of every organisation in the sector and therefore cannot speak on behalf of every group.

The contribution from the interviews with these two umbrella organisations will give an indication to which direction and on what level the voluntary sector is represented, and its needs/ideas put forward. One would like to think that these organisations have the capacity to keep other powerful agencies on higher levels informed about the situation at the grass roots level. GVOC has the knowledge of the day-to-day processes in the community and can communicate this where needed. VONNE is in a particularly convenient position to communicate with regional, national and international bodies.

Five of the interviewed organisations represent voluntary organisations, (with charitable status) i.e. community centres or community projects which mainly serve the immediate community in that particular locality. They should be fairly representative of the people in the area as they all share their

main objective as trying to relieve the pressure which may have been caused by deprivation. The combination of problems such as lack of income, low levels of skills and education, loneliness and family breakdown can not be eradicated but, to some extent, it may be easier to cope with such situation if intervened by voluntary action.

These community centres and projects are not branches of any nationally established large voluntary organisations but local community groups dealing with people who may have problems which are typical for that locality. They are exactly the type of groups which should in principle benefit most from the combined effect of Government's policies, particularly from those such as the Compact, and to some extent, the agenda of modernising the local government. Hence the interviews with these voluntary sector organisations should provide an overall picture (at the time) about how the organisations experience

- consultations
- community involvement and participation
- partnership working and relationships with other stakeholders

which are all high on the Government agenda. Let's start with GVOC.

Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (Interviewee G)

GVOC is a 21-year-old umbrella organisation for all the voluntary organisations and community groups in Gateshead. It has over 400 members and the membership is free but they do charge for some services. It provides and supports the voluntary sector infrastructure in the area and has a mediatory role. It has many areas of work:

1. To carry out practical procedures, e.g. offer services and training accountancy, fund raising, recruiting and management.
2. To develop functions of the voluntary sector, e.g. publicity.
3. To coordinate the sector around a range of issues, such as children (and protection), age, asylum, health and care and with social services partnerships.
4. Representing the sector, liaise and point out specific needs, i.e. develop/initiate new services.
5. Participation in regeneration via partnerships.

In practice, GVOC can arrange book keeping for organisations which is a more economical alternative to a commercial company. They can bring together organisations with shared interests and direct individuals to an organisation which can help them. GVOC generally tries to be responsive to requests from the community. They have links to on-going projects like the Children's Fund, the Supported

Volunteering Project, the Community Empowerment Fund and the Capacity Building Project[149] which all aim to increase the involvement of the local people. For example the Gateshead Community Network will have a role ensuring that local people are supported in having a real voice at all levels, particularly the Gateshead Strategic Partnership. GVOC works through themed forums which cover several different aspects related to various partnerships. GVOC can select and choose which representative would be best to be sent to which partnership, regularly or occasionally, depending on the need. This kind of specialisation helps to avoid duplication and improves the efficiency within human resources.

As a consequence of the duty to adhere to the Best Value criteria, local authorities prefer their partners to adhere to some standards, so GVOC is pioneering the idea of putting a Quality Assurance System in place in their organisation. They use PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance Systems for Small Organisations) in this process and aim to pass this system on to other organisations for their use in order to strengthen their positions in partnerships. In regards with the SRB funding coming to an end in Saltwell and Bensham, the staff at GVOC have begun to work on the 'exit strategy' where particular attention has been given to the needs of minority ethnic communities which have a suffered from a long-term disadvantage. The aim was to make sure that these groups and individuals can build on their capacity and continue operating successfully in the area.[150]

Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE) (Interviewee H)

VONNE is a regional voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation for North East England. It was established in 2000 and financed by money from the Home Office's Active Community Unit and the Community Unit Fund. It facilitates links between voluntary and community groups and other relevant bodies, for example RDAs, GONE and the EU. It promotes the role and potential of the sector in regional matters. It has charitable status and currently over 500 voluntary and community groups in membership. VONNE is an information provider and a policy co-ordinator which acts at the regional level facilitating, rather than being a gatekeeper. It aims to add value to what already exists and not replace or duplicate the many existing support bodies.[151] Some research work has been done by the organisation, the most important being the publication of <u>The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector to the Economic Life of the North East Region</u>.

Although VONNE has a good relationship with the Regional Development Agency, at first, it was received with some suspicion by the other voluntary organisations which thought that VONNE would take over some of the services they were providing and that funding would have to be shared. As soon as the role of VONNE as a body with a view representing voluntary organisations had become clear it was not seen as a competing but rather a complementing partner.

---

[149] GVOC http://www.gvoc.org.uk/Home, accessed 25 October 2003.
[150] Adapted from the GVOC website.
[151] Adapted from a leaflet published by VONNE.

Millin Centre (Interviewee E)

It took five years for the North Benwell Black Residents Support Group (NBBRSG) to achieve their dream and open the Millin Centre in February 1999 in North Benwell. It was formed because a group of black residents was concerned about the lack of services and facilities in the locality. Their aim is 'to improve, strengthen and promote the needs of the Black Communities living in Benwell while valuing their cultural diversity and recognising local circumstances'. It is the only voluntary community drop-in facility in the West End of Newcastle, which specifically supports the needs of BME residents. Therefore it also attracts people from the surrounding area. Ethnically the users of this community facility tend to originate from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Arabic countries. As such, this organisation is the only interviewed organisation which can be said to represent solely BME groups. However, they do not turn anyone away because of a person's ethnicity.

The operations of the Millin Centre are driven by a set of objectives. They want to:

- Provide an opportunity for black residents to raise issues of concern and take a positive action.
- Develop links between the organisation and other associations in the area on matters of common concern.
- Support black residents in making representation to service providers and have equal access to their services
- Be seen as a focal point of contact in North Benwell.[152]

These objectives have been put into practice well at the Millin Centre. For example, they have a representative participating in the Riverside Health Project whose role is to make contact with ethnic minority men who have proven to be difficult to reach. It has become clear that they feel uncomfortable about going to the Millin Centre or meetings of the other projects which can offer necessary services, information and help. This proves the point that the North Benwell Black Residents Support Group and the Millin Centre have been established as a convenient point of contact with its users. The centre has also proven to be a point of contact externally, when there is a need for a provision of expertise of a particular resident group to other organisations.

The Millin Centre is run by the voluntary management committee (local residents) which holds monthly meetings. Members of the committee have a variety of skills which collectively add up to a considerable knowledge from business and public management to crèche working and catering. They actively seek opportunities to acquire more skills, for example fundraising skills, which help in the running of the organisation. When it comes to training provided for the actual user groups, the Millin Centre provides information on how to operate in British society, e.g. how to find work, how to cope with racial harassment and communicate with the police. In this sense, the Millin Centre is an important channel for exercising active citizenship; 'getting together' (the meaning of the word Millin) and taking action for

---

[152] Millin Drop in Centre Annual Report 1998-1999.

achieving an improvement. This kind of individual participation will culminate in community action which creates a strong sense of belonging and representation and increases the social capacity of individuals. The interviewee argued that this project should be financed by the Council. It would make sense on the grounds that the Council operates other community centres for the use of residents. However, it gets funding from various sources but mainly from the National Lottery Charity Board.

Bensham Grove Community Centre (Interviewee A)

Bensham Grove Community Centre is part of Gateshead Council's learning and culture department. They have provided educational opportunities to the people of Gateshead for over 70 years. The centre offers an expanding adult education programme of courses. They do not have any particular political aims due to the fact that they have always been an educational organisation. The Gateshead Council covers 60 % of the funding with the remaining 40% being funded elsewhere by the council management.

Regular users tend to come from a white background of which 90 % are female and 80 % are over 50 years old. However, they are trying to attract new younger groups. There have been some people from refugee/asylum seeker population using the service, but they have not enjoyed it there and hence have moved elsewhere. This may be due to the aging user groups who seemed to guard the facility as their own as they have been going there for years. It is a challenging job to allow others to attend the centre as well. However, the local authority wants to make sure that it is representative of the area which has a small black population as well. (This is a particularly sensitive point as at the time of the interview the BNP was campaigning on the 'doorstep' very actively.)[153] The local authority wants its community centres to reflect the population in the area and to appear racially aware.

Regardless of the apparent hostility towards BME groups they do attend education on the premises. There is a Muslim group and there has also been formed the African Community Association, which has been helped in fund raising.[154] Although there is a large population of Jews in Gateshead, they do not appear to be using this service. However, the council has tried to attend to their needs otherwise. They have had meetings together in order to specify what can be done to improve the circumstances of Jewish community. Problems, such as safety, have been addressed by clearing out bushes in the pavements and walk ways and improving lighting in the area. This has improved the feeling of safety, particularly for the female Jewish population who were afraid of going out in the evenings when it is dark.

West End Refugee Service (WERS) (Interviewee D)

WERS is a project which was developed as a result of the congregation of West End United Reform Church (URC) in Newcastle in 1999. It is an ecumenical project providing support to refugees mainly coming from Eastern Europe. It gets its funding from various sources, e.g. Churches Urban Fund,

---

[153] Transcribed from the interview with A.
[154] Transcribed from the interview with A.

Greggs, the Getty Foundation, Lottery and Northern Rock to mention a few. At the time of the interview they were in a satisfying situation of receiving funding for next three years.

Due to the increase in client numbers, the organisation has been forced to concentrate its efforts in the West End of Newcastle. During the first year of operation, there were around 400 clients and during the second year there were nearly 600! Their main objective 'through the use of church and other faith community volunteers' is to 'relieve poverty and sickness amongst refugees and in particular those who come through the North of England Refugee Service (NERS), and have been housed in the city of Newcastle'.[155] Because WERS is providing such a specialist service, other agencies like to refer people to them. They also deal with the council very often in regards to accommodation arrangements. WERS receive clients from the NERS, the City Council, and by recommendation by a word of mouth.

The areas of work concentrate on home visits, emergency funding, providing clothes and welcome packs. Home visits are important in alleviating the feelings of anxiety, fear and isolation, and these one-to-one sessions have even resulted in lasting friendships. Emergency funding (a unique resource) is for refugees who may be faced with an unexpected dilemma, for example need for appropriate footwear (trainers rather than flip-flops), cooking books or dictionaries. The clothing store is trying to respond to a material need of many people who arrive England in light clothing. At the same time, WERS has proved to be a place responding to a social need as well. Many clients may become volunteers in the clothing store and find it a place where they can socialise with other people. Welcome packs, one for the Benwell area and another for the Arthur's Hill area, are available in eleven languages. These have given a great psychological boost for many people as they represent languages which are understood among most of the immigrants.

In addition to the work done directly for and with their clients in getting them integrated with the local community, WERS tries to extend awareness about the reality the refugees and asylum seekers live in here in the North East. WERS sees that the 'the way forward is to include asylum seeker families in existing groups ... rather than further widening the gulf between asylum seekers and the local community by creating initiatives specifically aimed at asylum seekers'. In the experience of WERS, 'asylum seekers are desperate to contribute to the local and wider community and to develop a sense of belonging and ownership of the place where they are living'. All the work is done by the four paid staff members and circa 30 volunteers.[156]

Riverside Community Health Project (Interviewee B)

This not-for-profit organisation was 20 years old at the time of the interview. Their aim is to help people to manage their situation when living in poverty. Individuals cannot control the underlining issues that

---

[155] Adapted from the WERS's Constitution.
[156] Adapted from the report of the Principal Project Worker in the WERS Annual Report 1999-2000. Citations from the same source, version 2000-2001.

