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# Space, Politics and Community: The Case of Kinning Park Complex



**Laura-Jane Nolan**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
School of Geography and Earth Sciences  
College of Science and Engineering  
University of Glasgow

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### **Author's declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Laura-Jane Nolan

# Abstract

This thesis is about space, politics and the community. It examines how spatial politics constitutes a community through time. It explores the way that urban governance interacts with community politics, and more importantly, how people can rework politics through spatial practices. The thesis scales down to focus on a case study of Kinning Park Complex (KPC), an independently run community centre that was saved from closure by building users in 1996 following a 55 day sit-in. I track the trajectory of this space since 1996, to investigate the resourcefulness of the community to withstand multiple crises at local and national levels.

KPC is a valuable social and political space that continues to exist in, against, and beyond neoliberalism. I focus on the paradoxical nature of KPC, as the space appears in-line with the current government plans to expand third sector projects in a context of austerity, whilst simultaneously striving to function as a non-hierarchical and not-for profit space. It is both an important site of social reproduction and a symbolic community space.

Through participatory methods and ethnographic observations, I have explored the social practices at KPC to investigate what they reveal about social relations and the structural problems that independent spaces face in the context of austerity. I draw upon the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Rancière to elucidate the contradictions in their theoretical disagreement by relating their ideas to the rich empirical material that I gathered at KPC. Finally, I draw upon Doreen Massey to bridge this theoretical divide and to provide an essential spatial context to my work. The thesis brings to light the complexities, contradictions and tangible forms of labour involved in simultaneously struggling against, and providing services autonomously from, the state during austere times.

# Acknowledgements

I remember being in a friend's house, whose father has a PhD in chemistry. I remember sitting in the kitchen at the age of 16 and saying, 'yeah I'd like to do a PhD, imagine Dr Nolan'. We all laughed.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focuses on Kinning Park Complex (KPC), a community centre situated in south Glasgow. Kinning Park is an economically deprived area that typifies the problems faced by urban communities in post-industrialised cities. As well as suffering decades of deindustrialisation, the area has, over the past three decades, faced many rounds of neoliberal urban restructuring. The Kinning Park Complex, and its struggle to preserve a space for community action, therefore represents an interesting and relevant case for exploring the intersections of space, politics and community.

By focussing on Kinning Park Complex as a local space of encounter, this thesis presents community as heterogeneous and uneven. Rather than theorising the community as a whole, I unpack the relationality of community at the local scale. Through using a participatory approach to research, I was able to observe, first hand, interpersonal, symbolic and material power relations that elucidate less obvious structures and dynamics within community. Politics, the critical activity of raising issues and deciding how institutional and social relations should be organized, crucially depends on the existence of spaces and forums to which everyone has access (Young, 1990:240). However, a key contribution of this thesis is to debates around community politics that highlight the *unevenness* of these social spaces.

My theorisation here conceives of space in its most tangible and physical form, that provides an opportunity or context for social relations. Space becomes a stage, a social field or partition of the (in)sensible for multiple encounters to take place (Rancière, 2009). Thus, space or the making or saving of space is always the vital precondition for political action. This is not a synchronic account, so the historic trajectory of a space is also an important contextual consideration in this thesis, which investigates space over time, to emphasise its relational and dynamic nature.

By politics, I refer to both interpersonal, small p politics, and formal modes of urban political governance. I investigate the ways they interact in the empirical reality of a community centre. This contributes to theorisations of urban politics in geography by presenting space as both a sphere of everyday politics and an ongoing political struggle for the community. This thesis discusses how grassroots politics can emerge around a common desire to defend and renew public and collective spaces in the neoliberal city and how,

through the example of a particular struggle, the community in its diverse forms shapes politics. Furthermore, I explore how involvement in the political space of urban community struggles also shapes people's life trajectories through collisions and encounters with other subjectivities and political identities.

The chapters that follow reveal a nuanced portrait of spatial community politics, whose struggle is paradoxical in many ways. KPC appears in-line with current government plans to expand third sector projects in a context of austerity. At the same time, KPC strives to function as a politically progressive, independent, not-for profit space that contests 'common sense neoliberalism' (Hall and O'Shea, 2013). It is important to highlight and explore the interconnections between space, politics and community because increasingly, as exemplified in the Localism Act (2010), 'community' is framed in a depoliticised way. The welfare state has also been diminishing through privatisation and cutbacks over the past three decades, and the UK's Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government has been further dismantling it at an alarming rate. We are seeing shared community services disappear because of austerity-driven cuts. This reality calls upon the analysis of shared spaces as an important locus for public social life but also of struggle. This thesis illustrates that there is still a need for community centres like KPC, where people can carry out vital forms and services to aid social reproduction. Furthermore, the neoliberal urban landscape needs physical spaces outside the private realm, where paths can cross and communities can encounter others.

### **1.1 Neoliberal urbanism and progressive social spaces**

The way that community centres and other public facilities are currently funded is becoming increasingly unclear and so their futures are unstable. KPC provides us with a long-term example of an independently run community centre that has weathered the impacts of numerous crises of state and welfare restructuring since the mid-1990s. There are three key elements to this. First, this case study enables us to interrogate the politics and tensions involved in reproducing a community centre through two decades of neoliberal urban policy and welfare retrenchment in a critical way. Second, KPC evidences both the resilience but also the compromises that grass roots projects must make to remain independent from the state. Third, this case study shows us both the continuing possibilities for autonomous action and a more progressive localism – despite the broader problems that KPC faces. This is not to say that KPC has remained completely

autonomous, but it has remained as a functionally independent space despite external interventions from Glasgow City Council. KPC remains, in its own right, as more than a reaction to an all-powerful neoliberalism.

My original contribution in the thesis is to bring Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Rancière into conversation, using Doreen Massey to bring a spatial context to their ideas and bridge their epistemological divide, to help us conceptualise space, politics and community effectively. Massey conceptualises space as a dynamic product of social relations, Bourdieu's notion of the habitus scales this down to articulate the dynamic personal life trajectories of individuals within a relational social space. Bourdieu refers to social space as an 'objective element of uncertainty' which 'provides a basis for the plurality of visions of the world...it provides a base for symbolic struggles over the power to produce and to impose the legitimate vision of the world' (1990:133). I argue that this idea is also present in Massey's radical and generative concept of space; where chance, relationality and chaos work simultaneously. Such intersections, I argue, are integral to understanding the trajectory of KPC. Rancière allows me to move away from structural considerations to provide a dynamic view of the political subject, by adhering to his 'method of equality' that enables academic work to draw the line of escape through rethinking the universal (2009:282). This is useful in studying KPC where a diverse community staged political action in 1996. My empirical material reveals exclusions, prejudices and the exposure of class and cultural tensions within communities, as featured in Bourdieu's analysis. However, the material also shows the construction of hybrid identities, antagonism and dissensus that have disrupted the distribution of sensible knowledge(s) at KPC, in line with Rancière's approach that rejects a straightforward depiction of the political subject.

I am critical of objective structures that some theorists construct, which fail to take into account subjective representations of individuals; however, I believe that structural representations must still be considered, in order to account for the individual and collective 'daily struggles', which both illuminate and transform these structures (Bourdieu, 1989). This means that the objectivist and the subjectivist positions stand in a dialectical relationship. Thus, Massey's (2005) notion of 'throwntogetherness' usefully helps to bridge the two approaches; through focussing in on KPC and operating with a concept of spatiality I can observe social practices, whilst always keeping social relations under scrutiny (Massey, 2005). We can observe how the throwntogetherness of different identities and subjectivities at KPC generates both progressive encounters but also reveals

tensions and power dynamics negotiated in the day-to-day running of KPC. The empirical findings should reveal a nuanced picture of throwntogetherness, which fleshes out the major aspects of the concept. Throwntogetherness allows us to celebrate the diversity at KPC without assigning the space a rigid identity. Academic work can often serve to classify spaces as either social centres, community centres, autonomous or co-opted, and this is problematic because it does not tell us anything more than what we can already observe. Furthermore, in doing this, we forget the progressive dynamic and hopeful nature of spaces like KPC.

## **1.2 Introducing Kinning Park Complex**

Kinning Park Complex is a Victorian schoolhouse built circa 1910 and was a school until 1976 when the then Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC) converted it into a neighbourhood centre. The neighbourhood centre, overseen by Glasgow City Council, hosted a variety of educational, sport and leisure classes as well as an afterschool club for the community. The City Council managed and staffed the neighbourhood centre, but over time the council ceased doing any repairs on the building and the old red sandstone building became run down. The building required costly upgrading and the Council was unwilling to carry out repairs, so in 1996 the City Council decided to close its doors. However, people who used the building stressed the value of the centre, and began a campaign to keep it open. Unfortunately, the Council still went ahead with the closure on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1996, so the building users occupied the building for 55 days and nights.

The community's main concern was to keep the building open for community use and they had no option but to accept the Council's position that there was no money in the budget to pay for the ongoing costs of keeping the centre open. So the community proposed that they would take over the management and the running costs of the centre themselves (KPC website, 2012)

Since 1996, the community centre has been independently run and, for the first 12 years, a local woman and committed community activist, Helen Kyle, managed the space. She continued to run the centre informally with an ever-changing management committee. However, the constant day-to-day maintenance, funding problems and power struggles between various user groups emerged. So eventually, Helen took the decision to stand down from the community centre in 2008. Following Helen's resignation, there was a year

of instability; the remaining artists that rented art studios at KPC at the time formed the committee, but community use dwindled. Then in 2009, a new, more stable committee was established with Lindsay Keenan acting as the manager. The lease was transferred in April 2009 and KPC became a Community Interest Company. Since 2009, Lindsay Keenan has brought the space back into community use, mainly for sports and recreational clubs, studio rental and hall hire. He updated the health and safety regulations and set up systems for managing the building, but the centre still faces major issues concerning repairs and generating enough income to function.

In April 2013, the building's lease came under dispute as Glasgow City Council decided to re-think their Concessionary Rents Policy; this policy designated reduced rent rates for community groups and charities that rent premises in Glasgow. For KPC, this change has meant a huge rent increase from the original £1 per year peppercorn rate, including newly introduced administrative costs from the said companies. This decision has been under dispute and KPC responded with a public newsletter to all building users explaining this situation. They also started a support KPC campaign, which requested people to sign up to be a 'Supporter of KPC' – in order to create a network of solidarity. Once again, KPC had to organise a campaign to remain open. All the while, the community centre took a decision to continue running as usual.

### **1.3 Methods and chapter outline**

I became involved with KPC after attending a political film screening at the community centre a few months after I moved to Glasgow in 2011. I then found myself back at KPC for another workshop a few weeks later for a different event. It became clear that KPC was interesting intersectional space for diverse groups in the city. I was intrigued by the history of the occupation and the communities of activists, artists and local groups that share the community centre, and I wanted to help support an independently run and progressive space. By becoming involved as a volunteer, I got the chance to scale down my research to focus in on the essential social practices at KPC to see what they reveal about broader social relations.

My methodological approach involved eighteen months of participatory and ethnographic observations as a volunteer at KPC, during which time I interviewed various people, both past volunteers and activists and those still involved there. This approach produced very

rich empirical material. My experience at KPC also gave me a nuanced perspective that I attribute to being deeply involved in this space. My involvement continues today through friendships and solidarity. KPC is a useful case study as we can observe the effects of local governance on the space since 1996. Rather than produce a synchronic account of KPC, in a more grounded way, I set out the historic context of KPC from 1996 to today. The cultural backdrop of Glasgow, being a city rich in historic working class politics, art and culture, also contributes to the character of KPC, which I consider a product of historic struggles in Glasgow.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2, 'Theorising Spaces of Community', discusses the main theoretical debates that will run through the thesis. I bring the post-structural perspective of Jacques Rancière, into conversation with Pierre Bourdieu's more structural notions of *habitus*, *field*, and *capitals*. I then draw upon Doreen Massey's grounded, spatial approach to politics to bridge the theoretical divide between the two, which I argue is essential to theorising KPC as a space for urban community politics. The chapter discusses the productive tensions that emerge from using these theorists together which are then integrated to form a conceptual lens for the subsequent empirical chapters.

Chapter 3 discusses my methodological approach to the thesis. It elaborates on the friction between Bourdieu and Rancière and discusses how I have incorporated their theory into both my practical research and epistemology. The disagreement between both authors resonates most clearly through their methodology and this chapter engages with their debate to articulate my own positionality, which is located between the two authors, between a 'method of equality' (Rancière, 2009) enacted through my participation as a volunteer and more removed ethnography at KPC.

In Chapter 4, 'Urban Governance and Forms of Localism in Glasgow', I set out the external urban political context for KPC, focussing on Glasgow's trajectory in relation to neoliberal urbanism. It discusses urban policy in Glasgow more broadly and contributes to debates around localism. Presenting localism as both a top down project instigated by the state and as a progressive, grassroots form of localism, the chapter frames top down localism in Glasgow and the UK more generally as a contradictory and murky project.

In Chapter 5, 'KPCs Historical Trajectory', I look at the history of the occupation and provide a historic account of the campaign and occupation. Drawing on archival

documents, photos and in-depth interviews with some of the people involved in 1996, this chapter presents the trajectory of the space as being the product of the work of certain individuals with particular subjectivities. It also situates the struggle at KPC alongside other local contentious political activity at the time, discussing KPC as a space of trajectories. I explore individuals' subjectivities through Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1984), which allows me to conceive of the individuals at KPC as unevenly resourced actors, imbued with various forms of capital. I highlight how forms of capital were collectivised during the occupation. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how the sharing of skills and capitals shaped people's habitus and their future life trajectories, touching on the problems in sustaining participation in community politics beyond the occupation.

Chapter 6, 'Throwing Together Community Politics', develops Massey's concept of 'throwntogetherness' (2005) to show the diverse aspects of community that are brought together in the production and reproduction of KPC as a collective space today. It contributes to Massey's concept through using the case study at KPC to demonstrate her conceptualisation of space, imbued with chaos, uncertainty and openness. I discuss moments of throwntogetherness that I observed and experienced through my ethnographic work. I discuss the different subjectivities of various people and groups at KPC, documenting how people imagine and produce the space in multiple ways. This chapter puts Bourdieu and Rancière's theories into action in the real world, to highlight how, in empirical reality, structures are present but are also renegotiated in space.

Chapter 7, 'The Hidden Abode of Community Labour', discusses the forms of labour that go into producing KPC as a community facility. I focus on the precarious, pressurised, mundane and importantly, hidden nature of this labour. I present the tangible impacts of state roll-back, to reveal the less visible, but critical, structural constraints put upon people and their relationships at KPC. The chapter argues that, while participation in the voluntary or third sector is articulated as gift-exchange, such exchange is not external to or independent of for-profit economic exchange. Rather, it is a supplement to such economic exchange. As such, the chapter engages with labour geography literature by presenting the community labour at KPC as concrete and tangible, multifarious in its nature; from mundane labour such as cleaning and fixing and maintenance to emotional labour that takes its toll on social relations inside the building. Spaces like KPC are the hidden abodes of capitalism, performing important social reproductive labour for the community.

Overall, the thesis shows how changing governance processes shape community activity and autonomous social spaces such as KPC over time. To present public spaces, such as community centres, as important political, social and cultural hubs in the city; to provide a historic example of progressive localism, through retelling the history of the occupation; and, finally, to emphasise the tangible labour entailed in progressive forms of localism in context of welfare reform and state cutbacks. To show how a space has existed in, against and beyond neoliberalism since 1996.

## Chapter 2: Theorising Spaces of Community

KPC is a paradox; it both performs socially valuable services for the community and is an empowering, local, independently run space that provides the local area with economically valuable welfare provision, once funded by the council. It both questions state-managed community provision, and also steps in to fill a welfare gap caused by withdrawal of state funding. Thus, the thesis takes two strands of analysis, one theorizing community politics and secondly an empirically grounded, critical analysis of the effects of welfare reform and localism. Jacques Rancière, Pierre Bourdieu and Doreen Massey provide useful theoretical tools for this project as this chapter sets out. Although divergent in their respective epistemologies, I will argue that Rancière and Bourdieu are nonetheless a fruitful combination when bridged with the work of Doreen Massey. The combination of these authors highlights theoretical contradictions that, I argue, reflect the paradoxical nature of KPC as a dynamic social space on the increasingly neoliberal urban landscape.

Despite not being geographers, Bourdieu and Rancière conceptualise politics using spatial metaphors, both authors discuss ideas surrounding what, or who, is a political subject or agent. They also both discuss the limitations and advantages of certain groups to partake in politics. Both authors consider these themes in very opposing ways, but when we apply their ideas to a concrete or real world space such as KPC we can see the merits in both approaches. Interjecting the concept of ‘throwntogetherness’ (Massey, 2005) in a real world context helps to bridge the tension between Rancière and Bourdieu’s theoretical arguments on politics. Instead of attempting a grand theoretical synthesis of the work of all three authors, this thesis attempts to draw the authors together to utilise each of their insights for my empirical analysis. This chapter begins by taking a spatial approach to Rancière’s theories about politics and the political subject. I then introduce Massey’s concept of spatial politics to emphasise the relationality that is inherent in space and politics. This leads me to the work of Bourdieu and his relational concepts of habitus and field. The penultimate section discusses the theoretical tensions between Rancière and Bourdieu, using Massey as an intermediary theorist. In the final section, I set out four main theoretical contributions.

## 2.1 Partitioning Politics

Many have theorised urban politics as simultaneously oppressive and empowering; as urban areas are governed by top down big P “state politics” and reworked by grassroots or “small-p politics”. KPC is a space of urban community politics, staged in a state community centre threatened with closure, then appropriated and reworked by the building users. The contested existence of KPC since 1996 provides us with an enduring and rare case study of a progressive urban community politics. Urban politics has been theorised by Jacques Rancière and applied more to geographical issues more specifically by Mustafa Dikeç; who developed Rancière’s position on the nature of ‘the political’ and the political subject. Rancière’s work employs a poststructural perspective and offers a dynamic portrayal of the political subject and agentic notion of politics, best envisioned through spatial metaphors, which is why his work is a useful theoretical component to my geographical argument. In this section I will firstly consider Rancière’s notion of politics and, secondly, discuss his notion of the political subject. Rancière explicitly states that real ‘politics’ only occurs when the logic of equality interrupts the logic of domination (Chambers, 2011:18).

Politics is not the exercise of power. Politics ought to be defined in its own terms as a specific mode of action that is enacted by a specific subject and that has its own specific rationality. It is the political relationship that makes it possible to conceive of the subject of politics, not the either way round (Rancière, 2010:27)

This quote is Rancière’s first thesis on politics from *Dissensus* (2010). Rancière’s notion of politics is multidimensional and accounts for the external influences of the ‘police’, the internal agency of the subject, and how these elements engage to produce a metaphorical spatial formation; a ‘partition or distribution of the sensible’ (Rancière, 2006). Rancière is primarily concerned with instances where the distribution of the sensible is breached or disrupted, and when redistribution of the sensible is possible (Highmore, 2011). For Rancière, ‘politics is all about creating spaces where a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated; re-configuring, in other words, the distribution of the sensible’ (Dikeç, 2012:675).

The logic of domination in Rancière’s theory is represented by the police. Rancière describes the ‘police’ as ‘an order of bodies that define allocation of ways of doing, ways

of being and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is the order of the visible and the sayable' (Rancière, 1999:29). Importantly, Rancière does not describe the 'police' as an institution of power, but as 'a principle of the 'partition of the sensible' within which strategies and techniques of power can be defined' (Rancière, 2000, cited in Dikeç, 2012:673). Thus, the 'partition' or 'distribution of the sensible' is a 'configuration of a specific world' characterised by metaphoric boundaries around what is sensible, and what is unacceptable in society (Rancière, 1999:28). Therefore, this theory presents invisible and oppressed people in society as 'the governed'; who are distributed outside the partition; and the rest of society, who adhere to what the police maintain as normal in the eyes of the elite, remain visible and inside the 'partition of the sensible'. Foucault also writes of the 'police' as signifier of 'a programme of government rationality' (Foucault, 1984:241). Indeed, Rancière's intellectual debt to Foucault is clear and Rancière, in *Disagreement* (1999), acknowledges this. Dikeç suggests that Rancière's political theorisation is more distinctively spatial, however, rendering it useful in describing the relationship between space, policy and politics (2007).

In his work on urban politics in *Badlands of the Republic* (2007), Mustafa Dikeç deploys Rancière's theorisation in his discussion of the banlieues; the suburban government housing estates of French cities. Dikeç's suggests that the banlieues are a tangible example of Rancière's partition or distribution of the sensible and have become socially and politically designated urban spaces. Dikeç (2007) illustrates how the distribution of the sensible is, in part, implemented through urban policy, arguing that the Banlieues are state-designated zones of social unrest and deprivation and that they provide 'a particular locus of enunciation for the governed' (Dikeç, 2007:18). Thus, physically defined spaces on the urban landscape become sites of state intervention, but also more generally sites of victimisation through 'police' (i.e. media and society more generally) apparatus where deviant behaviours are identified as outside the 'partition of the sensible', which serves as a justification for modification by the state. The insistence is that 'within the territory of the Banlieue we have deviant behaviour and incompatible cultural differences', deemed a potential 'threat to the one and indivisible republic' (Dikeç, 2007:32).

When such social spaces have been politically designated, the characteristics associated with them become 'the established order' and the 'established spatial organisation provides the given on the basis of which the problems are defined, solutions proposed' (Dikeç,

2007:18). This can also be applied to other cities such as Glasgow where the City Council has been instrumental in how funding and concessionary rents have been applied to certain spaces and not others. Economic crises have galvanised a particular neoliberal ‘distribution of the sensible’, and this can be observed on the urban landscape of Glasgow today. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, it has affected the space of KPC and thus politics have occurred in this space where people have disrupted and questioned those in power to retain a space that has been regarded as ‘insensible’ according to neoliberal logics upheld by Glasgow City Council. The distribution of the sensible also plays out through the allocation of state funding. These logics, however, can be disrupted with politics, as people ‘resist the givenness of place’ (Dikeç 2007:17). Thus ‘space could as much hinder political possibilities as it could engender them’ (Dikeç, 2009:1). When people ‘do not take as natural the distributions or partitionings of established orders’, they become political subjects (Dikeç, 2013:82). Rancière, more specifically, also theorises about the political subject which is the focus of the next section.

## **2.2 The Hybrid Identity of the Political Subject**

Rancière’s notion of the political subject as anyone, and potentially everyone, is very malleable: thus his conceptualisation is useful when theorising community politics that involve a huge range of people, such as the heterogeneous group of individuals involved in the KPC occupation. His conception is dynamic, inclusive and very human in accounting for the often contradictory and hybrid forms that the identity of a political subject can take. In this section, I argue that Rancière’s conception of the political subject as an individual with agency helps challenge normative, passive notions of community; through this conception, I establish a heterogeneous and dynamic way to speak of the collective group or ‘community’ at KPC.

Rancière is particularly concerned with the representation of the political subject, arguing that politics is performed by the ‘class of the unaccounted’, ‘that only exist in the very declaration in which they are counted as those of no account’ (Rancière 2009:38). Here, Rancière tries to prise open the notion of the political subject to include those outside the ‘partition of the sensible’, framing their political action as ‘ruptural and inaugurative’, suggesting that when those outside the ‘partition of the sensible’ engage in political action ‘they disrupt the established order of things by opening up political spaces through processes of political subjectification’ (Dikeç, 2013:78). Such an approach accounts for the

participation of diverse actors, even those not usually to be considered political activists, and assigns agency to unaccounted subjects that are not usually heard. Rancière argues that, ‘what is specific to politics is the existence of a subject defined by its participation in contraries’ (Rancière, 2010:29). So participation is framed in its most *active* form, as Rancière describes politics as a ‘paradoxical form of action’ (ibid). Rancière’s active theoretical approach entails a ‘practice of equality’; which is about enacting equality in our theoretical approach, instead of presuming inequality on the behalf of political subjects. Dikeç (2013) describes this process as ‘axiomatic’, where ‘equality is not a goal to be achieved or something to be granted by higher powers: it is a presupposition to be verified and enacted by opening up stages of equality’(Dikeç, 2013:82).

Rancière sets this approach to work in his early historical work; *Proletarian Nights* (1989), where he describes the emergence of class-consciousness and discusses experiments in worker association in Paris during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rancière also conveys one of his early arguments; that ‘the true threat to the existing order comes when the cultural event challenges the boundaries between labour and leisure, producer and consumer, worker and bourgeois’ (Reid, 1989:xxviii). By cultural event, Rancière is referring to occurrences retold from historical archives where autodidactic ‘workers’ engaged in activity considered outside their ‘given’ class-cultural parameters. *Proletarian Nights* (1989) re-tells the tales of those workers who had ‘wandered outside their station’ to engage instead in the labour of intellectuals; ‘those enticed by the semblances of knowledge and imitations of poetry; artisans seduced by the higher profits of philosophy’ (Rancière, 1989:13). Through focussing on the diverse passions of these ‘unlikely intellectuals’ who engaged in their pursuits outside their normal working hours, he gives historical accounts of dynamic and empowered political subjects. His contribution to theorising the political subject emerged from the messy reality of historical archives, and reviving these histories links *Proletarian Nights* with other history from below literature (Iles and Roberts, 2012). My theorisation begins from a very different messy reality of a community centre, but Rancière’s sentiment, to liberate the political subject from cultural determinism, is something that I take on board in my presentation of community politics.

Another main point, is that Rancière importantly portrays the political subject through their *doing* rather than *being*, action rather than identity, and retells a history in which ‘workers spoke in ways which exceeded any coincidence with themselves as occupants of a specific social place, or doers of an economic practice’ (Pelletier, 2009:275). This interrogates the

‘jealous concern to preserve popular, plebeian or proletarian purity’ (Rancière, 1989:x). He aims to highlight the disruptive and contradictory political moments of these night time pursuits where ‘non-representative individuals’ are ‘in love with the night of intellectuals, encountering the discourse of intellectuals in love with the toilsome and gruelling days of the labouring people’ (Rancière, 1989:x-xi). This attributes agency to the worker, who is able to reconfigure time as well as space, or their ‘place’ in society, when engaging in their pursuits. This helps to construct the worker as a dynamic individual with the capacity and agency to live not just as a labourer but also as an intellectual, hence an active political subject capable of social change. The project of the Saint Simonians<sup>1</sup> set out in this book was initially that of a bohemian existence, which deviated considerably from the Marxist conception of the honourable worker, something which some authors continue to project as a cultural arbitrary (Jones, 2012). Rancière refers to ‘ghostly doubles and shadow images’ that the devoted Marxist theoreticians and historians have ‘sought to hide again and again’ behind accepted images of the ‘worker movement, popular culture, and the like’ (Rancière, 1989:ix).

Rancière’s approach to theorizing the ‘non-representative’ political subject, as something without a preconfigured identity, is useful to my own theorisation, as it retains the idea that politics is open to anyone, and that an individual’s political action is what defines them, rather than their prefigured identity. As aforementioned, Rancière’s ideas are emancipatory for the subject and focussed on action and doing, rather than being. This approach is evident in the work of Hannah Arendt, who also focuses on action as imperative to identity formation for the political subject, rather than identity formation as a precursor to action. This empowering notion of the subject means that she is automatically imbued with agency; thus ‘the fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable’ (Arendt, 1958:178). This lineage to Rancière’s thinking is important as it allows us to understand his conceptualisation of the political subject as empowered and with agency. This is also useful in terms of thinking about community action, because when we are asked to describe a community we are being asked to assign a certain, homogenous identity, one that does not represent the heterogeneous and uneven reality of any modern community. Rather, we can think in terms of action, and this action bringing together disparate individuals, thus the action becomes the community, rather than participation being

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<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simonianism was a French political and social movement of the first half of the 19th century, inspired by the ideas of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825). Saint-Simon has been portrayed in many

differentiated along the lines of identity or trying to work backwards by assigning an identity to action which has already occurred in the past. Thus, time and space can act together, at once a political community.

This line of thought can be traced not only in post-structuralism, but also in anarchist and autonomous Marxist accounts of politics, which have been influenced by poststructuralism. Holloway (2005) contends that autonomous theory was correct in denying the objectification of people; ‘the only way we can construct relations of dignity is through the negotiation of those relations which deny dignity. Our movement, then, is in the first place a negative movement, a movement against identity’ (Holloway, 2005:164). Political urban spaces indeed incorporate a huge diversity of actors that are not represented by one set of restrictive class or other, homogenous identities. Instead, there are interactions and negotiations between many people under a general ethos of equality. However, this is where the usefulness of Rancière’s theory draws to a close, as there appear to be no tools for discussing the messy practices of ‘doing’ a community centre and the heterogeneity of the community. After the initial action that becomes the community, how does the community interact in social space? And how are radical autonomous political communities sustained in neoliberal urban landscapes? Whilst there is no one identity or one true political subject, there are a mix of individuals with differing histories and trajectories. Furthermore, these interactions are not without conflict. This is where I depart from abstract political theory to ground my ideas in space, to provide a context, for the inevitable interactions to play out.

### **2.3 Thinking Politics Spatially**

In *For Space* (2005), Doreen Massey explains how space provides a context for the politics described above. Using space as a framework for investigating politics is valuable, firstly to ground political theory in a material setting, and secondly to begin to investigate the personal interactions and micro-politics which occur within given spatial parameters. The political coming together of various people, in an urban context, can be conceived through Massey’s (2005) concept of ‘throwntogetherness’ where she draws on and develops Amin’s ‘politics of propinquity’(2004). Both concepts assert that being together and relating to each other is a chaotic process, full of political potential that can lead to shared understandings, but also conflict. Space is the essential context for this process.

The chance of space may set us down next to the unexpected neighbour. The multiplicity and the chance of space here in the constitution of place provide (an element of) that inevitable contingency which underlies the necessity for the institution of the social and which, at a moment of antagonism, is revealed in particular fractures which pose the question of the political (Massey, 2005:151)

Thrown-togetherness is at once local and global as the histories, trajectories and identities of different actors thrown together in space are inextricably linked to dynamic flows and processes. Places are characterised by change, so the thesis will begin to try and trace the trajectory of the space and also see the space as a product of individual trajectories or histories. Places and their ‘necessary spatiality (the positioning in relation to other trajectories or stories, for instance) is inseparable from and intrinsic to their character’ (Massey, 2005:12). Spaces and people are also temporally situated and relationally connected.

Massey, however, also admits that ‘the tendency to romanticise public space as an emptiness that enables free and equal speech does not take on board the need to theorise space and place as the product of social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal’ (Massey, 2005:152). One of the key aspects of Massey’s concept is conflict. She draws on the work of Chantal Mouffe here, which also focuses on conflict or antagonism as central to politics.

Political life concerns collective, public action; it aims at the construction of a “we” in a context of diversity and conflict. But to construct a “we”, it must be distinguished from the “they” and that means establishing a frontier, defining an “enemy”. (Mouffe, 1991:78)

Here, Mouffe’s draws on Carl Schmitt’s (1927) notion that politics relies on the friend/enemy relation and thus conflict is inherent within democracy. This is very important when thinking about a political community.

