Case for support

1. Introduction

What happens when disenfranchised communities are brought to centre stage? When we recognise communities at the edge can produce different capabilities which could transform the terrain and spaces of engagement? When we understand these new forms of engagement bring about new rules and organising structures? Globally we may be at such a moment, as diverse movements such as the Arab Spring, Occupy and Wiki-leaks appear as catalysts that call into question ossified social structures, at the same time bringing into play new infrastructures and rules for engagement.

This research programme aims to answer the question: **How can we design regulatory regimes that begin from the capabilities of communities excluded from the mainstream, finding ways of powerfully supporting the knowledge, passions and creativity of citizens?** Acknowledging that communities are under pressure, neighbourhoods have been stripped of resources, and occupational and domestic solidarities broken up by de-industrialization and austerity, we ask: how do communities engage with established social institutions when forms of communal association have become less solid (Jimenez & Walkerdine, 2011)? How can the new political knowledges, social infrastructures and legal forms needed for effective regulatory regimes be developed? The primary innovation is to co-produce the research agenda with communities at the margins through the **Productive Communities Research Forum**. It is a multi-disciplinary collaboration between Bristol and Cardiff Universities – with expertise from law, social sciences, arts and humanities – working together with neighbourhood-based, identity-based and faith-based community organisations and social enterprises experimenting with new ways of living and working. The community partners are multiply-placed organisations often representing several constituencies, able to reinvent and reposition themselves. The programme draws together social science understandings of regulatory theory and practice with researcher-producer expertise. Drawing on these wide-ranging knowledges, it will develop seven linked projects, maximise knowledge exchange, and cross-pollinate project co-production. Together we will shift debates from the **regulation *of* engagement** to **regulation *for* engagement**.

Our programme will create new and exciting dialogues – across two nations in a devolved UK; between urban communities in Bristol and post-industrial communities in south Wales; between long-established community organisations and new groups of social entrepreneurs; between academics and practitioners working in diverse fields. It will widen the modalities available to community groups, enabling more effective representation of assets and needs to other communities, service providers and policymakers through a range of arts practices – performance, video, contemporary art and digital technologies. Through a process of multi-directional knowledge exchange, including up-skilling community members in digital and other forms of representation, the programme will enable the groups to make a *lasting contribution* to the on-going challenges of regenerating and sustaining communities in an age of austerity.

The objective is to enable *bottom-up* rather than top-down perspectives on **regulating *for* engagement**. Whilst responsive regulation scholarship (Ayres & Braithwaite 1992) has moved regulation studies away from command-and-control mechanisms, actors in regulatory space are still assumed to be relatively powerful. Our programme of research starts elsewhere, calling on the insights from 'legal consciousness' research (which seeks to understand subjective experiences of law in everyday lives (Ewick & Silbey 1998; Cowan 2004)) to explore possibilities for, and limitations of, regulating for engagement. Working at the intersection of rights and regulation, the programme will identify community-generated understandings of rights which can be harnessed to develop horizontal, citizen-to-citizen, rights as well as reworking existing vertical rights generated by state and global structures (Morgan 2007). Our 'cross-border' collaboration between southwest England and south Wales enables us to contrast differing regulatory boundaries associated with devolution, and creatively use these insights to further develop new modalities for engagement.

In seven research projects co-produced between academics and community organisations, we will focus on the ways grass-roots communities can challenge powerful market and bureaucratic

structures, giving effect to their own forms of protest, resistance and engagement (Elliott *et al* 2010). Seeking to remap the terrain of regulation, our method foregrounds the knowledges, skills and practices of those often considered on the margins of politics and policy-making. In doing so we move away from problematics of participation as simply 'lay' involvement in pre-determined regulatory structures (Newman 2005, McDermont *et al* 2009), to creatively embrace engagement as constitutive of regulation in ways that fundamentally challenge its forms.

2.   The Research Agenda

Our title *Productive Margins: Regulating for Engagement* encapsulates the principal elements of our research agenda. In the term 'productive margins' we embody an understanding that people and communities excluded from participation in the regulatory regimes that impact upon their daily lives have expertise, experience and creativity that can be politically productive. Our research programme seeks to release these capacities, using this energy to *co-produce* new ways of envisioning and engaging regulation. Communities are tired of endless 'consultations', desiring instead bottom-up mechanisms arising out of the everyday lives of those who are caught up in regulatory regimes. Our claim is these regimes can be redesigned and harnessed *for* engagement, ensuring communities at the margins are engaged in regulatory processes and practices.