51

cause poverty and contribute to poor health. However, this project endeavours to equip people with such skills that help to manage their life circumstances by providing individual and group support. The work is done in two arenas; directly with the users by empowering them and elsewhere, informing decision makers about the concerns in the communities. The organisation had about 15 members of staff operating in the basement of Benwell Library. It receives funding from various sources including Newcastle City Council, the health authority and SRB.[157]

There appears to be quite a good provision for minorities here because there is a Bangladeshi family and community support worker who focuses on the refugee and asylum seekers who are increasingly being housed in the area. Another distinctive area of work is focused on families via women's projects. This may be due to the fact that there are large numbers of young single female parents on income support living in the area.[158] However, men are not excluded from the service but are visited at home instead because they appear less comfortable than women with attending public events around these kinds of issues.

This is a long established true community project which has seen many encouraging stories emerge because people have been given help and encouragement so that they have found the courage to 'leave the nest' and find employment.

Cornerstone Christian Project (Interviewee C)

Cornerstone, as it is known in the community, was started over 14 years ago and now has a Christian Café & Drop-in-Centre where anyone is welcome. Over 40 volunteers regularly work either in the café, in the loft sorting clothes, driving the van or teaching, to mention some of the activities. The aim of the organisation is to bring the Good News of Christ's Kingdom to the people of Benwell and to succour the needs of the whole person and the family within the community.

The main functions are the provision of Christian counselling, advice and assistance to people in need, and the provision of facilities for their general welfare, well-being, education and development. Cornerstone is visited by people from all age groups.[159] In the area, educational attainment is very low, unemployment high, and there are a lot of single parents. According to interviewee C, 75 % of their clients have used the Basic Skills service, an excess of 75 % of the clients have not finished schooling and 85 % of are on benefits. Teaching follows the basic skills education methods as most of the users are adults with a lack of skill and unpleasant memories of the mainstream education system. It also is deemed far nicer, even fashionable, to go to the café rather than education events. It is more like 'what the other people do'. This organisation creates a place to go in the community and find a friendly face, an important social function as sometimes the organisation is the only link for the client with the outside

---

[157] Adapted from Riverside Community Health Project Annual Report 2000-2001.
[158] Adapted from Riverside Community Health Project Annual Report 2000-2001.
[159] Adapted form the Cornerstone's Annual Report 2000.

world. Users form friendships, learn new skills and gain confidence so that they can go 'out' and possibly find work. They also have joint events with the Riverside Project, for example, women's issues.

In the 1990s refugees and asylum seekers, from the surrounding area, began to visit this centre. However, it seems now that they have moved on to the WERS venue. There appeared to have been some tension between the 'original' users and the 'new-comers'. One reason for this may have been the fact that many of the new-comers were not Christians but Muslims or of other religion. Or, it could be due to the fact that the 'new-comers' find WERS more tailored to their needs. The organisation receives funding from various churches and from a great number of other smaller sources.

Scotswood Area Strategy (SAS) / Scotswood Community Support Centre (Interviewee F)

SAS was formed in the early 1990s (funded by Key Fund) in order to try to give an answer to some of the typical local problems such as crime, deprivation and truancy. SAS is a strategy group with all directors originating from Scotswood but it also provides services aimed particularly at children and young people. For example there are groups for girls, an attendance project for those who want to attend school, music group and credit union. There are also youth groups which use 'carrot-and-stick' method i.e. first there is teaching in literacy and numeracy and then, as a reward, the youngsters get to work on a go-cart. The organisation is happy to try any initiative and if it works they will use it again. SAS tries to offer activities in the immediate community, for example a disco is held once a week, and there is a crèche and community bakery. These local services are needed as people may not have the money to travel further a field. In terms of practicality, in order to get a young mother to participate in learning, a nursery is needed nearby. However, the organisation is operating in uncertainty over the availability of premises. As the interviewee says, it would help to know if the organisation can continue operating in the same building. They are experiencing the same uncertainty as some of the local residents.

Health Care Organisation

North Tyneside Primary Care Trust (Interviewee M)

Primary Care Trusts have been through their own modernisation programme. In 1998 the internal market in health care was abolished and now they operate in partnership with various agencies such as the council, hospitals, the voluntary sector, other service providers and the more general community. This health care organisation has put a great effort into reaching ethnic minorities among the other more isolated groups of the population (such as the homeless). They provide and commission nursing services, develop mental health care options and purchase hospital services for the population of North Tyneside. They are involved with a range of other organisations as a funding partner, or otherwise in LSP in a particular geographical location or according to a client group based need. In addition to LSP, this

organisation is a member of the North Tyneside Race, Health and Social Care Forum which is a truly multi-agency forum aiming to offer services inclusively in the community. The contribution of this organisation helps particularly in understanding the difficulties the BME groups face. Interviewee M points out that as a health care organisation they have a long history of working with local authorities which now has become a duty. The interviewee sees that the number of partnerships on a local and policy level has stabilised but is still increasing on a neighbourhood level. This could be expected as the Government's policies on engaging communities have started to take an effect.

Part Two: Themes from the Interviews

The two policy papers, the Modern Local Government: In touch with the People[160] and the Compact: Getting it right together[161] both contribute to the new governmental attitude toward active citizenship and community participation, but from different angles. There are three issues which have changed: First, partnership working has become a norm. It has its advantages but as some interviewees say, the disadvantage is that there are too many partnerships to participate in. Second, consultations are a duty and a Government priority. They are more regular, and although some say that consultants have indeed learned from the mistakes made before, further improvements are needed. Third, citizenship has been promoted as a virtue which creates a nation. At the same time it has been promoted as a solution particularly against the alleged abuse of the British welfare state.

The Government and the voluntary sector strongly agree that citizens need to be more active. In order to achieve this, the Government has been keen to modernise local government and create a political life which would attract more people. Therefore, in achieving this, it is seen as essential to create a more active and participating population. There are plans for more citizenship education in schools (like there are in continental countries) in order to build more social capital and to increase the understanding of the political process among the people. In order to support this process, an Advisory Group on the Teaching of Citizenship and Democracy has been established.[162]

The voluntary sector needs citizens who are willing to give up their time for the common good and ultimately, assist in providing certain services. From this it follows that these parties also agree on the need for citizens being involved and participating in the public matters. However, the discussion may arise as to who is the citizenry, and how it should participate and in what. This point can be clarified by the fact that it has not been defined in the Government papers that the citizens in question would only be those who are in a possession of the British passport or are citizens of the one of the member states of the EU. Certain positions, and generally free access to jobs in Great Britain, can be limited by some qualifications. But an opportunity for participating in a community group is open for everyone. This is

---

[160] DETR, Modern Local Government: In touch with the People.
[161] Home Office, The Compact
[162] DETR, Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership.

the very essence of the idea behind the community participation that it is *open* and *available* to all those who are willing to contribute or want to benefit from better services. It must be admitted that it is demonstrating an open and welcoming attitude in this matter.

The main change in policy with regard to the government's attitude towards community has been in the Compact agreement which has given the voluntary sector a prominent part to play in social inclusion and regeneration. This has been enforced through the local authorities who are now required to measure (Best Value-effect) and show increased involvement with the communities. After publishing the Deakin report, in which it was argued 'that voluntary organisations are not just contractors, but are embedded in civil society with goals of their own'[163], the special nature of the sector was recognised. As a consequence the Labour Party published a report on the Voluntary Sector, Building a Future Together. This maybe due to the fact that when the Labour Party was seeking to enter office it had to distinguish itself from the Conservative Government of the time (and Old Labour) and win new allies. However, once in the office, it has appeared that it has been possible to continue on the lines of the Conservatives. There appear to be similarities, for example

1) the use of the word 'partnership', but with a wider meaning than used by the Conservatives (Lewis)
2) the confirmation of the 1997 Local Government Act (the initiative of the Conservative Government) in order to allow the local authorities to enter into contracts, and
3) the pursuance of the Best Value which has been compared to Compulsory Competitive Tendering (Geddes and Martin).

Contrary to some expectations, it can be said that the current government has gone further than the previous government. In the foreword of Chapter 30 of the Spending Review Report 2002,[164] the Government expresses its continued support for the voluntary sector by the words: 'The Government needs a voluntary and community sector that is strong, independent and has the capacity to be a partner in delivering world-class public services'. Therefore, it has raised the profile and the resources of the Active Community Unit in order to enable the voluntary sector to increase capacity building in the communities. The Government has agreed to increase the funding for this Unit from £35 million in 2002-03 to £65 million in 2005-06 and the work will be overseen by a high level group of officials from central government, local government and the voluntary sector. The Government will also establish a £125 million voluntary fund to tackle barriers to effective service delivery and modernise the sector for the future. With respect to the Compact, all the agreed codes will be implemented in full across the government departments. A senior official will be personally responsible for getting all of the recommendations executed in their department.[165]

---

[163] Lewis, 'Reviewing the Relationship', p. 264.
[164] Spending Review Report 2002 [http://www.hm-treasury.gove.uk/spending_review/spend_sr02/report/spend_sr02_repchap30.cfm.] accessed 25 October 2002.
[165] The paragraph has been adapted from Spending Review Report 2002.

At the heart of modernisation of local government (and the authorities), there has been an aim to increase political activity and make it more attractive to the citizens. This has been slightly improved already as the results from the experiment with all-postal voting show. For example in Gateshead where in May 2000 the elections were all-postal, two wards had 26 % and 32 % increase in the vote![166] There are also plans to implement e-voting[167] and lower the voting age to 16[168]. Particular attention has been given to citizenship education at schools where some new school councils have been created in order to allow pupils to experience and learn skills in co-operation in decision making.

However, as local authorities are expected to 'be in touch with the people, provide high quality services and give vision and leadership for local communities'[169] voting does not take place often and regularly enough for local authorities to fulfil these requirements. In order to improve this, the councils are working in partnership with other agencies and communities and consult organisations and individuals periodically. As explained in the chapter two, Dibben and Bartlett have argued that 'the effectiveness of consultation is limited by cost structures, and by the predetermined choices and preferences of senior managers'[170] which means that there are many obstacles to be tackled before the consultations are of such quality that the results would represent independent thinking and opinions of empowered citizenry. This problem may be helped by the Community Empowerment Fund in the nearer future and in the long run by the introduction of the citizenship education at various educational contexts. Although the practicing of the policies in question has started to materialise, there are still many hurdles to be crossed before all the promises will be delivered at the local authority level where, to some extent, there appears to be a problem with the ownership of the Government's initiatives. These will be looked at next through the themes appearing from the interviews.

Thematic discussion arising from the interviews

There are several interlinked themes to be looked at in this context. The questions which were asked in the interviews were aimed at prompting expression on these matters. The matters are concerning the idea of citizenship; involvement, participation, capacity building and the relationships in the arenas where these functions take place. These are between the individual and the organisation, and between the organisations in the partnerships. Let us start with the changing idea of citizenship and see what both of the parties can agree on and what the interviewees have said.

---

[166] Shaw, K and Davison, G. 'Community Elections for Regeneration Partnerships' Local Government Studies Vol 28 No 2 (2002).
[167] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2165175.stm
[168] http://www.votesat16.org.uk/.
[169] DETR, Modern Local Government, In Touch with the People, para 2.
[170] Dibben and Bartlett, 'Local Government and Service Users', p. 57.

Changing idea of citizenship

It appears that a wider and more inclusive idea of citizenship has been accepted in practice. This has been demonstrated by many interviewees who reflected citizenship skills through other than traditional terminology e.g. voting and electing. For example, interviewee A pointed out that the citizenship skills can be about British citizenship but also about how to survive in a new adopted home country and how will one function in that society. Another interviewee (D) has a similar impression about citizenship. They get information via NERS, which concentrates on legal matters of being a refugee or asylum seeker whilst WERS concentrates on practical everyday matters i.e. providing school uniforms etc. They also have some groups emerging, for example around one's nationality i.e. Iranian groups or Angolan Women's group. These enable activities which are dependent on one's language skills and which help in adapting to a new country using one's own language and exercising one's culture.