Therefore, while politics aims at constructing a political community and creating a unity, a fully inclusive political community and a final unity can never be realized since there will permanently be a “constitutive outside”, an exterior to the community that makes its existence possible. Antagonistic forces will never

disappear, and politics is characterized by conflict and division. Forms of agreement can be reached, but they are always partial and provisional since consensus is by necessity based upon acts of exclusion. (Mouffe, 1991:78)

The idea of a political community is difficult to conceive in any stable manner. Urban politics is highly complex and unstable, characterised by divisions and distinctions between the state and the people, but also through the internal conflicts that are inherent in any social space. Thus, antagonism remains present before action, during action and then remains in the very fabric of human relationships in a social space.

Rancière's theory of action over identity, and there being no specific identity for a political subject, fits well with the description of community politics; it is inclusive and broad. Massey states that poststructuralism has most importantly achieved 'the dynamisation and dislocation of structuralism's structures' (2005:42). This is an important contributing aspect of Rancière's theory, but also my point of departure from it. Whilst it functions as a postmodern take on politics, it provides no sense of temporality or historic context that could account for unevenness or conflict in social space. Whilst Rancière is well intentioned in his departure from homogenous political identities and structural representations, his theory remains abstract with no grounding sense of how politics plays out between individuals. This is where I would argue that the intervention of space as a context for theory is vital, and Massey's political theorisation of space provides the bridge to the next theoretical direction of this literature review. Developing my argument to incorporate Massey's notion of throwntogetherness begins to take into account the messiness of place-making and doing politics. In *For Space* (2005), Massey sets out the elements of conflict, power, chaos and chance imbued in this social process. In a following chapter of this thesis, I investigate these claims through an empirical case study, to scale down and examine the process of throwntogetherness on a local and interpersonal scale.

Amin (2004) describes how local turf is distinctive as it is a 'microworld that is experienced and contested as a lived space; as heterogeneity is negotiated habitually through struggles over 'roads and noise, public spaces, siting decisions, neighbourhoods and neighbours, housing developments, street life and so on' (ibid:39). The occupation at Kinning Park was an example of these local struggles for turf, the people on one side and the local state held accountable on the other. However, this local turf is also a dynamic space or field of 'agonistic engagement'. It is 'an arena of claims and counter-claims,

agreements and coalitions that are always temporary and fragile, always the product of negotiation and changing intersectional dynamics, always spreading out to wherever a claim on turf or on proximate strangers is made or to where novelty is generated by juxtaposition' (Amin, 2004:39). Here, Amin is referring to the face-to-face interactions between people within material space. We may describe these relations between individuals as a 'politics of propinquity' (Amin, 2004), but these face-to-face relations are much more complex than they seem in Amin's theorisation. The model of politics based on a decentralised, autonomous face-to-face relationships should not be privileged as the ideal opposite of state managed technocratic decision making (Young, 1990), as individuals also carry their share of societal baggage which plays out relationally. The next section uses the work of Pierre Bourdieu to delve into relationality and try to account for individual subjectivities that interact in social space.

## **2.4 Relationality in Political Space: Using Bourdieu's Field and Habitus**

Following on from these points, a key element of the thesis is to scale down, to investigate the messy everyday practices that emerge from throwing together various individuals to run a shared space independently. In particular, there is a need to highlight the practical struggles involved in funding and running a community space that was previously produced and funded by the state. Since 1996, KPC has been an independently run public community centre, the way the centre has been run and managed has been on a very experimental basis. Furthermore, the rhythms and flows of neoliberalism do implicate the people who produce and consume the community centre (Laurie and Bondi, 2006). Each individual enters KPC with their own historic life trajectories – which encompass particular dispositions, opinions, and economic statuses, social and political ways of being. Peoples' trajectories are at once pre-existing and ever evolving, but they are also inherently uneven when they meet in physical space. At this point of departure, I want to expand and deepen Massey's notion of throwntogetherness (2005) to emphasise the *relational* aspect of this concept and, in the chapters that follow, to investigate the relations empirically. By relational, I refer to the social relations and interactions between individuals within space. I want to enrich the concept to emphasise that random individuals are indeed 'thrown together' in a urban community spaces like KPC – but that this is not a coming together of equals as a synoptic account of politics would suggest (Lemke, 1995:28; see also Hillier and Rooksby, 2005).

This approach takes a divergent approach from that of Rancière, whose theory, whilst being malleable and anti-essentialist, fails to grasp the messy social relations between individuals in partitioned spaces, which Massey would argue actually produce the politics of place. So in order to investigate the politics of KPC, a more grounded theorisation and investigation is required to account for the moments of antagonism and conflict. Community organisations, in practice, show that ‘society does not cooperate as harmoniously as suggested within the world of social capitalists, where categories of exploitation and power have no space, where in fact neither multinational corporations and banks nor oppositional movements ever appear as actors’ (Mayer, 2003:119). Thus, Massey’s notion of throwntogetherness is useful in my theorisation, to focus on these sorts of fleshy social relations in urban politics and to use her dynamic notion of space as ‘causal, transformative, and is itself always in the making’ (Dikeç, 2012:I).

As Massey suggests, what is required is a change in the angle of vision that moves away from a modernist version (one temporality, no space) towards a post-modern one (all space, no time). Rancière’s notion of politics could be said to represent the latter:

Politics, indeed, is not the exercise of, or struggle for, power. It is the configuration of a specific space, the framing of a particular sphere of experience, of objects posited as common and as pertaining to a common decision, of subjects recognised as capable of designating these objects and putting forward arguments about them. (Rancière, 2009:24)

I argue that this is an empty account of space that merely functions as a static container; it is unclear how the actors relate to one another given their social status and personal histories. If we are to produce a deeper theorisation of a space it must take into account its many dimensions and also the relations within it. In order to investigate the relational aspect of throwntogetherness, I am incorporating the work of a very different theorist: Pierre Bourdieu. I use Massey’s concept of throwntogetherness to bridge the work of Bourdieu and Rancière. I am fully aware of the theoretical tensions between these theorists, as I discuss in more depth in the following methodology chapter. I aim to retain Rancière’s broad conception of the political subject, as potentially anyone and without a fixed identity. I also retain his generative notion of political action as designated as a distribution of sensible and insensible subject and actions, but I aim to investigate the relations between people. Before this, I want to move away from the focus on the subjected

self and focus instead on the social relations of political action and the historical conditions of particular social identities in a space by setting out Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field. Bourdieu, below, describes social space as a topology; this metaphor serves well as it takes into account the multidimensionality of space.

Initially, sociology presents itself as a social topology. Thus, the social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution (Bourdieu, 1985:723)

A topology infers the unevenness and relationality of actors within a space. Bourdieu's notions of field and habitus help to unpack, contextualise and home in on the messy everyday practices, negotiations and interactions at KPC. This section focuses on the concepts of field and habitus.

#### **2.4.1 Field**

Turning to issues of urban studies and land use planning theory and practice, geographers such as Thrift (2004) and Bridge (2001) continue to call on field and habitus as a fundamental concept in understanding what Thrift terms 'knowledges of position' and the concomitant spaces of anticipation as forms of social power (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:12). Other geographers have also utilised the notions of field and habitus when investigating place-making processes Hillier and Rooksby (2005), argue that one of Bourdieu's key contributions to our understanding of behaviour is the distinction between synoptic and participatory views of activity. Where synoptic approaches view the activity process from a theoretical distance, describing what is taking or has taken place, participatory views regard action from a participant's standpoint. Hillier and Rooksby (2005) argue that participatory perspectives emphasises the 'perspectival nature of behaviour' and 'habitus provides a link between these two views' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:21). Others have agreed with the usefulness of habitus corroborating that 'it mediates between a synoptic view of activity of a community and a dynamic view of the processes by which these activities are actually enacted on specific occasions by humans' (Lemke 1995: 3). I would further add that utilising Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus provides a close examination of power and politics on an interpersonal scale; something that would add to the depth of Massey's notion of throwntogetherness.

For Bourdieu, the notion of habitus is of course relational, but I would develop this point to suggest that different habituses become more apparent as a result of throwntogetherness; which reveals the relational heterogeneity of different actors; space provides the context for these clashes to occur and differences to emerge and, importantly, to co-exist. Therefore, relationality exposes the material and symbolic differences and inequalities between actors. Rancière also acknowledges the resulting spatial reconfiguration resulting from a political moment, but does not account for the messy process through which this is achieved and continues to exist. Thus, Massey's spatial theory provides the thesis with an important bridging point in bringing together Rancière and Bourdieu's ideas. Relationality is integral to Massey's concept of throwntogetherness, while Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field deepen our understanding of the ways people relate to one another in space. In my theorisation, habitus will be treated as multiple, interacting and evolving, contributing to an agentic development of Bourdieuan theory.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus identifies different forms of capital that take their position in the social field, functioning together as this (rather crude) formula shows:

$$[(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice} \text{ (Bourdieu, 1984: 101)}$$

For Bourdieu, society is organised into a series of fields, where a field is defined as 'a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97). Agents within this field are positioned according to the amount of capital they possess, comprised as the 'habitus', and 'in the determinations they impose upon their occupants' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97). I would argue that there is a productive engagement to be made by combining Bourdieu's concept of field and Massey's notion of relational space.

Urban community centres can be thought of as 'fields', with diverse actors engaging with one another in these public spaces. I also want to take this idea of social space one step further to look at how people actually socially relate to the physical space; Bourdieu confronts the intersection between social and physical space, 'the structure of social space shows up as spatial oppositions, with the inhabited (or appropriated) space functioning as a sort of spontaneous symbolisation of social space' (Bourdieu and Balazs, 1999:124). Therefore, we also visualise space as a reflection of existing social relations. Agents and groups of agents are situated relationally within that space in three ways. First,

symbolically, through social interaction; and second, physically, in the different areas of the building that they occupy; and third, in the multiple ways in which people relate to community centres as ‘places’ (ie. how they see and use KPC and what KPC means to them). All of these ways of thinking, acting and relating to a space inform actions that occur in community spaces. Bourdieu often refers to space and uses spatial metaphors to describe sociology, for example in this quotation:

The structures of the social space (or of fields) shape bodies by inculcating in them, through the conditionings associated with a position in that space, the cognitive structures that these conditionings apply to them. More precisely, the social world, because it is an object of knowledge for those who are included in it, is, in part, the reified or incorporated product of all the different (and rival) acts of knowledge of which it is the object. (Bourdieu, 2000:183)

#### **2.4.2 Habitus**

Geographers have described Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as inherently spatial (Casey, 2001). ‘Habitus’ refers to ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures’ (Bourdieu, 1990:53). An agent’s habitus comprises of different forms of capital. Firstly, economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money (Bourdieu, 1986:84). Secondly, social capital, which refers to the power and resources attributed to an agent due the social networks and contacts individuals possess. Thirdly, cultural capital, that refers to skills and knowledge gained through education and early socialisation (Bourdieu, 1986). Finally, this coalesces as symbolic capital, ‘the form which the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate’ (Bourdieu, 1991:17). The concept of habitus can be used to explain the social clashing and mixing of different people, as people are unequally resourced with various forms of capital and thus hold different positions in the social field. Habitus also can be understood as a flexible and generative concept: Bourdieu explains that the habitus may be ‘cleaved’ or ‘torn’, bearing ‘the mark of the contradictions which produced it’ (Bourdieu, 2000: 78). Many other authors agree that these concepts can be used in this flexible and non-deterministic way.

Habitus is a generative phenomenon...capable of regulated improvisation, or the ability to transform to fit new circumstances and experiences on occasions when

agents' habitual responses break down or clash and when agents consciously reflect on themselves and their changed contexts, and reconstruct their habitus accordingly. (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:13).

Real life situations require agents to respond according to their habitus; which is thus flexible and constantly adapting to situations. Habitus is also therefore, intrinsically about performativity (McNay: 2004); where subjectivities interact, clash and are reconciled, we can think of community as something that is performed. Thus 'performing' community in our terms here is a result of the varied habituses of those involved and their positions in the social field. 'The social norms and expectations reproduced through everyday sociability subconsciously frame identity performances and are, at least partially, incorporated into individuals' subjectivity, with effects on current and future social relationships' (Holt, 2008:240), and so the habitus can also evolve in a positive way. This performativity can be examined in very critical terms to seeing these performances as entrenching social inequalities (see Butler, 1997). In Chapters 5 and 6, I show how a space like KPC is one where the diversity of actors thrown together facilitates chance encounters and bring to light the passive performance of social norms. I also show how KPC is a space where habitus can be challenged and progressive identities can be cultivated. 'Individuals are not immersed inextricably in any single habitus, but can move from one to another, and can develop new adaptive behaviours within a habitus' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:14).

Bourdieu's notion of habitus takes into account actors' personal trajectories, which sets the context for the resulting interactions. Taking an 'agentic' reading of habitus emphasises the point that 'we make ourselves through our various ways of acting; our habits are a residue of our previous patterns of action' (Crossley, 2002: 172). Casey related Bourdieu's concept of habitus to place very clearly: 'a given habitus is always enacted in a particular place and incorporates the features inherent in previous such places, all of which are linked by a habitudinal bond' (Casey 2001: 686). Through a particular history of place-making, people form autonomous or grassroots community spaces, and the concept of habitus allows theorisation of this process to merge history and geography. Urban public spaces provoke both personal and collective visceral attachments, particularly when spaces are born out of community struggle and solidarity. Other people, may be more ambivalent to radical histories, or simply feel no affinity to such histories, and this range of perceptions about spaces informs the activities that go on within them. When thrown together in the production and consumption of a space, people's multiple understandings become evident.

## **2.5 Collective economy of social practice in community politics**

Utilising Bourdieu's theories when exploring empirical realities can bring to light traces of exclusion and power in community politics, to appreciate the economy of social practices in urban community politics. Whilst the previous section looked at the heterogeneity of the community and highlighted difference through people's different habituses, we saw how throwtogetherness can reveal traces of exclusion and power, 'so that they can enter the terrain of contestation' (Mouffe, 1993:149). Indeed, the ideal of community denies and represses social difference; in reality, 'the polity cannot be thought of as a unity in which all participants share a common experience and common values' (Young, 1990:227).

However, a dynamic and agentic theorisation of habitus, conceives habitus as both a 'a product of history' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:21). And also something that is constantly subjected to experiences, 'and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies their structures' (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992:133). We can investigate the generative effects of different people participating in politics in a shared community space. Rather than seeing the inequality of capitals as something that segregates people through emphasising difference, this section theorises the ways that both embodied capitals and material resources can be collectivised and used in resourceful and socially progressive ways. How both resources and capitals are shared, are also evident in the forms of labour performed at KPC. During my time as a volunteer, I built up a picture of the collective economy of social practice at KPC and how certain embodied capitals and material resources, such as roles, skills and trained capacities, are collectivised to run the community centre from 1996 and still today.

Firstly, embodied capitals, as referred to in the previous section on habitus, are certain dispositions and subjectivities made up of three forms of capital; social, cultural and economic. Bourdieu's notion of habitus is useful because it accounts for peoples' particular subjectivities; the agency inscribed in those subjectivities is shaped according to the capital that an agent possesses. Habitus does leave scope for individual agency, described as 'multiple, interacting and evolving' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:14). Thus, if people with different capitals mix, they are able to collectivise these capitals, learn new skills and expand and strengthen social networks. Shared physical space is the essential context for

this. If we imagine the various habituses of agents relationally in a material space (or social field), then we begin to map out a generative and dynamic theorisation of social space.

Political struggles bring together many different people. At KPC in 1996, the occupation brought together community workers, mothers with young children in the after school care group, artists and activists. Individual trajectories collided in space and new political identities and subjectivities emerged, as the following chapters will discuss empirically. ‘The whole history of the social field is present, at each moment, both in a materialized and embodied form’ (Bourdieu, 1985:738-9). So within the political field more specifically, the notion of a radical habitus takes experience of politics into account, thus seeing activists (and non-activists) as ‘historical beings’, ‘affected and transformed by significant life events’ prior to their decision regarding participation in contentious politics (Crossley, 2002:176). I think that this idea is useful when considering participation in contentious politics, especially contentious community politics, because, if we begin to conceive the community as heterogeneous, we can also understand the political participation within the community as uneven. In reality, contentious political movements encompass ‘congeries of overlapping networks, each with its own particular history, political vision and organisational forms’ (Juris, 2008:59). Chatterton (2006) notes that simply assuming an encounter between activists and non-activists to be played as equals is not this simple; in fact it is highly problematic. Thus, Bourdieu’s concept of fields as ‘sites of strategy and social struggle’ is a more accurate depiction (Painter, 2000:244) that provides a framework for thinking about movement formation ‘in a differentiated society’ (Crossley, 2002:180). Political involvement informs people’s values, frames, repertoires, narratives, symbolic boundaries and cultural capital, and an individual’s habitus is a pre-requisite for initial participation in P/politics and also determines their likely success in the field of P/politics (Crossley, 2003).

Bourdieu would argue that some activists develop dispositions or skilled capacities that allow them to ‘think, feel, and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu’ (Wacquant 2005: 316). Particular dispositions predispose some actors to choose to participate in political activities, such as a sit-in, which relate to their previous experiences and learned expertise as activists. Their knowledge as a resource is thus unequal in comparison with other, less experienced people, yet can be shared amongst those participating in a collective struggle.

Community struggle often encompasses a diverse range of people, as for example in the formation of Italian Autonomous Social Centres during the 1970s. These movements incorporated a multiplicity of people, as social centres became ‘the melting pot for different social and cultural milieus’ (Membetti, 2007:253). ‘Social centres found themselves all of a sudden at the centre of public attention; they met with unexpected solidarity from the general public’ (Mudu, 2004:931). In such settings, diverse groups interacted and generated elements of ‘chaos, openness and uncertainty’ that made these spaces potentially ‘creative crucibles of for the democratic sphere’ (Massey, 2004:153).

Those individuals with a political subjectivity or a ‘radical habitus’ (Crossley, 2003) were pre-disposed and socially equipped to enter into political activism from previous experience alongside others with less experience and skills and knowledge were thereby shared in these spaces. Rather than accept autonomous spaces as a homogenously egalitarian, it is useful to think about the heterogeneity of community spaces and thus the inherent unevenness of personal resources and political action within them in order to examine how a generative form of throwntogetherness is operationalised in reality. The multidimensionality of the habitus, or the multiple articulations determining any given situation, ‘creates contexts in which conflict, innovation, and change are frequently features of the production of social relations’ (Joseph, 2002: 34). Thus, expertise can be passed on and shared in a group of very different people with uneven forms of capital and skills, as in a community setting.

How activist expertise plays out is, of course, also affected by the internal power dynamics and broader social conventions; the following empirical chapters discuss these instances during the occupation in 1996 and today at KPC. Forms of capital or social and political resources function as a social relation. Resource mobilization, the use of financial and political resources by social movements, is a readily accepted strategy for social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). However, this theorisation does not take into account the social dynamics within a movement, which assumes equality amongst all those who are participating in a political field.

Being exchangeable, however, for Bourdieu, ‘capitals assume different forms and originate in various fields structuring a concrete social order and, as a result, it is possible to locate them empirically and interpret how accumulation of different forms of capital creates

distinct forms of hierarchies and volumes of power' (Navarro, 2006:17). For example, activist communities exist within broader communities and certain sub-cultural capital is attributed to activist sub-cultures (Kennely, 2008:74). In my theorisation, Bourdieu's theory should not be reduced to an economic, class determinism; I argue that capital and power is possessed in many forms in different social fields. In urban community settings, where economic capital is a scarce resource, social and cultural capital become important resources in the mobilisation and networking potential of the community, and these capitals – as any form – are not evenly distributed.

Thus, the Bourdieuan perspective highlights cultural resource mobilization between agents within a social movement, through the ways that symbolic capital informs social relations within the field. Moreover, we can understand the economy of social practices as utilizing more concrete and material resources such as skill sets and technical knowledge. Furthermore, things like spare time, ability to manage funding applications from third sector bodies, local organizing capacity, social capital from social networks, indigenous 'folk knowledges' about local culture are all unquantifiable resources used by communities in political struggle (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013). More 'resourceful' communities are better positioned 'to take nuanced positions on public policy issues, as well as to propose policies and imagine feasible alternatives and the concrete steps necessary to enact those alternatives' (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:264). This approach respects those involved in producing the space as individuals with agency and rejects a passive notion of the resilient community. It also presents the local space as a dynamic sphere of relations, 'a contemporaneous multiplicity and as always under construction' (Massey, 2005: 148):

resourcefulness is not only spatially grounded in identifiable local spaces, but also open and relational in terms of both recognizing the wider politics of justice that often underpin local activism. (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:265)

The resourcefulness of labour in the community combines radical capital embodied in the activist habitus with other material skills and capacities. Community work encompasses many roles, as youth workers, community development workers, activists, volunteers, community artists, treasurers, committee members. Social and cultural capital can also shape relations between individuals in the community through performing labour. Labour functions as a form of social currency and shapes identities and personas in mixed social spaces such as community centres. When jobs are low-paid or precarious, we ascribe other

values to certain positions: for example, the cultural capital attributed to being an artist, or the social capital required of a youth worker. These resources can often prove more ‘valuable’ than money in the roles they have in the community; thus, in this case, we can think of how labour shapes agency, rather than the other way around.

In reducing the social world to the economic field alone, it is forced to define social position solely in terms of position in the relations of economic production and consequently ignores positions in the different fields and sub-fields, particularly in the relations of cultural production, as well as all the oppositions that structure the social field, which are irreducible to the opposition between owners and non-owners of the means of economic production. (Bourdieu, 1985: 736)

When different individuals that thrown together, encounters between people expose the various forms of capital integral to community politics; for example, the youth worker who knows the hierarchies of young people in a local area and their positions occupied in the social field, or the artists with certain sensibilities or cultural knowledge who can pass this on to those never exposed to these ideas before. ‘People who are very distant from each other in social space can encounter one another and interact, if only briefly and intermittently, in physical space’ (Bourdieu, 1989:16).

## **2.6 Theorising Space Politics and Community**

This chapter introduced a conversation between two very different theorists, and has shown how Bourdieu and Rancière’s contrasting perspectives provide a fruitful disruption and antagonism between structure and agency, which will continue to be explored throughout the thesis. This section outlines the main features of the disagreement between Rancière and Bourdieu, situating their work within the political context of Marxism in France post May 1968. The May 1968 protests in France marked a shift for political movements and a turning point for Marxism. For French theorists such as Rancière, May 1968 embodied the dichotomy between the traditional social critique of the worker and the artistic critique of the students. Rancière’s work essentially aims to bridge this divide between the social and artistic critique, through his break away from the Althusserian ideology (Reid, 1989:xxii-xxiii). The disagreement that emerged between Bourdieu and Rancière exemplifies the post-1968 split in left thinking.

As aforementioned, following the 1960s, Marxism arguably took two divergent paths; the Althusserian position, which stated that the working class needed ideology (or, rather, ideological education) as the locus of their struggle, and another which asserted that class-consciousness would emerge from within working class popular culture. After being a former student of Althusser, and having collaborated with him on *Reading Capital* (1968/1970), in 1973 Rancière broke with this line of thought and first explicitly criticised the Althusserian position. In an article written in 1973<sup>2</sup>, Rancière sets out the main features of the Althusserian position on ideology. He firstly states that the Althusserian position on the uses of ideology to ensure the social cohesion of society in fact enforces classifications upon people. Thus, through the designations of class, people are assigned their position in society and are thus regulated to this position within the structure. Secondly, Rancière argues that the Althusserian position constructs ideology as the opposite of science, thus elevating ideology and academic knowledge to a ‘higher’ position that treats the subject as stuck in his or her class position. This, Rancière asserts, was politically inept, elitist and disempowering, and the May 1968 revolts in France provided the context for this thinking and subsequent break with Althusser:

Not only did the Althusserian theoretical presuppositions prevent us from understanding the political meaning of the student revolt. But further, within a year we saw Althusserianism serving the hacks of revisionism in a theoretical justification for the ‘anti-leftist’ offensive and the defence of academic knowledge. (Rancière, 1974:2)

This argument was also published in Rancière’s first book *Althusser’s Lesson* (1974) and was reiterated even more clearly in *Disagreement* (1999), where Rancière states that Althusserian theoretical presuppositions in political philosophy attempt to speak the truth on the practice of social or political actors, as a truth that actors would, or could, not think themselves. Rancière criticised Althusser’s prioritisation of ‘structure’ (social structure and class relationships to ideology) over ‘agency’ (engaged individual experience, interpretation and action). Rancière’s practical commitment to disrupting this dichotomy can also be seen in his doctoral thesis, *The Nights of Labour* (1989), as discussed earlier in this chapter, where his methodological approach to writing the book was to highlight examples of workers who contradicted and disrupted their ‘assigned’ class positions. By bringing to light in his academic practice examples of workers who refuse their class

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<sup>2</sup> Later translated into English, and published in *Radical Philosophy* in 1974.

position, Rancière was also able to operationalise his own ideological position against a top down imposition of ideology. The top down imposition of ideology could be seen as a legacy of a classic Marxist vanguardism, whereas Rancière's work, instead, tends to favour how individuals, in their social and aesthetic engagements with the world, can arrive at their own resistant politics.

The work of Bourdieu could be seen as being more deterministic, and, as some authors would argue, instigating a continuation of the Althusserian position that Rancière so heavily criticised (Ross, 1991). Bourdieu's approach appears to take a detached sociological analysis of subjects to describe the nature of social structures and the ways in which class manifests itself culturally in everyday life through tastes and distinctions, as most clearly set out in his seminal work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984). As I have mentioned earlier in the chapter, Bourdieu describes these everyday performances of class in the *field* as *habitus*. Bourdieu's work was, and still is, highly influential in France and beyond. When referring to Bourdieu (and the historian Francois Furet), Ross (2009:21-22) states:

It is not, I think, an exaggeration, to say that these two academics - with the various associates, journals and équipes de travail each presided over, and the institutional privileges each was granted - virtually controlled the production and direction of countless French intellectual careers in and beyond their respective disciplines throughout the 1980s.

Bourdieu's cultural approach to class and his inherently *relational* approach to describing class culture have undeniably been taken on and have hugely informed the social sciences. Thus, Bourdieu's accepted influence within the academy, and broad appeal outside, made him a target of critique for Rancière, whose political aim has always been to disrupt and unsettle accepted ideologies and class designations, as explained in his critique of the Althusserian position. This was especially true after 1995, when Bourdieu's work arguably took an existential turn, if not a theoretical one, alongside increasingly militant political activities (Ross, 2009:22). Bourdieu himself did not respond directly to Rancière, but does make a general rejection of a theoretical continuity with Althusser in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000:38) and explicitly criticises Althusser in an interview in 1986:

My intention was to bring real-life actors back in who had vanished at the hands of Lévi-Strauss and other structuralists, especially Althusser, through being considered as epiphenomena of structures. I do mean ‘actors’ not ‘subjects’. An action is not the mere carrying out of a rule. (Bourdieu as quoted in Honneth et al. 1986:41)

However, Rancière strongly refutes Bourdieu’s epistemological standpoint, suggesting that it ‘hinges on the phenomenon of misrecognition and Bourdieu’s definition of sociology as a “science of the hidden”’ (Pelletier, 2009:139). Rancière provides an explicit critique of Bourdieu, berating him as the ‘sociologist-king’, in his own words, in *The Philosopher and His Poor* (2004):

Everything happens as if the science of the sociologist-king had the same requirement as the city of the philosopher-king. There must be no mixing, no imitation. The subjects of this science ... must be unable to “imitate” anything else than their own dye. (Rancière, 2004:189)

This critique of Bourdieu, as the ‘sociologist king’, chimes with Rancière’s former critique of the Althusserian position, suggesting that description and ideology in relation to class serve to do nothing more than to keep subjects in their ‘place’ in society. Indeed, the concept of habitus could be seen as deterministic, treating subjects, as if they were indeed ‘unable to imitate anything but their own dye’ (ibid).

Thus, we can understand Bourdieu’s split from Althusser as trying to elaborate on a concept of class that put more focus on the social and cultural aspects of class, which gives cultural and social aspects of class some autonomy from the traditional economic definition of class. However, for Rancière, this theorisation of class still remains structural, and individuals remain classified, as it were. Thus they are ideologically designated to a certain class and thus locked into their own ‘habitual dye’. According to Rancière’s perspective, this prevents the disruption of class determinations and fails to permit workers to mobilise resources, not just economic, but also cultural or social resources, ultimately to disrupt the ‘distribution of the sensible’ and therefore become ‘political’. Thus, Rancière would argue that ideology that determines class position presents an external and ideologically leading influence on people’s agency.

In earlier work, specifically the translators' introduction to Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), Ross argues that Rancière's critique of Bourdieu's work essentially reiterates this critique of Althusser's form of Marxism, which arguably denies agency to the worker. I would argue that a critique targeting Bourdieu specifically is also a reflection of the context of academia in France at the time, where the work of Bourdieu was largely accepted, especially in the field of educational studies and was even employed in the ways that research on education and institutions were studied. It is also true that the work of Foucault was as influential in social sciences at the time and still today, and Rancière's work perhaps has more parallels with that of Foucault; indeed, his debt to Foucault is even acknowledged in Rancière's work (1999).

The other main theorist discussed in this chapter, Massey, however, states her debt to Althusser (Massey, 1995). Nevertheless, she explains that her particular reading of Althusser identified a certain 'open temporality', which, in her reading, allowed the 'enablement of new relations' (Massey, 2005). Thus, for Massey, Althusser was read in a less deterministic manner, especially when rearticulated by theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe during the 1980s (Featherstone and Painter, 2013). In terms of the work of Bourdieu, Massey does not directly refer to him in her own works, but, as Savage (2011) suggests, turning to Bourdieu's field analysis as a form of enquiry 'enables us to operationalise the kind of relational strategies which Doreen Massey rightly sees as essential to an adequate theory of spatiality' (ibid, 2011:512). Hence we can see links between Massey and Bourdieu's relational approaches, both authors embracing relationality and reminding us how thinking relationally, but not deterministically, is important in understanding how class and power operates within a space. I argue that Massey's overarching spatial theory, but specifically her (2005) notion of throwntogetherness, suggests that spatial politics is unquestionably relational and imbued with an open temporality. This allows my conceptual approach to encompass both Bourdieu's and Rancière's articulations of politics when understood in a spatial context. Thus, I draw upon all three authors for my empirically grounded depiction of a political community in this thesis. The next section concludes with a summary of the four main theoretical contributions claimed by the thesis.

The thesis attempts to address the fact that a political community is not the coming together of equals, so in my own theorisation I retain a structural critique by utilising the work of Bourdieu. The previous sections attempted to explain that habitus does not

necessarily need to be used to determine class, but to begin to illuminate and explain the unevenness of agents in social space. For Bourdieu, emancipation is a temporal issue, which is the product of realisation and struggle, whereas for Rancière there is no other means of achieving equality than to assume it from the start, and then systematically to verify it (Pelletier, 2009). Rancière emphasises that a political subject ‘is not a group that ‘becomes aware’ of itself, finds its voice, imposes its weight on society’ (Rancière, 1999:40). Thus, Rancière would argue that Bourdieu’s approach, for example his notion of habitus, presents class culture in a crude and deterministic manner which denies agency for action in the present. However, my theoretical stance is between these positions, one that is hopeful but at the same time realistic about the limitations that people face and various forms of capital with which we are unevenly resourced. My theorisation suggests that the social field is uneven to begin with, so to assume that every individual enters into a situation, such as an occupation at a community centre, with analogous social and political subjectivities, would be ludicrous. Thus, I utilise Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus, as a contextual notion, which helps to situate individual subjectivity, as a historic culmination of social, cultural and economic capital. I concur that habitus ‘emphasizes that capitals are not simply inculcated in a vacuum; rather individuals’ capital accumulation occurs within specific spatial moments – themselves not neutral and pre-existing, but becoming through everyday performances and within broader ‘power geometries’(Holt, 2008:239). At KPC, as will become evident in later chapters, when different trajectories collided during the occupation, each individual arrived with their own history, perspective and forms of capital, but all with a common political ambition to save their community centre.