The overarching research question – **How can we design regulatory regimes that begin from the capabilities of communities at the margins, finding ways of powerfully supporting the knowledge and passions of citizens? –** will be explored through these sub-questions:

- What are the social, economic, cultural and political barriers and facilitators to creating regulatory mechanisms *for* engagement?
  → how can legal rights support engagement? How might they create barriers?
- How can the regulatory architecture of spaces of participation support community engagement?
  → how might arts and humanities mixed-mode practices produce different modes of regulating spaces of engagement?
  → how should regulatory practices be re-configured to encourage/accommodate perspectives that dissent from the mainstream?
- How might devolution shape the possibilities for the re-design of regulatory regimes?
- How can the regulatory architecture of digital spaces be appropriated by communities at the margins for socially innovative, creative economic development?
- How are regulatory mechanisms *for* engagement experienced?
  → how do aesthetic and affective aspects of co-produced research reshape regulatory regimes?
- How can the re-designed regulatory regimes developed through this programme be 'scaled up' into more enduring forms of engagement with policy makers and service providers?

2.1   Regulation for engagement

Regulation is not just about law; 'regulatory law' as Teubner puts it is 'both politicised and socialized' (1987, 390). Regulation is broadly understood as any mechanism of social control or influence (Baldwin & Cave 1999). Regulation thinking has evolved considerably over the last three decades. Hierarchical command and control has given way to self-regulation, regulatory toolkits, performance targets and ideas of reflexive regulation techniques (Ayres & Braithwaite 1992), a sort of co-production of regulation between regulator and regulated institutions. Despite this, regulation is rarely seen as politically productive, but rather as 'red tape' to be eliminated. More importantly, the reflexive regulation literature rarely sees beyond the inclusion of professionals or business organisations in regulatory structures. The communities who are collaborators in this research programme rarely, if ever, get a seat at the table. Engagement is limited to, for example, including tenants on housing association boards (McDermont et al 2009) or requiring regulators to consult with consumer panels. Our programme will address this by examining regulation from the bottom-up, seeking to establish mechanisms of regulation **for** engagement, and for communities to engage **in** regulation. This involves re-envisioning spaces of regulation from the perspective of the everyday lives of communities.

Scholarship on how groups at the margins are engaged within mainstream political and regulatory spaces has to date focused on four broad areas of concern:

- Normative theories of social justice focused on practices of recognition of difference that enable the inclusion of marginalised groups in the public domain (e.g. Kymlicka 1995; Modood 2005);
- Critical analyses of state engagement with minority and 'hard to reach' communities that seek to mobilise such groups to generate solutions to complex policy problems inaccessible to bureaucratic expertise alone (e.g. Bang 2003; Newman 2005);
- Governmentality scholarship that sees engagement as a means of 'responsibilising' communities to generate capacities for 'self-governance' (e.g. Hughes 2009; Birt 2008);
- New forms of 'democratic experimentalism' (Unger 1998) or 'civic republicanism' (Marquand 1997) as transformative visions for spaces where formal politics fail marginalised communities.

We develop these starting points through four critiques of the conceptualisation of citizen engagement in standard 'regulation literature' (Gunningham & Grabosky 1998; Better Regulation Task Force 2005). First, to recognise the disorganised, contradictory and fragmented nature of regulation that goes beyond 'smart' 'toolbox' methods (Li 2007; Sharma 2008). Second, to recognise that citizens already exercise agency within mainstream political spheres through obstruction, challenge, exit, ignoring or bending the 'rules', or seeking alliances to create spaces of dialogue or deliberation (Bevir & Trentmann 2007). Third, that the governor-governed distinction may be more uncertain and porous than often portrayed (Larner & Craig 2005; McDermont 2010). Fourth, by focusing on grass-roots experimentation and 'new adventures in living' (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2011) that underpin alternative futures, conceiving of individuals and organisations engaged in such modes of dissenting behaviour as not simply 'outside' of, or challenging, extant regulatory forms, but as participants within a more complex political assemblage. Our aim is to de-stabilise the power/knowledge knot, seeking to understand and illuminate forms of knowledge not privileged by existing hierarchies and power relations. By calling upon scholarly and practice-based work on performativity in film, literature, theatre and history we seek to make visible heterogeneous actors and contested processes involved in enacting new political formations, innovating with regulatory forms that promote experimental, embedded and inclusive forms of engagement (Blencowe 2011).

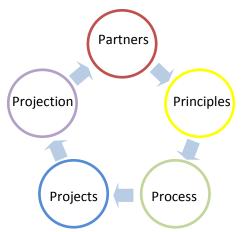## 2.2   Productive Margins – Co-Production

Scholars across a range of disciplines have long sought, in studies of everyday life, to give voice to those who are seldom heard, seeing everyday life as the central site in which consciousness, moral judgements and actions are formed (Gardiner 2000, 43). In sociology, for example, there have been efforts to rework the discipline into a 'sociology for people', one more sensitised to the 'felt' needs and experiences of individuals and groups, and which gives excluded groups intellectual tools necessary to expose their own oppression (Smith 2005). Legal consciousness scholarship similarly has been concerned to give voice to people's interaction with law and legality in their ordinary daily lives where law is 'common place' (Ewick & Silbey 1998). Seeking to understand how law shapes actions and thoughts in everyday spaces such as workplace discrimination, exclusion from public spaces, or the multitude of sites where citizens are having to act as 'consumers' of services and goods, has demonstrated how consciousness of law is constructed from myriad experiences, education and environments that regulate lives on a daily basis. In the arts and humanities, filmmaking, drama, theatre, performance, literature and contemporary art have long been used to engage groups, communities and spaces (Bishop 2006; Bourriaud 1998; Carpentier 2011; Fraser et al 2012; Jackson 2011; Sperlinger 2009). These collaborative endeavours between researchers and communities seek to co-produce understandings of the ways in which daily life is regulated and how this might be challenged.