Many interviewees saw citizenship as a social issue i.e. how to operate in a society. This can be called social capacity. In the past, it has been recognised that there is a lack of social capacity even amongst the majority ethnic people, e.g. skills about how to find information, what to do with it and who to contact if one wishes to influence political decisions. This is important because, traditionally, citizenship mostly has been seen as something which results in a kind of a political action or, as a legal membership of a state. It can be more about being equal and doing similar things as the majority does, and to feel included. Interviewee C demonstrates how they fulfil this kind of a need by listing things they organise in order to enable people to gain life experiences similar to those of some others. These kinds of situations offer opportunities to train in how to deal with money matters e.g. saving for holidays, negotiating where to go, taking turns and building confidence to bring forward everyone's ideas. For some, to be and act like everyone else, be it on a smaller scale or even take more time, in one's experience it can be a 'big' thing to participate this way. Interviewee M agrees and explains that they invest in community development with an aim to increase community interest to take control over health issues and influence policy making. They want to help people to help themselves. Particularly immigrants who may have developed stress related problems before arriving here, (traumatic life experience), or developed them after, for example when living in low quality housing and coping with racism.

Interviewee B appears to agree and points out that citizenship can be about encouraging people and trying to empower them, for example to be able to complain constructively. It can take a lot of courage to disagree with an institution, be it social services department or Marks & Spencer's. In some cases, citizenship can be seen to be about the person's own knowledge and experience of how to do things and manage their everyday life matters. Interviewee C explains that their organisation does some citizenship training. People can only do campaigning when they feel confident enough to address what are sometimes difficult issues, for example such as matters related to child protection.

Capacity building

It has been recognised by both parties, the Government and the voluntary sector that capacity needs to be encouraged in order to create a knowledgeable population. Not all organisations themselves provide training in citizenship skills. Those organisations that do, can invite an external organisation to come in and do the training. A popular advisory body is the Citizens' Advice Bureau although it may be that the questions and advice tend to be benefits-oriented information rather than about influencing organisations and their employees or seeking a political change[171]. Surprisingly, one of the interviewees (K) explained in response to a question about the provision of training in citizenship skills that it is done through the Council's Community Service Sector. By educating employees and developing an agenda, both parties, the employees and the participating public, will become more knowledgeable. It has been interesting to find out that a council officer would be comfortable about necessitating people to become something that may result in for example more demanding tenants.

On the voluntary sector, it is possible to take a credited certificate in voluntary activity. It may not be about something which some people would regard as citizenship, but it will result in citizen action as it is a practical course on selected matters e.g. fundraising, publishing or accountancy in the context of running a voluntary organisation. In this respect, the Government's plans in increasing social capital and empowerment in the communities are put in practice in an organised manner. This kind of active citizenship will help to build up knowledge and at the same time increase the ownership of projects and infrastructure in their community. This will contribute to an increase in people's confidence in their own skills and ability because they have been participating in the design of the project and deciding what is included i.e. what is important to the community.

Interviewee E explained that they do community capacity building using local resources and this way generate practical experience. Once the individual has learned from the running of the [community] centre she or he may have better access to paid employment. Interviewee E sees it as an excellent learning opportunity. In this version, there is a great emphasis on individual's own learning, and on a process of acquiring certain skills. Whereas in the next the emphasis appears to be the other way around: Interviewee L explains that it is the Liaison Officer who will give advice on where to go and find services e.g. community groups/centres. In the case of asylum seekers, after the asylum seeker status changes into a refugee, asylum seekers enter their system as citizens. In this version it appears that the individual will be looked after rather than actively learning to become active him/herself. However, sometimes asylum seekers become volunteers themselves. As Interviewee D points out it has been found to be the most helpful to have ex- or current asylum seekers and refugees involved as volunteers because they have been 'through the system' hence they have the expertise and are most capable of giving accurate information to others. Perhaps due to this, interviewee D has a positive experience of advocacy work because when they

---

[171] It is of a common understanding that if one's private matters are not in order it is difficult to be interested in the matters of the public.

were consulted about the infamous voucher system, they were against it and therefore feel that they were successful in their campaign for scrapping that system.

It is a very problematic issue to measure something like social capital. If compared using Arnstein's ladder[172], an indication of a high level of social capital would be when an organisation is free to do what it wants with its finances or that it would be trusted with a leading role in a partnership. When it comes to BME groups, the situation is even more difficult. Whilst interviewee H estimates that less than 10 % of the partnerships are led by BME group, after these interviews, the impression is that the percentage is far lower. An example of distrust in an organisation's social capacity was given by an interviewee who explained that their organisation had initiated and planned a project. However, it was eventually handed over to another organisation, elsewhere in the UK, to be managed from a distance. The impression was that the organisation was not trusted with the large account which would have come with the project.[173] The organisation had been told that they still would be involved in it. One can imagine how devastating that kind of an attitude is for the community organisation which feels that they have the capacity to manage the project. On the other hand, it is difficult to know what the reasons behind such a decision were but, it may nevertheless be as simple as them not trusting their experience in such matters and seeing it best to have the project managed by others.

In the matters of social capacity, some professionals remain doubtful. As interviewee H points out, there is not much forward movement with regard to social capital building. Interviewee H thinks that much money has been spent but there is not much to be seen. However, interviewee H sees that this could be helped by a long term commitment from people who have the power. This would tackle the problem with the lack of continuity. As Craig et.al. argue, 'enthusiastic and committed individuals can drive the process forward but their departure can undermine further progress.'[174] When it comes to resources for building social capital, the money is available. For example the Community Fund is meant to be used for this purpose.

Involving clients/users in consultation

Councils have a duty to consult residents and others but there is no duty for citizens and others to take part in these exercises. As the governments and councils fail to obtain accountability via elections, there must be other forms of expressing the agreement about being governed. In the current climate where people are used to seeing messages travel around the globe in few seconds and participate in the opinion polls, it is difficult to see how people would be happy to express their political opinion only once every few years. Even then, they just have to choose from pre-arranged lists. Therefore regular consultations are a priority in measuring the success of the local authority's performance.

---

[172] Watt. S., Higgins, C. and Kendrick, A. 'Community Participation in the development of services: a move towards community empowerment' Community Development Journal Vol 35 No 2 (2000).

[173] The author is under instruction for not disclosing the identity of the interviewee in this matter.

[174] Craig et.al., Contract or Trust, p. 15.

The consultations are a matter on which both parties agree. However, in practice there appears to be some discontent on the quality of the consultations. The voluntary sector is pleased to be considered as a professional agency which is asked to contribute because it has a considerable wealth of knowledge and experience in the matters of its own business area. But they would prefer to have more opportunity to be involved directly in the occasions where the policies are considered. They also would want to be more involved at an earlier stage of setting the questions and aims for the consultations. It has also become clear that although there is more feed back from the consultations and of the actions which will or have resulted from the consultations, there is still room for improvement.

A problem with the consultations which are held directly with the individuals from the community has been discussed above. This is a matter of which the voluntary sector particularly, has long been aware of. Therefore they have kept this problem with social capital and the issue of empowerment high on the list when negotiating the Compact with the current government. This matter is now being addressed but it will take a long time before the actual results can be seen widely. However, some progress has been made in the matters of getting people involved because there were some comments made in regards with the number of consultations.

All of the interviewees agreed that their organisation had been consulted in one or another context. For example in Newcastle where there is a major development project Going for Growth (GfG), organisations had been asked to contribute ideas and opinions in various stages of the project. It is easier to organise and conduct an interview with one or few representatives of the organisation than with a large number of individual participants. They may be more knowledgeable and aware how to contribute compared with individuals from the community. They often are well educated and experienced in expressing their views and opinions constructively. But when it comes to the users and clients of the organisation contributing directly in the consultation, the situation becomes more complex.

There are many problems and open questions involved with greater numbers of people; mobility, language and so on. How will people get to the venue (both able and disable-bodied) and should the travel be organised and the costs compensated? How should they be interviewed, indirectly or directly in teams, pairs or individually? Should there be interpreters interviewing in various community languages or should there be only English used? When these kinds of practicalities are taken into consideration, it becomes clear why sometimes it is seen most cost effective to consult an organisation and rely on such information trusting that it is a voice and a view of the user transmitted by an expert in the field. In one of the consultations, interviewee E explains, there were around 100 participants. However there were only five officers from the local authority and two interpreters hence only a few got a chance to make a contribution personally.

During the interviews it became clear that language clearly is a problem. It was pointed out that the number of languages spoken in the community has increased dramatically. This has been helped, for example, by Gateshead Council using the Newcastle interpretation service in coping with the demand

rather than providing its own service. Interviewee E explained having witnessed how two women who did not speak English, discussed things amongst themselves in their own language during the consultation. This opinion, which was deemed relevant by the observer who understood the language that was spoken, was not included for obvious reasons. Therefore not speaking the language does not equate with the fact that one does not have an opinion but it certainly equates with having no voice. Perhaps it is that only those who are confident and/or speak English, speak out and then are taken a notice of.

Another problem in this matter was pointed out by interviewee L. Sometimes there is a question as who should authorise anyone to be the leader of a community. For example in Gateshead, the council structures need a nominated community leader which may cause friction as the community's own perceived leader may not agree about the person. Authorities can, for example assume that a person with whom their own community worker is most in contact is the representative of that community.

Interviewee E explained that the more events were held in order to raise awareness of the GfG in the community, the more local people got tired of it and less and less people came along to events. Interviewee did not regard these events as valuable information gathering occasions but merely as an exercise so that it was possible to 'tick the box' of a consultation exercise done by the authority. In this organisation it was easy to sense distrust and disappointment towards government agencies. It appears that people have been asked too many times to 'participate', but in those occasions they feel that they never were asked if they would like to contribute.

At the time of the interviews, it appeared that there were too many consultations. As some interviewees pointed out, some people have become tired of being asked similar questions repeatedly. One would assume that once something has been consulted about the next event would be for hearing the results rather than being consulted again. Interviewee B believes that there are too many consultations and meetings when new initiatives and partnerships are starting, and that local people are tired of being involved this way.

Interviewee E also said that there are too many consultations 'but nothing is ever happening'. In contrast to this, another interviewee (K) expressed a more positive opinion referring to the Community Participation Green Paper which explains how the seven new Area Committees will have a leading role in planning. The Green Paper lays out the roles of both parties and defines what the council means by consultation/participation. Councils can also arrange smaller scale, possibly on-going consultations via their own employees for example using the community liaison team. Interviewee L pointed out that sometimes officers just forget to ask the other members of a management group. For example in the Carers Strategy Group a decision had been taken without consultation as they [officers] were so used to make the decision themselves.

Interviewee G was one of those who pointed out that there is a consultation fatigue and a problem with the quality of consultations. It seems that consultation events are used for presenting what has been

decided (i.e. by the council) and what there is on offer. People can comment on the draft for example, and choose between possible alternatives. However, they usually do not get any feedback on decisions, particularly about what the decisions have been based on. Interviewee G also points out that there are other agencies, which may not have a duty to consult or act openly, involved in projects. For example in town centre regeneration the council does not always have a control over other parties, e.g. land owning companies (interviewee G).

Interviewee F was doubtful of the Government's interest in public involvement and pointed out that the strategic partnerships exist already. Interviewee explains that they send over a representative and pass over information in regards with the situation at the particular locality. This is a good point as not everyone wishes to participate and those who do, have an existing opportunity already. Therefore why not take the word of the community activists' who are active in Community Council. It is a very good idea that the Government is interested in public involvement but as long as it does not become a duty for individuals as it has become for authorities. This is particularly important from the point of view of the voluntary sector whose whole ideology is based on voluntary action. Gladstone has argued that

> The essence of voluntary action is more a question of independence and autonomy and its fundamental antithesis is statutory actions, that is, activity carried out under the aegis of local or central government and their associated agencies within the framework of statutory obligations laid down in legislation. By contrast, voluntary action is independent of direct state control and voluntary organisations are essentially those established and governed by their own members, without external intervention.[175]

The duty to consult and to work in partnership, renders all the efforts by the government, central or local, subject to suspicion. There is nothing voluntary about working in partnerships where the partners have been determined in advance and the agendas have been selected based on the funding criteria.