Whilst Bourdieu and particularly his notion of habitus helped to theorise the unevenness of social space and the varied personal histories of people who engage in community politics, I also retain Rancière’s more dynamic notion of the political subject in my conceptualisation of the political community. In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu illustrates through numerous interviews that politics is not something in which we all engage on equal terms. He identifies how some individuals act ‘as fish in water’ within the field of politics because of their economic, social and cultural capital. Rather than strive to prove this deterministic assumption, I have chosen to give evidence to the contrary, in line with Rancière’s ‘method of equality’ explained earlier in the chapter and expanded upon in the next following methodological chapter. Rancière asserts that ‘politics has no proper place, nor any natural subjects’ (2009:39). In the following chapters, I aim to illustrate how the ‘non-representative’ political subjects exist in various forms KPC, past and present. This

theorisation is particularly applicable to a community setting. Community politics at KPC involve and have involved, diverse political actors and so unsettle a deterministic notion that politics occurs in proper places or by proper subjects. I show that diverse communities work in partitioned spaces, and the political subject exists beyond predefined, structural stereotypes. Finally, space is the important contextual anchor for a heterogeneous political community, as I discuss next.

Thirdly, physical space in a city provides the stage for encounter and politics. When diverse political actors come together in physical space, relationality reveals uneven and complex social relations; the chapters that follow explore these social relations in depth. Relationality is thus essential to my theorisation of community politics, which is where Massey's concept of space, and more specifically throwntogetherness, become vital. 'Doing politics' in the community is chaotic and conflictual; Massey's concept of throwntogetherness alludes to this messy, conflict ridden space where paths cross. The unevenness that I explain through Bourdieu's notions of the habitus would be meaningless without social relations. When individuals relate to one another in the social 'field' or 'space', with all the baggage of personal life trajectories or habitus in a community setting, this throwntogetherness reveals how unevenly resourced are the present actors, possessing diverse forms of capital. The exchange and collectivisation of non-monetary capitals also occurs, and this process unsettles the idea of a homogenous and harmonious community. So, through observing throwntogetherness and how it is operationalised empirically, we can consider conflict in this relational process of place-making *as generative*, where conflict in Bourdieu's theory of 'field' is more destructive.

Finally, by examining the tangible practices of engagement between people at KPC during my ethnographic fieldwork, the moments of antagonism and conflict were visible to me. In the empirical chapters that follow, I will examine these moments and endeavour to highlight the personal and collective struggle of people at KPC. One of the main objectives is to understand how various forms of labour are performed 'for the good of the community' at KPC whilst, importantly, also taking into account the contemporary political conjuncture that is characterised by privatisation and cuts to the welfare state. My case study provides an in-depth analysis of the effects of this process of cheapening and 'voluntarising' vital community provision since 1996. The huge amount of work required in keeping the community centre open impacts upon people and the social relations in the space and therefore I examine how labour is shaping peoples agency at KPC. Labour and

agency are experienced differently at KPC; some people find working at KPC empowering, others feel they are acting as a cheap replacement for state provision. People's varied experience of low paid work, artistic practice, volunteer labour and 'community work' more broadly are diverse, and contribute to the theorisation of KPC as a paradoxical space. Thus, theorising KPC as either a passive victim of structural and state violence or more idealistically as a completely empowering, autonomous project would not be appropriate. Rather, my experience as a volunteer at KPC has situated my perspective between the two, so the thesis provides a nuanced account of the position and the role of KPC in the wider political context, seeing KPC as implicated 'in, against and beyond neoliberalism' (Featherstone et al, 2015).

# Chapter 3: Methodology

One cannot grasp the profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality (Bourdieu, 1993:271)

This chapter discusses my methodology, which involved ethnography that also included a participatory approach as a volunteer. The first section explains my relationship to KPC and explains how I came to be a volunteer at the community centre. I then discuss ethnography as a research method, drawing on the methodological approach of Bourdieu. I also critically unpack this method to discuss the ways that a different theorist, Rancière, has also influenced my approach to research and epistemology in a very different way. This leads on to a final section that returns to my personal experiences at KPC and the emotions involved in being part of such an intense and lively space. It must be emphasised that KPC is a dynamic space. Following and recording the space as an ever-shifting constellation of social interaction has been one of the main challenges of the research process. Simply keeping up to date with the situation at KPC has required constant careful negotiation of my position and my relationship with people at KPC. This has been compounded by the changing external political context, and KPC's uneasy relationship with the City Council and their policymaking is something that I will deal with in more depth in later chapters.

## 3.1 My relationship to KPC: Between ethnography and participation

I first attended KPC on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to attend a talk, film and discussion event called 'Internationalism From Below – from John Maclean to Tahrir Square?' The event was a discussion and film screening organised by the Strickland Distribution, a radical arts, non-institutional research collective. When I arrived at KPC, the imposing Victorian school building struck me. Attached to a block of old sandstone tenements, it stands in contrast to the busy motorway situated right next to the building. KPC is situated between nearby Paisley Road and the motorway. The Kinning Park subway station is opposite KPC, so the community centre is one of the first buildings you encounter when you come up from the subway. As you cross the road from the subway the traffic noise from the motorway and the subway train surrounds you. Inside, the building is a cold, sturdy Victorian school and, when you explore the high ceilings and staircases, it reveals its longing for rejuvenation and repair. The sheer size of the building and thus the scale of the renovation that the

building requires seem overwhelming. When I first visited the community centre in October 2011, the paint was flaking from the walls and ceilings, and there were buckets collecting rainwater on the upper levels. Since 1996, just a handful of volunteers have looked after the building and the amount of labour that this maintenance must have required seemed quite astonishing.

In February 2012, our Human Geography Research Group held an away day at KPC, and once again, I found myself in the hall admiring the work that was going on there. The theme of the away day was coincidentally ‘dissemination’, so we had a number of talks from people involved in community organisations around Glasgow. Lindsay, the manager at KPC at the time, talked about Kinning Park. I was impressed with the space, the eclectic mix of activities and people that use the building. The walls were and still are covered with posters for gigs, events and meetings, past and present. Artists in the building have hung their work on the walls. There is a huge canvas in the main hall that depicts a Scottish landscape. There are bits of old theatre set from past productions, exercise mats and sports and sound equipment stored everywhere. When Lindsay gives people ‘the tour’ of the building, he also shows you the studios, each one rented by a different group. Behind each studio door is a unique creative space. One studio is full of steel drums; another full of large puppets; another paintings; one, shared by a four bands, full of musical instruments. The artists say hello, have a chat and go downstairs for a coffee in the communal kitchen. In the large assembly halls, zumba classes take place, the music spills out into the corridor as the windows steam up with all the sweaty activity. The Asian women’s group finishes in the hall downstairs and the chairs are slowly stacked, the children from the dance school burst in, followed by parents, and the man with a toasty machine sets up to sell snacks to parents and kids between classes. KPC is a space of diverse community provision, each area of the building is multifunctional and constantly in use. KPC allows people from very different lifestyles to encounter one another. The physical space of the community centre is the vital context for these diverse encounters and so KPC is a socially valuable and unique space in Glasgow.

I began volunteering at KPC in April 2012, having visited the centre on a number of occasions for different events and workshops. Initially KPC was not the case study in my thesis, I just wanted to get involved at KPC as I had recently moved to Glasgow and thought it would be a good way to get to know people in the city. In April 2012, I decided to contact the building manager, Lindsay, to ask if they needed a hand a few weeks after

the away day. Lindsay responded quickly and casually invited me to get involved. It took very little time for me to begin volunteering as ‘part of the family’ (Lindsay’s words) at KPC. From April 2012 I began volunteering at KPC to help with ‘anything that needs done’! From painting and pulling down ceilings, to applying for grants and working as bar staff at events, I was thrown into a variety of activities and kindly trusted with responsibility. This personalised my relationship with KPC and the people whom I now consider friends. In terms of my research, I now occupy a subjective position with an emotional connection to the project and being part of KPC was thus a ‘transformative encounter, based on solidarity’ often derived from an ‘emotional response’ to the world during a research process (Chatterton et al, 2007:220). Spaces such as KPC ‘constitute special socio-spatial arenas governed by the discourses and practices of participation’ (Kesby et al, 2007:24). Thus, being part of my research, in a participatory capacity, has fostered a great fondness for KPC that remains today.

As aforementioned, my methodology combined elements of participatory research with critical ethnography. My research is not exclusively ethnographic, as I worked as a volunteer at KPC, thus being a part of the ‘object of study’. However, at times, I had to retain some critical distance in order to observe and record social dynamics, and thus I would argue that the researcher will neither be truly participatory nor exclusively detached and ethnographic. I began carrying out ethnographic observations as a volunteer in April 2012 and the most intense involvement was for over 18 months, and involved volunteering at KPC every Thursday, plus occasional weekends and evenings. The events attended were very varied, from film screenings, to large parties and music gigs to garden volunteering days, painting days. We had an overnight session when activists spent a whole weekend at KPC doing direct action training and sleeping after the demonstrations. I helped Lindsay oversee the logistics and drank lots of tea and coffee with him in his office. I have also spent a large amount of time at the play scheme held at KPC during the school holidays every year since 2012, where I work as a youth worker. This involvement gave me a rich insight into the different groups that use the space and the varied ways that they use it. I spoke to people regularly and informally about their involvement with KPC and spent my first few months getting to know people and the space and talking to people about their experience of KPC.

By the start of 2013, I began to carry out more formal interviews and focus groups. I completed a series of interviews and focus groups with key actors during this period:

volunteers, people who worked at and used the community centre for services. Through snowball sampling, people put me in touch with different individuals who had been involved in the occupation in 1996. Setting up interviews with people from the past at KPC took some time; I was handed old landline numbers and addresses. I phoned people and explained that I was doing a project on KPC and the occupation in 1996; most people were surprised that I should want to ask them about this ‘blast from the past’. In July 2013, I went to the home of Helen Kyle, the woman who managed KPC from 1996 to 2009; I ended up doing a series of interviews with her. The story of the occupation became more complex and the huge part that the occupation played in people’s lives became evident. I began to dig for more clues as it became clear that there were many disputes and some bad blood between people at KPC from the past. I had to be careful to navigate the retelling of the events that had taken place at KPC.

The interviews that I carried out during July to September were extremely lengthy and emotional for the interviewees. During September 2013, one interviewee, Stasia, sat with me on numerous occasions for entire evenings, as we drank tea, ate toast and discussed the occupation and politics in general. For Stasia, her involvement at KPC had been a very emotional and formative journey. Her description of the events portrayed the occupation as very intense, and the highs and lows made and broke many relationships between people at the time. This meant that getting hold of people and talking about the events was sometimes difficult, as some people had cut off contact. I had to be sensitive that I was dragging this emotional time up from the past, a problem for the engaged academic that Askins captures well when she says:

Emotions and affects slide across any lingering barriers between public and private, activist and academic: for me, while I recognise the utility and necessity of analytical compartmentalisation, life just isn’t that delineated. It’s complex, it’s messy, it’s emotive and emotional. (Askins, 2009:10)

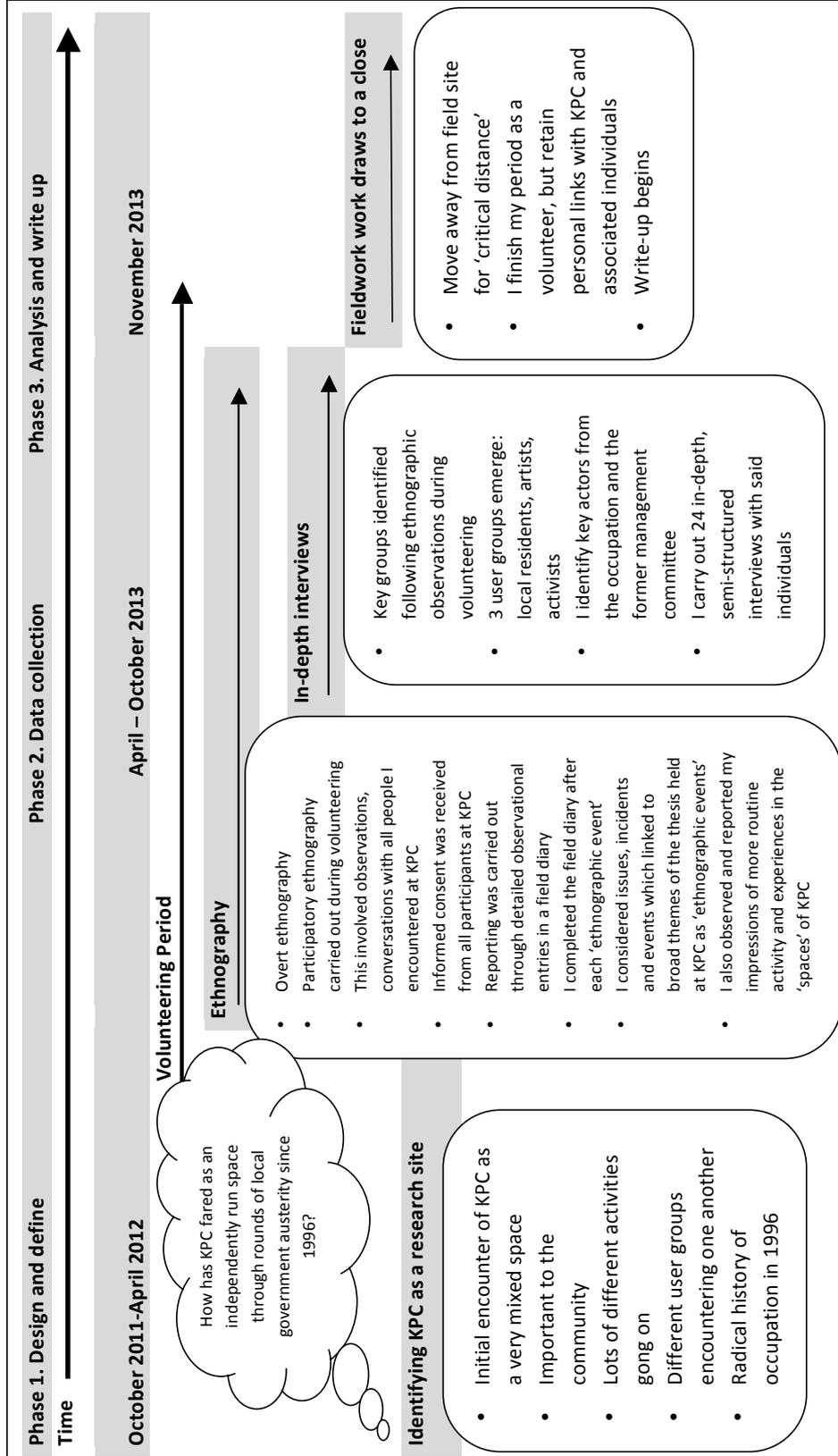
I interviewed individuals from each of the groups; and interviewed some individuals multiple times over the course of the year. I carried out 24 interviews with key individuals who had been involved at KPC from 1996 onwards. All the interviews were extremely in depth with some lasting over three or four hours. I conducted the interviews in numerous locations; at interviewees’ homes, my home, Kinning Park, cafes and bars. I used an unstructured interview approach whereby I had a set of key themes that I wanted to

address, which I would touch upon at appropriate points in the conversations. These conversations often did not follow a particular path, but deviated from my themes on most occasions, the diversions often proving fruitful in gaining contextual information about interviewees. Sometimes deviating from the key themes opened up new areas of discussion and sparked new ideas, which I could address in following questions. Many interviews were emotional as people retold their experiences of the occupation or personal dramas that had occurred at KPC. As I listened, the interviewees vividly described the trajectory of KPC and I began to build a picture of the space along a timeline, from 1996 onwards, as each part of the puzzle was uncovered.

When I gathered data from the present people at KPC, I also had to navigate with care. Sometimes, I was happy to take the position as an impartial researcher to retain relationships with people during conflicts that I witnessed at KPC. In particular, many people's relationship to Lindsay, the building manager, was complex. He often had to take pragmatic decisions in order to make things happen, as the longer process of deliberation often caused inaction. This was something that sometimes caused friction amongst some of the volunteers and between Lindsay and Emily, as I will discuss in Chapter 6. However, these tensions not only drew out self-reflexive conversations, but emotions and antagonisms, some of which were productive, others destructive, as my empirical findings show. Whilst it was sometimes difficult to remain impartial, I always saw writing about things that happened in my field diary as something of an escape from the interpersonal dramas at KPC.

During fieldwork, the messy process of 'throwntogetherness' was something I too had to negotiate with caution as it was occurring live, around me all the time, and at certain points I actively stepped away from the 'mess' in order to take the position of researcher. Miranda Joseph's experience of ethnographic research in San Francisco resonates with my own experience:

My position as a researcher allowed me to remain silent in moments of conflict and to remain present even when I was uncomfortable with the choices made by the staff and board. However my notes often reveal my unvoiced feelings, trailing off during heated discussions in which, though silent, I was deeply involved. (Joseph, 2002:x)



**Box 3.1**—Grounded Research Process

By November 2013, I had gathered the majority of my interview material. During this time the structure of volunteering at KPC changed too. The introduction of the Voluntary Action Fund in November 2013 caused some friction at KPC and the original group of volunteers, including myself, disbanded. My personal feelings about the introduction of the Voluntary Action Fund, which I discuss in Chapters 6 and 7, were something that affected me more as a volunteer than as a researcher, and this was difficult to navigate. In many ways, however, this aided the research process, as part of the ethnographic process involves 'stepping away' and looking at the bigger picture. The volunteer restructuring aided my stepping away from such intense weekly involvement as a volunteer in a straightforward way, which importantly retained positive relationships with all parties. Since November 2013, I have kept in regular contact with people from KPC socially. I remain on the email list and have attended and held events at KPC. I keep in close contact with Lindsay, the building manager, who keeps me up to date with the latest news and I drop in to KPC for a cup of tea when I am in the area.

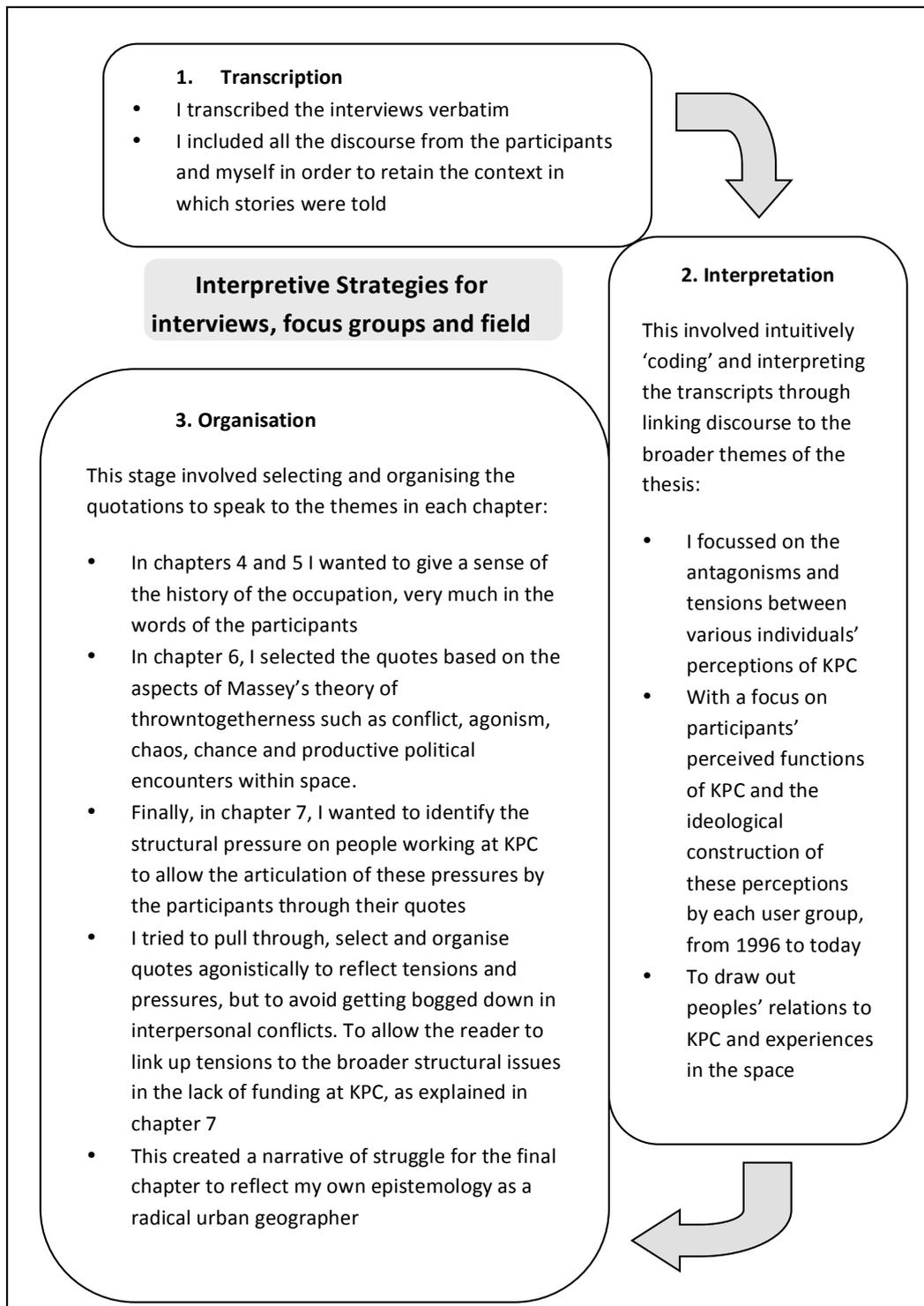
Stepping away from regular volunteering gave me the ability to attribute the tensions and contradictions that I observed to broader pressures inflicted on KPC from the City Council, and from the challenges of trying to run a community centre with volunteers and little cash flow. The huge amount of mundane labour and emotional labour entailed in keeping the doors open and everybody working as a team is something that I will also elaborate on in Chapter 7; it was valuable for me to witness and experience these things first hand.

I saw the interviews that I carried out at KPC as part of the ethnographic aspect of the project. Nevertheless, I always carried out the interviews *outside* of the designated volunteer work that I did, as I do not classify the interviews as part of the participatory action research. I wanted to respect the time and emotional labour involved in giving me an interview (Hoffman, 2007). I felt that I did not want to take up time where I could be performing more useful labour as volunteer. I felt anxious to ask for interviews in the beginning, as I really felt that, once we sat down in the room, chairs facing one another and I set up the microphone, the distinction between researcher and object of study would become embarrassingly evident. Furthermore, I was acutely aware of the amount of free time and labour people donated to KPC, and so to ask people to give up even more time in order to talk about this was something about which I also felt uncomfortable. Despite these concerns, people were often more than happy to talk to me. I felt that my participation in volunteering at KPC somehow acted as a form of currency with which I could ask the

favour to interview Lindsay or others at KPC. I did not explicitly state this, but in my own mind I felt that I had played my part as a volunteer, which helped me come to terms with being a researcher in many ways.

I carried out analysis of historical and archived documents from KPC, such as flyers, posters and newsletters associated with the occupation in 1996 from the *Spirit of Revolt* archive. Documents were also given to me from some of the interviewees, some photographs and a scrapbook that was made by Helen Kyle, the old building manager. I added these documents to the *Spirit of Revolt* archive, so they can now be publicly accessed at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. One evening, while interviewing Stasia, we went rifling through her cupboards to find old documents from 1996. We rediscovered the original logbook from the occupation; this provided such a vivid account for the day-to-day events during the occupation, it made for fascinating reading. Stasia retained this as a keepsake, explaining that she did not want to add it to the archive. She also sent me to hunt down an old banner that she made during the occupation. This was a hard task, as Stasia is banned from the building following a dispute with some of the artists. As I have shown, it was a complicated and messy process to uncover the social networks and dynamics at KPC from the past and present.

I also conducted analysis of documents, including board emails, building leases and contracts, accounts, and policy documents and written communication from the City Council. Lindsay was always very generous and open about forwarding on board emails and communication with the City Council; he was keen for the story to be told. He shared concerns about funding and explained that he thought that any publicity for KPC would benefit in the applications for grants. This led me to think about the perspective from which I wanted to tell the story of KPC.



**Box 3.2** Interpretive Strategies

I took the decision not to carry out interviews with the City Council during the research, as I felt the story was best told from below. Writing about the state as an actor, rather than just a context, would have taken the thesis in a different direction, leaving less space to discuss in detail the social practices within KPC. Furthermore, I had gathered lots of rich material from interviews and document analysis that already provided a multitude of perspectives to take into account. In addition and politically speaking, the focus of this project was to examine the intricate social relations involved in place-making at KPC and, aside from leasing the building from the Council, KPC functions as an independent institution. However, I have retained the contextual information about the political and economic landscape in 1996 in Chapter 4, and in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 we hear of people's experiences of dealing with the City Council from those *within* the space. By peeling away this layer of state intervention, rhetoric and policy, I was able to reveal a grounded account of the activities in this space, importantly as told by those working within it.

I acknowledge that the decision not to carry out interviews with the City Council could be seen as a limitation of the research for two reasons. It firstly stands in tension with the notion of throwntogetherness, as it ignores the state as an actor itself 'thrown' within the social milieu at KPC. However, KPC had no frequent interactions with the City Council between 1996 and 2011, other than payment of the peppercorn rent each year, and thus it is difficult to frame the Council as an active participant. Secondly, through this approach, the state may appear as a black boxed or hostile 'other' in the thesis. However, I have designated chapter 4 as situating KPC through time in terms of the *political context*, since the changes in policy and rent agreements from the City Council have affected KPC, but KPC has consistently managed to navigate such changes successfully. Therefore, despite the shifting political climate, the space of KPC remains today, and KPC's survival, which I attribute to its resourcefulness of KPC as a 'parallel institution' running alongside the local state, is what I wish to emphasise in my work.

By taking into account the historical, political and social context of the space since 1996, through using a mixed methods approach, that involved volunteering, interviews and focus groups and document analysis, it helped me to understand and portray the dynamic nature of KPC. It is important to me to present KPC as a spatial embodiment of hope and to investigate its trajectory as a community space through time, rather than producing a static notion of KPC as either progressive or regressive.

### 3.2 PAR and volunteering at KPC

The next section considers the four methodological elements as a whole, to discuss the epistemological and ontological basis for my methodology. As aforementioned, my approach was neither exclusively ethnographic nor participatory, but as a researcher I moved between each method depending on the situation. I will go on to discuss both approaches as informed by differing epistemologies. The respective research methods and positionality of Bourdieu and Rancière are very different, but I operationalised both theorists' ideas through my methodology. I would argue that their debates around research practice and positionality are where the disagreement between the authors resonates most clearly. Rancière takes a broadly poststructuralist and/or anarchist approach and thus the poststructuralist critique of participatory research is an important consideration for me: however, Bourdieu's recognition of existing 'systems of relations of power and relations of meanings between groups and classes' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:5) are also focal to my ethnographic observations. I argue that both epistemological standpoints and ensuing research methodologies are useful and necessary in the research process.

The next section will begin by discussing PAR and critical ethnography; I will draw out the epistemological starting points of these methods, relating them to Bourdieu and Rancière, and then interject my own experiences as a researcher in the field of KPC. This will also importantly take into account the positionality of the research sample – the people working at and using KPC as community centre. I will discuss Bourdieu and Rancière's views on both 'the researcher' and the 'researched', as it were. This will give an appraisal of how elements of these methodologies played out in the field. Finally, I set out my personal rationale for the middle ground adopted in my methodology. The messy and dynamic relationship I have had with KPC has been something that has had the most influence on my positionality as a researcher. Most importantly, I regard the members of the KPC community as 'competent and reflexive agents' throughout the research process (Kindon et al, 2007:14). Participatory research is

a process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview...(and bringing) together action, reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of

practical issues of concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities (Reason and Bradbury, 2006:1).

The volunteering role that I took at KPC formed the participatory aspect of the research process. In this role, I actively helped out, performing tangible tasks such as cleaning, painting the walls, repairing areas of the building. I was actively involved with Lindsay and the other volunteers, where we essentially organised our own volunteering – we simply did the jobs that needed doing each week. This meant that we were very close to decision-making, which at the time was done by Lindsay, the building manager, and events co-ordinator Emily. We saw all the work that was required at KPC as a collective project; the reward for this participation was having an informal, yet significant role in day-to-day decision-making. In a lot of ways, participating in volunteering at KPC helped ‘delineate modes of behaviour that enable unequal agents to participate with equivalence while discussing controversial issues’ (Kesby et al, 2007:21). From interviews and focus groups, the volunteers I worked alongside sometimes expressed a vision of KPC as a symbolic radical space in Glasgow that deserved and required voluntary labour to maintain the inherent social value of the building. Many would have identified themselves as ‘activists’ in some capacity and many were involved in activist networks beyond KPC. I shared in this vision of KPC as a socially important autonomous community space with a radical history. They generally shared the ethos that they wanted to keep KPC open, independent of the state.

In a sense, the volunteers took a politicised view of KPC – seeing it as a political space and the product of radical politics in 1996. Whilst we took this as a large motivating factor in our choice to volunteer at KPC to keep the doors open and in the hands of ‘the people’ rather than ‘the state’, we were aware of others at KPC that didn’t share in this view of the community centre. We actively discussed the ‘activist’-community relationship and agreed that it can be critically interpreted as a ‘consciousness raising’ exercise. This was something many of the volunteers wanted to avoid, yet we were all hopeful that KPC as a physical space and meeting place would facilitate ‘throwntogetherness’ (Massey, 2005); where diverse social groups encountered one another. After discussing these ideas, Emily remarked on how throwntogetherness was a strategy at KPC, as discussed in Chapter 6.

### **3.3 PAR and Rancière’s ‘method of equality’**

‘Participatory Action Research (PAR) is characterised by some as an archetypal modernist political project concerned with liberating marginalised and exploited subjects’ (Cameron and Gibson, 2005:317). I did not, however, simply want to present the people at KPC as marginalised exploited subjects, nor did they see themselves in this light. There was no assumption of a hierarchy of knowledge between the researcher and the ‘objects of study’ on my part.