More recently, there have been efforts to explicitly design institutional and organisational spaces in which community voices can be enabled to speak, be heard and be acted upon. In public services, for example, nef/NESTA define *co-production* as 'an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours' (2010, 3). They

suggest that in an age of public spending cuts, an aging society and increasing demands for health services, co-production is the only solution for saving public services. Organisations such as the Environment Agency have recognised the importance of local knowledge in new research apparatuses such as a 'competency group' of academics and community members that successfully challenged scientific expertise about flood defences (Whatmore & Landstrom 2011). In healthcare, collaborative approaches to knowledge production, distribution and exchange can be seen in the Welsh Government's Sustainable Health Action Research Programme, in which all constituent projects 'involved public service agencies, academic institutions and communities as partners' (Cropper et al 2007). In the arts and humanities, artists such as Phil Collins, Jeremy Deller and Clio Barnard have worked with communities to produce new institutional spaces – from housing estate to pageant to office to gallery - thus disrupting conventional ideas of regulation. In Bristol the Pervasive Media Studio has partnered with a number of institutions to form the AHRC-funded REACT Hub, which aims to co-produce new funding structures and spaces for interdisciplinary practice, and the Knowle West Media Centre collaborates in the RCUK-funded University of Local Knowledge project, which will produce a community toolkit for valuing and enacting local expertise. Our programme begins from the understanding that these new formulations of co-production are still very much in-the-making. Aspirations to move from 'knowledge transfer' to 'knowledge exchange' and collaborative knowledge-making must be set in a robust framework that acknowledges and works creatively with inevitable differences and tensions.

3. The Productive Communities Research Forum

The **Productive Communities Research Forum** is an innovative mechanism where academics and communities together will identify research projects that develop regulatory regimes for engaging communities, projects that arise out of everyday lives rather than the bureaucratic needs of mainstream institutions. The Forum will co-produce the content of the 'Productive Margins' research programme. Our methodology of co-production begins with two principles: 1) academics and community organisations are equal partners in the design and delivery of the research programme; 2) new understandings arise when we reflect what we think we know against others who bring to the field different perspectives. Our research team is therefore multi-disciplinary by design, for example, acknowledging that methods from drama or literature might illuminate what would otherwise be hidden to conventional social science. The Forum will provide opportunities for innovation by representing perspectives, producing knowledge, and facilitating collaboration between communities and academics.

The Forum is not a conventional advisory board, nor does it follow a familiar model of 'partnership' dominated by powerful actors. Rather it is itself *a site of experimentation*, acting as a dynamic location for co-producing knowledges, enhancing exchange and dissemination, and developing innovative methods for the social sciences, arts and humanities. Understanding research as a process of co-production between academics and communities rather than as academics doing research *on* communities raises a host of new questions and dilemmas for research practice. As existing work on co-production has shown (Pohl 2008) this model may create tensions within communities as well as between communities. Moreover, we potentially open the door to those who may not be sympathetically regarded by either academics or other community organisations. The Forum must therefore develop ethical understandings of how tensions and conflict can be addressed creatively. Other research practices may also need to be questioned. Principles of anonymity of research participants may not be appropriate where voices want to be heard or possible where peer researchers are used, underlining the need to negotiate the publicity/confidentiality divide and set out boundaries for peer research. Finally, we must be alive

to the wider dangers of co-production: could it be used as a way of co-opting communities into decisions that ultimately are never going to be to their benefit? Is there a danger that the ambition to find novel solutions through co-production silences difference? In order to embed co-production at *every level* of programme design the Forum will address these challenges through five stages:

a)Partners

Academics from Bristol and Cardiff universities have a long history of working with community organisations for mutual benefits. The need to develop co-production as a methodology has emerged from these established working practices, and it is from these relationships that we will constitute the first manifestation of the Forum:

Building the Bridge	Bristol-based Muslim community organisation
3 G's Development Trust	Post-industrial community in Merthyr Tydfil
Single Parents Action Network	Engaging and empowering one parent families
CoExist	Bristol-based grassroots social enterprise network
Knowle West Media Centre	Media arts charity engaging young people and communities
Communities First	Charity and social enterprise working for social justice in Wales
Ebbw Vale & District Trust	Post-industrial community in Ebbw Vale supporting the regeneration of the Ebbw Fawr valley
Deaf Access Cymru	Empowering Deaf people across Wales
Southville Community Development Association	Community development charity and social enterprise company