In Newcastle City Council there are seven Area Committees which serve the immediate local community. Although these have been arranged geographically, interviewee K points out that not all communities are geographical. There are other kinds of areas – communities, e.g. religious, educational institutions, work-related communities or even the Internet community. The traditional council structures may not translate to different kinds of communities. However, this understanding is well reflected in the publication Community Participation.[176] It is possible to distinguish different kinds of communities. For example, there are the 'communities of identity' and 'communities of interest'. The first consists of people who identify with people of the same nationality or sexual orientation. The second consists of people who are affected by the same issues, for example hobby or concern. People may not live in the same location and do not form therefore geographical communities. Similarly this is often true about the minority ethnicities. Some people might assume that if there are no large visible communities of minority

[175] Gladstone, F. J. Voluntary Action in a Changing World National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Policy Planning Unit, (London, Bedford Square Press, 1979) p. 3.
[176] Newcastle City Council, Community Participation, p. 10.

ethnicities, they do not exist. And even where they exist, one can not assume that they form a uniform community.

There exists another matter with regards to active citizenship. The outcomes of citizen/resident action may not be what the local authority has wished for. When getting people involved it is difficult to predict who will attend an event. This was demonstrated during the consultation which was observed for this research purpose. In December 2001, there was a Neighbourhood Renewal consultation held in Catchgate. This is an area of high deprivation and because at the time it was among the ten worst wards in England in the deprivation scale, it had been prioritised for this scheme by the central government.

During the consultation it was explained that the number of people attending the event ranges from six to twenty. In the case of Catchgate, there were about ten people present of which one or two were from the surrounding area which was not included in the regeneration scheme. However, these participants appeared voluble and were dissatisfied about their area (Langley Park) not being included because they did not have certain services either. It is not clear whether these people had not understood the geographical limitation that applied to the event or whether they arrived out of ignorance or if they just wanted to make their point of view clear. What is clear is that it is not easy for the councils always to be successful in their appeals to people to come forward. It is also clear that whatever the views of the people are, they are subjective and based on people's life experience in the location, again, an idea which may not correspondence with the council's definition of a community.

Another example was put forward by interviewee J who described how the local branch of the BNP had found out that the council was planning to house asylum seekers in the area. The activists from the organisation had immediately started canvassing door to door and managed to turn the tide of locals against the council's plan. This may be easier in a close-knit community where people are more likely to share the same background and reasons for their circumstances than in a large multicultural city such as Newcastle. Both of these examples show how citizen activity may not result in something which the council would prefer. This raises an issue about politically acceptable views of a local community whose views may be fuelled by the racist and asylum-opposing press coverage. In such an environment it is very difficult to do community work which is aimed at helping minority ethnicities. In addition, it is not only the press that creates this unnecessary climate. Government organisations may disapprove of some of the campaigning that voluntary organisations want to do. For example, interviewee D points out that the National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) would not be happy with what their organisation has been campaigning for. They have participated in the process of reviewing the infamous and eventually scrapped voucher system.

Interviewee F remains sceptical about the activity in the community. It is clear that some people are very active but some will never be despite the Government's participation initiatives. Interviewee F thinks that people have already an opportunity to participate for example in the Community Council. However, interviewee has an opinion that despite of all talk about the community, (the myth of 'golden age'), there

will never be going back to old style community where people supported each other. The question is how long those who regularly volunteer, can keep doing it. Interviewee J reminds us about a certain individual who puts in for example 20 hrs per week. Another question is that how much one can contribute, particularly fresh ideas, to community work. There is also a risk that one activist only represents the wishes of a few rather than a community as a whole. This is why it is important to keep up with the capacity building and recruiting new 'blood' in addition to acquiring new funding, which however, appears to be the greatest problem.

Interviewee M explains that they try a community development approach and bring together different stake holders in different localities. This enables people from health professions discuss with locals how to tackle health issues (consult and report back about issues). However, with minorities it can be painfully difficult as they may be more difficult to reach. Interviewee M points out that a lot of effort has been put in but there has not been so much influence. Perhaps one reason is in the distrust and vulnerability amongst minorities as interviewee F points out. Interviewee M explains that BME groups do not have established networks. This makes it more difficult to communicate with them although the situation has been helped by the excellent interpretation service and the racial equality training for the staff. But, from the point of view of BME groups it may be difficult to create networks and communicate as they are small units with small cultural groupings scattered geographically. This brings us neatly to the next issue.

Different services for different people?

This is a matter where both of the parties agree. Services need to be tailored to the needs of the clients in order to enable access to services for everyone. However, there remains the underlying problem of treating everyone equally when providing services, particularly where public entitlement is established. Therefore, the reader should be aware of the two-fold nature of this question. It can be understood as being responsive if the services are tailored to users or as being an organisation which adheres to equal opportunities when everyone is treated the same if the services are not tailored. This is a matter where the arbitrating role of the local authority is emphasised as various kinds of minority interests, not only ethnic, need protection against the majority.

There was only one organisation among the interviewed which provides services solely to asylum seekers and refugees. As such, the West End Refugee Service is in a dilemma in the way it is selective in regards with the clients. At the same time, it would prefer its clients to be able to use other services which are open to all regardless of people's ethnicity or nationality. Theme based services would be better because there are people from different backgrounds which helps mixing with locals. It would also help accessing expertise as interviewee D explains.

To the question 'If you provide service for immigrants how does it differ from service which is given to other client groups?' interviewee L replied that 'I would not use that term [immigrant], ethnic minorities

is better'. Interviewee gave an example of a post of Liaison Officer for this part of the population, in which research shows that these groups do not take up services. Perhaps some reasons can be found in people's pride and their different traditions in kinship. Interviewee L continued that they have to work on that and find out why they don't use services. Interviewee L agrees that they would like to provide services but there are some obstacles; for example in regards with old people's services and also with a need for halal and kosher meat which the council does not provide at the moment.

Interviewee E stated that there is no difference in the service they offer to immigrants. Their services are open to everybody. However, interviewee E states that immigrants have a different long-term need. Statistics show that they face higher risk of becoming isolated and living in deprivation. The recent census 2001 proves the point as 'the second and even third-generation immigrants are still among the most deprived in society. The figures show that black, Asian and other ethnic minorities are twice as likely to be unemployed, half as likely to own their home and run double the risk of poor health, compared with white Britons'.[177] Perhaps part of the solution would be if the services for immigrants (largely part of BME groups) were provided by another body than the council which has evidence of their services not being taken up sufficiently by these user groups.

Interviewee C explains that whilst they are happy to offer training to everyone, they now direct refugees and asylum seekers to the WERS. Clients seem to prefer it there which may be due to the fact that there are more people who are in a similar position i.e. living in a foreign country. For example the language teaching has been provided by linguistics students from the Newcastle University in another location. Another reason for later arriving immigrants preferring another arena can be that whilst their problems appear similar with those of the locals' they are in fact very different. Whilst the 'immigrants' suffer from missing their families and relatives and also may struggle with the language, they may not lack confidence as those who have lived here longer, i.e. single mothers and long term unemployed. It would appear that the 'immigrants' have a different attitude to life because they have taken great risks and opted for uncertainty in order to reach their goal and manage to arrive here.

When asked how the service is organised for the clients, most interviewees said that it was according to the location where they live. In some cases the service is organised according to the date people had arrived at the North East. As interviewee L explains 'Home Office sends them here and buys housing from a private sector.' To the reader this may suggest that local authorities are not completely happy about compulsory process of receiving immigrants to their area.

As for a proof of the satisfaction with the services, interviewee L explains that, in some cases, people will either walk or take a bus from further a field. If they see it pleasant and beneficial to attend a community event, they will go. Interviewee L sees that this kind of 'voting by feet' is important to a community organisation as they see that they are doing something valuable. Many interviewees explained that they

---

[177] Frith Maxine The Independent Thursday 8 May 2003, p. 1.

provide taster courses after asking what kind of events people wish to see in their location. If these prove popular, the service is likely to continue.

Interviewee M explains that the organisation provides a slightly different service for asylum seekers (and homeless). Hence, the mainstream services should be tailored to some extent. For example training is needed in the use of interpreters during the consultation and in matters of cultural sensitivity. For example 'most Bangladeshi women still use their children to interpret for them, although this was not always very accurate' and 'the South Asian ladies ... find it difficult to comply with the dietary requirements ... due to the culture, which does not permit them to tell their elders what to do'[178].

There clearly is a need for differentiated provision because it is quite impossible to integrate people from different cultures completely. They cannot be expected to enjoy or join the same activities. For example, whilst everyone enjoys eating, some people will not enjoy eating certain kind of meat and some don't eat meat at all. All these different tastes may be due to cultural, religious or personal factors. However, where people can be expected to enjoy similar things such as sport and food, they should be given the opportunity to do so with a provision. For example, in the cultural events there should be alternatives as to what to eat and in sporting occasions there should be a chance to find a suitable event. Interviewee E explained, that when there was an outdoor event organised in the community, there was no such food available which would have accommodated one's religious specifications. The same applies to alcohol. Some people, particularly women, have found it uncomfortable to attend such events where alcohol is available. And again, as interviewee B explains, men are more reluctant to join in some occasions. For example, swimming with others may not be accepted particularly if there are any members of the opposite sex in the pool at the same time. Factors such as culture, sex and hierarchy may limit one's options whilst they may be taken for granted in other cultures. As long as these kind of issues are not taken into account it is impossible to expect people to feel comfortable about getting involved in the events which can build up a sense of community.

External relationships - courting with no wedding in sight?

The impetus for this research arose after reading the two of the Government's policy papers which promised a new relationship for the voluntary sector and individuals with the Government. It has become clear during the interviews that the attitudes have changed in most organisations although there were signs of resistance, particularly within local authorities. Although this achievement is mostly due to the regulations and duties set by the Government, the situation is nevertheless better now when the atmosphere is more open than it was before. Community participation can materialise on the level of local strategic partnerships where the community organisations should gain access to policy making.

---

[178] Adapted from: Taking Heart: North Tyneside Reports from focus groups April to May 1998. Published by the North Tyneside Taking Heart Project group, 1998.

The Voluntary Sector and the Government do agree that there must be more joint-working. However, as the number of partnerships has increased, the sector has remained wary of becoming just one of the partners. The sector does not want to be regarded as similar to the profit making sector. They have different goals and values that drive the business and they guard this fact carefully.

One aspect to consider in this context is the relationship of a voluntary sector organisation with the local authority. Another is the relationship between the voluntary sector organisations. The first has already been looked at and it became clear how the Government's agenda of <u>Compact</u> has been implemented at local authority level. For example, Kendall[179] explained how the recent developments reflect political manoeuvrings within the party. As was explained in the chapter three, the Labour Party on its way to becoming New Labour had reviewed its policies and gave a greater role for the voluntary sector. This was possible after ideological adjustments (i.e. steering away from statist principles) which were implemented in order to be able to pursue the marriage between markets and communitarian ideas.[180] Kendall's argument suggest that these changes do not necessarily reflect a voluntary wish for change on among the civil servants (although they may respond to a need of it). It could be argued that as such it may not be popular amongst the officers but something that they have to put up with. This appears to form the base of the suspicion and distrust among the voluntary organisations toward the local authority.