According to the traditional view of ideology, people are exploited and oppressed because they don’t know the law of their exploitation or oppression. They have wrong representations of what they are and why they are so. And they have those wrong representations of their place because the place where they are confined hinders them from seeing the structure that allots them that place. (Rancière, 2009:275)

This point of view is one that researchers involved in participatory research also dispute; self-reflexive PAR has articulated the ‘barriers to participation’ (Pain and Francis, 2003) and the ‘tyranny of participation’ as a research method (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). There have been positive outcomes from these critiques, which point to the useful contribution that post-structuralism has made to PAR (see Cameron and Gibson, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2001). The poststructuralist contribution to PAR helps us avoid the epistemological standpoint that Rancière criticises in the quotation above, in which *inequality is assumed* from the outset, presenting inequality as a temporal issue, where the endpoint (equality) is moved towards over time as people become aware of how things really are. Rancière has been vocal in his critique of Bourdieu. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991) and *The Philosopher and His Poor* (Rancière, 2004), he sets out his concerns with Bourdieu’s approach: Rancière suggests that Bourdieu’s work begins with a presumed inequality, in contrast to Rancière’s axiom of equality. Bourdieu’s analysis assumes that the unequal division of capital between social groups appears as an explanation of inequality, whereas Rancière’s argument is that some individuals do not succeed because their discourse is not recognised or ‘heard’. I argue that a combination of these processes take place in order to marginalise some individuals in society.

This concern, regarding temporality and equality, reiterates Rancière’s main criticisms of Althusser; the opposition of science to ideology and theorists pretending to ‘speak the truth’ about what is practised by social and political actors (Rancière, 1999). This helps us

understand both the epistemology of research methods and how poststructural critique can inform academic research. The debates between the modernist, structuralist approach and the post-modern, poststructuralist approach are resonant in the debates between Bourdieu and Rancière: Rancière, taking a poststructuralist – or I would even argue anarchist ontological – position to inform his methodology, and Bourdieu taking an ethnographic, but nonetheless self-reflexive, approach to research.

Other authors also corroborate Rancière's critique: 'aren't the likes of Althusser and Bourdieu complicit in staking out a certain distribution of proper places?' (Bowman and Stamp, 2011:95). Authors have argued that Rancière's 'challenge begins when we ask: what happens when a worker or intellectual refuses to know their place' (Highmore, 2011:95). Bourdieu's work has been widely criticised for being 'deterministic' and 'set in a world where things happen to people rather than a world in which they can intervene in their lives' (Jenkins, 2002:91). Some literature in the past has 'had the effect of aligning Bourdieu in the minds of many Anglophone geographers rather too directly with Anthony Giddens' 'structurationist project' (Painter, 2000:248). However, I argue that contentious political movements are inherently structural and have a 'structural focus'; 'they are rooted in and seek to transform relatively enduring sets of social relations' (Bagguley, 1992:42). Furthermore, for Bourdieu, 'conflict is built into society' (Bourdieu, 2000: 19), and it should be appreciated that 'it is struggle, not 'reproduction', that is the master metaphor at the core of his thought' (Wacquant, 1998:215-229). I would argue that, most importantly, Bourdieu's habitus and field are relational, as set out in the previous chapter; thus, I believe that radical, progressive potential can be attributed to these ideas.

According to Bourdieu, the task of sociology is 'to uncover the profoundly buried structures of the various worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the 'mechanisms' which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation' (Bourdieu 1989:7). Rancière fundamentally criticises this in two ways. Firstly, he criticises the understanding of sociology as 'the science of the hidden' (Pelletier, 2009a:139). He comments on the unfalsifiable nature of Bourdieu's sociological claims: 'if science is thought of as constituting the world rather than understanding it, the problem of how to account for a 'ruined' research practice or 'partial' truths, is removed' (Pelletier, 2009:280). Rancière attributes Bourdieu's epistemology to a structuralism that sees the world as ordered by symbolic structures that deny agency to certain agents. According to Rancière, 'there must be no mixing, no imitation' (in Bourdieu's representation of the

social). The subjects of this science are like ‘the warriors of [Plato’s] Republic’ and must be ‘unable to imitate anything else than their own dye’ (Rancière, 2004:189). This critique is important to my approach: I wanted to avoid coming into the project with a set of prejudices, and instead I will constitute the participants as ‘speaking beings’ (Rancière, 1999), as statements should not be checked against a presumed given or empirical reality but on the basis of what a proposition brings to presence. Consequently, emancipation should not be thought of in terms of possessing ‘reflexive knowledge’; rather, it is related to changing the ‘distribution of the sensible’ (Rancière, 2006).

Secondly, Rancière does not focus on Bourdieu’s methodological validity or reliability, but rather he rejects the performative function of Bourdieu’s work which, Rancière says, enacts the very inequality it claims to refute. This critique links to the issue of performativity in my own research method. Bourdieu would see power as ‘a commodity that can be redistributed’, but poststructuralist theory (and Rancière) would see power as ‘an effect: an action, behaviour or imagination brought into being in a specific context as the result of the interplay of various communicative and material resources’ (Kesby, 2007:20).

In Rancière’s own work he takes a ‘method of equality’ (2009) which can be instigated ‘by identifying those times and spaces where equality declarations might be manifest and made into political practice’ (Davidson and Iveson, 2014:7). This method can be enacted by the researcher through identifying times and spaces where the subjects are not normally designated by the police order: for example, the working mother who occupies her community centre to protest closure by the state. Such events, where people speak and act outside of their given place in society, are the occurrence of politics according to Rancière. Therefore, in my attempt to locate the contradictions, unusual coalitions and political identities at KPC, I am enacting Rancière’s ‘method of equality’. Rancière’s ‘method of equality’ is useful, as it enables academic work to draw the line of escape, the line of universalisation ‘when the poor romantic floor-layer meets the aristocratic philosopher of antiquity and verifies that they have something in common’ (Rancière, 2009:282). However, this standpoint is also very researcher-centric; Rancière uses the above example from his early work – *Proletarian Nights*, mentioned in the previous chapter. From this work, he bases his positionality as a researcher; however, I would argue that his work is not grounded in the messy empirical reality that is the field. Thus, I would argue his

method lacks a sense of grounded messiness that is always entailed in fieldwork, especially any sort of participatory approach that aims to go beyond observing from afar.

No matter how epistemologically reflexive and systematic our fieldwork is, we must still speak as mere mortals from various historical, culture-bound standpoints: we must make limited, historically situated knowledge claims. By claiming to be less rather than more, perhaps we can tell stories that ordinary people will actually find more believable and useful. (Foley, 2002:487)

There was another level of reflexivity on my part, as I was taking part as an activist alongside the volunteers, but I was also carrying out a research project investigating the very act of doing this; crossing the boundaries between the spaces of activism and academia is inherently problematic (Kitchen and Hubbard, 1999:196). Maxey (1999) explicitly states that the ultimate responsibility for his research rests with him and that he will benefit from it more than anyone else will. He goes on to explain that this fact makes trying to define relationships and responsibilities within his research as problematic (Maxey, 1999). I too had many conversations with people at KPC about the role of academic research; and my field notes mention these conversations, which made an impact on my positionality. Lindsay openly discussed a time when he felt misrepresented by an academic that had written about a direct action campaign that he had been involved in the past. Whilst my participation was welcomed at KPC, my identity as a researcher or academic was something I actively wanted to ‘play-down’; I tried to avoid conflating my personal identity with my research, primarily adopting the role of a volunteer. I did not want my personal political views to inform my actions at KPC so much that I was unable to participate in anything outside my preferred political persuasions; this point is crucial, as KPC is a community centre and not an anarchist social centre. This means that the pragmatic approach often has to dominate the political project, as I explain in Chapter 6.

There was notable suspicion from some people at KPC about researchers and academics; and this awkward reality was something that led me to be self-reflexive, even highly critical about my personal role as a researcher. I experienced similar grounding realities as felt by Chatterton et al (2010), sometimes feeling that some activists saw academics and researchers as ‘exploitative, unaccountable, managerialist, and compromised by our academic status’ (ibid:251). Emily, a worker at KPC, also openly discussed funding for academic research, asking the question: ‘how is there money available to carry out

research on community groups like KPC, but no money for the groups themselves?’ (Emily). I empathised with her concerns on this issue, yet pragmatically had to accept my position as a funded PhD student, but our friendship provoked many other interesting questions regarding the role of the academy. Although tensions and contradictions such as these were sometimes aired, I was happy that people at KPC felt comfortable enough to discuss honestly these issues with me. Such moments of ‘agonism’ actually led to very productive conversations and interviews with people and a set of friendships from the community centre that continue today.

### **3.4 Stepping back as an ethnographer**

That being said, there is a point at which, as I was participating in the activity at KPC, I had to take a step back in order to gain a certain level of critical distance to discuss the empirical reality that I observed. Critical ethnography is a more removed method of research, which I think is useful for analytical purposes.

Ethnographies offer vantage points for generating new understandings by illuminating power-laden processes of constitution, connection and disconnection, along with slippages, openings and contradictions, and possibilities for alliance within and across different spatial scales. (Hart, 2006:982)

This is akin to Bourdieu’s ethnographic methodology. Foley describes how that Bourdieu’s methodology helps to observe and analyse cultural actors ‘enacting, breaking, and improvising on the normative rules of a given setting’ (2002:476). Furthermore, ‘it is struggle, not ‘reproduction’, that is the master metaphor at the core of his thought’ (Wacquant, 1998:215-229). Where Rancière’s method of equality is useful to bear in mind in writing up, methodology in practice must ultimately avoid the *intellectualist bias* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:39). As seeing bias everywhere ‘is to know the symbolic profit of everything and the truth value of nothing’ (Maton, 2003:61-62). Furthermore, I would argue that Rancière and Bourdieu both fall into the trap of seeing their research in an abstracted sense. Feminist and postcolonial authors have reconceptualised the gap between theory and practice more effectively. They have produced new conceptual tools for writing and thinking about research methodology as an embodied practice and in a grounded way that encompasses emotional and affective subjectivities (Askins, 2009). At KPC, rather than seeking to segregate power and empowerment spatially, ‘it is more

productive to conceive the modalities and spaces of power and empowerment as entangled' (Kesby et al, 2007:23).

The benefits of taking a more removed and ethnographic approach to fieldwork were noticeable, however; to provide me with a wider scope for analysis of trends and patterns of social behaviour at KPC. For example, I had to identify user groups at KPC in order strategically to choose a sample of people to interview to get a representative picture of the 'community' at KPC. The ways people used the space at KPC was a method through which I could identify different user groups at the community space. This informed my sampling process for interviews and focus groups, as I identified three main groups at KPC; the local community, artists and activists. Whilst the emergence of these groups was evident, I want to emphasise that people did move between these groups frequently and that they were not homogenous in any way.

People's relationship with the space and thus the meaning the space had for them often changed over time. Some individuals involved in the occupation in 1996 no longer use the space; new people enter, and people leave KPC. The groups were the local community, which were broadly speaking, people that lived locally and used the building for broadly pragmatic reasons such as dance classes or play-schemes. Secondly, the artists that rented studios in the building; individuals in this group varied from being highly involved in the running of the building and members of the committee, to some that simply saw KPC as a building that housed their studio, to which they took a landlord-tenant relationship. Finally, there was cohort of people who volunteered at KPC who were often trying to preserve the radical legacy of the space and saw its history in a symbolic way; this desire to preserve the space in a particular way informed some of their motivation to volunteer at KPC and their opinions on how KPC should run.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Activist scholarship is 'often called into question within the academy when it is posed in terms that are overly celebratory or sanguine rather than in relation to actual confrontations with contradiction and complexity' (Chari and Donner, 2010:76). There were many moments of confrontation with reality and contradiction that I had to negotiate in a more detached way. So I adopted a dual role; as an ethnographer, who participated, as it were. My dual role reflected my dual epistemological approach; which sympathised with my

personal political views and informed my interpersonal interactions with people; which could be seen as poststructuralist. Alongside this, my approach to research was informed by structuralism and took a critical ethnographic analysis of the situation at KPC. This dual approach keeps the theories of both Bourdieu and Rancière in dialectical tension; this provided a suitable methodical framework for researching the messy and contradictory realities of throwntogetherness. Through taking Rancière's 'method of equality' into account for a longitudinal case study I was able to implement 'a principle of historicisation and a principle of untimeliness, a principle of contextualization and a principle of decontextualisation' (Rancière, 2009:282).

In the following empirical chapters, I will hopefully build a positive picture of KPC, but without being over-celebratory, and remaining critical of the overarching structures present in society that impact upon funding and policy that adversely affects places like KPC. Finally, I have also aimed to emphasise the agency of the people at KPC in how they negotiate these structures; thus, in the thesis they are represented as active, aware and resourceful. The people at KPC are highly aware of their contradictory role in simultaneously aiding the state in welfare cutbacks in some ways, and providing themselves a self-managed community space that empowers people in other ways.

# Chapter 4: Urban Governance and Forms of Localism in Glasgow

This chapter will look at the changing political context surrounding KPC and some of the ways that local governance has intervened to shape the existence and survival of KPC. It will situate the local governance and policies in Glasgow alongside the broader UK political and economic context. The building we now know as KPC began as a school in 1910; it remained a school until 1976, when it was converted into a neighbourhood centre. However, in 1996 the City Council planned to close the neighbourhood centre, and in May 1996, building users occupied the space for 55 days and nights to save the centre and establish it independently as Kinning Park Complex that remains today.

This chapter will show that, despite the turbulent external political climate, KPC still exists and remains ‘in, against and beyond neoliberalism’ (Holloway, 2005) through almost two decades of welfare cuts, austerity, political and economic crises at both national and local levels. Even whilst I was volunteering at KPC, in March 2013 the City Council threatened KPC with closure once again, as will be discussed in more depth. I attribute a large part of KPC’s survival to its particular local politics, as it is situated in an area that has a long and radical history of activism and solidarity, as Chapter 5 will discuss. However, this chapter will focus on the impacts of policies imposed on KPC from above to contextualise the next three chapters.

Firstly, I will examine how the UK government and local City Council’s diverse practices of articulation relate to spaces of urban policy in Glasgow – through ‘definitions, categorizations, spatial designations, naming, mappings and statistics’ (Dikeç, 2007:16). This examines the role of the local state through the past century to explore the changing nature of local governance in Glasgow where we can observe state-lead experimentation with forms of decentralisation, localism and local capacity building in Glasgow. Broadly speaking, recent state policy in the UK has been largely focussed on ‘economic governance premised on the extension of market relationships’ (Larner, 2005:5) with a move from ‘managerialism to entrepreneurialism’ (Harvey, 1989). However, this chapter considers Brenner et al’s (2010) ‘variegated’ characterisation of neoliberalism, to focus on particular events and policies and their local implications for Glasgow, and more specifically on KPC. The first section describes the ways local government was restructured in the 1970s and restructured again in the 1990s during periods of fiscal crisis

in Glasgow, to examine the specific impacts that this had upon the birth of KPC and its existence ever since. I will specifically observe the impacts of drawing and re-drawing spatial boundaries in and around the city during periods of fiscal crisis, resulting in cutbacks and roll back, that we are once again witnessing today. I will emphasise how such spaces can then become ‘sites of political mobilization that are aimed at opening up political spaces in the determined spaces of the police’ (Dikeç, 2007:22). I will discuss how the Kinning Park occupation in 1996 challenged the police order and the ‘distribution of the sensible’ through political action (Rancière, 2004). I argue that KPC highlights the contradictory, incomplete and uneven local outcomes of neoliberal urban governance in Glasgow (Brenner and Theodore, 2005). I will then discuss the notion that KPC exists as a paradoxical space in the current political conjuncture, being once again threatened with closure in 2013, despite actually being in line with many aims of the new Localism agenda, such as substituting state responsibilities through community driven action (Clayton et al. 2015:2).

#### **4.1 Broad context of local government in Glasgow**

From the early 1930s, Glasgow City Council, then known as The Corporation of the City of Glasgow (CCG), held strong, centralised control over the city (Boyle and Hughes, 1994:456). The ‘central concern’ of the local state during the 1930s to the late 1970s, was one of social reproduction alongside dealing with chronic overcrowding and poverty in the city; policy focussed on issues surrounding housing and public facilities. In the UK more generally, there was a post-war implementation of universal benefits, ‘building on the experience of municipal collectivism and operating on a much larger scale than had been previously possible’ (Cochrane, 1993:11). As a result, local authorities lost many of their powers during the 1930s and 1940s and there was a move away from localism. However, in Glasgow, the CCG were arguably the principal driver in shaping the city ideologically and physically through planning and urban policy (Pacione, 1995). Two examples of extensive urban planning projects initiated by the CCG were the Bruce Plan, designed in 1945 by Robert Bruce, and the Clyde Valley Regional Plan (CVRP), led by Patrick Abercrombie in 1946. These plans were to redesign and transform urban life in Glasgow (Fyfe, 1996). The Glasgow Corporation favoured the Bruce Plan, and the central Scottish Office favoured the CVRP (Fyfe, 1996), which caused a rift between two levels of governance. The battle between these competing visions of the city sparked one of the most well known post-war arguments between central and local Scottish government

(Damer, 1989). Local city politics in Glasgow have remained in a tense relationship with the Scottish Office, and broader national British government ever since. Furthermore, the implementation of the CVRP over the decades that followed 1946 caused conflict between ‘the planners’ (via the local state) and the people of Glasgow, because the installation of the arterial motorway system (actually recommended by the Bruce Plan) meant that large stocks of tenement housing were to be cleared in order to make way. Swathes of population were moved away from inner-city Glasgow to satellite towns and high rise housing estates under the plans (Fyfe, 1996). The construction of the M8 motorway in 1965, as part of the CVRP, affected the area of Kinning Park: lots of housing was removed, which radically altered the area and displaced a large amount of people. This happened again in 1977 due to the construction of the M77. The old sandstone schoolhouse that the community centre is located in backs onto these motorways today.

The period up to the early 1960s was also one of expansion and consolidation of the welfare state in Glasgow and in the UK more generally, as local governments engaged in a period of ‘collective consumption’ (Dunleavy, 1989). In Scotland, the professionalisation of social work with the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 was a milestone, which gave local government responsibilities to train and employ social workers that would form a new arm of the welfare state instrumentally embedded in the local community (Cochrane, 1993). But then the unstable political climate of the late 1970s-1980s was characterized by a movement from ‘proto-to-roll-back’ neoliberalism, where neoliberalism went from being an abstract ideology to an overt political project: furthermore, the macro economic crisis of this period allowed blame to be ‘laid at the door of Keynesian financial regulation, unions, corporatist planning, state ownership, and “overregulated” labour markets’ (Peck and Tickell, 2002:388). In 1976, the national Labour government had to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund, which imposed a strong deflationary package for Britain (Cochrane, 1993). For Thatcher’s government, the financial cost of the welfare state became too much in the context of economic crisis in 1970s Britain, so they rolled out neoliberalism; ‘freeing up markets, restoring the “right to manage,” asserting individualised “opportunity rights” over social entitlements’ (ibid). Parallels can be drawn with the crisis of 2008, which allowed the Coalition Government to begin their ideologically driven method of reducing the deficit through heavily reduced government expenditure.

Glasgow was hit very hard by the Fordist-Keynesian compromise (Boyle et al. 2008). The region was economically depressed, Glasgow was a Labour stronghold and a predominantly working class city with a high proportion of council housing, public services and the traditional industries were largely unionised (Pacione, 1995:203). During the mid 1970s, 'local Government became the target of a whole series of attacks (or reforms) from above' (Cochrane, 1993:28). Thatcher's government hugely reduced the level of grants paid by central government to cover the expenditure of Local Authorities all over the UK and was an attempt to regain centralised control; however, this was not necessarily successful (Cochrane, 1993). It did, however, represent a direct attack on the autonomy of local authorities (Pacione, 1995:204). In 1976, the building that KPC is situated in ceased being a school and was converted to a community centre under plans to consolidate education resources.

A number of local and national political events occurred during the early to mid 1970s, which converged to create problems for local government in Glasgow. Firstly, in 1973 the Local Government Scotland Act set up a two-tier structure of regions and districts, creating the region of Strathclyde and district of City of Glasgow; which came into effect in 1975. The Strathclyde Regional Authority took control of 'most of the major responsibilities' and the District of Glasgow was allocated responsibility for housing and local planning with a range of 'minor functions' such as leisure and recreation, libraries and licensing (Pacione, 1995:205). This separation of responsibilities often did not work out in practice, as there was a lot of overlapping responsibilities in many cases. For example, when the District council of Glasgow would try to attract business to the city through building a new shopping centre, the regional authority would overrule this on account of the potentially detrimental effects that it could have on other shopping centres in the wider Strathclyde Region. Ultimately, this meant that 'the District would complain that the Region's wider geographical remit prevented it giving proper attention to the special problems of Glasgow' (Pacione, 1995:205). Secondly, in 1977 the local elections in Glasgow saw the Labour Party fail to gain sufficient wards to control the council; they had to concede some power to the Conservative Party. Thirdly, these events were closely followed by the general election of Margret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979, as aforementioned.

However, having lost power in 1977, in Glasgow the Labour Party returned in 1980, rejuvenated with new ideas to decentralise local governance with greater emphasis on

community consultation and participation in the delivery of welfare and they were also experimenting with public private partnerships (Boyle et al. 2008). The Council began to focus particularly on the problem of the city's economic demise and Glasgow would appear to have been one of the first cities in the UK to embark upon local economic development policies (Boyle and Hughes, 1994:456). For example, in 1981 the Glasgow District Council established an Economic Development and Employment Committee, designed to generate employment and halt economic decline (MacLeod, 2002). This fostered partnerships with local businesses and aimed to attract investment in the city to create wealth and employment. Quangos were set up by the local authority to advise and make these links with private enterprise. The local authority remained the key institution in Glasgow that affected the allocation of local resources to economic development initiatives, and the way these resources were subsequently deployed (Boyle and Hughes, 1994).

The District Council also engaged in place marketing during the 1980s and early 1990s which saw Glasgow host a number of 'entrepreneurial' place-making events, aimed at redesigning the city's image. In 1982, Glasgow hosted Mayfest; between 1983-1990 there was the Glasgow's Miles Better Campaign; in 1988 the Garden Festival; and in 1990 Glasgow became the European City of Culture. Many authors were critical of these events at the time: Paddison quoted; 'the marketing events did little to reduce the overall level of unemployment in the city, and between late 1990 and early 1992 the rates increased with the effects of the recession' (1993:348). Today, authors remain critical of these attempts 'to rid the city of images of its industrial past' seeing it as 'the plunder of its cultural infrastructure in the pursuit of urban revalorisation' (Gray, 2010). It is evident that 'governments are increasingly obliged to take an entrepreneurial turn, and act as active state partners in an attempt to lubricate capitalist investment in the city' (Gray, 2009). The city marketing projects were costly to the local council and contributed to the fiscal crisis of 1995-6, which I discuss in the next section. Fyfe suggests that 'city marketing projects', when scrutinised closely, indicate the 'dilemma the local state has faced between acting in the interests of capital and those of the community' (1996:460). From interviews with those involved in the occupation at KPC, these citywide events had a mixed reception in Glasgow. They undoubtedly exacerbated the fiscal crises that led to the closure of local facilities such as Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre in 1996. However, city-marketing events also brought promotion of and funding for local arts projects from the Council at the

time, exemplifying the complex set of relations between the third sector and the City Council and people in Glasgow at the time.

#### **4.2 1990's local government restructuring and crisis: the effects on KPC**

Following the previous (1973) Local Government Act to create the two-tier region and district structure, Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre - as it was then known - was designated in the region of Strathclyde, the district of Glasgow. In 1994, there was another act, the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, which reorganised boundaries once again and came into effect in 1996. The new act abolished the two-tier structure of regions and districts and adopted the current local government structure that we see today, comprised of 32 unitary authorities covering Scotland. 'Glasgow City Council' (GCC) became one of the unitary Local Authorities. Glasgow's boundaries were adjusted from how they had previously existed within the Strathclyde region/district set-up; as parts of Cambuslang, Halfway, Rutherglen and Fernhill areas were removed from the newly established GCC area and became part of the new South Lanarkshire council area. The economic implications for re-drawing these local boundaries were detrimental for the newly established GCC, as some of the areas that were removed were wealthy suburbs, which provided important tax revenue for the council. Driven by electoral considerations, the decision to alter the boundaries was a case of gerrymandering by the Conservatives (Vicar et al, 1994). This creation of a single-tier system of local councils also transferred a lot of instrumental functions and powers to the Local Authority. It made the Local Authority responsible for managing their own budget to deliver most public services for the first time. Previously, these functions had been centralised. This shift of responsibility to the local level is documented:

The district councils and regional councils were replaced with 29 single tier (or unitary) bodies to provide a more economic, cohesive, accountable and effective system. All 32 councils are responsible for delivering services such as education, leisure and recreation, planning and building standards, social services, housing, street cleaning, and refuse collection. (Scottish Government website, 2014a)

The Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, announced in 1994, was part of John Major's Conservative Government's attempts to take central control of the economics of local authorities during the 1990s, but the responsibilities of the Local Authority had actually

grown considerably. Localism can come in two forms, the decentralisation of political responsibility to another elected part of government, for example a Local Authority, or the decentralisation to numerous bodies outside the formal political structure such as community groups, private-sector firms, civil-society organisations (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013). In 1994, the former was the case; autonomy was gained for the Local Authority but alongside considerably reduced budgets from central government, which inflicted economic discipline on local authorities. This impacted local state run facilities in Glasgow, exemplifying how neoliberal economical policy actually shapes local space; we can theorize this as ‘spatial liberalism’:

localities are ‘assembled and freed to act in the interests of general security and wellbeing, but only so long as they can be made up as rational and responsible actors. Such government involves: deciding on what counts as rational and responsible local action; enabling those actions through decentralisation where possible; encouraging those actions through liberal technologies of government where appropriate; and enforcing those actions through centralisation where absolutely necessary’. (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013:13)

This means that some localism agendas are developed against a background of incredibly strong national state disciplinary regimes around a neoliberal urbanism, which can be observed in the case of Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre and its relations with the Glasgow City Council in the run up to the decision to close the centre during 1994-6. We can draw parallels with the austerity localism being employed to ‘instigate a new round of ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism’ (Featherstone et al, 2012) today.

The impacts of GCC’s fiscal crisis in 1995-6 were that the City Council made £23 million worth of ‘savings’ (i.e. cuts), to balance its budget having also lost the wealthy suburbs during 1996-7 (Carmichael and Midwinter, 1999). Urban policy took a ‘roll-back’ approach, which saw the state contract significantly through the ‘now familiar repertoire of funding cuts, organisational downsizing, market testing and privatisation’ (Peck 2010: 22). The early 1990s in Glasgow were characterised by closures of community services and instigation of a culture of intra-area competition for state resources in the city. This political climate in Glasgow in 1996 characterised as it was, by cuts, uncertainty and competition, was evidently felt by people in the Kinning Park Community Newsletter quoted below. The newsletter plainly expresses the scarcity of resources and the

competitive context orchestrated by the council during this period of fiscal crisis; the closure of the Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre was just another saving for the City Council.

Believe me once these facilities have gone, they will never return. Councillors here have been threatening for years to close down to take KP out of the area of priority, which means no longer will Kinning Park be eligible for Urban Aid funding and Community Projects. However, you can sit back and watch your neighbours enjoy projects galore while you help to pay for them. One area of priority is Gorbals. Govan is another. What category do you think Kinning Park comes under?' (Kinning Park Community Newspaper, 1996, see appendix)

This quotation conveys the social impact of the ever-shifting state responsibilities and unstable nature of urban policy funding. Furthermore, it articulates the neoliberalisation of the welfare state in Glasgow as more than just the implementation of an economic system and spatial liberalism, but also form of 'political-economic governance' (Larner, 2000:5). There are two ways in which this extract describes how the state is actively producing the neoliberal city – through altering city boundaries within Glasgow and through competition-based area resource allocation. Even the writer appears to instigate the competition between areas; 'you can sit back and watch your neighbours enjoy projects galore while you help to pay for them' – demonstrating how embedded neoliberal cultures can become, setting communities against one another. The quote also expresses an expectation for state welfare; there is a clear notion that at the time people felt that the state had a duty of care for citizens. This expectation was being challenged at the time, through disciplining action from central government. In order to accommodate the significant drop in revenue, the City Council made cuts of £68 million beginning in 1996 (Amin, 2002:64) and the impact on the community is evident in this quote. As Peck (2010) describes, cuts to welfare and privatisation have become part of the 'familiar repertoire' of action, similar to that which we witness today.

The battle for the centre to remain open and run by the council was the main aim in 1996, which is why in the aftermath some expressed that they had not won the occupation, as they did not intend to run a community centre, they just wanted a public service. Today, we can see how the process of reducing welfare services is happening once again by the

Coalition Government through current 'aggressive roll-back neoliberalism' influenced by the global economic crisis of 2008 (Featherstone et al, 2012).

In 1996, Glasgow was also alive with widespread public protest following this wave of cuts that were being imposed by the City Council. Huge fiscal pressures unleashed by this process and many of those involved in the occupation were affected by the cuts from the City Council; the loss of their neighbourhood centre was just one of the impacts. However, the picture becomes more complex, as some of the people who used the space were also actively involved in and benefitted from funding from the city marketing projects that had taken place a few years previously. These events involved many local artists and voluntary organisations through providing funding. Many people at the time were aware of the discrepancy between the Council's responsibilities for their local populations and its role in 'city branding'. Some also spoke out against the events because of their element of 'spectacle', and the fact that these expensive events were carried out alongside state roll back of basic welfare services. The Workers City project actively campaigned to highlight the rampant capitalist marketing strategies that were not only costing the city a lot of tax revenue, but were actively redistributing funds away from communities in need (Boyle and Hughes, 1994). Furthermore, Workers City also argued that the City of Culture event in 1990 was appropriated for a different purpose and had no place for the indigenous socialist culture of Glasgow. 'Instead, the event was argued to have taken on the character of 'hype' and 'spectacle' geared towards the tastes of middle class and tourist consumers, which represented a sanitising of Glaswegian culture and a rejection of the city's organic identity' (Fyfe, 1996:465).

The next section examines the influence of capital on the City Council and the way local governance shapes community space in Glasgow. To consider state spaces as 'produced through practices of articulation and intervention' (Dikeç, 2007:16) and to illustrate how space-making practices have 'material effects in the everyday lives of people' (ibid: 21), I will discuss how the state, metaphorically and literally, partitions spaces on the urban landscape, in order to delineate and define a 'distribution of the sensible' (Rancière, 2004). These actions, justified with 'sensible evidences', led to the planned closure of the neighbourhood centre in 1996 (Dikeç, 2009).

### 4.3 Reclaiming urban space

In many ways, the neoliberal political processes described above contributed to the emergence of KPC as an independent community centre, which I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter. As described at the start of this chapter, urban space is influenced from above by neoliberal political policies; furthermore, it is entangled with forms of governance and capital, but it is also an anchor and locus for politics (Massey, 2005). As a community centre, KPC provided a space where many actors came together to utilise the space and in 1996 to stage dissensus. Thus KPC can be thought of as a site of political mobilisation ‘aimed at opening up political spaces in the determined spaces of the police’ (Dikeç, 2007:22).