The Forum will initially comprise the representatives from these nine community organisations, the nine Co-Investigators, and will be chaired by the Principal Investigator, with the vice-chair drawn from the community organisations. Decision-making mechanisms are covered in the revised Management Plan (section 3). The diverse and multi-faceted nature of the community organisations and the cyclical nature of co-production will allow the Forum to mutate over time, drawing in new partners as projects develop and the work of the programme becomes known. Indeed, we hope the Forum would have a life beyond the Productive Margins programme.

b)Principles

Once constituted the Forum will agree principles to guide decision-making on the programme, and provide an operational and ethical framework for the Management Team:

- *Academic principles* – these would include: ensuring significant scientific and societal impacts; providing opportunities to involve users of research beyond the academic community; drawing on insights and expertise from the arts, humanities and social sciences
- *Principles for decision-making within the Forum* – enabling excluded voices to be heard, adopting inclusive methods of decision-making
- *Principles for conducting ethical research* – enrolling participants, training researchers, confidentiality and consent, authoring of materials for public dissemination (academic and non-academic), open access to findings, dealing with conflicting perspectives and priorities
- *Principles for project objectives and outputs* – balancing community and academic aspirations; considering the demands and needs of external stakeholders
- *Legacy principle* – all projects must leave individuals and communities with skills, knowledge and other resources that can enable them to continue their political engagements.

c)Process

Processes will be set up for identifying common agendas, areas of shared interest, and generating ideas for projects and their appropriate methods of enquiry, experimentation and research, including

- Seed-corn funding to organisations to carry out community consultation
- Website and other social media to represent perspectives and produce knowledge
- Community festivals show-casing existing work to demonstrate a range of possibilities

Establishing needs and ideas will develop further principles as a framework for individual research projects, and identify relevant academic expertise required to develop theories, methods and techniques of researching that would meet the aspirations of communities.

d) Projects

Alongside developing processes the Forum would begin working to collaboratively develop the aims, objectives and methodologies for two projects: the 'Heads of the Valleys' programme in south Wales and the Bristol-based 'Building the Bridge' programme (below section 6). These pilot projects were chosen because they were already developed to outline stage through a process of co-production, although not necessarily formally named and understood as such. Our ambition is that the Forum acts as a critical friend, suggesting through a 'dialogue and design' process how these projects could be further developed, which will also allow the Forum to refine understandings of research co-production, re-work its principles and processes, and begin identifying the content and substantive focus of the five further research projects.

e) Projection

The Forum will develop as a creative, interactive hub in which emerging findings and ideas are developed, including generating ideas for scaling-up, legacy and sustainability. 'Knowledge for Communities' placements will enable community experts to embed innovative regulatory structures in wider institutional settings. Half-yearly festivals and the website will project innovations and new ways of working arising from the programme to an audience of policy makers, practitioners and new communities, potentially bringing in new community-based partners to complete the cycle. Distance partnerships with cognate international institutions (University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of New South Wales, University of Western Sydney) and community organisations in Vancouver (Canada) and Sydney (Australia) will also be developed.

4. Programme themes

Within the overarching concept of **productive margins** we offer three interconnected work themes that have already problematised the regulation of engagement. **Mobilising neighbourhoods** arises from tensions between the opportunities the localism agenda allegedly opens up for neighbourhoods, and the destabilising, often disastrous, effects of the withdrawal of services and funding resulting from the current economic crisis. **Harnessing digital space** acknowledges the transformation in the spaces of engagement over the last decade, but recognises that such transformation has too often been driven by advantaged users and economically dominant groups. Digital space needs re-thinking from the bottom-up perspective of communities at the margins. **Spaces of dissent** takes as its starting point very public expressions of oppositional politics. How does dissent offer alternative perspectives on difficult issues, and what does recognising this mean for regulatory forms? In each of these themes arts and humanities has a long tradition, traceable to such events as the 1889 founding of Jane Addam's Hull-House or John Ruskin's founding of the Guild of St George in 1871. However, this history is marked by attempts to regulate access and participation and by reciprocal attempts to democratize practice by locating it in some sense of 'community'. Arguably art has always been a community practice although concepts of participatory and socially-engaged practices remain problematic and hotly debated by communities, artists and researchers alike. In the context of this project, arts and humanities will be explicitly engaged to develop innovative and provocative methods, practices and spaces, with the potential to produce new metaphoric and material spaces in which to enact the three work themes.