The second point, the relationships amongst the voluntary sector organisations themselves has also changed. This is greatly affected by the new attitude of the local authority issuing funding and applying the Best Value criteria to its services. Along with modernising the local authority, it has become a duty to adhere to Best Value criteria which assumes the competition hence the funds are generally granted for shorter periods and then reappraised, and they come with other criteria which effects voluntary organisations. These feel that they have to prove their actions, measure and compete with other organisations to a greater extent than before. They have to adhere to a more general agenda before they can access a partnership. This kind of problem with lack of trust which Kingdon[181] has identified between the partners does not help either. It will become clear in some of the following examples.

One of the clearest examples of the changed attitude is between the local authorities and the voluntary sector. "Those people out there" as interviewee G explains the change, 'have become "customers"' and continued: 'They [local authority] saw us as adversarial, if we campaigned they took it as criticism.' Previously the authorities have been in charge of running the projects and telling others what to do. Now they have to accept criticism as they have to measure their performance and the customer satisfaction. Only a few years ago, councils did not have much communication apart from the 'lip service' with the big voluntary organisations (interviewee J). If authorities were previously used to taking decisions based on their own expertise, they now have to consult people and explain why and what they are doing.

---

[179] Kendall, 'The mainstreaming of the third sector', pp. 541-562.

[180] For a longer analysis of this development, see Kendall's article where he also explains the important role of policy entrepreneurs in this process.
[181] Kingdon, <u>Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies</u>.

Previously when voluntary organisations were campaigning, it was seen as 'a pain in the neck' (interviewee G). Interviewee J holds a similar opinion that particularly in the past the tenants' groups were seen as a threat. Attitudes have clearly improved.

However, it appears that the local authority still holds back. It may be the frictions between the officers or departments within the public organisation that may dampen down the progress. As interviewee L explained, colleagues may disapprove if one takes a strong lead in promoting a matter and becomes 'too' involved or attached to a client group. It is seen that the officer in such a case would be campaigning for one group when they are expected to stay 'neutral' in order to be able to arbitrate between colliding agendas (interviewee K in theme on Citizenship). This kind of 'going native' has been raised in the context of other research case studies. For example, where there is a nominated officer to deal with the community, the 'benefit of having a champion to lead change could be undermined by the tendency of other staff simply to refer all issues to the "participation officer". This might marginalise or compartmentalise the issues of concern to tenants, or render the officer's role difficult, if they became too closely associated with tenants' interests'.[182] There is also the matter with the public money as interviewee M points out. It appears that the local authorities and the health care organisations do appreciate the voluntary sector efforts but would prefer them to continue doing what they think these organisations do best i.e. recognising problems and reacting to need. It is possible to detect a slight hostility towards the voluntary sector.

When it comes to working with councils, interviewee B feels that the organisation has been taken advantage of. The impression is that the organisation is not getting as much out of the relationship with the local authorities as before because the power and resources which have been taken away. Interviewee K sees that the policies are not perhaps as much local priorities as they are those of the Government. They may have different goals. The Government measures performance with goals set on a national level yet there are great variations even within small local areas. Interviewee E has a similar impression: they feel that they do get only limited support. For example, there is limited language skill in the local authority. Hence the authorities ask the BME organisations for help in organising consultations and meetings and getting people in to the event. After such effort, interviewee E feels that they are not even consulted properly not to mention being paid for this organisation.

Interviewee K recognises that 'the council does not have one department or person to deal with voluntary organisations' [sic]. However, at the time of the interview, the council was in a process of creating a Compact which would be used for developing the relationship further. There is also direct funding (£4 million) given to the voluntary sector for the purpose of preparing it for the new responsibilities. Interviewee K has noticed that the voluntary organisations are occasionally combining their efforts, which is good because organisations can learn from each other and most importantly, they learn what others have gained from the dealings with the local authority. Similarly, with other service providers, the local authority has different ways of having a relationship with organisations which have an access to premises,

---

[182] DETR, Tenant Participation in Transition, p. 15.

funding or exchange expertise and advice with the partners. This is why the local authority sees the citywide Strategic Partnerships as very important. They enable them to see the overall picture and be in the lead. Somehow, it appears that the local authority wants to develop the relationship with the voluntary sector, but just like the Government, it wants to keep the reins tightly in its own hands.

Interviewee K sees the role of the council to be arbitrating between colliding agendas. However, it has not been denied that in the future some responsibilities could be delegated to partners but not until they are ready and prepared for such changes. This is why it is important the local authority goes public with its long term aims with regards to the communities. People need to learn that there are opportunities, other than voting in elections, to influence the decisions that affect the public.

Interviewee H believes that there are enough partnerships already, although they are still mushrooming. The interviewee sees that there is a problem with them as they have not developed much yet with respect to the technicalities of involving people. Interviewee H thinks that the local authority is not good at involving people. It is one thing to talk about including partners but another to put it into practice. He also explains that there is a partnership inequality although the local government is slowly opening. Interviewee H appears to regret that the local authority must be heavily involved here in the North East. As interviewee H explains it, the local government wants to be aware of everything that is going on and keep their hands on the reins. Apparently, the first reaction is "What shall we have to do about this?" Interviewee H explains that in the current situation where the local authority is more an enabler than a provider, the voluntary and community organisations still ask what the local authority is going to do about it. This indicates that there exist a great disbelief and suspicion as to who should do and what. How would individuals be able to participate if professionals, the voluntary organisation representatives, still rely on the local authority to create solutions rather than organisations initiate their own ideas? Interviewee C says that an individual can make a difference by being proactive. Perhaps individuals should try to push the boundaries harder and in doing so they might be able to establish their role more firmly for example in the 'fabric of care' (as interviewee L calls the system).

Interviewee B explains that the organisation has a close working relationship with some other voluntary organisations. However, tension may arise in accessing funding, i.e. community groups compete for the same grants, particularly if they offer a similar kind of service. Interviewee B points out that some large organisations are thought as 'voluntary' organisations, but are not such in a similar way because they have more paid full time staff and have a more established position nationally as an advantage. However, interviewee B sees that the smaller organisations, whilst they struggle to maintain their budgets, have the advantage of being able to change and adapt to situations quickly. They also have their ethos coming from the community (interviewee B).

Interviewee C believes that the organisation has a very good and active relationship, formally and informally, with other voluntary organisations. This has become clear also in other interviews as other voluntary and community group representatives have mentioned this organisation in other contexts.

Interviewee E sees that the relationship with other voluntary organisations is fairly good. They refer people to one another and share resources, even staff in some occasions. However, despite these rather active 'projects' with other organisations nearby, interviewee C believes that the relationship with the Government requires a greater level of working in partnership. This is in order to enable the government organisations to gain specific knowledge about local matters rather than relying on generalised, overall information. This is true about the Government initiatives particularly, and is perhaps best demonstrated in health care where the Government sets national targets which, some say, should be set closer to the users because it is locally where the best understanding of the local situation is.

The changed attitude is still not completely satisfactory to all. The voluntary sector remains suspicious of this recent interest particularly in regards with developing a regional compact with the voluntary sector in the North East, as the Government had commissioned. The developing of a regional compact was dropped because it was deemed un-necessary as the region is covered by the national compact. However, the evidence from the interviews suggests that there is no comprehensive plan to establish the Compact firmly at the regional level. When it was asked from interviewee H if there are many links with the voluntary sector and the GONE, the reply was that there wasn't much awareness of such links. This indicates that the relationship has been left to individuals and individual organisations in the region to be initiated at their own pace.

In regards with the relationship between the organisation and the Government, interviewee B sees difficulties with funding which tends to be short-term. Interviewee feels that the organisation has been given the responsibility but not sufficient resources to take on the responsibility. In regards with the GfG consultations, interviewee B feels that people's views were not taken seriously. There have not been enough jobs created in the community nor are people compensated properly for their houses and mortgages. Interviewee F pointed out that since the start of the GfG, there has been an increase in their business. People have experienced uncertainty and disappointment as they have had to move into housing which is not necessarily better than what they left behind. People have felt that the matters are out of their control. That is exactly why any consultations should be held. People could feel more involved in the process of managing the change and increase the ownership of the projects.

However, interviewee B admits that the Government listened to them when ministers invited women from the community to London, a trip which made the women feel involved. Similarly interviewee G commented on their relationship with the Government positively and explained that through GONE, 'working hands-on' [sic] has improved and that some of the civil servants do know their organisation. In this organisation, there is a feeling that some civil servants regard themselves as supporting the organisation or even as being allies unlike in the past when they did not. They also were very pleased with the visit by the member of the Government. They felt that they really had been listened to and the ideas had been taken onboard.

Interviewee K says that the Government expects local government to change in all areas. It may be after consultation with councils, but all the same it may not necessarily be what the council wants to do. The Government is seen to be very reluctant to give powers down to the local authority, and if doing so, only after many checks and increased scrutiny has been put in place. This may harm the creation of ownership of the Government policies among the local government staff.

Interviewee D did not emphasise the importance of partnerships but networking. In this organisation, it is seen as absolutely crucial because it helps in avoiding duplication which is important because clients can be dealing with many agencies. It is also seen valuable because, when networking, the organisation will learn a lot from others and vice versa. Interviewee D explains that it has been very helpful to network with other agencies as it is felt that it enables the access to expertise. The other kind of benefit of networking comes through the ability to demonstrate how not to establish a new group rather than someone else telling how to establish one. (The idea is that if one has made mistakes, the others can avoid the same pitfalls if they have been enlightened about them. Some of the problems can be avoided for example by providing childcare at the same time as NVQ training for young mothers. Or maybe start lessons later on Mondays and leave Fridays out of the curriculum just to avoid creating a negative atmosphere when expecting people to attend 'classes'.) However, the downside of partnership working may be in their increased numbers, as interviewee C points out. These are questions about how many partnerships can be participated in and if it is possible to have them all efficiently serviced.

Interviewee B explains that organisations try to send different people to different meetings so that each of them increases their expertise and gives feedback in order to share the work load between workers and users of the organisation. They see that it is more important that the users and staff from the management group form relationships with individuals in other organisations rather than focus on forming partnerships with other organisations. Interviewee B regrets that there is so much 'red tape' in partnerships and that it is more difficult now than it used to be putting organisation's views and interests forward. In their experience, when the organisation has been approached, with a consultation or a partnership in mind in the matters concerning GfG for example, there is more competition over various agendas. The same kind of problem can be detected below.

Interviewee F sees that organisations maybe worn out with partnerships because the meetings are weighing people down with bureaucracy. Organisations must be selective with partnerships in order to not waste time. In the current situation organisations may be obliged to take part because of funding criteria which states that there must be co-operation. Interviewee K agrees with this and says that the importance of the partnerships is recognised, but coping with a number of them is another matter. Perhaps this is why one gets an impression that in Newcastle the number of partnerships appears to be levelling out, unlike during the other interviews where the impression was that they are still mushrooming, although very slowly in Durham (interviewee J).

There are many opinions on whether the partnerships work for organisations who are involved in them. Interviewee G points out that 'some of them work some not' [sic] and explains that it might help if people would decide before hand what to do if the partnership does not get money. This way it might be more likely that they remain co-operative. Afterwards it may prove difficult to get people around the table to discuss how to spend it and think strategically and widely. Interviewee H explains that [at the time of the interviews, 2002] partnerships are still at the stage of being created [rather than deepened]. They are not yet rationalising them or linking them up. It seems that everyone wants their own strategy put forward. Interviewee K thinks that the partnerships work and produce results. The overall decision is made in partnership after which the community groups will get on working it out in smaller detail. However, interviewee K points out that direction of root to top would be much better way, 'but that we are a long way from there'.