The partition of the sensible (*le partage du sensible*) refers to the way a given community is ordered, both symbolically and materially as symbolic forms of order are also present as sensible givens. (Dikeç, 2013:82)

When the City Council announced the closure of the neighbourhood centre in 1996 they produced a ‘partition of the sensible’ based on their ‘sensible evidences’; the council decided to make cuts to local services due to their fiscal crisis. However, the community acted upon ‘the police order’ through staging an occupation in the building for 55 days and nights. ‘Politics is about disrupting these routinised sensible and sense-making practices by re-configuring the partition of the sensible’ (Dikeç, 2013:82). The politics staged in the occupation questioned the sensible evidences that led to its closure. Importantly, the community reclaimed space in the city; therefore, space can be thought of as ‘the sphere in which distinct narratives co-exist; space as the sphere of possibility of the existence of more than one voice’ (Massey, 1999:279). The sit-in at the neighbourhood centre in 1996 proved that there was a multiplicity of voices willing to save it, and even local politicians got behind the occupation, as Stasia, a building user and activist heavily involved in the occupation explained;

‘... word got round what we were doing and it sort of shook up interest with the Labour Party, at that time it was Labour Party Militant, then there was the SNP the Lib Dems, the CP, all the local political parties started to take an interest.’ (Stasia)



Figure 1 Picture from the sit in (unknown source)

The campaign involved a multiplicity of actors from different worlds, as it were; politicians, parents, activists and those involved in the third sector. Rancière states that ‘politics is not made up of power relationships; it is made up of relationships between worlds’ (1999: 42). The form of progressive localism that emerged during the occupation enhanced representative and participatory forms of local democracy through creating relations between worlds. Raco and Flint suggest that participatory forms of local democracy have the potential to cause ‘local tensions between elected councillors and unelected local activists—both with claims of legitimate community representation’ (2001:586), and these tensions create a disruption to the logic of the City Council.

In the run up to and during the start of the occupation there was a fierce battle within the Labour party. The selection battle between Mohammed Sarwar and Mike Watson, for the MP seat for the Govan constituency, was highly controversial at the time. The Govan selection had been ‘dogged by a welter of accusations and counter-claims of ballot-rigging, racism and voter fraud’ (Scottish Daily Record Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1996). John Major’s Conservative Party was the national government at the time and so this form of controversy emanating from within the opposition was highly publicised in the media following the past smear campaigns from Labour regarding Tory sleaze. Furthermore, both men were determined to secure votes to win the seat at all costs. This was a great political resource that was mobilised in the campaign to keep the neighbourhood centre open and

this situation highlights the complexity of the political context at that time for the occupying people. Those campaigning for it to remain open were against the national cuts from the Conservatives and also against the localised Labour council cuts in the area, but they could simultaneously gain political traction from the Labour party selection contest, as they were aware of the Sarwar and Watson's desire to gain 'the peoples' vote.

I would have to say that the reason that we got that building was because the constituency seat was being challenged in relation to who was going to be the MP for the area. Mohammed Sarwar, who became the first Asian MP for Scotland, and I can't remember the other MP [Mike Watson], fought very hard for us at council level. So that they realised that if they didn't help us to fight, that they would lose a lot of votes in the area because it was a very very localised campaign that could affect them being voted in at the elections. (Helen)

The community created a 'spatial disruption' for local politics at the time (Massey, 2005). But the space also acted as a physical anchor for the more progressive politics of the sit-in. Stasia explained how these relations and disruptions were managed first and foremost, on the terms of those involved in the occupation:

...you know if they were in political parties like Tommy Kelly, he was in the Scottish National Party, he really wanted the sit in to work, but he was very careful in taking part in meetings where votes were concerned, he wouldn't even give verbal contributions. He was very careful about it being *us* that were saying what was going on, and the outsiders that came and joined in took a lot of care too, they really respected the whole process, it was great. The MPs and all that supported us, Sarwar and Mike Watson from the adjoining ward, they all came along at different times and visited. All of that really kept you going, to remind you that what you were doing was valuable and valued. We did all that and the months just went past and then it came to the second month, it was coming up to the summer holidays - I was going to the sit-in in the evening then sleeping there and then going to my work in the morning! (Stasia)

Political subjectification 'consists in putting a world within another' and invents a form of political relation based on the denial and affirmation of equality rather than on given identities (Rancière, cited in Dikeç, 2013:83). During the occupation, those involved put

their world outside the ‘partition of the sensible’, to disrupt the plans to close the centre, and the endurance of the space since 1996 is a constant reminder of that disruption or crack in neoliberal sensibilities on the urban landscape. Localities are ‘the product of interaction between people, groups and institutions in particular places over time’ (Cochrane, 1993:25). More specifically, the collective radical history of Glasgow must be mentioned, as ‘it is impossible to appreciate the emotive significance of the City Council’s engagement with urban entrepreneurialism without reference to the historical context within which the Glasgow left evolved’ (Boyle and Hughes, 1994:455). Damer (1989) argues that the militancy of the Glasgow working classes reflected not hard living and working conditions, but also the politicised nature of the Highland, Lowland and Irish immigrant populations. Therefore, ‘it cannot be denied that the power of the Red Clydeside identity continued to inflect the character of local politics. Indeed, it is difficult to explain the deep electoral support the local Left has had without contextualizing it against its ‘historical moorings’’ (Boyle and Hughes, 1994:456). Those who became involved in the occupation also possessed personal histories which drew them to the campaign and one of the most instrumental people involved was Helen Kyle, whose organisation Scotland in Europe, became the name on the lease of the building, for a peppercorn rent of £1 per year.

#### **4.4 The non-profit organisation as ‘the community’**

After the 55 day occupation by building users, local woman Helen Kyle signed her non-profit organisation, Scotland in Europe, onto the lease with the council on behalf of the community and she then went on to manage KPC until 2009.

... it was agreed that the building should come to Scotland in Europe rather than the management committee of the building because they didn’t have enough experience of fundraising, you know, in managing a building like that. But the criteria was, that Scotland in Europe, because both workers at Scotland in Europe were trained community development workers, you know *trained*, had *lots of experience* in community development work, that our job would be to set up the management committee. To work closely with them and eventually give the building over to the management committee and that was the Council’s decision. They also said that they would give us the building for a pound a year because we were a charity and the management committee was a charity, so they would forgo rates. (Helen)

As Joseph (2002) notes, non-profits often appear ‘at moments of capitalist expansion, instability, and crisis, nonprofits indicate that something, or rather someone — the subject of capital — is missing’ (ibid: 74). This creates markets and willing subjects in the community to perform where capital fails; in the form of community development jobs, funding and facilitation from the roll-back state. The next section brings to light the ways in which the state exerts power indirectly through its ‘reach’ into dispersed localities and through ‘drawing within close reach those that that are able to broker and influence decisions’ (Allen and Cochrane, 2010:1076).

Individuals like Helen often become ‘advocates of local partnerships’ and ‘are very often community activists who have been forced into, opted for, or been recruited into new “professionalised” roles in their efforts to advance social justice’ (Larner and Craig, 2005:405). Helen’s ‘soft skills’ were vital in her role to help save the community centre, her background in community work giving a lineage to her skills and social conscience:

My background is in community development and for many years, I was doing issue-based work, but some of the issues we took on in relation to working with ordinary working class people were quite demanding on the individuals who were taking on the politicians and the hierarchical structures. I found myself being a bit shocked at how damaging it was for some individuals. For instance, there was a place in Johnston called Howard Road, who had just had a whole renovation of housing stock, only to find their houses were incredibly damp after the initial upgrading. We then found out that the heating system that they put into the houses was coal fired but had to be on 24 hours a day, which nobody could actually afford, so the heating system wasn’t working efficiently and that’s what was causing the dampness. So the tenants association that we were working with took Renfrew District council to court, won the case through the courts, and it became a precedent in law. So after that I thought that what I would like to try and do is use the arts, as a form of community development, especially amongst, er you know, what was seen as “poorer communities”, or communities that were dysfunctional, ya’know all the language of ‘the planners’. (Helen)

Helen’s role was complex, acting in, against and beyond the state. We can see here how the ‘language of the planners’ actually becomes part of her discourse. In this vein we think of ‘politics as a world-building activity rather than as a matter of given identities and

interests' (Dikeç, 2013:79). This really highlights the tacit and complex ways in which neoliberal ideology and rhetoric becomes entwined with ways of imagining space, populations and the solutions to manage both. The reproduction of such discourses could be said to contribute to the 'sensible evidences' of Rancière's 'police regime'. 'The essence of the police is not repression but distribution – the distribution, or partitioning, of the sensible, of what is made available to the senses and what is made to make sense' (Dikeç, 2013:82). However, during the interview, it was also evident that Helen was and is fully aware of the irony in her complying with the 'language of the planners'. Helen articulates a clear link between the arts and community development, which was also something that the local state was encouraging through the City of Culture events. We can see how her assumptions about the role of arts in community development could both be in tension with critical understandings of the 'creative class' (Florida, 2002) and in turn be in line with the cultural events that were being promoted by the city council at the time. The funding for her initial project actually came out of the City of Culture arts policies, as explained below:

Erm and from that, I set up an organisation called Raring to go Festival, which was a festival for older people. We put a huge event on during Glasgow's year of culture in 1990 and it was really about showing the amount of work that senior citizens actually did for their communities, in relation to running community centres and running holiday programmes, but also about their artistry, which was quite successful. I found myself in Paris and made contact with some people I knew in Brussels, and from that, I set up an organisation called Scotland in Europe, Celebrating A Certain Age. At that time, it was about looking at older people and where the similarities in Europe were, so we set that up in Paris. We had to register with the Marie du Paris, which is the equivalent of the City Council. Then I came back here and set it up in Scotland in Europe in November 1992... Anyway, I came back here because, obviously, I had a house here, and I was looking for somewhere to establish Scotland in Europe in its own building and to try and utilise the whole concept of Scotland in Europe as a basis for bringing the arts into an area where you wouldn't normally see it... (Helen)

Helen could be understood as a 'strategic broker' between the community and the state (Larner and Craig, 2005). Such individuals sometimes appear to be governmentalised in their professional functions, and also in their personal and political commitments too.

Larner and Craig suggest that, if this is true, ‘then the new form of governance being rolled out is not just embedded, it is also feminised and domesticated’ (2005:406). Furthermore, civil society groups such as Scotland in Europe can sometimes act as a shadow state (Wolch, 1990), but I would suggest that their role is more ambiguous as they often act as an essential intermediary between the state and the community. Furthermore, these civil-society-state relationships are multidimensional and simultaneously engaged in activities of cooperation, resistance and modification with respect to state agendas (Trudeau, 2008:685).

Such activities of civil society groups like Scotland in Europe are thus constantly renegotiated and adapting within changing political contexts and in certain moments form radical resistance to the state. Their roles as ‘representatives of the community’ make third sector organisations a pivotal link between the state and the community. Joseph (2002) also notes how when we look for community in research, what we often find is non-profits; ‘nonprofits often stand in for community metonymically. One gives to one’s community or to “the community” by contributing labour or money to a nonprofit; nonprofits are asked to represent communities politically, to speak for the communities for which they are metonyms’ (ibid: 70). This was the case at KPC, where Scotland in Europe was clearly asked to represent the community by the state.

This process is more complicated in reality, and the strings are not simply pulled from above: by involving Helen as a subject of capital, capitalism gives her a vested interest in the space for her non-profit. She explained to me in interviews how she used the neighbourhood centre for a rehearsal space for Scotland in Europe. She described one of the events, STAGE (Scottish Talents Across the Generations in Europe), for which she had obtained grants from the EU. Helen described how the project ‘involved people who had never been involved in the arts before’, involving ‘going out, campaigning into places and finding people who were artists but had never been given a platform before’ (Helen). Whilst the EU funded this project, the local state provision of the neighbourhood centre provided the physical space for hire for rehearsals, and so the local state remained an important facilitator for Helen’s organisation that was committed to empowering local artists. When the funding for the space was cut and the centre was threatened with closure, Helen’s needs were no longer met by the state and thus she joined in coalition with the community as a building user during the occupation. Her organisation, then, through signing the tenancy agreement, provided the institutional link that the council required for

the community. ‘The contradiction is that while capitalism cannot coexist with, neither can it exist without, the welfare state’ (Offe, 1984:153). The state, capital and the community are linked and rely on one another in complex way. Furthermore, rather than portraying individuals like Helen as puppets, ‘whose strings are pulled by a variety of structural ghosts’ (Joseph, 2002:74), I would rather suggest that community arts workers like Helen ‘are enabled in their projects, projects that are often important to the very survival of the people served by the organization, precisely because nonprofits are useful to capitalism’ (ibid). Furthermore, Helen is a member of the local Kinning Park community, born and bred in the area as well as the head of a non-profit organisation, and she is a skilled activist imbued with social and cultural capital in her community. We can then begin to think of Helen’s decision to represent the community as a resourceful way of utilising her skills and embodied forms of capital for the social benefit of herself and those in her local area, as I will discuss in Chapter 5. I would argue that, through her organisation, Scotland in Europe, Helen aimed to ‘transform social relations’ in ‘progressive, anti-capitalist and socially just ways’ (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2013:255). Furthermore, this presents a progressive form of localism; which contests ‘spatial liberalism’ through actually strengthening local institutions and communities as part of a wider political project grounded in principles such as ‘social and spatial justice, equity, democracy and solidarity’ (Mackinnon et al, 2011:11).

A key point here is that ‘community’ needs to be situated within a broader narrative of capitalism, or the neoliberal order that currently prevails in the UK. ‘Community’, as a term, a practice, and general concept, has been understood, operationalised and evoked in a particularly malleable way according to various competing interests (Holgersen and Haarstad, 2009). Joseph (2002) also notes how society often situates community and capital as opposing spatial concepts; community as local, bounded and involving face-to-face relations; capital as dynamic, global and faceless. Secondly, she importantly expresses that concepts of capital and community are also structurally contrasted; capital is about economic value and community about human values; such as kindness, reciprocity and care. ‘Posited as its other, its opposite, community is often presented as a complement to capitalism, balancing it and humanising it, even, in fact, enabling it’ (Joseph, 2002:1). This binary opposite is of course a fiction, as community, if anything, cannot be fully autonomous from the grasp of capital. The building users were affected by capital when the Council introduced the cuts through the closure of the neighbourhood centre.

During periods of local government crisis the third sector often steps in, but many normative conceptions of civil society tend to ‘downplay the built-in risks of innovative capacity-building approaches of community-based organisations in the context of current restructuring; overlooking how present economic and political processes structure and transform contemporary forms of civic engagement’ (Mayer, 2003:117). My empirical evidence shows that people at KPC experience the impact of neoliberalism differently, each person reworking their position, so the outcomes are not just negative, but are sometimes creative and generative. This presents a space like KPC as a paradoxical space; where capital and community are mutually constitutive and entangled. These relations need to be critically analysed because of the ways that problematic notions of community are currently being employed by the state to justify and bolster public service reform, as I will expand upon later in this chapter. The state clearly understands the economic value inherent in the community although this is seldom explicitly mentioned, and more often the notion of ‘social capital’ replaces the blunt assertion that community is now, more than ever, essential to support capitalism and secondly to support people. Thus, the ‘metonymic nature of community’ is evident (Joseph, 2002). Furthermore, taking a geographical perspective, since local states ‘do not have the resources or even the will to engage with all [voluntary] groups in the city ... it becomes clear that in urban areas, inter-organisational social capital is neither brokered equitably nor distributed evenly’ (Foley and Edwards, 1998: cited in Maloney, Smith and Stoker 1999:809). Thus, when power is devolved via ‘technologies of citizenship’, the governmentalities of active citizenship and participatory democracy can be regarded as ‘competing and conflating with more representational and managerial modes of local governance’ (Painter et al, 2011:7). Autonomy or independence from the state is therefore not necessarily more democratic or representative, the picture is more nuanced, as Chapter 6 will discuss.

#### **4.5 ‘Why not give it to the community, they’ll run it for flipping nothing?’**

As the previous section explains, the lease was signed by Scotland in Europe and the Landlord was GCC, the rent set at a peppercorn rate of £1.00 per year. Scotland in Europe was then required to work with the other building users to establish a management committee. Stasia, one of the most involved individuals in the occupation, explained in interviews in no uncertain terms that people involved were aware that they were both producing an autonomous community-run space but also aiding the Local Authority by taking on the centre, its functions and, of course, the running and staffing costs:

‘so we had this strange situation at the end of the occupation, where the council were prepared to give us the lease of the building, but some of us maintained that we never won that occupation. At the end of the day we wanted the council to run that community centre. We wanted to keep a community centre for people with paid workers, that would service the community and that’s why we occupied the building. So at the end of the occupation, it was as if you could see the council you know...the penny dropping...why not give it to the community, they’ll run it for flipping nothing? there’ll still be clubs in the community and you can just let them take the responsibility on for all the repairs and the rest of it!’ (Stasia)

Stasia and those who occupied were experiencing the negative impacts integral to the nature of state-roll back, highlighting the paradoxical nature of the community victory against the council; they lost a service and gained a responsibility. Those involved in the occupation knew that they were about to embark upon a huge task of running it and funding a formerly state funded and staffed community centre ‘for flipping nothing!’ The reality of forced volunteerism and responsabilisation is evident in her admission that they were not the winners following the occupation. Scotland in Europe were advised to work alongside the existing management committee – and were given responsibility for the running costs and for the maintenance and management of a very large, Victorian schoolhouse, with a provision that they could rent out space in the centre to raise income. KPC has been run by individuals from the local area as a not-for-profit space ever since.

Helen Kyle managed the building from 1996 to 2008. Rather than see her role as supplementary to capital, she was very proud of their autonomy from the City Council:

We never were given a grant, we were never helped financially, so all of the building was literally saved because of the work of the local management committee and Scotland in Europe, in bringing different projects into the building. (Helen)

Helen also introduced the system where the upper floors of the building, the old classrooms of the schoolhouse, became rented artist studios to generate revenue. This continues today, where there are currently 11 studios rented privately to artists, musicians and theatre groups. The two large gym halls are also rented out at a low cost to the various clubs and associations, one off events are held in the Halls for a fee. However, as

suggested by Clayton et al. self-distancing from funding sources and support does compromise an organisation's ability to act resourcefully (2015:4). I will discuss this in more depth in Chapters 6 and 7. Today, the rent derived from these units pays for the maintenance of the building, electricity and heating costs, not to mention enriching the social mix of people at KPC.

The City Council effectively devolved responsibility for representing, managing and providing for the community to Scotland in Europe, while simultaneously benefiting from the continuation of key services in Kinning Park. They outsourced the costs involved in this to the community. However, they also maintained some form of control through the ownership of the building, which – as we find out later in this chapter – came back to haunt KPC in 2013, when the Council changed the terms of the lease. The City Council retained the power use 'techniques' of regulation, calculation and control to shaping the fate of KPC (Raco and Imrie, 2000).

Helen ran Kinning Park Complex for 13 years; Chapter 5 describes the details of this period. In 2008, Helen took the decision to step away from KPC with Scotland and Europe. Since 2009, a newly formed committee comprised of other building users have signed the lease and Lindsay Keenan has taken over the management of the building. KPC is registered as Community Interest Company with a reinvigorated committee. The community centre has continued to run independently through volunteer labour and external grants. These have been obtained from the private sector and large funding bodies such as the National Lottery. The building users still represent a very broad community; the multifarious ways in which the building is used and the 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2005) of a variety of people at KPC make it a thriving space in the city, that facilitates encounters between diverse groups, as will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6. The next section of this chapter focuses on the current political conjuncture at which KPC finds itself. The community centre still plays a somewhat paradoxical role, as an ongoing grassroots project that retains a space for independent community provision, but in the context of the current crisis and a neoliberal political landscape being shaped by the City Council. In some ways, KPC appears in-line with the current UK government plans to expand third sector projects in a context of austerity, but in others the ways that the City Council have handled KPC actually contradict the broader aims of the Scottish and UK governments who have seen a recent return to localism, community empowerment and citizen participation, but in a context of austerity.

#### **4.6 ‘Austerity localism’ in the current political conjuncture**

The first section of this chapter set out the shift from centralised and bureaucratic forms of decision-making, ‘to a plurality of coexisting networks and partnerships that interact as overlapping webs of relationships at diverse spatial scales, from the neighbourhood to the globe’ (Hubbard et al, 2002, 175–176). This section will discuss the current political conjuncture and the return to forms of governance based around localism in recent years. Importantly, this recent incarnation of localism has occurred in a context of austerity, thus has incorporated widespread cuts and welfare restructuring as part of the ideologically driven project in the UK and more specifically in Scotland and Glasgow, as the final section describes.

A new ‘politics of austerity’ has emerged as a common response to the sovereign debt crisis of 2008 (Kitson et al., 2011:292). The Conservative-led UK Coalition Government has begun a programme of austerity to ‘dramatically curtail government spending’ (Featherstone et al., 2012:177). The British government’s austerity package has been comprised of welfare reform and public sector cutbacks. Local authority budgets are subject to spending cuts and restructuring from central government, and because of the removal of the ‘residual state role of redistribution, stabilization and management of the national economic space’ (Pike and Tomaney, 2009:30), the economic landscape of Britain is looking increasingly uneven. These recent welfare reforms have hit hardest in the places where welfare claimants are concentrated, which are also the poorest areas with the highest rates of unemployment (Beatty and Fothergill, 2013:13). As Stoker explains, rather than a commitment to decentralization, local government’s move towards ‘networked community governance’ has envisioned the role of local government as place shaping’ but with reduced budgets (2011:22). The effects of the spending cuts meant that, in 2011, the Scottish Government’s total budget (in cash terms) fell by £1.3 billion (Christie, 2011). Thus, welfare states are increasingly being framed as ‘costly, overburdened, inefficient and incapable of eliminating poverty’ (Jessop, 2002:465).

There has also been a return to ‘localism’. The Localism Act, first announced in 2010, proposes: ‘a huge cultural change . . . where people don’t always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face, by developing active and sustainable communities’ (Cameron, 2010). New Labour also championed ‘localism’; and similarly utilised the discourse around community empowerment,

community engagement and implemented multi-scalar partnership, but with some centralised regulation of these activities (Pratchett, 2004). Furthermore, this was prior to the 2008 economic crisis, which has become both catalyst and ideological justification for the austerity driven welfare cuts seen in the current political conjuncture. The six key aims of the Localism Act (2011) are set out in table 1 below. The Welfare Reforms and the Localism Bill also *indirectly* enforce a form of austerity localism on the Scottish Government through massive cuts to the Scottish Budget, but, as I will explain, the Scottish Government have also set out its own plans in the form of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (2014). Over six years, from 2010-11 to 2015-16, the cumulative impact of the welfare reforms on the Scottish Government will be around £6 billion (Scottish Government, 2014b). These cuts will be felt by all Local Authorities but will be systematically greater in more deprived local authorities than in more affluent ones (Hastings et al 2013). Furthermore, reductions in spending tell only part of the story, as Local Authorities will also have to cope with rising costs and demands (ibid). In Glasgow more specifically, in 2012, 30.2% of households had no one aged between 16 and 64 in employment (Office of National Statistics, 2013).

In Scotland, in 2011, as part of the SNP's 2011 Scottish election manifesto, they set out plans for the 'Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill'. This Bill is part of a wider programme of public service reform in Scotland, preceded by the Christie Commission's Report on 'The future delivery of public services in Scotland' (Christie, 2011). The Commission examined various options for reform whilst retaining the social democratic ethos of Scottish public service delivery. The Christie Commission identified four key objectives for the programme of reform in Scotland specifically:

- public services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience;
- public service organisations work together effectively to achieve outcomes;
- public service organisations prioritise prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality;
- all public services constantly seek to improve performance and reduce costs, and are open, transparent and accountable (Christie, 2011)

Alex Salmond MSP, then the First Minister, formally launched the Commission on 19th November 2010. He later made these comments regarding the differences between the English and Scottish approaches to public service restructuring:

This is a tale of two countries, of two very different visions of society and of the future... We can build, and will build, a new and fairer Scotland. Not yet in every

way, but in many ways. And the country we create will be a very different one from the nation that is emerging down south...There is a harshness to the UK government's approach that goes against the grain of Scottish society (The Scotsman, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011)

The finding of the Christie Commission was taken into account and after three years of consultation, the ‘Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill’ was officially announced in June 2014. The main aims of the Bill are also set out in Table 1 below:

<b>Localism Act 2011 (England and Wales) (HM Government, 2011)</b>	<b>Community Empowerment Bill 2014 (Scotland) (The Scottish Parliament 2014)</b>
New freedoms and flexibility for local government	The Bill provides a statutory basis for the use of ‘National Outcomes’.
Increase local control of public finance	Provide reforms to the system of community planning.
It will facilitate and diversify the supply of public services.	Community bodies are to become involved in delivery of public services.
Open up government to public scrutiny	Communities granted the right to take over publicly owned land or buildings with ‘Community Right to Buy’.
The Act will strengthen accountability to local people	The Bill will allow community bodies to take on assets from the public sector.
The Act will empower communities and lift the burden of bureaucracy.	The Bill introduces a number of reforms to the system of common good.
	The Bill will introduce legislation concerned with allotments.
	The Bill allows local authorities to set their own reliefs for business rates.

**Table 1 Key aims of Localism Act and Community Empowerment Bill**

The ‘trajectory and composition of public sector cuts and their local impacts are likely to be different in England and Scotland’ (Painter and Pande 2013:4). One reason for this is the speed with which the English and Welsh Localism Act was rushed through by the Coalition government, it was first announced by The Secretary of State for Communities

and Local Government, Eric Pickles, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 and given Royal Assent in November 2011. The Scottish government have thus taken more time to formulate a plan to mitigate spending cuts, involving less aggressive measures. Painter and Pande (2013) usefully compare the Scottish and English approaches to community empowerment, showing that the Scottish situation is thus slightly more favourable, but they conclude by stating that there are ‘more similarities than differences’, especially given the context of austerity (7-8). My main problems with such top-down forms of localism are the ‘responsibilisation’ of ‘resilient’ citizens, simplistic assumptions surrounding participation and empowerment, the homogenous portrayal of the local scale and the apolitical conceptions of community, as I will set out next.

Both the English and Welsh Localism Bill and Scottish Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill imply that local resilience will counter the national spending cuts, placing the responsibility at the local community scale (O’Malley, 2010). There is a clear *expectation* in this local imaginary that all ‘localities should be able to withstand the shocks of neoliberal crisis, restructuring and rebuke’ (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013). This Conservative celebration of community ‘resilience’ arguably reinforces efforts to roll back spending for local governments, in that, the very concept of resilience ‘privileges the restoration of existing systemic relations rather than their transformation’ (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:263). Some of the community planning procedures claim that there will be new procedures for communities to take control of council-owned spaces, but the transfer of property rights to citizens, as set out by the Community Empowerment Bill, has mainly related to rural rather than urban space. The next section shows how the designation of urban space and particular council properties in Glasgow (including KPC) as ‘commercial’ has actually excluded some urban populations from gaining ownership of community buildings. They are currently tied into a lease that Glasgow City Council controls as the next section will explain. Thus, those at KPC are being resilient, but through their resilience, they are actually softening the blow of regressive and contradictory forms of governance from GCC.

Secondly, conceptualisations of ‘empowerment’ and ‘participation’ inherent in localist discourse are based on problematic and simplistic assumptions about these categories (Painter et al. 2011). The experiences of empowerment vary within KPC; alongside some moments of empowerment and real participation, the community have been well aware of the paradoxical nature of their ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ when they saved KPC in

1996 and still today. Localist governance is being used to facilitate state rollback, and these arrangements are being instituted ‘to encourage family, neighbourhood, informal or market-based and market sustaining solutions to the problems of social reproduction’ (Jessop, 2002:465). Neoliberal apologists are routinely justifying such ‘offloading’ by arguing that it augments local control and is therefore more democratic (Purcell, 2006:1926). Chapters 6 and 7 discuss how local control is not necessarily *more* democratic; there are clear discrepancies between different actors in any community space.

This leads on to my third criticism, this relates to the simplistic representation of the local scale in government discourse. It is too often misunderstood as a site where ‘the apparent opposites of enterprise and community, of efficiency and welfare, of economic means and local ends’ might be reconciled (Eisenschitz and Gough, 1993:11). Purcell (2006:1921) reminds us that these local spatial scales ‘are not independent entities with pre-given characteristics’, but are instead ‘socially constructed strategies to achieve particular ends’. Even in leftist community development literature, ‘the great irony of the preference for the local scale is that it plays into the hands of the neoliberal agenda’ (Purcell, 2006:1926).

Finally, ‘these depoliticised governance versions of community are declassed and deracialised in that they do not draw on or recognize how human collectivities or groupings use their own capacities and creative resources to cope and manage in contexts of poverty, racism and exclusion’ (Hancock et al, 2012:17). Progressive and subversive urban community groups like KPC already exist in the city, and such groups are instead resourceful in how they ‘seek to transform social relations in more progressive, anti-capitalist and socially just ways’, crucially, from below (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:255). This reconfigures the terms of top-down, austerity localism, to generate a more progressive localism which can be applied to organisations such as KPC that ‘strengthen local institutions and communities as part of a wider political project grounded in principles such as social and spatial justice, equity, democracy and solidarity’ (Mackinnon et al, 2010:11). Spaces such as KPC are in line with more progressive forms of localism that are based on a ‘local ethics of care’ and are framed in positive political terms: forms of ‘place-based organising can shape localisms in contested and solidaristic ways’ (Featherstone et al, 2012:179). This necessitates ‘thinking differently about the links between place-based politics and global processes that shape everyday practices of localism’ (ibid 180). The empirical chapters that follow will show how important KPC is

as a political space since 1996, through facilitating the ‘throwntogetherness’ of different groups, but also how this process is hard work and complex to negotiate (Massey, 2005).

The present UK government clearly acknowledges the crucial role that the third sector continues to play in society; voluntary organisations often identify needs, provide services and offer support to groups outside of the public sector framework. Indeed, the ethos of localism has become ‘deeply entangled with an ideology of citizen-driven government’ (Newman, 2013:5). For example, current UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s notion of the Big Society clearly begins with the assumption that central government presents a barrier to community participation at the local scale, thus justifying the scaling back of centrally funded services. It works on the assumption that ‘where the market and state fail, ‘extra’ economic values such as kindness, generosity or decency will come into play, and thus this abandonment produces its own social strengthening rewards’ (Gilmore, 2007:44). Social capital is thus gained, where economic capital is lacking (Fine, 2002). This ‘responsible’ or ‘active’ citizen agenda frames people as intrinsically empowered, fixed in their local, unitary area and embedded in ‘community’. Painter and Pande (2013) conclude in a recent discussion paper that these assumptions not only produce a homogenous notion of community, but also overlook the fact that it is often those individuals that are most well resourced in the community that reap the benefits of more access to participation and thus empowerment. Thus, at KPC, Helen Kyle is a highly resourceful individual; moreover, she possessed lots of social and cultural capital, which is discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.



Figure 2 Poster from May 68, 'we participate, you participate, we participate, they profit'

There has been a ‘remarkable revival of interest in the role of the third sector as a possible “panacea” for the problems facing neoliberalising states’ (Fyfe, 2005:537). In the UK, the contemporary institutional landscape at local level is highly complex, comprised of economically weakened local authorities. Some civil society actors and strengthened private sector firms are well placed to compete for government contracts and partnerships such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013:15). This was exemplified in 2008, when the Scottish Government announced plans to set up third sector ‘interfaces’. According to the Scottish Government: ‘the Interface provides an opportunity to shape our own vision for the role the third

sector can play in Glasgow' (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, 2010:4). These frameworks mainly serve to link the third sector to the state more formally.

In Glasgow, the voluntary sector is significant; there are over 1700 voluntary and community organisations in the city, contributing around £671 million annually to the city's economy (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, 2010).