Mobilising Neighbourhoods

The concept of neighbourhood is problematic. It embodies tensions between a bottom-up 'intense delineation of territory' (Smith 1999) and processes of regulation which produce and contain neighbourhoods. Government classifications (e.g. Welsh and English Indexes of Multiple Deprivation) regulate understandings of neighbourhoods, becoming the basis for policy and resource allocation. As ecological units, neighbourhood can display a significant influence on life-chances (Fone *et al* 2007). Local systems of regulation shape neighbourhoods, such as responses to

anti-social behaviour which rely on centrally defined statements of the meaning of locality (Cowan 2011); funding structures which rely on neighbourhoods' engagement in pre-defined programmes commonly involving private sector organisations (Malpass 1994; McDermont *et al* 2009); or schemes which laud and give some sort of preference to "good" neighbours (Lupton *et al* 2003). Common to such regulatory programmes are assertions and assumptions of the scale, shape, norms and identity of neighbourhood which frequently cut across community constructions, often producing stigmatisation, exclusion and marginalisation. The localism agenda potentially magnifies problems, creating further inequities in what is delivered and how.

By contrast, there are movements in research through which communities themselves inform, develop and sometimes counteract regulatory initiatives and/or decisions. This research has been inspired by interactions between law and geography (Blomley 2005; Cooper 2007), knowledge and expertise (Valverde 2003; Elliott & Williams 2004), the experiential effects of place (Robinson 2010), knowledge controversies as generative events (Elliott *et al* 2010) and the production of new online toolkits, such as 'Know Your Place'[1] that enable participatory planning through crowd-sourcing data in the form of memory, image and audio file. *Mobilising neighbourhoods* focuses research on how neighbourhoods can themselves become bridges to engagement with regulatory regimes. By locating arts and humanities researcher-producers within neighbourhoods we will produce new spaces of engagement that might generate changes in regulatory regimes. One starting point could be instances of communities protesting against regulatory frameworks (such as planning decisions). Such forms of resistance, often dismissed as involving 'the usual suspects', frequently bring the most active forms of knowledge and argument to regulatory and policy developments. Neighbourhood actors raise new challenges about how to engage with communities, the meaning and status of community voiced through dissent, and what the terms of engagement could be. Research questions will challenge dominant assumptions of "better regulation", seeking to pluralise regulatory space by asking how regulatory modalities can be configured to accommodate perspectives that dissent from mainstream positions. Using the differences devolution opens up in political structures, we will exploit the possibilities for comparison and learning across borders.

Harnessing Digital Space

Digital spaces offer the potential to reconceptualise what activity is (Säljö 2010) including new access routes, modes of becoming and boundary crossing. Governance is increasingly driven by data and there is a need to democratise this process by enabling people to design, gather and reflect on data themselves. In particular social media technologies (e.g. wikis, blogs, video-sharing sites, social networking sites) enable users to participate in online social networks, share information and co-produce knowledge (Kim 2009; Pew 2011), suggesting both creative possibilities and potential conflicts with existing regulatory forms. However there is a tendency for deterministic thinking to be associated with the introduction of digital technologies (Perkins 1985), and a belief that simply by making a technological system available, people will more or less automatically take advantage of the opportunities offered. We recognise that the digital divide is not just technological, but also social, economic, cultural and political (Selwyn 2004), and that an overemphasis on the potential of digital space could erode a sense of community, creating an 'interpersonal divide' between virtual and real communities (Bugeja 2006).

Cardiff and Bristol embody a wealth of socio-digital expertise and digital communities, including: the previously mentioned Knowle West Media Centre and REACT projects; Cube Microplex with its open source approaches to community and digital structures; Arnolfini's commitment to socially-engaged art and technology practices; the e-Democracy forums used by Bristol's Neighbourhood Partnerships; Bristol City Council's Connecting Bristol project;[2] and the Digital Cultures Research Centre at UWE, which runs the i-Docs interactive documentary festival. The EPSRC University of Local Knowledge community project is developing a digital toolkit to

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[1] http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place
[2] http://www.connectingbristol.org/contact/project-team/

support collaborative knowledge building (Fraser, Piccini & Sutherland 2010); the WISERD[3] Young People and Place Project deployed digital tools to investigate young people's understandings of place and space (Ivinson 2012a &b, forthcoming); the COSMOS4 platform enables systematic data mining through the ethical harvesting of publically available social media, enabling communities to create new, hybrid forms of local knowledge; and a participatory qualitative GIS method designed to generate community intelligence on community defined security problems (Innes *et al* 2004, Innes *et al* 2008; Innes & Roberts 2008). We will draw on this expertise to devise participatory methods of engagement. We will address questions such as: What does data look like to communities? How can data be visualised in a range of ways to facilitate and generate new understandings of everyday life? What are the affective dimensions of creating data? How are grassroots and open source technologies reconciled to be democratic, sustainable and usable? What is the role of pleasure in open data, and to what extent does the desire to interact with data constrain (and enable) technology design? What can we learn from the principles of the Open Data City movement to democratise the data landscape? Overall, the project will work with grass-roots groups to explore how they might steward their digital habitats (Wenger *et al* 2009) in ways that enhance their capacity to take control over their own information commons (Amy *et al* 2007)