Interviewee G explains that there is a partnership fatigue. It is often the same people who tend to be the most active and enduring time after time (this has been pointed out by other interviewees as well). For example interviewee J expressed a slight worry about the energy levels of these same people who always take on things voluntarily. Interviewee G has noticed that in partnerships those with resources will get their voice heard and those with less skill and resources have less say. 'Meetings as such do not empower people', interviewee G points out and demonstrates the organisation's own experience of not being prepared well on time. They had had delays in recruiting the right people and building up structures, hence they were set to fail a project.

Interviewee H explains that relationships depend on individuals, trust does not exist but it has to be worked at as after all it is down to the individuals who create it. Similarly, interviewee C believes that knowing the right person is important and that an individual can make a difference by being proactive. This appears to be the reason why some of the interviewees did not see the partnerships as the most effective and important way of working but rather emphasised the importance of networking and knowing the right people. In this, the partnerships can of course help.

Evaluation

From the interviews we can draw up a view that the internal relationship, i.e. the nature of the functioning between the voluntary organisations and their users/clients, has not been affected very much by the Government policies in question. They continue fulfilling their organisational purpose which is supporting people in the communities, encouraging them and helping them to build up their confidence. They choose activities according to the suggestions by the users and the popularity of the courses. (Naturally this can seriously be affected by the availability of the funding to run projects.) However, the individuals have an opportunity to use their initiative and put forward their ideas (the best evidence of actual 'empowerment' can be found in the tenant participation) but they don't easily become leaders in the community. This may be due to the supporting nature of the most of the voluntary organisations which have been looked at in this context. Community groups have not seen it their task to educate

people in citizenship skills as such but rather help people to find solutions to their life supporting activities (i.e. education, finding work etc.). However the impact has been quite important on the external relationship and dealings between the local authority and the voluntary sector, or any other partner. The main areas affected are in the patterns of networking and funding, which are interlinked.

The importance of the networking has been emphasised by many of the interviewees. They appear to prefer the idea of networking to partnership working, which they tend to consider to be more forced and artificial by nature. Networks are developed over time via 'natural' interactions with other groups, whilst partnerships are a more recently acquired necessity. Most interviewees agreed that there are more partnerships now than before, but they also pointed out that there appears to be some saturation with these partnerships. Only one of the interviewees believed that there weren't so many being created but now actually a slowing down. Partnerships are a very good arena to try to put forward ideas and agendas, but at the same time organisations may feel overwhelmed by the attention given to the initiatives of other organisations. Competition between these agendas has become fiercer and some of the organisations feel that they risk trading-off their original values and ideas. It could even be said that many people in the voluntary sector do not feel competitive but rather passionate about their values and objectives. Yet this may not be enough in pushing forward their goals in such a competitive team environment as partnerships can be. The nature of voluntary action is different. It is not as market-oriented or profit-driven as it would help to be when competing and bidding for scarce funds. This is a fact of which some voluntary sector representatives are not happy about. Yet in a way, it appears to be part of the criteria the Government will apply as they come to evaluate their partners and whom they will fund.

The question of funding has been brought up in many interviews. The Government has helped the situation by adding more value to certain contributions made by the individuals or organisations to charities. However, the underlying worry is the length or the availability of funding. Since the government has started to apply the rules of competition among the suppliers of the services, the voluntary organisations have found it difficult to plan ahead under such short-term funding. The organisations have to spend a considerable amount of time and man power in collecting and securing funds rather than providing the service. This kind of uncertainty takes away some of the enthusiasm which would come handy in providing the actual service. The funding criteria may also dictate that the organisation must share projects (savings and cost-effectiveness) and/or the projects must benefit certain members of the population for example BME groups who must be included. As such, it only can be a good thing that the Government promotes inclusiveness. But in practice it may be more difficult and the approval of the people on the grass root level should not be taken for granted. This brings us neatly to the matter of trust between the partners.

There appears to be little trust between the partners in partnerships or towards local authorities. This may They appear to have their preferred contacts with whom they have worked before and the relationship has been well-tried in the course of years. This kind of a long-term commitment is the best basis for nurturing trust. The possible trading between the agendas in such relationship is not experienced as a

threat but rather an indication that 'next time around' it will be our turn to win. Another reason for suspicion toward local authorities and government agencies is that whilst the voluntary sector appreciates the Government help for the sector, i.e. the principles of the Compact, they remain cautious of the reasons behind it. They have seen the transfer of the powers from local government to the centre, and hence are tightly holding on to their independence.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Policy Papers

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate the impact of the major changes in the system of national and local governance which were aimed at addressing some of the shortcomings in existing governance. There has been a conscious effort to modernise the delivery of public services and to increase the participation of public and other stakeholders in the decision making process. The two major statements of government policies Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People[183], and the Compact – getting it right together[184] have been expected to inspire individuals and voluntary sector organisations: to work together with the local authorities and other service providers in order to create better opportunities for participation and generate more contribution towards policy making. This has been expected to contribute towards improvement in accountability and better services. Based on the evidence from the interviews and supportive literature, it can be said that whilst the afore-mentioned policies have managed to strengthen the relationship between the local government and the voluntary sector, they struggle to achieve a closer relationship between the local government and the people in the communities, or indeed any real feeling of 'doing things together'. The underlying problems hindering this progress appear to be encapsulated in the lack of any coherent idea of citizenship, any sense of community and difficulty in promoting participation.

Citizenship

In this thesis it has been argued that citizenship is changing and that the Government appear to be embracing this change. In the title Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People[185], it has not been defined with which people the Government wants to be in touch. Therefore, it can be understood that it is no longer necessary to possess citizenship in particular, in order to be allowed to participate. The evolution and the 'deepening' of citizenship from a legal status to political and then social status have been discussed in Chapter Three. This 'deepening', meaning an increase in entitlements to a citizen, has slowed down but the 'widening' is taking place currently. What has been traditionally seen as active citizenship, i.e. voting (behaviour, which has seen a decline) which is restricted by eligibility is now expanding. Therefore a larger number of people are included in the participation process even if not entitled to vote in elections.[186] It has also been argued that citizenship is not just about one's externally defined status in society, but a 'subjective experience' of an individual and his or her opportunities to function in it. By initiating these two policies the Government has shown their effort in improving,

---

[183] Department of Transport and Regions [DETR] Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm 4014).

[184] Home Office Compact – getting it right together (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm 4100).

[185] DETR, Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People.

[186] For example there have been suggestions of lowering the voting age, and there already are young people's councils in place. In order to increase the number of people voting, alternative systems have been used, for example postal voting. However, there have been problems with this system for fraud and security reasons.

provided that they have been sincere attempts, accountability and involvement in decision making processes. Unfortunately, in practice these policies have not penetrated and become widespread at the grass root level so it could be argued that communities have not become any more empowered or independent.

Sense of Community

As has been explained previously, Kymlicka and Norman advocate that ideally citizenship would consist of an individual's sense of community and their willingness to participate in the political process.[187] The problem with the idea of community in the contemporary society is that there is no overall sense of community, although the current Communitarian-influenced Labour Government would like people to think so. Communitarians like Putnam assume that isolation feeds extremism.[188] They would prefer people to belong to a community, which they believe would help in preventing causes and consequences of social deprivation.[189] Other theorists like Girling et al.[190] advocate in the unifying effect of the community acting against 'danger on the borders'. This, however, according to Flint, does not work because 'the danger' i.e. violence and crime is often committed by members of the same spatial community.

It is difficult to define what community is in a contemporary changing society. People are spatially more fluid than in the past, when most of the population in a particular area were working nearby either in farming or mining or ship building and therefore did identify themselves with that particular community. There are also people from different religious, cultural, racial and sexual backgrounds living in a community which means that there are competing values and aspirations which can be difficult to assimilate when people are expected to make collective decisions. This problem with sense of community and belonging was clearly demonstrated during interviews. For example, if people did not feel comfortable in one group, they moved on to another more suitable group. Similarly it has been identified that a group feels protective about their 'identity' and they do not welcome others who *they* think do not share this identity. It was quite apparent that identity, which either united or divided, was in most cases based on race and religion i.e. white British versus other colours. Based on this evidence it is easy to see why Flint observes 'technique of governance' failing.[191] He does not believe that it is possible to transmit norms and regulate behaviour in the community by moulding compliance to dominant value of responsibility.[192]

---

[187] Kymlicka and Norman quoted by Flint in 'Return of the Governors: Citizenship and the New Governance of Neighbourhood Disorder in the UK' Citizenship Studies Vol 6 No 3 (2002), p. 246.

[188] Putnam, R. Bowling Alone (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000) p. 338

[189] This has been a norm in the past when women stayed at home looking after children and the elderly. Now it is not possible because a great number of women are in paid work outside home which limits the time they are able to contribute to the community outside home.

[190] Girling et al. referred to in Flint, 'Return of the Governors', p. 252.

[191] Flint, 'Return of the Governors' p. 246.

[192] Crawford, 1995 and Giddens, 1998, referred to in Flint, J., p. 249.

Participation

It has been demonstrated that there is a great difficulty among people to associate with a certain community and its values. Therefore it is un-realistic to expect participation in such circumstances. For example when the Government is trumpeting that it is supporting hard working families, this excludes certain parts of the population. Some people are not working, and some may not see themselves as families in a traditional sense. Therefore they may feel that the Government is not interested in their needs. If it is not seen interesting or benefitial, or even worthwhile, the realism is that people will choose to remain outside the main-stream political process. They feel that it is impossible to influence well-established authorities and organisations where professionals appear to have made all the decisions already. In order to rectify low interest in participation, and the consequent lack of accountability, the Government has imposed a duty on local authorities to consult people.

In this thesis, several problems with the Government-initiated participation i.e. consultations (and the emphasis of joint-working i.e. partnerships) have been put forward: First is that it is an arrangement which flows from top-down, rather than bottom-to-top. This has been documented in the literature and is well confirmed by the empirical evidence for this research. In the case of the voluntary sector this problem with direction is particularly problematic because voluntary action should, and in most cases does, stem from communities. The second problem is that consultations are based on different values than voluntary action is. Many voluntary sector organisations and community groups may find it uncomfortable or inconvenient to be involved in projects which are driven by different motivations. The third problem is that these projects and partnerships may be measured by similar performance criteria as are the profit making or are public sector organisations. If such regimes as Best Value (and 4C's) will be applied to voluntary sector organisations, they may not serve their purpose there as well as in performance-oriented organisations. It also takes time to produce statistics which at the end, as was pointed out by one of the interviewees, only tend to measure numbers but not quality or the actual outcome. The fourth problem lies in agenda setting. Based on the empirical evidence, it was clear that the consultation agendas had been set by the Government or the authorities. At the time of the research, there was very little evidence of agenda and criteria being set by the community. However, this can be expected to change in the future because there was some evidence, although marginal, of tenants being involved in drawing up agendas and criteria.

Based on these four problems, it can be seen why Stewart observes that public participation is substituting a management process for a political process. Any kind of political process, in accordance with democratic participation, would require equal availability of clear information and openness before any joint, two-way discussion and decision making can and should take place. Therefore, it is only reasonable for the voluntary sector to remain suspicious of the Government's sincerity. Although some progress has been made, there still are serious contradictions between the goals of the Government and those of the voluntary sector. The former wants the local authorities to be in charge and lead the communities yet the latter would prefer the communities to become more, if not fully, independent from this direction. The

next convincing step by the Government would be to give the community groups an opportunity to take a real lead and eventually full responsibility for the projects. This looks very unlikely to happen anywhere in the near future.

When it comes to arranging these consultations in the community, it appears that community groups are sometimes expected to organise getting people together for the event and are assumed to represent the community. The voluntary sector organisations may feel that they have been taken for granted because they are not being rewarded either financially or otherwise for this service. At the moment it appears that small community group organisations have to spend a considerable amount of time in securing the funding for the future and attending various partnerships securing their own agenda within them, which means time and resources away from the actual service provision. It could even be said that voluntary action is at risk of becoming professionalised to such extent that specialist, administrative skills may be becoming more important than skills which feed the original *raison d'être* of the organisation.