The Third Sector in Glasgow is resilient and has worked especially hard over the last few years to cope with increasing demand despite declining resources. (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, 2010:3)

In Glasgow, experimental forms of local governance have become the means through which regeneration, economic and social, is mediated (Paddison, 2002:19), as the first half of this chapter has shown. Alongside their enthusiasm for the third sector, GCC also announced a savings target of £180 million in 2010, which meant reduced funding from the state to local third sector organisations in the city, predicted to have 'a massive impact on services, communities and local people' (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, 2010:3). This means that any partnerships and transfer of powers at the local level will be with reduced investment from the state. Furthermore, the money available for the third sector from the City Council is channelled to specific partnership organisations rather than independent spaces such as KPC (Fyfe, 2005). For example, much of GCC's funding for the third sector sports, culture and recreation is allocated via the arms length company Glasgow Life, who have particular criteria for funding allocations (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a) and who effectively act as an arm of the state with the freedom of a community enterprise (Nesbitt, 2009). This undermines trust between third sector organisations and the City Council in Glasgow (Maloney et al. 1999, and Fyfe, 2005).

#### **4.7 The impacts of the current political conjuncture for KPC**

This final section situates KPC in the current political conjuncture. In response to Clayton et al (2015), this section sets out how KPC has fared in the context of austerity. Since the current crisis of 2008, the UK been under serious pressure and has faced much restructuring and cutbacks, as the previous section explains. These negative impacts trickle down to the local level as aforementioned; GCC has responded to this financial pressure, which has affected those at the grass roots level, such as KPC. Despite the language, which 'responsibilises' citizens and the third sector, the local state is still the body instigating this

process (Blanco et al, 2014), as the case of KPC illustrates in this section. In 2010, in a bid to raise much needed income, GCC's Executive Committee decided to end the 'Concessionary Rents Policy' in the city. This meant that voluntary organizations situated in premises' deemed to be commercial properties would no longer have reduced rental rates.

The impact of the current recession is that the capital receipts targets set by the Council are unlikely to be achieved. The disposal of the commercial investment portfolio is perhaps the only short term solution which is open to the Council to generate very significant capital payments over a very short space of time (Glasgow City Council Executive Committee, 27th November 2009, see appendix)

These properties were also transferred to a private company called City Property (Glasgow) LLP; 'evolved from the property services previously provided by Glasgow City Council' (City Property website, 2013). This was in exchange for a large loan from Barclays Bank. City Property appointed the estate agent, Ryden, as external property agents to support the management of this portfolio. It is hard to see how the Community Empowerment Bill fits into this agenda. Furthermore, it clearly demonstrates how local governments can be seen as 'mediating' processes of neoliberalisation in the city in unfair and often contradictory ways (Newman, 2014). Organisations across Glasgow have been affected; some faced 'rent increases of over £20,000, which in turn could lead to the loss of valuable services (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector website, 2013). Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector added 'we are very concerned about the impact this policy will have on voluntary and community services in the city' (2013). Many of the affected organisations simply cannot continue if their rent is increased.

KPC was one of the organisations affected by this new policy. KPC's peppercorn rent of £1 per year was set to be extraordinarily increased; after adding large administrative costs to draw up the new lease, this amounted to almost £2750. Despite this rent increase, KPC continued to receive no economic funding for building maintenance and repairs from GCC. There are only two full time paid employees at KPC; the building manager and the other paid position is split between two cleaners and a treasurer. They are paid solely from revenues raised from public events and hall and studio hire. This affects the capacity for an organisation like KPC to cope 'in an environment in which their work is championed, but not necessarily supported by those controlling resources' (Clayton et al, 2015:4).

Following this development, KPC were unhappy about signing the new lease with the Council, partly due to the large financial pressure it would cause and partly due to the rejection of market rationales behind being asked to pay increased rent for nothing other than to prevent eviction. KPC continued to go about daily business and began applying for grants from the national lottery to maintain control of the building. As a result of refusing to sign the new lease, KPC were handed a Notice of Removal on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013, due to be enforced on the 27<sup>th</sup> May. This letter stated that ‘because KPC were unsuccessful in obtaining Lottery and other funding’, this ‘may have an impact on the terms and conditions agreed with City Property for the long lease of this property’ (letter from City Property, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013, see appendix). Thus, KPC would be unable to sign the new lease in any case. As a response, the committee and volunteers set out to begin a new campaign to gather support from the community building users and supporters of KPC. Building manager, Lindsay, sent out a letter to everyone on the mailing list:

For the last 15 months we have tried to talk to the Council / City Property, funders, other agencies and councillors about how we all might work together to secure the long term future of Kinning Park Complex as a community facility. We now have to deal with City Property on behalf of Glasgow City Council. Recently those talks have broken down. Last week, without notice, City Property sent us a Notice of Removal telling us to be out of the building by 27 May.

This City Property letter reminds us that despite the huge efforts made by many in the community to keep this building open and in daily use there is still a long way to go to secure our long-term future and fund the major repairs needed. (Email to all building users, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2013)

The current political conjuncture is once again being negotiated and challenged by those at KPC. ‘The resilience of capitalism is achieved at the expense of certain social groups and regions that bear the costs of periodic waves of adaptation and restructuring’ (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:254). Whilst KPC remains strong in a turbulent economic and political landscape, it exemplifies the paradox of contemporary localism(s), in which organisations like KPC mitigate the negative social effects of economic cuts with much needed community provision, but also facilitate these cuts in doing so. KPC highlights the messiness and multiple logics competing at local government level (Blanco et al, 2014)

with Glasgow City Council acting in ways that actually hinder grassroots organisations like KPC (Gray and Porter, 2014) yet rhetorically appear to be encouraging this form of citizen action. In 1996 the community were aware of their contradictory position in both producing an autonomous community space but ironically aiding GCC by taking on the centre, its functions and importantly the running and staffing costs. Currently KPC have a one-year lease with the Council, through City Property and their agents Ryden. There is an option for a 25 year lease, but with no guarantee that rent would not be increased to a commercial level, potentially around £20k. Alternatively, Ryden could even take back the building and the community centre would be shut. Without the 25-year lease however, obtaining grants to carry out the large-scale repairs is impossible. So once again, KPC is suffering the impacts of poor decision making from the City Council, which seem to be also in tension with the recent Community Empowerment Bill, but the ways in which these contradictions will play out remains to be seen.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

From one perspective, the relentlessly parochial nature of the local is said to invite fragmentation, not only limiting the ambitions of those engaged in politics at that level, but also encouraging division and competition between those who should be united in the face of global challenges. From another, local action is understood to make it possible to build movements that can win particular concessions. (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013:10)

In this chapter, localism has been discussed as both a top down form of governance carried out by the state, thus holding GCC to account in orchestrating the local shift to entrepreneurialism. But it has also showed how the local has been the main site of local political contestation (Boyle and Hughes, 1994). Thus localism can also be a progressive grassroots project. I would suggest that spaces such as KPC help instigate progressive localism in four ways. Firstly, by highlighting the plurality and political power of a community, this distinguishes KPC from the passive notion of the local. Secondly, the direct conflict with the Council stresses the overbearing role of local government who often impose top-down, ill thought-through and frankly contradictory strategies. KPC actively challenge notions of community as passive recipients of this urban policy despite their financial impacts. Thirdly, KPC exemplifies progressive localism through its contribution to social justice in the local area and beyond, by providing space for bottom-

up community organising and practices where diverse groups and social agendas can be met through childcare and the arts. Finally, KPC has remained physically present on the urban landscape since 1996 and thus provide us with a rare historical trajectory of progressive localism. This contributes to debates on localism, as many accounts fail to pay attention to the long histories of actually existing progressive localism(s). Spaces like KPC, make cities into ‘landscapes of antagonism’ that are ‘formed (and reformed) through the discursive constitution of new subjects and the orchestration of new lines of antagonism, resistance and alignment’ (Newman, 2013:9).

The occupation at KPC celebrates the agency of communities during times of crisis, in a way that acknowledges the inherent contradictions as well as radical potential of such struggles. The complicated relationship between the Council and KPC through time paints a realistic picture of the contradictory nature of local politics, as well as the sustained ingenuity shown by those involved in the project. The diverse coalitions that KPC engenders promote skill learning and sharing – illustrating the resourcefulness and social empowerment at KPC. I have presented the struggle at KPC ‘without overshadowing the exciting activism and politics that occurs in these spaces and their potential to facilitate transformative change’ despite the ‘material and enduring challenges that marginalized communities face’ (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:265). KPC is both an important symbolic and a functional community space, and a case study to demonstrate the complexities and contradictions of simultaneously struggling against and providing services autonomously from the state during austere times.

Additionally, the ongoing struggle at KPC from 1996 to the present also allows us to observe multiple urban crises over time as important moments where the fragile and contradictory nature of neoliberalism becomes exposed. This helps to unsettle hegemonic practices and challenge the seeming omnipotence of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Spaces like KPC have been embedded in an ongoing contestation and negotiation to retain their control, and their experience shows that economic and organizational independence is difficult to achieve and maintain. This takes forward the debates on localism by asking us to consider the multifaceted nature of this concept, reminding us that localism(s) need not be either progressive or regressive; instead, the ‘wider social relations and political strategies are what shape specific forms of spatial politics’ (MacKinnon et al, 2012:11). KPC is situated along a historic trajectory of community struggles in Glasgow and the next chapter discusses the campaign and occupation in more depth to show how

the interactions were influenced by legacies (even memories and representations) from the past (Cochrane, 1993:25). The next chapter also discusses the role of collective histories in the emergence of KPC, taking a historic look at the campaign and eventual occupation at KPC in 1996. Chapter 5 will present a history from below, also taking into account the individual trajectories of those individuals who saved the space from disappearing from the community.

## Chapter 5: KPC's Historic Trajectory

The previous chapter dealt with the external political context surrounding KPC since 1996. This chapter focuses on the internal dynamics and KPC's trajectory as a social and political community space. It situates KPC as the product of previous struggle in the area and focuses on the agency of the building users during the campaign and occupation in 1996. This provides a thick description of progressive localism, identifying the resourcefulness and endurance of the community at the neighbourhood centre.

Massey (2005) presents space as a product of interrelations; secondly, as a sphere of possibilities; and thirdly, as a process that is always under construction and never closed. She articulates the temporal nature of space, as a trajectory. In this chapter, KPC will be discussed as a product of multiple trajectories, referring to the personal histories of those individuals who encountered the space since 1996. KPC can be thought of as 'a simultaneity of stories-so-far' if we consider the multiplicity of actors that have been involved at KPC, at different times. Thus, I conceive of the space as 'the dimension of a multiplicity of durations' (Massey, 2005:24). In this chapter I bring together Massey's

conception of space as site of multiple individual trajectories with Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (1984) to articulate the personal histories, or trajectories, of each individual in more depth. Though examining interpersonal dynamics and personal histories I present a plural, active and, importantly, relational notion of community at KPC. The trajectory of the community is an ongoing process of dynamic and social relations.

Through describing the collective history of political struggle in the area during the late 1980s and early 1990s, I will firstly set the context for the campaign that led to the beginning of the occupation at KPC in 1996. I will describe



Figure 3 Article from Counter Information newsletter, 1996, Spirit of Revolt Archive

the events using images and documents from the Spirit of Revolt archive. Through the combined theoretical approaches of Massey and Bourdieu, I discuss how individual biographies or habitus are weaved into the social fabric of KPC. The next section will

reconstruct the occupation and look at the day-to-day workings of the 55-day sit-in. Finally, I will look at the continuing trajectory of Kinning Park Complex, post-occupation. This will explore the trajectory of the space as a whole since the Council's decision to allow it to become independently funded and managed in 1996.

## **5.1 Contentious urban politics in Glasgow**

In 1996, following £68 million pounds of cuts made by GCC (Amin, 2002:64), the city was alive with widespread public protest. As described in Chapter 4, there was a combination of a spending squeeze and grant loss from local government reorganisation which led to spending reductions and tax increases in Glasgow that were well in excess of the Scottish average (Carmichael and Midwinter, 1999:96). The fiscal pressures unleashed on the inner city by this process were of such a magnitude that the City Council simply cut back any activities or services that they saw as marginal (Amin, 2002). The cuts to educational and recreational services in the city were contentious. The struggle to close the neighbourhood centre linked into this broader network of struggles at the time, generating solidarity against the rollback of City Council provision through the closure of spaces like community centres and schools.

During the 1980s and early 1990s in Glasgow a multitude of political campaigns sought to hold the City Council accountable for cuts, closures and unpopular planning decisions. For example, the anti-poll tax movement began in 1989 as a reaction to the trialling of the Thatcher's unpopular per-capita tax in Scotland one year before the rest of the UK<sup>3</sup>. Over 50,000 people demonstrated against the tax in Glasgow city centre in 1990 (Grant, 2002). Situated in South West Glasgow, the area of Kinning Park was a hotbed of anti-poll tax protest during the late 1980s and early 1990s; and the contestation between the people and the City Council was very visible in the local community. People organised in community centres like KPC and in their living rooms, they put posters in their windows and subsequently over 100,000 refused the tax in Scotland. The anti-poll tax campaign was orchestrated, led and organised from below and demonstrated how working class people could actively shape and direct the political process. In addition, citizens demonstrated that they were legitimate collective actors, best placed to meet their needs and demands (Lavellette and Mooney, 2000:218). The broad based community resistance established

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<sup>3</sup> 'Poll tax', as it was commonly known, was officially called 'The Community Charge' and was a system of taxation introduced in replacement of domestic rates in Scotland from 1989 by the Thatcher Government.

tangible social networks of individuals, which brought new people into politics to utilise their knowledge and skills, thus political identities emerged from people's involvement in the campaign.

Later, in 1995, there was more opposition in South West Glasgow more specifically, very close to Kinning Park. This time the campaign was against the proposal to direct a section of the motorway through part of Pollock Country Park. These actions led to the establishment of a protest camp in the park, called Pollock Free State (Routledge, 1997). Some of the building users from the Neighbourhood Centre, as KPC was then known, were involved in the campaign, which comprised 'a heterogeneous affinity that traversed gender, age and class differences' (Routledge, 1997:365). Residents Against M77 also formed around this time after an extension of the motorway was announced. I present these historic struggles in the local area of Glasgow, not as a selfish opposition or parochial NIMBYism, but as Lake (1993) suggests, these are examples of LULUism (Locally Unwanted Land Use). In line with Lake, I would argue that the local political struggles mentioned here 'express conflict between community and capital, and between community and the state, which is constrained in its intervention by the capital-state relationship (Lake, 1993:88). Therefore, the culture in the area in which KPC is situated is punctuated by historic political struggles. Indeed, political and social consciousness is as unevenly distributed across space as economic development (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982).

## **5.2 March 1996: the run up to the Occupation**

During March 1996, there had been rumours that the Neighbourhood Centre at Kinning Park was going to be closed. The building users objected to this decision and began a campaign to keep the community centre open, arguing that the community needed public spaces like this to practice arts, sports, music and community events. The campaign officially began on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1996, when over 500 local people signed a petition to save the centre. The building users organised a march to the city centre, to hand the petition to the City Council in the City Chambers (see photos in appendix). The march went from the neighbourhood centre on Cornwall Street, along Paisley Road West and toward the city centre. It crossed George Square, a large public square in Glasgow city centre, a space in the city centre with a history of political protest and an important symbolic location for people to demonstrate in Glasgow.

## **DOING IT FOR OURSELVES**

**With cuts in services throughout Scotland, the lesson is that only determined action by local people, prepared to disregard the Law, can defend community resources from the callous plans of politicians.**

**Figure 4 Article from Counter Information Newsletter, 1996, Spirit of Revolt Archive**

The campaign at Kinning Park attracted support from other campaigns, notably the 'Save Our Schools' campaigners became involved, but also shipyard workers, SNP activists and anarchists associated with anti cuts actions in Clydeside. Links were also made with other workers, including Librarians threatened with having their shift allowance withdrawn (Counter Information Newsletter, 1996). Indeed:

We organised publicity in the form of demos along Paisley Rd West with the kids after school care, made contacts with the evening times and anybody else, gave talks and attended other occupations meetings. Netherfield School in Castlemilk was also occupying at the time and Greenfield Street was talking about it as was Hillhead centre. We made huge banners to hang outside the building, we'd even tell passersby to help us! (Stasia)

The marchers handed the petition to save KPC to the Council in the City Chambers for the attention of Councillor Shaukat Butt. The local MP at the time was Mike Watson and both MP Watson and Councillor Butt were asked to support the campaign to overturn the decision to shut the Centre. The community at Kinning Park held local Councillor Butt and other Labour Councillors accountable for their agreement with the closure and for their vote of support for the Labour Groups 'Cuts Package' outlined in March 1996. Donna Murray, one of the leading Kinning Park campaigners at the time, met with Councillor Butt where he stated that he was 'unaware of the implications of the Labour Group's cuts when he voted with all the other Labour Councillors for the package' (Justice Cothrom, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1996). Donna stated that this 'only proved his incompetence, lack of accountability and subservience to Councillors Gaughan and Sarwar to trade off keeping St Gerard's open at the expense of Summerton Govan and Kinning Park neighbourhood centres' (ibid).

Following this, MPs Mike Watson and Ian Davidson tried to rescue the Labour Party's credibility by supporting the notion of a self-managed centre with charitable status at Kinning Park. However, those on the Kinning Park Campaign saw this as more to do with the Watson versus Sarwar selection campaign that coincided with the run up to the occupation, 'rather than a rediscovered concern for community centres run for local

people' (Justice Cothrom, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1996). This political opportunity was mobilised by the campaign and, from interviews with those involved, all mentioned how they were able to 'play one politician off another' because of the pending selection campaign.

An article in Justice Cothrom, a local radical newsletter, carried the title 'No ifs no Butts, No Kinning Park Cuts' clearly demonstrating the way the campaign mobilised against their Councillor Shaukat Butt, to highlight local government incompetence and the Council's disregard for closing community facilities. The campaign drew on the legacy of previous struggles to create awareness about the economic objectives of the City Council. One

newsletter stated: 'another strange fact – four of the seven schools the council are most adamant about closing just happen to be along the route of the proposed M74. Do they think we are stupid?' (Flyer, 1996, see appendix). This not only linked into the campaigns against the building of the M74, but contextualised them alongside the broader politics of urban resistance that were ongoing. This speaks to the assertiveness with which people involved in local community campaigns went on to be involved in broader campaigning.

The campaign was also fully aware of the ways in which City Council were negating their responsibility through closing many recreational and educational facilities. The discontent with the City Council is clear in figure 5. In this image, the community awareness of the City Council as manipulative and dishonest is evident. It also speaks to the localised scale at which politics was working at the time. The campaign held the City Council to account, and it honed in on a handful of councillors and local MPs, which empowered the grassroots campaign concentrated locally.

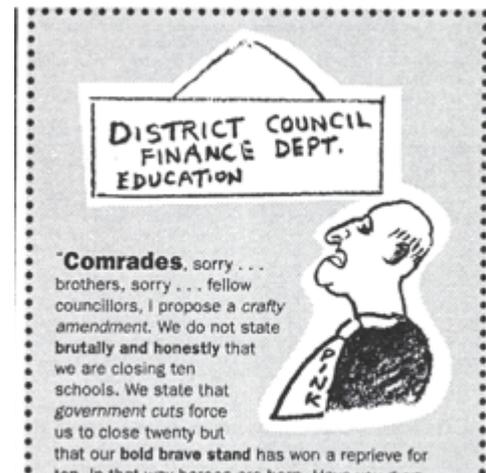


Figure 5 Justice Cothrom Newsletter, 1996, Spirit of Revolt Newsletter

### 5.3 Children and a politics of responsibility



Figure 6 Photo from the campaign, Stasia's copy

The banner above (figure 6) states, 'Save Our Centre for Our Weans' (a Scots word for children); the campaign was localised and the community in the local geographic vicinity of the centre were highly involved, comprising parents and children. On a pragmatic level, the involvement of children on the marches and rallies made the campaign accessible for parents to be involved in. Furthermore, the family ties that this embraced further entrenched solidarity amongst those involved.

The campaign also heavily utilised the notion of 'community' and 'local imaginaries' in the campaign to generate solidarity. The use of community, by the campaigners, was made in opposition to the City Council. It portrayed a united sense of solidarity that was constructed from below rather than an imposed or co-opted notion of community from top-down actors or policy described in Chapter 4. During the campaign in 1996, there was a clear distinction between the state and the people; state actors were very much utilised as a form of resource mobilisation for the campaign. This built on the legacy of other political struggles such as the anti-poll tax campaign of 1990 in the same area, where local activity informed people of the campaign, organised local activities and fundraising events and, importantly, 'argued for new layers of people to get involved and take the lead in their locality to spread the breadth and depth of the campaign' (Lavallette and Mooney, 2000:218).

The campaign continued throughout the rest of April 1996 and involved an array of people of all ages, from children to elderly people. The demands of the building users largely centred on saving the facility because of its huge social and educational use value for children of the area. The emotive campaign mobilised around issues of social reproduction. The campaign at KPC in 1996 illustrates some of the impacts of privatisation and disinvestments in public space, leaving children in poor and underserved neighbourhoods

without services (Katz, 2001). Through mobilising around the moral outrage that these important services could be taken away, the campaign shows us the historical trajectory of struggle against the neoliberalisation of urban space.

One of the key groups to support the campaign were the parents and staff of the 'Schools Out' Service, who provided after school care to children with working parents and was based in the neighbourhood centre. The campaign managed to hold the City Council accountable through emphasising the detrimental effects that the cuts would have on these children in particular. The mobilisation, based on a politics of responsibility to local children, saw children acting as both symbols of hope and responsibility in the campaign. Children can be seen as an important societal 'repository for hope in the diverse political agendas of human rights and well-being' (Kraftl, 2008:83). Furthermore, this form of childhood-hope is 'so powerful that it assumes the form of logic...and that seems immutable' (Kraftl, 2008:84). This was the case in the campaign and, during interviews I carried out, local children were often the central concern for those who took part in the campaign.

The children also took an active role in the campaign, appearing in many pictures from 1996 (see appendix) holding banners and signs with slogans such as 'we need a safe place to play!' Through these practices, they utilised the 'representational and affective force of childhood-hope' (Kraftl, 2008: 85). Rather than mobilising around labour relations, the use of children in the campaign also created an irrefutable call for moral accountability around social reproduction and legitimised the space as having an important use value. As Dalla Costa and James explain in *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1972:17), 'Once we see the community as a productive center and thus a center of subversion, the whole perspective for generalized struggle and revolutionary organization is re-opened'. The Neighbourhood Centre became an essential tangible and symbolic space of social reproduction by forming a tri-coalition between the Schools Out service staff, parents and children. The Schools Out staff faced with losing their jobs, the parents who needed the service to care for their children whilst they were at work, and the children themselves – were framed as worthy recipients of care from the City Council. Therefore the neighbourhood centre represented and performed as useful and productive, thus as a centre of subversion.

## 5.4 Closing the neighbourhood centre and opening up space

On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1996 there was a ‘Save the Neighbourhood Centre’ meeting held in the centre between the local MP, Mike Watson, and a representative from Community Education<sup>4</sup>. It was successful and the official closure date was extended, while the idea of the centre becoming self-run was also put on the table. The conditions of this were that the management committee at Kinning Park would team up with a third sector organisation to prove to the City Council that the centre could feasibly run independently; MP Mike Watson supported this plan.

Helen Kyle attended one of the meetings; she was a local woman and activist and at that time was running her own community arts organisation, Scotland in Europe. Her organisation used the neighbourhood centre as rehearsal space, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Helen became involved in the campaign and the negotiations with the Council; Scotland in Europe and the management committee at that time drew up a joint proposal to put the building into community hands. The management committee was mainly comprised of parents and staff from the Schools Out service and some building users. The management committee collaborated with Scotland in Europe – forming a grassroots third sector and community coalition with a multiplicity of vested interests and skills.

They agreed upon a proposal to present to the City Council on 30<sup>th</sup> April, but unfortunately, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, the Property Services official deemed this proposal ‘unsatisfactory’ and the building was set to be closed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1996. So the management committee and Scotland in Europe called an emergency meeting. They agreed collaboratively to develop and send in another, improved proposal six weeks later, but in the meantime, they took a decision to stage a sit-in in the neighbourhood centre to ensure it was kept open. Helen explained that the building users wanted to demonstrate the use value of the space, so during the occupation all the clubs were encouraged to continue as usual. The occupiers remained in place in the neighbourhood centre 24 hours a day, for 55 days and nights.

I can’t remember if we went home and got stuff or just took sleeping bags and occupied from then on, I remember phoning lawyers the next day as I was worried

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<sup>4</sup> A former branch of Glasgow City Council that dealt with neighbourhood centres, schools etc.

that it would affect my job because I was worried if I was caught breaking the law and stuff. (Stasia)

The occupiers put a note on the front door to explain to all the building users what was going on:

We think that if we leave the centre the proposal may be lost. We believe that the loss of this centre will mean that local services will disappear in this area. These services and facilities are badly needed in this area. (Poster from archive)

The main strategy during the 55-day occupation was to canvass support from a broad range of people so they spoke to all the building users. There were around 25 regular occupiers, mainly women and a handful of men. The City Council even sent a security guard to oversee the building during the occupation for the safety of the women and the building. However, the women turned this to their advantage, and assured the police and the City Council that the security guard was in need of *their* protection – he was on their turf. Many of those involved lived locally and felt safe and in control of the space; the security guard was protected by them as an outsider:

...on the day that they came to close the building we stood our ground and said “we are going to take the building over - we know we are acting illegally, but at the same time there is young man who is a security guard who is left on his own in here all the time and for health and safety reasons we feel we need to protect him as well as the building! So we are not leaving the building and thank you very much”...The Council called in the police and we explained to the police why we were staying in the building, and that we were responsible people and we didn’t want to see our facility, and this young man, being put in danger, and the police said “they seem to know what they are doing, we can’t arrest them, so we can’t go ahead and put them out of the building at this juncture” - We couldn’t believe it! (Helen)

There was also careful negotiation with the existing janitorial staff in the building. The janitors at the time agreed to keep watch for the police in solidarity with the community. When the occupiers were settled in, they formulated a rota, which designated time and labour between each person according to the amount of time they had available.

...So for 55 days we did a sit-in in the building, we had a rota of the women, the ones that put their children in to school at 9 o'clock would be in the building from 9 until 2, and the ones that who were in part-time work would come from 2 until 6 and then at night time from 6 overnight, those that did have childcare provision would stay overnight. (Helen)

The sit-in was integrated into everyone's daily lives (Boudreau et al, 2009, Auyero, 2004) according to their availability. In one interview Stasia mentioned how she was sleeping at the centre overnight, then going to work as an art teacher during the day. Both Helen and Stasia talked about the everyday rhythms of an occupation, the huge amount of social reproductive labour that goes into sustaining a temporary autonomous zone was evident in their accounts (Halvorsen, 2014). Feigenbaum et al (2013) argue that the real work of activism and social reproduction often remains hidden from accounts of protest camps or autonomous zones. Figure 7, below, shows Helen and two of the children putting up the banner for the sit in.



Figure7 Photo from the sit-in, Stasia's copy

Whilst carrying out interviews, one of the interviewees managed to find the original logbook used during the occupation, hiding at the back on a cupboard, amongst piles of papers. The hidden social reproductive labour was revealed through the notes in the logbook. The logbook was started on the third day of the occupation, 6<sup>th</sup> May, so everyone involved could communicate effectively, as this was a time before mobile phones and social media. The logbook gives a vivid account of the occupation and contains all the communication between the individuals. There are accounts of the security guards 'smoking fags and drinking beers in their office', of people sending 'a thousand apologies for being late'. There are practical concerns about 'replacing loo roll in the toilets', lists of other organisations to contact, meetings to attend. There are celebrations and commiserations for other local struggles that were part of the anti-cuts movement at the time. The seemingly mundane, daily entries actually build a fascinating picture of day-to-

day workings of the occupation. The logbook also contains the phone tree that was set up in case the police showed up or an emergency occurred. Those who had some experience of direct action instigated these important logistics. Accounts of the anti-poll tax campaign, just a few years previously also note the use of phone trees and tight-knit, well-organised social networks in the local area (Lavallette and Mooney, 2000), suggesting that these practices had been previously instituted in the community and that the community was well equipped and resourceful in how they mobilised their ‘capacities for organizing and maintaining associated organizational structures to facilitate the kind of holistic, ongoing critique that might support sustained activism’ (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013:265). This situates the occupation along a historic political trajectory in the area as the product of previous struggles:

During the interviews, people also described recreational periods during the long days and nights of the occupation.

So we started working out rotas and getting public meetings going, because you have to have the social side because the hours are really long when you’re sitting in an occupation, what do you do? There are some times when you are planning and there’s times where you have to know how to have little targets you could meet, we used to hold events and poetry meetings. You know, public things, where members of the public could come in, feasts, and I did all the arts stuff and people joined in with that, so everyone had some kind of skill you know. Jim’s wife Dot would come in and do sewing, and just sit and chat with people and make tea, people all had jobs and it was great. Then there was the role of the wider political community, word got round what we were doing and it sort of shook up interest. (Stasia)

I must be going mad – I’ve just counted number of people who have signed in since the sit-in – 985 through the door! (Logbook)

Many of the entries in the logbook emphasise the inclusion of all the building users in order to pool collective, non-monetary resources. For example, those at the occupation encouraged everyone to sign up to the sit-in rota, to donate time, food or blankets to the campaign. Through having an inclusive campaign, they were able to harness the skills of a broad range of people – all with differing habitus or life trajectories. All the individuals interviewed stressed what hard work the sit-in was. They spent night after night on camp

beds in the community centre – an old schoolhouse that was cold and damp. They tried to keep spirits up and activities in the community centre continued as usual in order to demonstrate to the City Council that the building was integral to the community.

The occupation at Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre in 1996 is difficult to fit into the existing literature on autonomous movements and occupations. Recent work on autonomous movements stresses the pre-figurative nature of their politics. For example, Occupy Movement (Halvorsen, 2012, 2014), the Arab Spring, the student occupations of 2010/11 (Ibrahim, 2011), the occupation of Parliament Square and the creation of ‘Democracy Village’ (Springer, 2011) are all presented as having overtly political objectives from on outset. However at KPC, according to interviews, the sit-in did not begin with a political ethos, to set up an autonomous space actively; but they had a political objective to occupy the space to prevent closure by the City Council. The activism during the occupation of the neighbourhood centre appears to be more organic and spontaneous, involving a very broad range of individuals. Occupying space in the city has become more popular in the UK since the late 1990s (Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006). Before this, autonomous movements in Britain ‘have been weak and the socialist left has generally refused to embrace the practice of physically reclaiming public spaces for political, cultural and community use’ (ibid: 306). However, the occupation at the neighbourhood centre in Kinning Park in 1996 is an early example that contributes to this genealogy of autonomous struggles in the UK. In many ways, it is easier to draw parallels with the Italian Autonomist Movement of the 1970s. For example, during an interview with Helen Kyle, she explained her vision of the community as a ‘social factory’, reiterating the ideas of the Italian Autonomist Feminists:

There’s a very, very, interesting dynamic that goes on, from my perspective, about what is termed is ‘community politics’ and ‘politics’ in general and I’ll be quite political at the moment here and say that Karl Marx, was the person, from a Communist point of view, saying that the only way that people will have a say about what happens in their life is if they organise in the workplace, so trade unionism, campaigns to save jobs da da da was all done, mostly from a male perspective, through the workplace, but *my* argument has always been that there is *another* workplace that no one ever thinks of organising, and that’s the community, because in the community it’s the women that keep the men getting to their work, as well as working. They have responsibility for the child’s welfare when they are sick, if there

is a problem at school, they are the ones that run the children to all the different activities, the only difference is there is not a paid scenario in that, and if you are not in a paid scenario, people do not give you the kudos in relation to ‘make things work’, but people will argue about this. I think women can break strikes because they can put pressure on their husbands, they are a powerful grouping from a community perspective. (Helen)

The Italian *Autonomia Operaia* movement gave birth to many social centres. Many of these community spaces emerged from women’s rights, ‘drawing attention to the perennial rift between private and public life’ to everyday life issues and during the 1970s, and many disused buildings in (predominantly) northern Italian cities became host to social centres (Mudu, 2004:920). Wainwright (2003) documented one social centre, La Villetta, in Bologna, where a group of working class women saved a childcare service from closure in the late 1960s. This campaign, like the occupation at Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre in 1996, was conducted by framing the facility as an essential space for social reproduction and included involvement of mainly working class women, actively opposed the state and took over an urban space. These aspects were characteristic of many Italian Social Centres (Montagna, 2006), as the next section discusses.