Spaces of Dissent

Rhetorics of community engagement percolating through policy and practice communities tend to assume that citizens will want to engage and do so in a consistent and ongoing way. Studies of engagement in practice suggest that the reality is often far more intricate, complex and messy. Engagement can be very difficult for some communities because they cannot 'bear the weight of expectation' demanded of them (Herbert 2006). Others do not participate in partnerships because of legacy issues, distrust or because they have devised alternative arrangements; many avoid such arrangements because of the (often very real) risks of complicity/co-option with top down political agendas; of grassroots actors becoming 'little fingers of the state' (Wolch 1990). *Spaces of dissent* raises questions about how non-mainstream views and voices are positioned within processes of engagement. How might groups whose views dissent from mainstream politics be engaged to inform how social problems of various kinds are understood and addressed? What are the social, economic, cultural and political barriers and facilitators to creating regulatory mechanisms *for* engagement? Can legal rights support engagement or do they create barriers? How should regulatory modalities be configured to encourage and accommodate perspectives that dissent from mainstream positions? And, if this focusing on dissent leads to new forms of political, social and cultural experimentation, how can these be 'scaled up'? How might an understanding of the aesthetics of dissent contribute to our knowledge of how ideas travel within and across different contexts (Bal 2002)? Can arts and humanities research and art practices be harnessed to produce spaces that resist recuperation by mainstream political structures (Cox, Haq and Trevor 2010)?

Rather than seeing dissent as 'resistance', individuals/groups as opponents to government programmes, we are interested in how spaces of dissent can be engaged with and productively crafted to afford new and initially unorthodox perspectives on difficult issues, offering potential solutions. There are numerous examples (feminism, civil rights, micro-finance, participatory budgeting, restorative justice) of ideas initially seen as radical and marginal which have come to be adopted by the mainstream. A growing literature maps how ideas and information 'travel' within and across different social networks and are embodied in diverse forms (Larner & Laurie 2010; Newman 2012; Peck & Theodore 2010). Translations, negotiations, compromises and mutations are integral to these processes, and emerging institutions, governmental techniques and regulatory forms often bear little resemblance to the initial formulations. Research with community organisations encourages us to understand spaces of dissent as potentially productive. We contest arguments about the rise of 'post-politics' which claim that technologies of government that
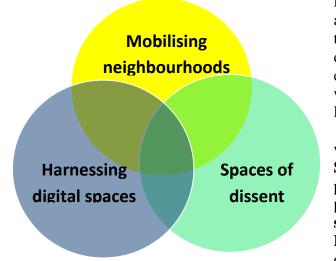
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privilege partnership, consensus and agreement have displaced debate, disagreement and dissensus (Swyngedouw 2011). The research will explore how initiatives can be identified, claimed and made integral to regulatory processes; representing not the demise of politics, rather the emergence of new political formations.

5. Work Programme

The three programme themes have grown organically out of long-standing collaborations between researchers across the two universities and community organisations. They are themes that play to our strengths: to the expertise and knowledge embodied in the community and academic partners.

Rather than creating discrete work packages the themes are intended as provocations – for all who engage in this programme – to creatively rethink how we can design processes of regulating for engagement, and engaging in regulation. Indeed, as the diagram shows, we anticipate that each research project will speak to at least two themes, and at times all three .

There are **four stages** to the programme, which will generate **seven** interconnected research projects. **Stage 1** (which begins in the 6-month lead-up to the programme start date) will involve identifying **'entry points'** into the programme (see Management Plan). In **stage 2** (months 1-12) we will develop and carry out **Projects 1 and 2** which have already been developed to outline stage and are discussed below. In **stage 3** (months 7 to 54) a further **five** projects will be identified and designed through the Forum, with data collection, analysis and production of outputs all taking place as a collaborative process. Dissemination will take place throughout the programme through the Festivals, programme website and associated app, and academic papers as appropriate. **Stage 4** will be devoted to drawing the ideas, innovations and proposals together in a conference, book and final community festival.

Whilst we cannot specify the five projects in stage 3, as that is a matter for co-production, indicative areas are suggested by the themes and existing partnerships. We will also systematically develop comparisons between Bristol and south Wales (facilitated by the Co-Is and PDRA) so creative dialogues occur through this cross-border collaboration. Possible areas include:

- Neighbourhood sustainable energy projects – building on work of Transition groups – that explore possibilities for alternative regulatory frameworks for community-led energy futures
- Possibilities offered by digital technologies for engaging Deaf communities in regulatory processes, comparing intense urban (Bristol) and peri-urban/rural areas (south Wales) environments
- Using participatory documentary film-making or theatre workshops to explore contested identities across and between communities
- The role of cultural, creative and performing arts initiatives in supporting civic engagement, social action or protest, including myth and story in community-led urban regeneration
- Through Coexist in Bristol and organisations such as United Welsh and Arts Factory in south Wales, examining the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurial social enterprises.

