Kim Ward
University of Exeter

Transforming Neighbourhoods: An Exploration of the Neighbourhood Management Process in Ilfracombe, Devon.

Submitted by Kim Ward, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography, September 2011.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: .................................................................
Abstract

The neighbourhood became one of the key sites for urban policy development during the previous New Labour government, and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders were amongst their final strategies to combat “the most difficult problems faced by deprived neighbourhoods” (SEU 2000:5). This thesis explores the process of neighbourhood management in the coastal town of Ilfracombe, Devon. Ilfracombe features the characteristics of decline found in a number of coastal towns across the country, and suffers from high levels of deprivation (House of Commons Report 2006). Consequently, the neighbourhood management pathfinder ‘Transform’ was deployed in Ilfracombe in an attempt to address high deprivation. This thesis uses empirical findings collected through interviews and focus groups to examine the process of ‘Transform’, from its conception to its practical operation. It specifically considers the ‘voices’ of residents whose opinions and experiences, as targets of neighbourhood intervention are not always sufficiently documented within policy narratives. Consequently, the thesis unravels the process of neighbourhood management through findings generated by qualitative research ‘on the ground’. These are then examined through the lens of governmentality, allowing the methods, practice and outcomes of government, to be unpacked through a presentation of my empirical findings (Foucault 1991). These examinations take a particular interest in notions of community engagement and participation, partnership working, and the process of social exclusion. Here, partnership is demonstrated to be a tentative and fragile process underlined by local histories and differing temporal frameworks for action. But, this research also demonstrates that joint working can be improved through neighbourhood management which widens routes of communication to officers ‘on the ground’. However, what this thesis hopes to demonstrate most strongly is the continuing depth of problems felt by residents in Ilfracombe and that the process of ‘inclusion’ through paid work and ‘active’ citizenship, underlined in Labour’s neighbourhood renewal strategies, is not tackling some of the main problems of ‘deprived’ neighbourhoods, as experienced by the residents themselves.
“When we came into office, we inherited a country where hundreds of neighbourhoods were scarred by unemployment, educational failure and crime. They had become progressively more cut off from the prosperity and opportunities that most of us take for granted. Communities were breaking down. Public services were failing. People had started to lose hope. That’s why I asked the Social Exclusion Unit to work on developing a new and integrated approach to reversing this decline.”

(Tony Blair SEU 2001:5)

“In a monoculture, in particular in seaside areas and coastal areas, they [the white working class] don’t have the energy- they haven’t come from a culture where they’ve got to work, they think there’s a more limited range of things they can aspire to. You have to open their minds that they can go to the city that they can go abroad. You can’t turn around a school without turning around a community”

Liz Sidwell, Schools Commissioner (Vasagar 2011)
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 9
Introduction 10

Chapter One: Key Concepts and Literature Review

1.1. Introduction 19

1.2. Social Exclusion
   1.2. i Introduction 24
   1.2. ii. Tracing the Concept of “Social Exclusion” 25
   1.2. iii. The Political Evolution of Social Exclusion 26
   1.2. iv. New Labour, the Third Way and ‘Social Exclusion’ 27
   1.2. v. ‘Conceptualising’ Social Exclusion in British Politics 30
   1.2. vi. Models of Exclusion 34
   1.2. vii. Methodical Dimensions of Social Exclusion 38
   1.2. viii. Social Exclusion and Poverty 42
   1.2. viii.. From Exclusion to ‘Inclusion’ 45

1.3. Using Governmentality as a Micro-Level Tool for Analysis
   1.3. i. Introduction 47
   1.3. ii Governing Ourselves and Our Community 51

1.4. The Importance of Partnership 58

Chapter Two: Neighbourhood Renewal, Key Policy Initiatives

2.0 Housing- The Core of Empirical Research
   2.1. i. Introduction 60
   2.1. ii. Social Exclusion and Housing: How does it fit? 62

2.2. A Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal
   2.2. i. Introduction 70
   2.2. ii. Identifying Neighbourhoods for Intervention 74
2.3. Neighbourhood Management
   2.3.i. Introduction 80
   2.3. ii. Unpacking the Case Study 80
   2.3. iii. Producing Neighbourhood Space 89
   2.3. iv. Summary of Neighbourhood Management 93

2.4. Summary of Chapter One and Two 95

Chapter Three: Research Questions and Methodology

3.1. Introduction 95
3.2. Research Objectives 97
3.3. Methodology 99
3.4. Governmentality as a Framework for Analysis 108
3.5. Ethics and Context of Research 109
3.6. Summary 113

Chapter Four: Introduction to Ilfracombe

4.1. Ilfracombe, Devon 115
4.2. Coastal Towns
   4.2. i. An Introduction 116
   4.2. ii. The House of Commons Coastal Town Report 118
   4.2. iii. Ilfracombe, North Devon in the Context of Coastal Towns 119
4.3. Ilfracombe: The Lived Reality
   4.3. i. Introduction 123
   4.3. ii. Ilfracombe central ward: Key Issues 124
   4.3. iii. Housing in Ilfracombe 125
4.4. Resident Stories
   4.4. i. Living in Ilfracombe 128
   4.4. ii. Dealings with Landlords and Opportunities for Engagement 138
   4.4. iii. Housing Standards 146
Chapter Five: The Construction of Neighbourhood Management

5.1. Introduction 166
5.2. Statistical Construction of Neighbourhood Management in Ilfracombe
   5.2. i. Identifying Ilfracombe 167
5.3. Political Construction of Neighbourhood Management in Ilfracombe
   5.3. i. Introduction 171
   5.3. ii. Using “Community” as a Vehicle of Reform 173
   5.3. iii. Creating an Inclusive Development Process? 175
5.4. Partnership and Joint Working in Ilfracombe
   5.4. i. Introduction 178
   5.4. ii. The Context of Partnership in Ilfracombe 179
   5.4. iii. Partnership in Ilfracombe: A Look at the Past 180
   5.4. iv. Developing a New Partnership 183
   5.4. v. Transform: Working together to ‘Fill the Gap’ 186
   5.4. vii. Transforming Power? 189
   5.4.viii. Summary 191
5.5. Housing: Working Together
   5.5.i. Introduction 195
   5.5.ii. Collaborative Practices of Partnership 196
5.6. Summary and Discussion of Chapter 200

Chapter Six: The Operation and Practice of Neighbourhood Management

6.1. Introduction 205
6.2. Creating an ‘Inclusive’ Community
   6.2. i. Introduction 207
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.7. i. Introduction</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. ii. The Initiation of Joint Working: A Fragmented Beginning</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. iii. Building Trust</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. iv. Partnership 'on the ground'</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. v. Goals of Partnership</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. vi. Partnership: Re-constituting a Set of Local 'Elite'</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. vii. Transforming Governmentalities</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7. viii. Partnership as a Bottom-up Process?</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8. Main Findings of Thesis</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>