### **5.5 Radical habitus**

During the occupation, Helen Kyle’s involvement was very important, having been involved in community based housing struggles in the past as described in the previous chapter. In one interview with Helen, she recalled the moment when she suggested a sit-in to the parents and ‘Schools Out’ staff – Helen recalled that they asked her; ‘what’s a sit in?’ Helen said that she explained how occupations worked and that was how the sit-in began. Many of those who orchestrated the sit-in had never been involved in politics before. Helen was integral to passing on radical political knowledge and consciousness-raising. Vacchelli (2011) describes how this was also an important role of radical feminists in Italy during the social centre movement of the 1970s, where consciousness-raising was a relational method of ‘exploring feminine desire as a revolutionary act’ (ibid:770). Helen described herself as taking the women through a process, ‘if you want to politicise people, you take them through a process: in my experience’. She took her role as a key activist seriously and actively tried to engage the mothers of the children in the afterschool care club in politics:

we organised a committee of the people who used the centre, it was dominated by young mothers, this was the first time that any of these young women had been involved in what would be termed 'low level politics' in a sense. (Helen)

Helen already possessed a 'radical habitus'; Crossley (2003) suggests the formation of the radical habitus is linked to an individual's personal biography, socio-structural location, as well as broader historical events and trends. As discussed in the previous chapter Helen was from a background in community development and issue-based activism. She explained that she set up her arts organisation Scotland in Europe as a way of bringing the arts to disadvantaged communities, to encourage a form of community development. Her personal trajectory, or habitus, formed around cultural capital from arts based work, political capital, and reflexivity from working on community struggles and social capital built from living and working locally. She described her journey to that point from what she described as a 'working class background':

I am who I am today because of the processes that I went through in relation to discovery, I came out of school when I was 15. I started working in the thread mills in Paisley that now no longer exist. Now, at the end of the day I have a degree, I think that the work I do on a day to day level has very positive results, because the outcomes can be really quite good, So there are some success stories, but if there's one success story we have to identify the process that allows that process to go through. (Helen)

Each individual possesses a habitus, a personal history, or trajectory. Bourdieu's notion of habitus, as comprised of capitals, while being constituted by social networks and relationships, is crucially never disconnected from capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus also 'mediates between a synoptic and participatory view of activity formations characteristic of a community' (Lemke, 1995:28-29). Thus it allows for an analysis of the *dynamic* nature of the process by which social relations are negotiated by people. Helen actively saw herself as a product of social mobility; she aimed to share her forms of capital with people during the campaign and space provides her with the material grounding for these actions. The concept of habitus is politically useful and distinctive because it is 'simultaneously both economic and a set of power relations, that constitute a variety of realms and social interactions normally thought of as noneconomic' (De Fillipis

2001:783). Bourdieu sees capital(s) as almost synonymous with power (De Fillipis, 2001) and habitus conveys the relational and distributional aspect of power (Harrits, 2011).

social practices are generated through the interaction of agents, who are both differently disposed and unequally resourced, within the bounds of specific networks which have a game like structure and which impose definite restraints upon them (Crossley, 2002:171).

The occupation was a product of a particular set of social relations and the various building users came together into a close-knit living space, drawing together individuals who would have never have encountered one another outside of the community centre. This is 'one of space's most disruptive characteristics – the enablement of new relations–to–each–other of previously disparate trajectories' (Massey, 2005:41). Thus I argue that we can draw parallels between Massey's conceptualisations of space and Bourdieu's notion of field (1984). Both are theorised as relational, uneven, dynamic and always changing over time. Furthermore, fields are 'sites of struggle, structured, in part, through an unequal distribution of the forms of capital pertinent to them; forms of capital whose possession and definition are precisely the objects of the aforementioned struggles' (Crossley, 2003:44). For Bourdieu, individual human action does not emerge out of 'nothingness', but rather out of a habitus formed by way of the history of the agent' (Crossley, 2002:172). The habitus is a useful way of theorising individual experiences as it accounts for individual histories and skills, thrown together in this case to produce collective political action.

Forms of embodied capital were evident in the individuals involved in the campaign, social resources such as 'social status, power, personal contacts, and formal and informal forms of knowledge' (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:24). For example, as discussed earlier, the political capital possessed by local MPs and councillors was utilised by those involved in the campaign. There was also social capital embodied by the network of parents and the children and in individuals like Helen, who had experience in activism and the arts, and also embodied radical cultural capital. These forms of power were utilised and regenerated during campaigns by the various people. The politics during the occupation were of a collective nature acting as a 'simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey, 2005) as different women encountered one another in the space and shaped the trajectory of the entire space.

Stasia was also a key activist in the campaign and subsequent occupation; she was a friend of Helen's. She was a Community Arts worker at the time and had been involved in some activism before. Today, Stasia identifies as being an anarchist and still participates in radical politics, and in interviews, she often remarked on how the involvement with the occupation had been a very formative experience for her, generating, in her, political or radical capital. This presents the dynamic nature of the habitus, how it influenced both her reason for getting involved, and how, through her involvement in this political space, her habitus was in turn altered (Boudreau et al, 2009). Helen and Stasia's knowledge and practical skills regarding how to do politics were vital to the campaign.

Stasia described in detail the place-making strategies that went into the politicisation and networks of social solidarity at the time. In my interview with Stasia, one of the things that she talked extensively about was a large embroidered banner that she made with the others at the occupation:

.... it was beautiful, it was all hand embroidered and it's the history of Kinning park in embroidery, it's got the Angel building with the big golden angel, it's got the big crane it's got a sunrise and sunset and it depicts a whole day in the life of Kinning Park, it's got oak trees and all wild plants of Glasgow. It took us about nine months to make this banner, it had about 25 women and one boy and one guy who made it, it came to symbolise this as what the Kinning Park centre could become, you know that it would become a haven for people in debt, people who couldn't feed themselves. All that kind of thing, because these were the hopes that we had at the time you know. (Stasia)

The way that Stasia described her banner was vivid. Having spent a lot of time volunteering at Kinning Park I know the building well, so I could visualise where this banner was, how it may have looked and what it meant to her through this emotional description. The way in which she described this material object that bonded and depicted the group and



Figure 9 Angel Building, Google images



Figure 8 Finnieston Crane, Google images

the area is full of the passion that generates those attributes of loyalty, trust and solidarity. Stasia's description of the banner powerfully evoked a spatial imagery through the way she described how it depicted the landmarks of the local area. The nearby Finnieston crane (figure 8) the Angel Building (figure 9) and the local wildlife produce place-specific images that embed the Neighbourhood Centre and the community in the

local area. For Stasia, Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre was an important symbol of hope for the local community. Her passion for the building was highly evident and she clearly saw her commitment at the time as part of the building blocks of something important for the future of the building. Stasia's skills and expertise were combined with the skills of the mothers from the after school care club:

..a sit in's strength is its local people, if the local people don't... or aren't interested there's no point in sustaining it because people from further afield can't.... Or don't have...let's call it the love. It's really the passion to give the extra inch to keep a sit-in going, because it really is a huge amount of work, so we had to have local people, as a core bunch of locals, coz I lived just along the road from it, if people wanted to do sleepovers and things and they weren't local, we sort of dissuaded them you know... (Stasia)

Activists such as Helen coming together with actors who had a more localised existence created a grounded politics of place at KPC (Keith and Pile, 2004). The particular constellation of social relations that were meeting and weaving together at the particular time (Massey, 1991) created and formed the occupation. 'Their behaviours were related to the field, introducing their ideological viewpoint and their perception of which issues are worth fighting for' (Hiller and Rooksby, 2005:23). Occupied space provides a shared

emotional space (Lacey, 2005) and political action often carries a stronger emotional texture (Boudreau et al, 2009:338).

Rosina, was a parent of one of the children who used the 'Schools Out' Service, and Stasia recalled her passion for the campaign:

Rosina was a mother in the after school care club, she put her kids in and took them out, was one of these people who had never been involved in politics, and this thing was the catalyst for all her rage and anger against the system. She was brilliant, she just came out of her shell. There were so many wonderful people in that occupation that's why it gelled and it lasted. (Stasia)

With a coalition of people who had never been involved in political movements alongside more experienced activists, the occupation took on a particular character. Rosina was a resident of the local area with many friends, and therefore possessed social capital embedded in her relationship with her own family and friends who used the centre. During the occupation these different forms of capital were thrown together and utilised collectively to politicise, build numbers and popularise the campaign. For example, outsiders with political capital and social value to the campaign were also asked to become involved. Helen and Rosina went to meet Tony Benn during the campaign (see photo in appendix) to create social connections with those outside of Glasgow. The mutual benefits and interdependence of these forms of capital should also be noted – the political or radical capital possessed by Helen, for example, would be useless without the social capital embodied by Rosina and the other parents from the 'Schools Out' service. Therefore, whilst the capital possessed by each individual was unequal and different, all were interdependent resources.

From interviews, it seems that actors such as Rosina made sure the campaign remained accessible to everyone and the logbook states how she requested that the occupation banner included 'welcome' on it. It became clear in interviews that the involvement of members of the community who had never been involved in political activity before was one of the reasons that the campaign was so successful, as it was not framed in exclusionary terms or positioned as a marginal cause. For example, if the neighbourhood centre had been an anarchist social centre, framed in a particular pre-figurative politics, then it may have appeared less accessible to some people. Hodkinson and Chatterton

(2006) describe how social centres can sometimes become ‘relatively closed ‘activist hubs’’ (ibid:314). But people such as Rosina had many local social connections with other parents or social capital, ‘resources based on connections and group membership’ (Bourdieu, 1987:4). Everyone involved had their own skills, connections or enthusiasm to bring to the occupation, so felt more equally resourced.

## **5.6 Sustaining participation and empowerment**

Not everything was easy to organise, though; convergent subjectivities came to a head during the occupation. For example, Helen mentioned how some were not so concerned with the formal political processes required to negotiate with the politicians:

Not all of the women found it interesting to talk to councillors. They just didn't care about the councillors, they just wanted to make sure the building stayed open so it was the women who were interested in the underlying politics of it that kept a firm grip on how we were approaching the different political parties who were part of the decision making process. (Helen)

This highlights how differently disposed and unequally resourced people in the occupation were, but also how they had different subjectivities concerning politics. This is still the case in KPC today, as will be discussed in the next chapter:

Some people found, quite rightly so, the whole process of being on a management committee really boring it was like, having to take minutes, having to make decisions in a very structured way and a lot of demands on their time in relation to sitting and talking about things. Some of the women were just not interested in that scenario, but they were very determined that they wanted the centre to be kept open and they were party in naming it the KPC. (Helen)

It was evident in interviews that the occupation affected people's lives beyond. Some people that I interviewed stated that the occupation had positive impacts on the life trajectories and encouraged political participation. In one interview someone stated how ‘the sit-in had given us a taste of our own power and we believed we could use this opportunity to develop the centre’. There was a clear sense of empowerment felt by those who took part in the sit in, a genuine expression of empowerment rather than the

empowerment commonly referred to in urban policy such as the English New Deal for Communities from Blair in 1998 or the more recent Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (2014). But the difficulties in maintaining participation were also clear. Helen says that she was sometimes frustrated when trying to mobilise people who had no interest in the politics and they just wanted a service:

You know the juxtaposition for anybody that becomes involved in a management committee, it's like democracy, some people say I don't really want to be responsible for making any decisions, however you better do what I want you to do. Instead of it being an agreed cooperative scenario, where you find the people who are interested in the politics behind it and the decision making process behind it, you have the ones that have been brought on board to get what they wanted, i.e. KPC giving a service to their community and families, and they sometimes negated responsibility but put pressure on the people who would. (Helen)

'The reality is that despite hundreds of people circulating through social centres each week, only a handful actually make that space happen, leading to burnout, resentment and inefficiency' (Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006:312). So, whilst relational political habitus, or political identities were forged through the occupation, translating these into sustained political interests and action was difficult. This problematizes the idea of "responsibilisation" of citizens; some people do not want responsibility. It was clear from interviews that there were specific characters, notably Helen, who did want the responsibility. What is more, only some individuals had the time, resources and capacity to take on the huge challenge of negotiating with the Council and running the building. This makes community politics and community empowerment a difficult process to 'roll out' and initiate evenly, and it also means that those involved are not necessarily representative of the community. As Massey (2004) points out there is a specific and uneven geography to responsibility. 'First there is "home", then maybe place or locality, then nation, and so on. There is a kind of accepted understanding that we care first for, and have our first responsibilities towards, those nearest' (Massey, 2004:9). There is also a broader geography of responsibility, which in the case of KPC shows that not all people want to adopt. Many activists use the language of responsibility and community, which almost seem to echo that of government discourse. Indeed, 'discourses of responsibility are complex and multi-stranded. They sometimes converge in the language used, but diverge in the meaning given to responsibility' (Staheli, 2013:528).

This also makes the outcomes of responsibility difficult to measure, as those who want to get involved do and so will inevitably report a feeling of empowerment. However, conflating responsibility with participation and then empowerment is very problematic (Painter and Pande, 2013). Nevertheless, Helen believes that some of the careers and life trajectories of some of the women involved changed because of their experience in the occupation:

But the key thing, as far as I'm concerned, was that of the 20 women that were involved, three of them went to work with the Schools Out service, they were given employment, which meant that they had to come off the management committee, but at the same time it was local employment. Two of them went on to be teachers, four of them went on to work in other places and the rest of them went onto the management committee of the primary school, so all of those women who were involved in the sit actually went on to keep a linkage in relation to what they were involved in. (Helen)

As Helen describes above, political participation in a campaign such as the sit-in can have broader effects and engender feelings of empowerment. It also highlights how social interactions have positive outcomes outside a formal policy framework or government initiative – the generation of social capital in its most organic sense. On an individual level, it also shows how habitus is ‘an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133). The ways in which people’s identity is shaped and lives changed through involvement with spaces like KPC are positive outcomes of throwntogetherness, and these generative encounters still go on at KPC today and are discussed in more depth in the Chapter 6.

### **5.7 Pragmatism and Politics: Trying to make ends meet post-occupation**

In those early days we didn’t lock the doors, the rooms were also used to get money in from the Glasgow fiddle group who used them, but they were never private owned businesses, they were an open door system where people could walk in and use the other rooms. The point of that was that these rooms were facilitates to make money

to keep the peoples centre open, you just trusted that you sewing machines wouldn't get stolen. (Stasia)

In 1996, after the occupation, the management committee and Scotland in Europe agreed to work together, although Scotland in Europe was the organisation that was named on the lease. They collectively decided on the name Kinning Park Complex (KPC). The early days of the newly formed KPC are described very favourably by those involved, they describe the various groups who used the building. The afterschool care club continued between 3 and 6pm every evening for 35 children and at the time they also had another 20 on the waiting list. This service employed four members of staff, plus sessional staff, at the time the management committee was considering extending the service. There was a Karate club for children ran by a man called Steven Morris; this club remained from before, during and after the occupation. There was a football group for 20-15 boys up to the age of 13 at the centre, which was run by a volunteer. This formed the Complex Club and they played matches against other teams in the local area. There was a Belly Dancing club and a line dancing club. Around this period lots of other arts organisations began to use KPC for rehearsal space, such as Castlemilk Theatre Group, TRAM theatre group, Theatre in action. These groups were drawn in through links from Helen and her arts group Scotland in Europe. Music was also an integral part of life in the community centre, and Willie Black, Helen's partner taught some music at the centre. Thus,

On any given day or night music can be heard somewhere in the building. There is a variety of workshops and classes covering guitar, flute, saxophone, African Drumming, percussion, fiddle etc. One of the most significant groups who use the Complex – if only in terms of numbers – is the Glasgow Fiddle Workshop which meets on Wednesday evening, around 70 of them taking over virtually the entire building (Spirit of Revolt Archives, see appendix).



**Figure 10 Images of KPC post occupation, Helen's copies**

The pictures in figure 10 are from the early days of KPC and demonstrate the use value of the space for the local community in terms of sports, recreation and a meeting and working space. This is throwtogetherness (Massey, 2005) in its most idealistic form and the next chapter provides a more nuanced depiction. However, the financial burden of the running costs of the centre became a problem after a few years as the management committee failed to take over from Scotland in Europe as planned. Helen ended up managing the space single-handedly instead.

It's an interesting story, and it's about women who had never been involved in decision making before being able to make decisions. They forced the people who were voted in to help them get what they wanted. It worked very well for two years, but as things changed, the dynamic changed. That is why Scotland in Europe was left

to run the building itself. So it is a very interesting dynamic about what you can keep going, in relation to community involvement. (Helen)

KPC requires a huge amount of labour to run, and this is an ongoing problem today, discussed in Chapter 7 on labour at KPC, which shows the realities of running an independent space without funding. During interviews it was explained that many people drifted away from the centre after a few years; Stasia ended up in Canada, while Rosina's children grew up and no longer needed the facility.

..Now, in a wonderful world, where you are not too tired after your work, you would want to maybe have a say in running a building. You would maybe want to be part of something like that, but these parents were working their butts off, they just wanted to pick up their kids, have their dinner and go to bed. So when the occupation finished, some parents did stay involved like Jim Lynch and Rosanne, but others drifted away. (Stasia)

The campaign was originally situated around issues of social reproduction; the plea to keep the centre open was based on needs rather than a desire to run an autonomous space inevitably. Without the political contingent there to run the centre as a political space, it became taken for granted, as it was before when it was a state-run facility. The political symbolism of the space dwindled and it was difficult for the centre to survive independently, so the management committee often had to put together applications and business plans that fitted into particular objectives, rather than having a more independent strategy or trajectory. The dissemination of neoliberal development logic is evident in Scotland in Europe's proposal that promised to 'address national objectives for economic development':

The vision of Kinning Park is of '....a landmark centre of excellence for arts, children and young people, the wider community and the environment'. The Kinning Park Centre can help complement these objectives by using studio space and to be linked more explicitly to enterprise (by helping tenants build their businesses); by ensuring that flexible learning spaces help individuals grow their skills and competencies and by promoting wider European connections. (Scotland in Europe proposal, 1997)

The proposed future use of the space had at least to appear to be configured in line with market rationalities:

<b>Proposal for Layout of KPC</b>	
<b>Ground floor</b>	redeveloped as a flexible multi-use facility capable for accommodating meeting and conference space for up to 100 people
<b>First floor</b>	is proposed to be flexible learning spaces offering access to IT based learning
<b>Upper floor</b>	the upper floors are proposed to be retained as artists' studios and not-for-profit cultural organisations but with a greater emphasis on promoting enterprise
<b>Exterior</b>	The exterior is proposed to be developed as an urban garden and exploration of whether revised street-scaping can allow the frontage to run into the car park and form part of a green corridor running into the Clyde.

**Table 2 Scotland in Europe Proposal**

The ways that neoliberal rationality seeps into how the building was utilised show the pressure to conform to a market-led form of community development is demonstrated by the proposals set out in table 2. The excerpt shows the ways that Helen tried to adapt KPC to broader regeneration discourses of the time, as the building was rapidly physically deteriorating and needed expensive repairs.

‘The constant need to find the rent/mortgage rapidly transforms social centres into ‘social enterprises’, creating the same alienating, authoritarian structures as capitalist society and making radical groups feel unwelcome or forced to limit their radicalism in order to protect the space’ (Anonymous, 2003:186). By creating ‘a false binary opposition between the evils of legalisation (compromised/co-opted) and the radical purity of an occupied social centre’, people ‘fail to understand the dialectical relationship between them’ (Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006:313). In interviews, Helen explains how she was uneasy about depending on certain forms of funding, yet she also faced financial pressure which enforced the commoditisation of space at KPC. The infiltration of financial pressures meant that difficult choices had to be made about the future of the building, which caused tensions among individuals. Some wanted the space to remain autonomous and for the community, but Helen decided to rent the smaller rooms and classrooms out to artists in

order to gain some steady income for the building. For some people this undermined the integrity of the space:

The reason artists came into this thing was because Helen started renting the studios out to artist. When I came back from Canada, these rooms had turned into exclusive artist zones, so there were rooms that locked and the fiddle group didn't seem to be using these rooms any more. Somehow, these artists started locking the doors and that was allowable. These artists were only paying 40 quid a month then! They didn't have a clue about the sit-in, they weren't even at the sit-in! They might have heard of it! They might have been very keen - oh that's great, that's great! But they never put their money where their mouth is, they did their own thing and they used it as 'I rent this space and its mine and any profits that come from it are mine. (Stasia)

This point also marked a change in the way that Stasia understood the space – whereas once she saw it as a free-flowing, open and importantly, political space, she now saw it as turning into private, 'exclusive artist zones'. She also emphasises the importance of the symbolic trajectory of KPC and its roots as an occupied and therefore political space. The challenge of maintaining political integrity over time is very difficult for many community organisations (DeFillipis, 2007). Helen faced a large amount of pressure simply from the mundane and emotional labour that was required to keep the huge building running. The building faced substantial maintenance problems with the roof in need of replacement along with the pipes, heating, plasterwork, gym/toilet ceiling, ceilings replaced upstairs, rewiring/lighting, health and safety updating, and general help with administration.

The political trajectory of KPC is complex, simultaneously interweaving 'anti-', 'post-' and 'despite-' capitalisms' (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010). It was difficult for KPC to function autonomously without regular funding. KPC exemplifies 'the dirty, real work of activism that expresses a pragmatic 'get on with it', an antagonistic 'no', and a hopeful 'yes'' (ibid). The management encouraged and welcomed all kinds of radical groups around Glasgow to rent spaces, and Helen also got grants for feasibility studies, as the roof needing £230,000 and the boiler replacing.

After 13 years I felt I was becoming a janitor, rather than someone who had a voice, and I think it was time for Scotland in Europe to move on. Because we had done well in relation to building up some aspects of linkage to Europe, and because of the

activism I was involved in the local area, getting involved in networks that had a say in policy, running KPC, which is a day to day, that Scotland in Europe was losing out in relation to its concept for the arts being a way forward for communities (Helen)

Helen clearly felt the pressure between competing objectives of running an arts organisation and community activism, and this was her main reason for leaving KPC. KPC has always maintained a reputation in Glasgow for being a radical space and an arts space. It has built up a form of cultural capital with different groups in the city. During interviews with many different folk who use the building, KPC's reputation always seems to precede it as a certain type of space, whether associated with politics from the occupation, the arts or community development, as Chapter 6 will discuss.

### **5.8 A changing managerial regime at KPC**

By 2008, Helen began the process of moving away from KPC with Scotland in Europe. At this point, some felt KPC should maintain the political ethos of the building as a collective, autonomous community. Helen considered giving up the lease of the building to the artists who rented the studios, something that many were against, as it meant the end for community usage, as the building would become exclusively private art studios.

The management committee became dysfunctional as people were leaving and the artists in the studios began to step in. The involvement of new people on the committee caused conflict between certain people, so a steering group was set up after Helen and Scotland in Europe decided to leave the community centre in 2008.

Scotland in Europe will be leaving KPC. We have been running the building for 12 years. This means that the centre will close unless a steering committee takes over running it. All present and previous users are invited to participate in these meetings with a view to keeping the place open and running as usual. Scotland in Europe has been responsible for the running of Kinning Park Complex over the last 12 years, but due too restructuring, it is now looking to place the building in community hands. By community we mean the geographical area of Kinning Park and beyond, and the community of interest who already use the centre. (Open letter to the building users from SinE, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008)

A public meeting of all the users and ex-users of the centre was held. There were those from the sit-in in 1996, The Radical Independent book fare, City Strolls, plus Afterschool Care and artists from the studios, amongst other members of the public. At that meeting a steering committee was established of 13 people: 7 artists and 6 others. There was fierce debate over the management structure of the building. Many of the artists wanted to turn the building into a Wasps Studios<sup>5</sup> – where the building would be turned into artists’ studios.

Bel has been in touch with Wasps Studios and they say that they may be interested in running and fund raising for PART of the building. They are aware that there is a community element to the building and that this must be considered, but this is a scenario that they have worked within in other places. (Steering Group Meeting Minutes, April 2008)

The ‘community element’ of KPC was in danger of being lost in the debate: Stasia explains that she felt that ‘they wanted that whole building to be an artist’s studio space and the community wasn’t necessary and that’s why we were turfed out’. Other ideas were put on the table. Others requested a community buy-out, but this option was quickly shelved. Others wanted to form a co-operative:

I said I think a place with this history should be run on a non-profit basis, it should be a co-operative approach; it shouldn’t be a business model where you have enterprises like artists’ studios. But that really shook the artists because they are all self-employed business people, it shook the afterschool care club because they were fearful of their jobs, and we couldn’t run that centre without them: that’s a steady flow of parents who come to the line dancing, who come to all the other things. It was key, you wouldn’t in your wildest dreams get rid of something like that, you would protect it. (Stasia)

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<sup>5</sup> Wasps Studios is a charity that provides affordable studios to support arts organisations and artists. WASPS currently house 800 artists, 23 arts organisations 17 buildings in Scotland. They were recently named Scottish Enterprise of the Year for 2014: ‘our activities support the regeneration of many deprived communities across Scotland. We redevelop redundant, historic buildings into beautiful facilities for artists and charities, attracting jobs and improving the physical appearance of local communities’ (Wasps website, 2013)

Stasia saw the space as imbued with a particular history and wanted to retain this through the way the space moved forward. It is also interesting how she assesses each part of the community at KPC as to its 'value'. In reality, the artists are as economically precarious as any other group at KPC. The way that value is attributed and extracted from various groups at KPC is a debate still present at KPC today as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In the end, KPC was not turned into "Wasps" studio spaces, but KPC came close to becoming private space, exclusively for artists. This was mainly because they were the only ones present in the building at that time, suggesting that the labour that goes into running this space is very dependent on who is available to do it; again, this is still an issue today, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Around this time, Lindsay Keenan entered the fray. Before coming to KPC he was a campaigner for Greenpeace International, organising and taking part in many high profile environmental actions for over a decade. He was also familiar with local struggles and had taken part in Pollock Free State; an ecological encampment set up to resist the proposed path of the new M77 motorway through Pollock Country Park in 1996 (Routledge, 1996). Thus, Lindsay had many social and political connections and different forms of capital to draw upon. Furthermore, he was friends with Helen Kyle's daughter, demonstrating the social capital that he has in the area. He set up the current organisational structure and made KPC into a Community Interest Company.

With Lindsay Keenan as building manager, KPC was established as a Community Interest Company (CIC). Lindsay's habitus or personal life trajectory was of course shaped by his experiences prior to KPC. Scotland in Europe signed the lease over to artists and Lindsay as the manager, the main reason being that Lindsay had been the only individual present at the meetings with enough experience, time and energy to take control over the space and begin to get groups into the building again, as numbers had been dwindling.

In April 2009 when we established KPC CIC the initial structure was simply the basics of a board of directors for that organisation as required by law. That board pretty much chose itself by default. At that stage there were only really the studio tenants, the now defunct KPSOS (Kining Park Schools Out Service) and myself (as the one external person) attending the irregular meetings. A board was needed to go forward. Seven people (six studio tenants plus myself) volunteered to be on the board

while other studio tenants at that time were given the option but chose not to be.  
(Lindsay)

Today, a board of directors manages KPC and Lindsay handles the day-to-day business. The board of directors was initially six studio tenants and Lindsay as the only external individual. The studio tenants sit on the board voluntarily, while other studio tenants were invited to join this board but declined. This shows a clear shift from the participatory beginnings of the neighbourhood centre. When Lindsay began managing KPC, the financial books were a mess, there were many repairs to be done in the building and there were large amounts of rubbish that needed to be cleared from the attic and around the building. To begin with, Lindsay took it upon himself to get these things into order. In the meantime, regular dance classes remained and Lindsay encouraged new groups and individuals to start using Kinning Park as a centre as the next chapter will discuss.

## 5.9 Conclusion



Figure 11 Image of Sign above the door at KPC, My copy

The image above shows the sign placed in the entrance hall of KPC, for all to see. It states the importance of the radical history of the space. Thus, it stresses the importance of the trajectory, or story of the building, for all who use the community centre today. The website for KPC also reiterates the struggle at KPC. In the face of closure,

the community, however, thought differently. Recognizing the beauty and history of the building, understanding the value of a space where art, music and sport were practised and community events were held, and knowing that communities need public spaces in which to flourish, they made a strong case to the Council for keeping the centre open. (KPC website)

The story of KPC is an example of how ‘people have opened up local government through social democratic principle that there are certain needs...which are a public good and social right, and whose provision should not be left to the workings of the market’ (Wainwright, 2003:7). This chapter has demonstrated how the struggle is the product of many previous political struggles in the area, and drew on this rich history for the campaign in 1996. I have shown how the space has been the product of collective action, made up of individuals, whose personal trajectories, or habitus, have influenced the production of KPC. We have seen how KPC’s trajectory has meandered through various internal existential crises since 1996 and how the space has sustained the volatile external political context described in chapter 4. This has demonstrated the difficulties in sustainable forms of participation in a project like this over time.

This chapter has taken a historicised approach to the occupation at KPC, which presents the trajectory of the space, and the personal histories of those within the space at that given moment. Thus we can see how the space has emerged from a particular set of relations. Where Massey treats space as dynamic and a product of social relations, Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus scales this down to elucidate the dynamic personal life trajectories of individuals within a relational space. There have been multiple articulations and configurations of the space and the activities within it since 1996, which presents KPC as dynamic and always evolving. ‘Neither societies nor places are seen as having any timeless authenticity. They are, and always have been interconnected and dynamic’ (Massey, 2005:67). In the next chapter, we look at how the space has changed and how it functions today, considering the contemporary forms of ‘throwntogetherness’ of KPC.

## Chapter 6: Throwing Together Community

As described in Chapter 5, the relationships and solidarity formed in 1996 were integral to the campaign to save the community centre. Today, the everyday interactions and encounters within the space are still vital to keep KPC open and running. This chapter is primarily about these fundamental social relations at KPC today. The social relations are fundamental, because much of the labour required to maintain the space is performed on a voluntary or at least low-paid basis. Therefore, it is carried out through goodwill and because of social connections between those in the space. Whilst Chapter 7 will be about the labour at KPC, this chapter will discuss those social interactions and relationships that underpin everything that goes on at KPC.