Resourcing community-led data collection and analysis: The overall programme offers a range of options for carrying out research. Each project will have a lead academic steering the research, and then choose from either utilising a university-based PDRA or employing a community based researcher (Community RAs). Resources will also be available for community members to be trained as peer researchers (also see *Project Timetable*, *Management Plan* and *Justification of Resources*). The principle of co-production will permeate all aspects of the research process, starting at the development of appropriate theoretical frameworks, through to formulating research

questions, developing empirical studies and analysing data. On top of the extensive experience of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methods embodied in the research team (see *Research Experience* document) we aim to bring experimental methodologies and perspectives from partnerships with academics and community organisations from the arts and humanities. **Piccini** (Bristol, Drama) is a collaborator in the University of Local Knowledge and has experience using participatory video documentary techniques for enabling community organisations and in 'deep mapping' of community landscapes. **Sperlinger** (Bristol, English) uses creative writing projects based in schools and community reading groups to explore understandings of engagement and will provide creative writing workshops for academics and non-academics to work on co-production of articles and publicity; **Fyfe** (George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling, Glamorgan University) uses myths and storytelling to develop thick description ethnography. The community organisations also bring new techniques and perspectives to the research. As a trainee Imam **Zaheer Shabir** (Building the Bridge) brings theological perspectives from the everyday and has previously brought in members of Christian and Jewish communities to conduct research in Muslim communities. **Coexist** is an umbrella body incorporating 120 different organisations ranging from dance groups to bicycle workshops. **SPAN** has experience of using forum theatre to work through neighbourhood problems with single parents. We will also work with **Bickers** (Bristol, History) whose AHRC Connected Communities funding for the 'Know Your Place' project[5] allows people to explore local history and culture through the eyes of the community.

A linked studentship will support each theme**:** *Mobilising Neighbourhoods* (**funded by SWDTC**) will use innovative quantitative methodologies to provide a fuller understanding of how growing up and living in marginal communities influences both individual and community outcomes (this builds directly on the work of Manley *et al* 2011). *Harnessing Digital Spaces* will explore the ways in which mobile technologies can be developed to meet the needs of community engagement. *Spaces of Dissent* will involve a social network analysis of Coexist's activities to better understand how specific actors and knowledges are travelling through the diverse associations established around this organisation.

Research projects. Below we outline the first two research projects. Both projects work at the intersection of two or more themes, and will be pilots for the 'dialogue and design' co-production process of the Forum. They demonstrate our ambition to use traditional social science methods alongside audio, digital and film technologies that open up new research modalities; and they will enable the identification of understandings of local concerns about regulatory structures that will be further developed in the following five projects (see **Revised Management Plan** for more detail).

Project 1: Building the Bridge

This project arises from dialogue between the Centre for Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol and members of *Building the Bridge*, an organisation that emerged from Bristol City Council's implementation of the previous Labour government's Prevent strand of counter-terrorism strategy. The model of engagement framed by Prevent was widely criticised but in Bristol implementation had a different trajectory: the term 'Prevent' was jettisoned and the programme renamed 'Building the Bridge' in an attempt to counteract some of the troubling logics of Prevent as it had been formulated at national level. Indeed, Bristol's 'Building the Bridge' was described as a local success and cited 'as a model of good practice' (Edwards and Gomis 2011). In particular, it is credited with facilitating bottom-up engagement between Muslims and the City Council, local agencies and the police, and with creating a space for dialogue and interaction between established (largely Pakistani) and newly-settled (particularly Somali) Muslim communities in the city, that had not hitherto existed. Under the current Coalition government's 'Prevent II' agenda, Bristol is no longer a priority area for Prevent funding or activity; nevertheless Building the Bridge remains as a

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[5] http://www.bristol.ac.uk/public-engagement/events/know-your-bristol/

mechanism for facilitating Muslim engagement in the city, and continues to engage with the Council, police and other agencies.

The objectives of the Building the Bridge research project are to:

- understand how communities can refashion top-down regulatory initiatives to institute more responsive, bottom-up modes of community engagement;
- develop a partnership between academics and communities to benefit the work of community organisations and enhance their capacities for engagement;
- identify means of developing community engagement and connections into the future.

These objectives will be pursued through three phases: *1: History and Development of Building the Bridge*: explores the background and development of Building the Bridge through qualitative research. Insights from this phase will be shared with Building the Bridge and its constituencies, the Research Forum, and wider policy, practitioner and community audiences through, for example a short documentary filmed and edited by the Muslim communities. *2: Current work: Challenges and obstacles to engagement across diverse Muslim groups*: comprises research and community activities to enhance capacities for community engagement, particularly with those groups that Building the Bridge's membership identifies as experiencing distinctive obstacles and challenges, such as women, young people and Somalis. Theatre workshops and other arts-based methodologies will be used to open up new dialogue spaces. *3: Future directions*: tracks Building the Bridge's development beyond Prevent; and analyses the issues that arise because of contractions in public funding by connecting with other community groups and researchers within the Research Forum.