Interviews

From the interviews, it has become clear that the matter of changing the idea of citizenship which was traced in the literature has been supported by the practice. Many interviewees pointed out that citizenship can be about one's capacity to operate in a society, not just a legal status. Therefore these community organisations offer basic skills teaching, advice, and support confidence-building activities. This is very important in the areas of social deprivation where people first of all need to learn to help themselves. In doing so, they may be in a better position to take a stand in their community and perhaps become knowledgeable leaders in the future. However, one could detect a disappointment among the interviewees. Regardless of the efforts and opportunities that have taken place so far, social capacity still remain relatively low. One reason is that there is a lack of continuity of funding to keep the projects going. Sometimes there is an internal disagreement within the public sector organisation as to who should do what and to how far individuals should go in their community work. Another reason is that long term support of the people in positions of power is not always possible. Once they have moved on, this may cause a gap in a hard-earned relationship. On the voluntary sector's side a problem building social capital may be due to the fact that the actual voluntary work in many cases relies on the efforts of the same people continuously. Once they move on, burn out or lose their enthusiasm, it can be difficult to recruit suitably skilled and active people who can give their time for the community and share responsibility for overseeing the projects.

The representatives from the public and voluntary sector agree that if there was a better level of social capacity in the communities, people would be better equipped to participate, for example in consultations. As has been explained previously, it takes skill to be articulate in public events particularly if people are defending their homes or services in the community. From the interviews, it became very clear that people and community groups are tired of consultations because they feel that nothing good comes out of them. In the end, consultations are not legally binding in their results. At the positive side of the

consultations is the fact that service providers (public and private) will gain valuable information. Without consultations (and other research work) service providers would not know as accurately who the people in the communities are or what their needs are. At the moment when the performance is under scrutiny, at least they now know where they are failing so that they can improve and/or tailor services accordingly.

Last but not least, a word on the relationship between the voluntary sector organisations and the public sector. It has changed due to the Compact and the modernisation process, which has placed a duty on more joint-working, in particular. It has become more formalised, documented and quantified. The voluntary sector has been high on the Government's agenda. However, the evidence from the field proves that there is a great suspicion toward the motivations of the Government. Although, most interviewees say that the relationship has changed for the better, not all interviewees agree. Some say that the situation has got worse because the local authorities have lost powers. It is a worry now that partnerships will replace networking. This might have an impact on the position of the voluntary sector organisations in the partnerships where other organisations may gain more presence. Most interviewees pointed out that partnerships cannot substitute the relationships or trust which have been forged over time between committed individuals and organisations.

In conclusion, it can be said that under the circumstances where the lack of interest in traditional democracy and participation persists, the New Labour Government has taken a step in the right direction. An attempt by government to get in touch with the people has been over due. They also have made a conscious effort in lifting the voluntary sector higher on their agenda. This has, in general, improved the position of the sector and given it a greater role as an advisory body in policy making processes. However, these policy actions have not managed to materialise in those radical improvements which the voluntary sector must have hoped for. Neither can it be said that people feel any closer to the government even if the government may wish to perceive itself to be closer to the people.

Prevailing problems with participation in this context have been assessed. They are crystallised particularly if evaluation of participation is based on the theory of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. The author believes that this should be the case because it appears that the Government-initiated consultations are seen as a proof of participation. They take place in an environment which Hirst has described as 'where the bulk of economic and social affairs are controlled by large bodies, and where '"civil society" becomes vestigial, confined to marginal groups and peripheral areas of social life with little influence over the real decision-makers.[193] In such a case, it can be said that the invitations to participation remain tokenistic.

Government stipulations dominate the relationship as partnership working is a duty. Organisations are close to losing any independence they have under such circumstances. They have to participate in partnerships they might prefer not to. They also have to try to include people from different backgrounds,

---

[193] Hirst, Associative Democracy, p. 22.

who the Government sees to be disadvantaged and under-represented, in their project in order to obtain funding. For the same reason they may have to share resources (which in many cases is probably a good and achievable idea) but can be impractical in some cases.

In promoting the public good, and the current Communitarian-influenced policy, the Government is keen to impose a requirement of a sense of community from above. Yet it is something that cannot be set and applied by an institution. Any expectation or standard which tries to appeal to a fear of otherness, or tries to portray any progress of one part of the community as a threat to another, is set to fail in creating an inclusive community. A sense of community must grow from diversity of people in the community and be created by people themselves so that it reflects the character of the community. This would help to achieve a long-term commitment by individuals within the organisations, which is seen as one of the most important cornerstones for successful community work. In this the voluntary and community groups can help in providing continuity which is needed for successful ownership of the projects in the community and is therefore superior to one-off consultations.

In the future, we will see if there will be a more active generation emerging after the current Government initiative of citizenship education starts to take effect. It is likely that more changes are required, for example in the voting system to attract people back to the political arena. Until there is an improvement in the numbers participating in the electoral process, the governing bodies will have to seek re-assurance for their accountability. At the moment it appears that the Government's calls for an inclusive and more active and participating citizenry are falling on deaf ears. The worrying result would be a law-abiding consumer citizenry which leaves the professional political machinery largely undisturbed.

Bibliography:

Primary documentary sources

Books:

Abbott, J. Sharing the City Community Participation in Urban Management (London, Earthscan, 1996).

Adolino, J. R. Ethnic Minorities, Electoral Politics and Political Integration in Britain (London, Pinter, 1998).

Alibhai-Brown, Y. True Colours: public attitudes to multiculturalism and the role of government [own missing, IPPR, 1999].

Allum, P. State and Society in Western Europe (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995).

Anheier, H. and Seibel, W. (eds) The Third Sector: Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990).

Balloch, S. and Taylor, M. (eds) Partnership Working Policy and Practice (Bristol, The Policy Press, 2001).

Bemrose, C. and Mackeith, J. Partnerships for Progress (Bristol, Policy Press and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1996).

Beresford, P. and Croft, S. Citizen Involvement A Practical Guide for Change (London, MacMillan Press, 1993).

Blackburn, R. The Electoral System in Britain (Houndmills, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995).

Braudel, F. The History of Civilizations (Paris, Penguin Books, 1987) pp. 319 – 321.

Bussemaker, J. (ed) Citizenship and welfare state reform in Europe (London, Routledge, 1999).

Castles, S and Davidson, A. Citizenship and Migration: globalization and the politics of belonging, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000).

Chanan, G. Taken For Granted Community activity and the crisis of the voluntary sector (London, Community Development Foundation Publications, 1991).

Craig, G. et.al. Contract or Trust? The role of compacts in local governance (Bristol, Policy Press, 2002).

Davies, N. Europe a History (London, Pimlico, 1996).

Etherington, S. 'To the millenium' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations (London, Routledge, 1996).

Faulks, K. Citizenship (London, Routledge, 2000).

Favell, A. Philosophies of Integration Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain (London, MacMillan Press, 1998).

Geddes, M. Partnership against poverty and exclusion? Local regeneration strategies and excluded communities in the UK (Bristol, The Policy Press, 1997).

Gladstone, F. J. Voluntary Action in a Changing World. National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Policy Planning Unit, (London, Bedford Square Press, 1979).

Gray, A. and Jenkins, B. 'Democratic Renewal in Local Government: Continuity and Change' in Pratchett, L. (ed.) Renewing Local Democracy (London, Frank Cass, 2000) pp. 26-45.

Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations (London, Routledge, 1996).

Harris, M. and Rochester, C. Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy in Britain Perspectives on change and choice (Houndmills, Palgrave, 2001) pp. 81-107.

Hirst, P. Associative Democracy New Forms of Economic and Social Governance, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994).

Husband, C. 'Defining and containing diversity: community, ethnicity and citizenship' in Waqar, I. U. Ahmad and Atkin, K. (eds) 'Race' and Community Care (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1996).

James, E. 'Economic Theories of the Nonprofit Sector: A comparative perspective' in Anheier, H. and Seibel, W. (eds) The Third Sector: Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990) p. 21.

Kingdon, J. W. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies (2nd ed., New York, Longmont, 1995).

Kymlicka, W. 'Liberalism and the Politisation of Ethnicity' in Stapleton, J. (ed.) Group Rights Perspectives since 1900 (Bristol, Thoemmes Press, 1995).

Kymlicka, W. and Norman, W. Citizenship in Diverse Societies, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

Leach, S, Stewart, J. and Walsh, K. The Changing Organisation and Management of Local Government (Houndmills, Macmillan Press, 1994).

Modood, T. 'Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the 'Recognition' of religious groups' in Kymlicka, W. and Norman, W. Citizenship in Diverse Societies (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 175-198.

Mullard, M. 'Discourses on citizenship' in Bussemaker, J. (ed) Citizenship and welfare state reform in Europe (London, Routledge, 1999).

Orme, J. Gender and Community Care Social Work and Social Care Perspectives (Palgrave, Houndmills, 2001).

Osborne, P. and Ross, K. 'Regeneration: The Role and Impact of Local Development Agencies' in Harris, M. and Rochester, C. Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy in Britain Perspectives on change and choice (Houndmills, Palgrave, 2001) pp. 81-91.

Perkins, E. and Allen, I. (eds) Creating Partnerships in Social Care An Evaluation of the Caring for People who Live at Home Initiative (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1997).

Pratchett, L. (ed.) Renewing Local Democracy (London, Frank Cass, 2001).

Putnam, R. D. Bowling Alone (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Richardson, A. 'Participation' in George, V. and Wilding, P. (eds.) Concepts in Social Policy (London, Routledge & Keagan, 1983).

Robinson, F. et.al. Who Runs the North East … now? (Durham, University of Durham, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, 2000).

Seibel, W. and Anheier, H. 'Sociological and Political Science Approaches to the Third Sector' in Anheier, H. and Seibel, W. (eds) The Third Sector: Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990).

Shachar, A. 'Should Church and State be Joined at the Altar? Women's Rights and the Multicultural

Dilemma' in Kymlicka, W. and Norman, W. <u>Citizenship in Diverse Societies</u> (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

Smith, J. D., Rochester, C. and Hedley, R. (eds.) <u>An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector</u> (London, Routledge, 1995).

Stewart J. <u>Local Government: The Conditions of Local Choice</u> (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1983).

Stoker, G. (ed.) <u>The New Management of British Local Governance</u> (Basinstoke, Macmillan, 1999).

Stoker, G. (ed.) <u>The New Politics of British Local Governance</u>. (Basinstoke, Macmillan, 2000).

Taylor, M. and Langan, J. 'Map of the new country' in Hanvey, C. and Philpot, T. <u>The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organisations</u> (London, Routledge, 1996).

Taylor, M. 'Partnership: Insiders and Outsiders' in Harris, M. and Rochester, C. <u>Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy in Britain Perspectives on change and choice</u> (Houndmills, Palgrave, 2002) pp. 94-107.

Waqar, I. U. Ahmad and Atkin, K. (eds) <u>'Race' and Community Care</u> (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1996).

<u>Journal articles:</u>

Baubock, R. 'Reinventing Urban Citizenship' <u>Citizenship Studies</u> Vol 7 No 2 (2003).

Caragata, L. 'The privileged public: who is permitted citizenship?' <u>Community Development Journal</u> Vol 34 No 4 (1999) pp. 270-286.

Chandler, D. 'Active citizens and the therapeutic state: the role of democratic participation in local government reform' <u>Policy & Politics</u> Vol 29 No 1 (2001) pp. 3-14.

Chaskin, R. J. 'Building Community Capacity A Definitional Framework' <u>Urban Affairs Review</u> Vol 36 No 3 (2001) pp. 291-323.