The project engages across the dissent and neighbourhoods themes by exploring ways in which **dissent** can give rise to more creative and effective modes of engagement across communities, in particular through **mobilising** the skills and capacities in **neighbourhoods** of the city. It will benefit from the Programme's expertise in harnessing digital technologies in its community-based research and dissemination activities.

Project 2: Securing the Future for Youth in South Wales

The distinct identity of post-industrial communities in south Wales relates to their geography and economic history: narrowly tapering valleys cut off from each other by mountains, and historic affiliation to workplaces based on coal, iron and steel extraction and other manufacturing. The experience of deindustrialisation following the closure of mines and steel works is common to all communities in the valley regions and many are amongst the most economically deprived in Wales. Deindustrialisation was accompanied by the disintegration of institutional forms of organisation such as unions, labour parties, miners' institutes and chapels that forged solidarity and mobilisation in workplaces and communities. Such organisations had enabled people in the valleys to maintain a sense of identity and interests across the region and provided bottom-up forms of regulation in relation to economic activity and wider social and cultural controls.

All this indicates a need for new forms of engagement to ensure the Welsh Government's Communities First commitment to the co-production of services and policy is rooted in the knowledge, experiences and aspirations of communities themselves. This project will focus on young people, their perceptions and experiences of neighbourhood security, and how this relates to opportunities and aspirations in three areas of the south Wales valleys. We recognise that psychological security relates to physical and embodied security. Utilising a methodology designed around a qualitative GIS platform, the aim is to enable young people to a) collectively define spaces where they feel secure (and insecure) in their neighbourhood, b) define their local needs, c) articulate these effectively to public agencies and third sector representatives within the Communities First partnerships, and d) engage in a deliberative process to design new modes of provision. The particular innovation is to take a methodology that has previously been employed by South Wales Police to survey local communities about their priorities, and put it in the hands of those typically marginalised by such engagement processes. Indeed, there is significant evidence that young people are consistently identified as the key focus of public concerns when surveys of this kind are conducted (Lowe and Innes, 2012). To facilitate young people's participation, this

project integrates the three conceptual themes orienting the Productive Margins Programme using new digital methods to understand perceptions and experiences of neighbourhood, amongst groups whose views are likely to dissent from those who are traditionally consulted by the authorities.

6.   Programme outputs

a)   Ideas that travel: embedding innovation

If this programme is to produce ideas and innovations that go beyond academia we must find ways to embed such innovations in established regulatory structures. 'Pathways to Impact' details the many ways the programme will project its findings and innovations outwards – through half-yearly festivals, the website and associated social media, and through the manifold opportunities that our partners offer in their daily activities. In addition we propose:

- 'Knowledge for Communities' placements to enable community experts to take innovative ways of working and regulatory mechanisms into local government, education, health and other statutory, third sector and business organisations, embedding them as best practice.
- Policy briefings for statutory, third sector and business organisations
- Materials orientated at community organisations and activists – print, web, film or performance-based – to be used by other communities to put to work and develop the project's ideas and innovations, working within existing engagements structures and how to create new structures.

b)   Academic outputs

Through its methodology of co-production this research programme takes legal consciousness studies and studies of the everyday in many other disciplines beyond present understandings. Through experimentation with our community collaborators we will develop new theorisations and methodologies that will be of importance to a wide range of academic disciplines. We will carry our principle of co-production through to our publications strategy to ensure that members of community organisations involved as researchers, the PDRAs and Community RAs, as well as the academics of both universities, are recognised for their input. Specific outputs will include:

- An **end-of-project academic workshop/conference** on theories and methods of co-production.
- **Practice-based outputs:** where possible, each project will be encouraged to develop creative-collaborative outputs in the form of websites, films and live performances.
- An **edited collection book**, aimed at academics, policy-makers and practitioners, bringing together new theorisations of co-production from the programme, alongside innovations in method and practice. We envision this would be published by Bristol's Policy Press given its long experience of publishing across the academic/practitioner divide.
- At least **one article by each project** for a relevant academic journal to be produced alongside a series of more abbreviated outputs for the programme website.
- A **post-graduate-level advanced training module** on 'The Co-production of Research', to be piloted through a joint programme or summer school in year 3 across Wales and SWDTCs, then to be delivered nationally. Additional opportunities (beyond the linked studentships) for collaborative doctorates will also be actively pursued.
- **Placements for post-graduate research students** with community partner organisations, providing opportunities for students to further develop research skills, improve the quality of their PhDs and develop capacities to secure future employment, at the same time offering the partners the opportunity to rigorously investigate research issues of importance to them.

c)   Innovation through collaboration, sharing knowledges, new partnerships

Finally, one of the legacies of this programme will be a far less tangible but, we believe, far more important output: the sharing of knowledges, experiences and expertises between communities that have not previously been in dialogue, between members of academic disciplines who have not previously put their expertise to work in the other's field, and between communities and academics who have not previously worked together. Simply by putting all these elements in the same room together, allowing a problem to be viewed from a different angle or through a different lens, the programme will develop new, innovative and sustainable ways of **regulating for engagement**.