Cook, D. 'Consultation, for a Change? Engaging Users and Communities in the Policy Process' <u>Social Policy & Administration</u> Vol 36 No 5 (2002) pp. 516-531.

Dibben, P. and Bartlett, D. 'Local Government and Service Users: Empowerment through User-Led Innovation?' <u>Local Government Studies</u> Vol 27 No 3 (2001) pp. 43-58.

Farnell, R. Faith communities, regeneration and social exclusion: developing a research agenda. <u>Community Development Journal</u> Vol 36 No 4 (2001) pp. 263-273.

Flint, J. 'Return of the Governors: Citizenship and the New Governance of Neighbourhood Disorder in the UK' <u>Citizenship Studies</u> Vol 6 No 3 (2002) pp. 245-264.

Foley, P. and Martin, S. 'A new deal for the community? Public participation in regeneration and local service delivery.' <u>Policy & Politics</u> Vol 28 No 4 (2000) pp. 479-92.

Geddes, M. and Martin, S. 'The policy and politics of Best Value: currents, crosscurrents and undercurrents in the new regime' <u>Policy & Politics</u> Vol 28 No 3 (2001) pp. 380.

Jones, R. 'With a Little Help from My Friends: Managing Public Participation in Local Government' <u>Public Money and Management</u> Vol 22 No 2 (2002).

Kendall, J. 'The mainstreaming of the third sector into public policy in England in the late 1990s: whys and wherefores' <u>The Policy & Politics</u> Vol 28 No 4 (2000) pp. 541-562.

Laverack, G. 'An identification and interpretation of the organisational aspects of community empowerment' Community Development Journal Vol 36 No 2 (2001).

Lewis, S. R. 'Reviewing the Relationship Between the Voluntary Sector and the State in Britain in the 1990s' VOLUNTAS Vol 10 No 3 (1999) pp. 255-270.

Osborne, S and McLaughlin, [Missing initial] 'Trends and Issues in the Implementation of Local Voluntary Sector Compacts in England' Public Money & Management Vol 22 No 1 (2002) pp. 55-61.

Schuftan, C. 'Debate: The community development dilemma: What is really empowering? Community Development Journal Vol 31 No 3 (1996) pp. 260-264.

Seaford, H. 'The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: An Opportunity Missed.' The Political Quarterly Vol 72 No 1 (2001).

Shaw, K. and Davidson, G. 'Community Elections for Regeneration Partnerships' Local Government Studies Vol 28 No 2 (2002).

Smith, G. 'Religion, and the rise of social capitalism: the faith communities in community development and urban regeneration in England' Community Development Journal Vol 37 No 2 (2002) pp. 167-177.

Smith, G. 'Ties, Nets and an Elastic Bund: Community in the Postmodern City.' Community Development Journal Vol 31 No 3 (1996).

Smith, R. 'The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Tackling Poverty' Community Development Journal Vol 27 No 3 [Year missing].

Sullivan, H. 'Modernisation, Democratisation and Community Governance' Local Government Studies Vol 27 No 3 (2001) pp. 1-22.

Watt, S., Higgins, C. and Kendrick, A. 'Community participation in the development of services: a move towards community empowerment' Community Development Journal Vol 35 No 2 (2000) pp. 120-132.

Websites:

BBC News on-line [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2958148.stm 3 June 2003] accessed 15 June 2003.

Call for BME Groups to Get Involved with Compact [ncvo-vol.org.uk] 17 April 2000, accessed 7 July 2001.

Compact between Newcastle's voluntary and community sector and the City Council [www.ncvo-vol.org/uk/main/gateway/pdfs/compactpdfs/NewcastleCompact.pdf] 19 January 2001, accessed 22 February 2002.

Compact sub-group on behalf of One Voice Network County Durham Compact Agreement [http://www.2d.org.uk/downloads/Compact_10_res.pdf]October 2001, accessed 14 April 2002.

Dahl, R. A. Democracy and Its Critiques. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989) p. 29 quoted by Li, B. in Representative Government and Democracy Perspectives, Vol 1 No 3, [http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/3_123199/representative_government.htm.] accessed 16 April 2003.

DETR (1998) [http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/lgwp/5htm] accessed 7 January 2001.

Dorset, R. Ethnic minorities in the inner city [http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings...] September 1998, accessed 5 February 2002.

Edward N Zalta (ed), [http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2001/entries/communitarianism] 4 October 2001, accessed 16 April 2003.

English Indices of Deprivation 2000
[http://www.vonne.co.uk/Policy_Developments/Index_of_Deprivation/Report.htm] 3 December 2002, accessed 30 September 2003.

Fox L. MP, a speech to Conservative Spring Conference.
[http://www.conservatives.com/news/article.cfm?obj_id=55785&speeches=1] 16 March 2003, accessed 19 September 2003.

GONE [http://www.go-ne.gov.uk] 17 January 2002, accessed 4 April 2002.

GVOC [http://www.gvoc.org.uk/Home] accessed 25 October 2003.

Home Office Compact – getting it right together http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/comp2am.pdf accessed 7 January 2001.

Home Office and Compact Working Group Compact getting it right together Report of the Second Annual Meeting [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/comp2am.pdf] 2000, accessed 23 October 2002).

Home Office Strengthening the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector Infrastructure [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/streng2.htm] 12 July 2000, accessed 15 February 2001.

Home Office, Compact, Getting it right together [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/bmecomptackling.htm] 19 July 2001, accessed 9 February 2002.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/beveridge_william.shtml

Iqbal, K. 'Consultations with Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Organisations about the New Connections Service A report of three regional seminars' [http://www.connexions.gov.uk/ethnic_minority/EO%20Consultants%20Report%20-Final.pdf] 24 February 2002.

Lause, M. Ovenism [http.www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Quad/6460/div/825owen.html] accessed 18 April 2003.

Li, B. in Representative Government and Democracy Perspectives, Vol 1 No 3. [http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/3_123199/representative_government.htm] accessed 16 April 2003.

Local Compacts Progress - Oct 2002 [www.vonne.co.uk/Policy_Developments/Compacts/oct2002update.htm] October 2002, accessed 15 December 2002.

McLeod, M. et.al. The role and future development of black and minority ethnic organisations [http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/311.asp] March 2001, accessed 5 February 2002.

Roberts, S., Protest and Reform at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/society_culture/protest_reform/chartist_03.shtml] 1st May 2002, accessed 16 April 2003.

National Statistics, Census 2001, 'People and Places Census results on ethnicity, marriage and families' [http://www.statistics.gov.uk] 13 February 2003, accessed 25 October 2003.

Newcastle City Council City Wide Tenant Participation Compact [No publishing details.] Also available at www.newcastle.gov.uk.

Newcastle City Council, Community Participation Green Paper June 2001. Also available at www.newcastle.gove.uk /cpgp

Spending Review Report 2002 [http://www.hm-treasury.gove.uk/spending_review/spend_sr02/report/spend_sr02_repchap30.cfm] accessed 25 October 2002.

Universities of Brighton and Hull jointly Black and minority ethnic organisations' experience of local compacts [http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/122.asp] January 2002, accessed 15 May 2002.

Weir, S. 'The quangos just grow and grow. New Statesman [http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m0FQP/4532_130/74886360/p1/article.jhtml 9 April 2001] accessed 15 June 2003.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2165175.stm

http://www.votesat16.org.uk/

www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk

Newspaper articles:

Advertiser, Saturday, December 13, 2003.

Frith Maxine The Independent, Thursday, 8 May 2003, p. 1.

Wintour, P. and Carter, H. 'Postal voting boosts turnouts in local polls' The Guardian, Wednesday, 1st May 2002.

Other:

Bell, D."Communitarianism" in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2001 Edition),

Census 2001 National report for England and Wales London: TSO Office for National Statistics.

Citylife (Newcastle City Council's publication) July 2001.

Cornerstone Annual Report 2000

Department of Transport and Regions DETR Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm4014).

DETR 1998 Modernising local government Local democracy and community leadership (No date, no place) (b.)

DETR (1999) National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts Crown Copyright.

DETR Tenant Participation in Transition: Issues and trends in the development of tenant participation in the local authority sector in England by Cole, I., Hickman, P., Reid, B. and Whittle, S. Housing Research Summary, number 147, 2001.

Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council Involved in Gateshead Gateshead's Tenant and Resident Participation Compact [No publication details].

GONE North East of England Objective 3 Regional Development Plan 200-2006 May 2000.

Gott, C and Johnston K. The migrant population in the UK: fiscal effects Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, Occasional Paper No 77 (London, Stationery Office, 2002, p. 22.

Home Office <u>Compact - getting it right together</u> (London, Stationery Office, 1998, Cm 4100).

Millin Drop in Centre <u>Annual Report 1998-1999</u>.

National Council for Voluntary Organisation <u>Contracting - In or Out? The contract culture: the challege for voluntary sector</u> (London, NCVO, 1989).

Newcastle City Council <u>Regeneration Plan Newcastle West End</u> July 2001.

<u>North Tyneside's Multicultural Community</u> [a report on the meeting] 11th April 2000 at Newcastle Hilton Hotel, Silverlink, Wallsend.

Rallings, C., Thrasher, M. and Downe, J. 'Enhancing Local Electoral Turnout - A Guide to current practice and the future reform' (1996) in <u>Modernising Local Government Local Democracy and Community Leadership</u> (DETR 1998).

Research Solutions, <u>The Contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector to the Economic Life of the North East Region</u> Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE), November, 2000.

Riverside Community Health Project <u>Annual Report</u> 2000-2001.

Social Policy Team <u>A White Paper Working together with Communities</u> Newcastle upon Tyne. [No publishing details.]

<u>Taking Heart: North Tyneside Reports from focus groups April to May 1998</u>. Published by the North Tyneside Taking Heart Project group, 1998.

<u>Tenant Participation</u>. A document assumingly published by the Tenant's Panel in Durham in early 2001. No specific publisher or date available.

<u>Tenant Participation Compact</u> Tenants' Panel, Durham, 2000-2002

WERS's Constitution. Adapted from the report of the Principal Project Worker in the WERS <u>Annual Report 1999-2000</u>. Citations from the same source, version 2000-2001.

Wilson, D. & C. Game (eds.) <u>Local Government in the United Kingdom</u> (Basinstoke, MacMillan,1998).

<u>Work to be undertaken in North Tyneside for minority ethnic communities</u> a document attached to a job application pack recruiting a Community Development Worker in Health for the Health Project in 2001.

Appendix

Covering letter and Sample Questionnaire

22 February 2001

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mrs Eitta REAY

Mrs REAY is currently registered as a MA student (by research thesis) at the University of Durham.

As her research supervisor, I can confirm that Mrs REAY is engaged upon bona fide social science research and that she will make appropriate use of any data which you choose to provide and respect the usual professional norms.

If you have any further questions about her status I should be very glad to deal with them.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew MacMullen
Postgraduate Director

A) The organisation and the relationship with the client groups.

1   How would you define your main beneficiary group of people?

2   Can you give examples of community groups you support?

3   How do you choose the activities?

4   How is the service organised for your clients, is it according to

          a)   date they have arrived at the North East, or
          b)   their nationality/ethnicity/faith etc., or
          c)   the locality they live?

5   Do you provide training in 'active citizenship' skills for your members of the group?

B) The organisation and the relationship with other service providers and councils.

1   How would you describe the relationship with

          a)   other voluntary organisations

          b)   councils

          c)   government?

2   Do you have regular meetings with them?

3   Has your organisation formed a partnership with other organisation in order to lobby and try to influence civil servants, councillors or any other politician?

4   In your opinion, has it become easier to form partnerships with other bodies related to the interests of your organisation?

5   Has your organisation been consulted in the context of any development programme?

Other:
Do you feel that you are taken into account in policy making?
What would help most in the work you are doing in the community?