Massey's work most clearly highlights the *relational* nature of space, and we can begin to describe the interactions that occur at KPC through her concept of 'throwntogetherness' (2005) to examine what constitutes place at KPC. As Massey states, what is special about place 'is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating the here and now' (2005:140). This notion clearly resonates with places like KPC, and I would argue that KPC is a product of throwntogetherness and a multiplicity of people with divergent identities, personal histories, skills and opinions negotiating the here and now. Massey also states that space is *always* under construction, as is KPC, so this ongoing negotiation between different people that are thrown together, coming and going is a perpetual process that we can observe at KPC.

The chapter explores the everyday encounters between different groups and individuals at KPC, discussing some instances where throwntogetherness has produced generative social relations. However, I firstly look at KPC's citywide relationality, focussing on the various ways that KPC is perceived in Glasgow as a type of space that attracts particular groups. I then focus on two contrasting ways that throwntogetherness is instigated as a strategy at KPC, both informally and through more contrived state funding. Next I discuss the different ways that KPC is ideologically shaped by those at KPC, and how this also configures certain identities at KPC such as artist, activist or local resident. The penultimate section looks at the micro spaces within KPC, to explore how space is perceived at KPC and how some groups physically partition it. Finally, I discuss the way

that throwtogetherness highlights differences and tensions between groups at KPC, exploring a more contested understanding of the concept.

## **6.1 Fostering diverse communities at KPC**

KPC fosters various communities in Glasgow, and is a relational space in the city. Importantly, space is ‘an open on-going production’ (Massey, 2005:90) that is also dynamic, porous and continually under construction (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013). Whilst the throwtogetherness exemplified in the previous chapter refers to the micro politics and everyday interactions within the space, it is important also to consider these in relation to the rest of the city. As Chapter 5 showed, there is negotiation surrounding how the space should be produced and used, and this inevitably affects the way that KPC is perceived. Many of the groups that become involved at KPC are attracted to the space as it fulfils a function for them and, in turn, the space is shaped by the involvement of certain groups. This chapter also aims to portray the diversity within the community at KPC, to unsettle the depiction of the local ‘as discrete places that host relatively homogeneous communities or, alternatively, constitute sites of grassroots mobilisation and resistance’ (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). There are many arts groups, activist meetings, play schemes, theatre groups, sports clubs, and a benefits advice group at KPC, so KPC means different things to different building users.

Today, KPC retains its reputation as a ‘political space’ in Glasgow and the occupation in 1996 has had a lasting effect on the ways that the space was conceived and is perceived in the city. From working at KPC, it became evident how important the space was to the activist community in Glasgow. The way in which people imagine space is important for solidarity and longevity within the activist community. As mentioned in Chapter 5, there is a plaque underneath the front door stating ‘this building was saved by the community after a 55 day occupation’. The community of activists in Glasgow is anchored by material spaces and places such as KPC. These places and spaces provide ‘critical activist hubs’ where social relations are fostered as many political groups use KPC for talks, discussions, conferences, and workshops (Vail and Hollands, 2013). I first visited KPC to attend a talk on Internationalism From Below, in 2011. The way that KPC has retained a political identity since 1996 is one of the most intriguing aspects of the space. During interviews, people often mentioned other spaces in the city that they also associated with activism. For

example, the Peirce Institute<sup>6</sup>, is an independently run community centre in Govan, just a few miles from KPC that has existed independently since 1991. Transition Art Gallery is an artist run space that has existed in the Merchant City, to the east of the city centre in Glasgow, since 1983. There were links with the Anarchist Centre, Edinburgh (ACE) established in 1997. Two other volunteers and I held a screening of the documentary *Riot from Wrong*, a film about the 2011 English Riots. We showed the documentary in KPC one night and the next at ACE in Edinburgh. This fostered links and solidarity between the filmmakers in London, KPC in Glasgow and ACE in Edinburgh. KPC has hosted over 100 activists overnight after large anti-nuclear demonstrations just down the road at Faslane, so has links with those in the Peace Camp (Mason and Askins, 2012).

These connections between space and people create the activist community in Glasgow. When I interviewed Simon, an activist filmmaker, and at the time a board member at KPC, he explained his social links within KPC and beyond:

I primarily know Emily through KPC but we are both probably part of the wider set of people, she's been to quite a lot of Strickland<sup>7</sup> things, Nadia too she's part of the artists groups so there was some connection there beyond KPC. (Interview with artist, on the board at KPC)

The ways these spaces relate to one another, whilst providing solidarity, also highlighted the differences and tensions that emerge from the comparisons between different spaces.

What is common to activist networks is that they can foster emotional convergence, the social divine, through the act of being together, physically and/or virtually. Activists are able to link with one another and share information, previously unlinked activists connect in rhizomes of activism. Here, they are often able to find a spirit of community. (Lacey, 2005:299)

With this loyalty, there also come expectations and visions about the way the space should operate and function (Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006). In an interview with Simon, he

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<sup>6</sup> The Pearce Institute is another independently-run community centre located nearby in Govan

<sup>7</sup> The Strickland Distribution is an artist-run group supporting the development of independent research in art-related and non-institutional practices. Art-related includes research forms that directly implement artistic practice as a means of research method. Non-institutional includes forms of grassroots histories, social enquiries and projects developed outside of academic frameworks and by groups and individuals normally excluded from such environments (The Strickland Distribution Website, 2014).

reflected on how this engenders a ‘certain vibe’ in a space. Simon explained why he got involved at KPC, saying ‘I guess my interest is in the need to have spaces, to make it possible to have more radical spaces and the politics of the place just felt right’. Simon has now left KPC because he sees the space moving in a less political direction; ‘I think it’s changing, it’s not the organisation it was’. So these associations that people have with KPC are tenuous and fragile, which points to the disadvantages of the dynamic nature of space; people come and go.

The political sense of place at KPC is derived largely from the radical history of the occupation described in Chapter 5. This is history that feeds into my understanding of KPC, but not all building users know about this history when they come into contact with the space. The KPC website explains the history of KPC and the verbal history is often given to people who enter the space by Lindsay, the building manager. During my experience as a volunteer at KPC, I learned of the history, the myriad of staircases, the hidden cupboards and leaking roof, and saw my relationship with the space develop. I became friends with the people who use the space, noticed familiar faces, so my positive interactions and experiences were as emergent and dynamic as the space itself. As Massey argues, ‘place changes us not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it) but through the practicing of place’ (Massey, 2005:154).

For some people at KPC, however, this political history was not as important. I asked Ammie, the newly appointed volunteer co-ordinator, if she saw the political history of KPC coming through today:

Erm, no, not really, is the shorthand I guess. It doesn’t come through, not to say that isn’t relevant, it is amazing, and it shows because there is a community here - and we couldn’t have done any of this if that hadn’t have happened. But there’s so many more exciting things going on, it’s not something that I find that we need to push I guess, I find what’s going on now more interesting. (Ammie)

In many ways what Ammie was advocating here echoes Massey’s sentiment that what is special about place ‘is not some romance of a pre-given identity...rather what is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness; the unavoidable challenge of negotiating the here and now’ (Massey, 2005:140). When we exclusively associate KPC with the

occupation in 1996 we see the space as merely a ‘static slice through time, as representation, as a closed system’; these are all ways of taming space, furthermore idealising and romanticising it. To conflate time with space at KPC would be ‘to ignore its real import; the coeval multiplicity of other trajectories and the necessary outward lookingness of a spatialised subjectivity’ (Massey, 2005:59).

However, some nostalgia – in order to retain some integral features of KPC, such as its radical heritage – is very important to other people at KPC. For example, one volunteer, Jonathan, started to become disillusioned with KPC following some recent resignations of politically active people; he saw the space moving in an apolitical direction towards becoming an arts association. He took a critical perspective on this process and saw it as in line with mainstream gentrification rhetoric, which he found problematic. He saw KPC as becoming a brand rather than a community centre and especially felt uneasy about receiving grants such as the Voluntary Action Fund from the Government;

I think there’s problems with the Pearce Institute but it’s not like a brand in the same way KPC is now, it’s just a place, to me it’s more similar to what I’m used to. I think a lot of my confusion with KPC was like mistaking what it is, for something that I thought it was. And that also plays a lot into why once I’d become busy with other stuff... and I was also starting to realise certain things about KPC...it wasn’t like a boycott, I just started to see the problems with it. You have to be careful; desires for certain things can get co-opted and stuff... there was like a through the looking glass moment, when I realised that it wasn’t a community centre with artists in it, it’s like sort of an arts organisation. (Jonathan)

This disillusionment experienced by Jonathan’s during his time as a volunteer is discussed in more depth in Chapter 7, but his concerns here question an idealistic form of throwntogetherness, which assumes that mixing different social groups is inherently good, when in reality this position is linked with a potentially troubling gentrification discourse (Lees, 2008). Jonathan echoed this sentiment when he described how KPC helped him understand the complex relationship between the arts and gentrification in the city:

I was never into art as a kid, I didn’t even know about small art galleries, I just thought art was these big galleries, and things are just separate, you know, then when I came to Glasgow and from going to gigs here I found out what it was. It was like

KPC was the end process of me finding out how art functions at different levels in the city, so for me it was useful as it really helped me to understand some of that stuff. (Jonathan)

Through the experience of place making at KPC, Jonathan has developed this critique. Jonathan's feelings of alienation towards the arts scene in Glasgow speaks to his personal history or habitus (Bourdieu, 198). However, I would argue that it is problematic to see the artists as neoliberal subjects, as they too are struggling with precarity alongside other groups (Aranda and Wodds, 2011). The ways in which arts are used as a form of place marketing in Glasgow is a highly debated subject in the city (Gray, 2009). Jonathan's reaction contrasted heavily with Ammie, who actively celebrated KPC's arts credentials:

Yeah KPC was in the list top 100 hot list for 'arts things' last year - it could have been an arts person, an arts venue, or an arts company... And KPC was listed as one of the only venues! And we are not even 'a venue' if you think about it! I think that's an amazing thing. (Ammie)

The arts community is well represented at KPC, as there are 14 art studios in the building, they are home to many bands, arts and theatre collectives. KPC also provides rehearsal space for many groups including the National Theatre of Scotland, LOOP theatre group, and the Commonwealth Youth Circus, in the two large main halls. There are film screenings put together by radical groups and world cinema groups. There have been some high profile musicians that have performed at KPC; and the space has hosted a variety of performances from a plethora of artists and some large music events and monthly gigs. The hall space is cheap to rent and negotiable; Lindsay puts together a make-shift bar, provides a stage and PA system that were obtained from grant funding, which provides a very accessible space for creative activities. KPC could be described as a 'creative incubator' site that is recognised as a 'vital part of cultural production' (Harvey et al, 2012:537). The arts and music events which happen at KPC bring creative talent to KPC and so the space has built up a reputation, and in turn people are attracted to hiring space at KPC as it is independently run; and during my research this was something that many groups liked about KPC. Nadia, an artist who has rented a studio space at KPC with her arts collective 'Now Now' since 2011, explained how she became involved:

It's so hard to get a studio space here, we were really lucky to get one. We didn't know anything about it until the time we came off the subway that day and we were like 'oh wow cool', and then we went in and so we just signed this contract, which was really vague, got keys and that was us! (Nadia)

I asked Nadia if she knew of the history of the building when she first took on the studio:

No, nothing at all, I think we were there, like, six months before we realised! A few of us had been to committee meetings and stuff, and at that point, if you had a studio there you also had some responsibility to do something in the building because it was cheap. You know, to clean the kitchen once a week and most of us were pretty active and happy to do that. (Nadia)

Since she took on the studio, Nadia has become a key individual at KPC; when her arts collective, 'Now Now', first joined KPC, there was much less involvement from the local community. Nadia has aimed to welcome many people into KPC by holding large public events, and even got involved in designing a summer programme for children running from KPC.

At that point (March 2011) there wasn't as much community use as there is now, although we knew it was a community centre, although there was a lot of artists doing their own stuff but it was exciting to us to think we could meet other people. We organised a few events, a big Burns Night party and we had an exhibition in the space, six months went by and Lindsay asked me to be on the board, because we'd been pretty active and I'd been there a lot and he wanted me to bring on some younger people. (Nadia)

When I interviewed Lindsay, the building manager, about how KPC has changed since he began managing it in April 2009, he explained that it was mainly studio tenants on the board at first. Then, when Nadia came to KPC as a new studio tenant in 2011, this brought new, younger groups into the building. He explained that, 'whilst we had wanted to diversify away from having a board dominated by studio tenants, Nadia was already showing that she had the skills, enthusiasm and commitment needed and that was judged more important'. So Nadia joined the board at KPC in January 2012. Lindsay explained that 'since 2011 KPC has taken a great leap forward' and 'hall hire increased

dramatically’, bringing a vast range of groups and activities to KPC. Individuals such as Nadia have aided the recent development of KPC and increased the social mix within the space. One other group that is represented at KPC is local people that live in the immediate geographical vicinity. This group mainly use KPC for sports and recreation; there are Zumba classes, yoga, aikido, taekwondo classes and the Nicole O’Donnell School of Performing Arts. These groups have regular hall bookings and so provide a bulk of the hall hire income. There are also other ways that the local community use the centre, for family parties such as weddings and birthdays. The throwntogetherness of the local community, the activist community and the arts scene is something that lots of people at KPC like about the space, but discussion around the extent to which these groups integrate came up lots in interviews, with people taking different approaches to encourage this process, as the next section discusses.

## **6.2 ‘Throwntogetherness’ as a strategy?**

When I arrived to volunteer at KPC in 2012, Emily had recently begun working in the office with Lindsay: between them, they ran the building, booked events, organised the calendar and kept track of jobs that needed to be done at KPC. Emily had a background in political activism and the arts and was interested in KPC, having held a high profile gig in one of the hall spaces. Emily was thrown into a position of responsibility at KPC fairly quickly, as Lindsay needed some hands on deck immediately.

What I was interested in was that it had three layers of stuff going on at the same time, which was arts stuff, community stuff (in the sense of useful kid and parent stuff) and political stuff, and I said I thought it was really unusual in Scotland, and really internationally, for those things to co-habit, to genuinely co-habit, rather than one thing to try and construct the other, coz its commonplace of the arts...to do something political or do something community-ish, and its commonplace for community facilities to have an arts and crafts programme or whatever things but it’s pretty unusual that that should organically happen together. I think that’s what I perceived going on at KPC, what I said that I was interested in trying to make that a more deliberate thing, and try to kind of foster that, because those things were happening alongside each other, but I wanted to make them intersect more. (Emily)

Emily then began to take an instrumental role at KPC and wanted actively to shape the space in a progressive way. When I discussed the idea of throwtogetherness with her, she remarked ‘well...throwtogetherness is a strategy for us’. It was interesting that she described throwtogetherness as ‘a strategy’ – it begs the question, is throwtogetherness a strategy? I would argue that Massey’s notion for throwtogetherness is an ideal, a constructive conceptual notion of spatial mixing, emphasising ‘the spatial’ and its ‘role of bringing distinct temporalities into new configurations sets off new social processes’ (Massey, 2005:71). Emily clearly shares in this conception of space and thought she could foster interaction through the intermingling of the three user groups that she identifies. Emily saw KPC as a political space that should foster social justice, and she felt that ‘politics’ was something that Lindsay, the building manager, wanted to avoid. She described how she felt that she and some of her friends that worked at KPC were ‘pegged as radicals or something quite early on’. She said that ‘anything that sounded like we were trying to do that, then it was quite quickly shut down’ (Emily).

This highlights how certain identities are perceived and stereotypes are formed in a space like KPC. Emily became frustrated with trying to balance between Lindsay’s pragmatism and her idealistic approach to running the building in a politically progressive way, although she could see why he had to take such a pragmatic approach:

I do have sympathy with him on that, I think he was... and is... trying to balance things, and if he had a sense that things were going to get out of balance, like, that there would be too much political stuff, he got the sense that the local people would not tolerate any subversive activity. But that’s totally counter to the assumption I would want to make, which is that people are open to that and it’s about trying to communicate that to them in a way that wouldn’t turn them off. (Emily)

Emily is part of an activist scene in Glasgow and friends with some of those who took part in the occupation in 1996. She is well aware of the history of struggle at KPC and sees the community as political. In the above quotation she talks about the community as political subjects. Emily has actually now resigned from her position at KPC because of the disagreement she had with Lindsay with regards to the structure and management of the organisation. She was uncomfortable with some of the arts groups that were dominating the space, as she saw. I spoke to Emily after she had left the office role at KPC, although

she still works out of one of the studios for WestGAP<sup>8</sup> and she described how she felt about KPC in retrospect:

I thought that they could sort of be persuaded to go to each other's stuff. Which is kind of naive, because people don't have that much free time, they do stuff just coz it's there, so having said that, I think there are ways that can be fostered, that's one of the reasons that I think that the structure of KPC should be more considerate of trying to do that. Coz I think that's one of that ways that people could be encouraged to overlap more, and they have been actually, for example, the relationship that's built up between me and Liam and Nadia and you, as I think we all come from different places. (Emily)

After Emily left, Lindsay was struggling to cope with the volume of activity at KPC, scheduling the calendar, being a janitor, handyman and cleaner at KPC as well as doing the general administration for the centre. This was evident to myself and the other volunteers. We mainly used our time to carry out repairs for which Lindsay did not have time for; clear and clean rooms and spaces; re-paint the walls which were flaking; and devise systems to mitigate the leaking roof, not to mention empty the many buckets of water placed all around the building to catch the dripping rainwater.

In 2013 a new volunteer came into the office, Ammie. She was already involved at KPC through the LOOP theatre group who use Room 1 and regularly book the hall for classes. Ammie's vision for KPC was different to the vision Emily took; she aimed to bring more arts into KPC, and actively to market it as arts space. She also felt differently about the ways that grants were to be obtained. Ammie suggested that KPC apply for a Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) which offered £10,000 from the Scottish Government to fund a part-time volunteer coordinator post and to put systems in place to reach 'black, minority and ethnic groups'. Lindsay was keen to let her do this; 'she did the bulk of the required work for the grant, was qualified and had a vision for what the role could achieve for KPC' (Lindsay). Her idea to use a government grant to fund her own job at KPC, bring in hard-to-reach groups and formalise the volunteering at KPC was something that caused controversy at KPC, and will be discussed in more depth in the seventh chapter. However,

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<sup>8</sup> 'WestGAP is an anti-poverty community group run by and for people in Glasgow who have firsthand experience of living in poverty. They provide a free, independent and confidential advice service covering welfare rights as well as support with housing problems, fuel poverty, homelessness and a wide range of other issues. They are totally independent, and are not part of any political party or organisation and based in Room 1 of KPC.'

this example also speaks to the idea of throwntogetherness as a strategy; the VAF was a more contrived and state lead version of throwntogetherness and was a major cause for concern for some of the groups in the building:

it is also that KPC is kind of abdicating responsibility by accepting that fund (VAF) you have allowed an outside body to dictate what goes on, someone you have never met and someone you don't have any dialogue with. (Simon)

Interestingly, Ammie explained that she saw the move to introduce the VAF as apolitical, which contrasts with Emily's overt desire to politicise 'the community' and Simon's concerns about losing autonomy from the state:

I don't know whether I'd say it's political, I think it's just responsible, it's socially responsible to do it and it just so happens that was one of the goals of the fund we found, and that's why I found it, coz I was like wow we tick every box!' (Ammie)

I then went on to ask Ammie whether she thought the building was integrated and people were mixing:

You can't deny there's always going to be a split though; no, there's not any real mixing. It means that you get that distance, and that's not necessarily something that we want, but then I don't know if that's just a necessary thing, don't know whether it is necessarily a bad thing. If I had a studio space I'd see that as an extension of my practice, you're not necessarily wanting that 'community thing'. It's just making sure that everyone has respect for each other, I don't know whether there needs to be any more interaction than that. (Ammie)

This approach differs from that of Emily, who was striving for the collective integration and assimilation of different groups more organically, as in the earlier examples of everyday encounters. But these contrasting perspectives demonstrate the plurality of understandings about what the community centre is, or should be. It also speaks to the ways that people's individual identities and subjectivities play into the ways that they construct the ethos of KPC in their minds and therefore how they shape the space.

### **6.3 Constructing space ideologically: ‘Aye, but this is a community centre not a social centre’**

This section looks at the ways in which that people’s identities and subjectivities play into their conception of KPC. I carried out a focus group with Liam and Michael, two volunteers at KPC; Liam is also now a board member. Both men are involved in other activist and volunteering projects around Glasgow and both described themselves as ‘political’ and saw KCP as a political space. Michael explicitly describes himself as an anarchist and tries to live his life through anarchist praxis; such as non-hierarchical self-organisation and mutual aid. He regularly attends the Glasgow Anarchist Social Centre. I discussed this with volunteers Liam and Michael: they described how they saw the ethos of KPC. Liam explained, ‘the building’s just got different agendas doesn’t it, but the agendas support each other, but there has been conflict here in the past’. I asked him how he saw these agendas play out at KPC:

Liam: Well, we have a business plan and we have a community and they appoint the key aims.

Michael: It’s a social enterprise!

Liam: Kinning Park ‘company’ haha! We don’t do it in an anarchist way or non-hierarchical way, there are strict kind of roles and conditions set out. Like there’s a whole rental policy and certain agreed transactions; don’t know much more formal, in some ways but then in a way it operates quite well, without... too much sort of... baggage.

Liam refers to particular political ways of doing things as having ‘baggage’; something which literature on social centres and autonomous spaces also recognise since the everyday functioning of these spaces is definitely ‘a complex, and often contradictory, articulation of political ideals’ (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010:479). This has also been noted by others: ‘some activists had begun to see the quest for unqualified consensus as a cumbersome filter in the translation of ideas into action, and a restraint on dynamism as decisions had to be channelled through group process’ (ibid:482). Instead, KPC is seen more as a space of implicit activism that do not necessarily constitute an identity for people (Horton and Kraftl, 2009).

I asked Liam and Michael if they thought that Lindsay, the building manager, had a political vision of KPC.

Liam: Think he has an idealistic, or an ideal of how it might work, then he also has an idea of how it works in reality at the same time.

Michael: Pragmatism...

Liam: Yeah pragmatism, yeah he's really pragmatic, but at the same time very political. He needs to get stuff done.

Liam and Michael articulate the complicated task of organising, which often involves hiding beliefs 'behind the mask of pragmatism' whilst 'making explicit an ideology, even a Left populist ideology, in community-based efforts'. De Fillipis et al add: 'the challenge for these organizations is to sustain this stance over time; that is, keeping their vision over the long term' (2007:49). Simon, one of the board members, hints that funding is one of the major reasons why pragmatic decisions are often required;

There's a kind of *real politik*, like they need funds so they will go for funds, but eventually you do get sucked in and you are doing things to satisfy other bodies. Erm, I've seen that happen in other organisations, I've seen some spaces with very radical practice just become instruments for government policy and funding puppets.  
(Simon)

During my interview with Simon, he was very cautious of the 'shadow state' interventions that certain funding can also bring. His critique is valid, yet not everyone at KPC shares it; Ammie for instance saw the funding from the Voluntary Action Fund as apolitical and unproblematic. There are important nuances in the ways that people conceive of the ideological ethos at KPC which have tangible outcomes in the decisions about which funds to accept or reject. Decision-making at KPC has to balance ideological and pragmatic tensions at the community centre. During the focus group with Liam and Michael, we ended up having a discussion about the nature of the space at KPC and the distinction between a community centre and a social centre.

Michael: There's a really good argument, going on about why isn't Kinning Park a social centre, why it's not...

Liam: Like why it's not in a social centre, in a positive sense.

Michael: So you had Glasgow social centre, well that was an attempt to create a project that we wanted to create, a non commercial space, yeah but that's been all over the shop...

Liam: Aye, but this (KPC) is a community centre, not a social centre.

Me: What's the difference?

Michael: If your deeming to have more of a presence in the community, you've got to have less political stuff, whereas if you're having a social centre, you would actually want that to have a kind of narrow focus and a way of doing things. Like the social centre looks to establish itself as a sort of locus for 'activisty' people, that's kind of run in an anarchist way that's, I guess... that looks to run itself in an 'activisty' way, so like politically it would be 'anarchisty', like non-hierarchical and stuff. But Kinning Park is a *community* centre, it's a place that serves to cater for the community and their struggles, so it might take on more institutional forms in doing that.

Michael acknowledges the differing ways in which people see the space, but more importantly how space is actively constructed and, in turn, the multiple ways that an ethos is articulated at KPC. There is a clear sense that Liam sees KPC as attempting to engender an inclusiveness, 'where uncommon encounters can be extended, where activism and non-activism can blur, where commonality can develop and mature, where experiences and critique can be shared, outside the pressures of policing and assumed social roles' (Chatterton, 2006:273). The distinction Liam makes between the 'community' and 'activists' is an empirical reality with which the theoretical concept of throwntogetherness has to contend. It problematizes throwntogetherness, which, it could be argued, frames the process as a spontaneous and uncontested process. It also presents this distinction between community(ies) at KPC, something which I will return to later in the chapter.

#### **6.4 Spaces of representation**

Whilst there were differing political subjectivities at KPC, as described in the last section, these ideological and political stances have tangible impacts upon the physical space in the building. The various groups that use KPC influence how spaces in the building are used. The micro spaces at KPC are in constant flux each day, the two large halls that are for hire at KPC taking on different identities for the various groups that inhabit them. There are mats brought in for Nicole's dancing classes; there are chairs set up for a film screening;

then the halls are cleared for children to play football at the play scheme. In the evenings, the building sometimes adopts the identity of a music venue buzzing with people, drinking and socialising at a live music event. The field notes I took recalling the first time that I attended KPC express the dynamic nature of the space.

After entering the cold, damp, musty building we went inside one of the halls, into a warm, damp stench left behind by the previous Zumba class to begin our session. The ladies hurried out of the double doors carrying rolled up exercise mats and water bottles. After a few brief encounters, holding doors and smiles, we occupied the space and began a very different activity from the Zumba class, and the building instantly took on a new function and contained a very different crowd. (Notes from field diary)

These complex negotiations are also materialised in the partitioning of space at KPC. The ways the building caters for certain groups is also contested; the initial decision to begin renting spaces out as art studios was a pragmatic decision to generate income and was heavily debated at the time. The particular ways in which the building is physically arranged and set up for different purposes speaks to how it serves different groups. ‘Through the practising of place, the negotiation of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us’ (Massey, 2005:154).

In the main hall of KPC, there is a large wall with a canvas depicting a Scottish landscape. It is very large and imposing; people notice it and it has become somewhat of a talking point in the building. During my interviews and a focus group, the topic of this painting came up, without my mentioning it. The debate around it symbolises the throwtogetherness of KPC, many people expressing different views on it with regards to the how saw KPC as a predominantly community space, a political space and/or an arts space. There have been ideas from some people at KPC to make the space more ‘neutral’ to attract people and make it more user friendly for certain groups, mainly referring to the arts users who need neutral spaces for exhibitions:

I think that a next step is to think about do we need to make the spaces even more neutral in order to make them even more accessible, for all different types of things and users? Just like walls should they all be white? So you can project on any wall and stuff. (Ammie)

In another discussion with Liam and Michael, which mentioned the canvas, they explicitly described how the painting actively rejects the space being used as an arts space:

Liam: as soon as we start talking about it as a space, though, is it us that rejects it? Or is it the building that rejects it? That big painting rejects it, that's why we like that big painting in there, it's really just rejects the possibility of this being a contemporary art space, you just could not have a serious exhibition in here with a giant canvas there like that, I think it's really good! I think its apolitical painting!

Me: What is that style though?

Liam: Don't really know!

Michael: 'Traditional Scottish!'

Liam: Yeah like some arts and crafty looking or something...it's painted by one of the studio users, it's not a bad painting of what's essentially a massive bog.

Michael: It's also as Scottish view, it's a traditional view, it's not modern.

Liam: It doesn't have any people in it.

Me: What do other people say about that painting?

Liam: People just think it's really cool, most people just say it's really massive!

The discussion around the painting was vested with cultural capital; we knew the various styles of art, yet we were actively persuaded that this was an inverse symbol of anti-cultural capital. We clearly represent

agents endowed with the pertinent categories of perception, i.e., with a practical intuition of the homology between the space of distinctive signs and the space of positions, social positions are immediately discernible through their visible manifestation. (Bourdieu, 1987:11)

Thus, the art is exclusionary, in line with Bourdieu's understanding of art in *Distinction* (1984). The view in the painting is also interesting, as it is an apolitical view in that it is very 'traditional' and rejects contemporary art trends and therefore renders the space redundant in terms of being a contemporary art space. Ammie even covered up the canvas in order to hold an art exhibition in the hall:

We had some exhibitions from the Camera Club, who are just down the road, and we built two pairs of white flats, book ended, so they could mount things, but we can use for so many events they kind of masked the really busy wall in the main hall, you know the one with the big canvas, so they masked it. (Ammie)

However, in this conversation, we also see the ‘unfashionable’ nature of the art as political art; in that it is ‘unfashionable’ prevents the space being used for the exclusive purpose of being a gallery, in line with Rancière’s understanding of art and politics. ‘Rancière situates the fundamental inequivalence he sees between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics within the gap that aesthetics introduces between two regimes of the sensible: the representative and the aesthetic’ (Vallury, 2009:230). In this conversation, we refer to both the aesthetic nature of the art, its ‘badness’ or ‘unfashionable’ nature, and then we recognise its representative qualities as separate and therefore political. The ways that Liam and Michael imbued the space with political meaning and symbolism speaks to how they politically relate to KPC.

### **6.5 Political autonomy within KPC: Room 1**

Kinning Park has two main halls and then lots of smaller rooms that function as studio/rehearsal/office spaces for various groups. In August 2012, Room 1 was set up in what was previously a studio, by Jonathan and some of the activists working in the building; they wanted to create another independent zone within KPC.

We wanted to experiment with the idea of using sub-committees to drive new projects forward at KPC. We hoped that devolving responsibility for delivering the Room 1 project to a small group of interested committee members, volunteers and building users would develop the existing volunteer model in two main ways, whilst minimising the impact of the increase in building capacity on the workload of the building manager. Firstly, it would give more room for those involved to act on their own initiative and direct their own work, and secondly, it would create a space for collective decision making which could respond to the interests, skills and ideas of the people contributing. Although there have been glitches along the way, we feel that in the main this experiment has been successful. (Room 1 report)

Room 1 was a physical and ideological space arguably created through agonism; ‘a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognise the legitimacy of their opponents’ (Mouffe, 2005:20). Room 1 can be seen as a space for the activists to enact their own political project, ‘belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place’ (ibid). This was a result of social tensions between Lindsay and some of the activists, and their desire to bring new groups and different facilities into the building. These events constitute throwntogetherness in its most contested sense; fraught with political antagonism and conflict, yet inherent and essential. KPC is a ‘field of agonistic engagement’. KPC is and has been a dynamic space since 1996, unregulated by the state; this ‘leaves a heterogeneous urban population to decide who really is going to have the right to be there’ (Massey, 2005:152). Room 1 created conflict, and conflict is fundamental to politics. Massey emphasises notions of conflict informed by Mouffe’s ideas about political antagonism in her account of throwntogetherness (2005):

Instead of trying to erase the traces of power and exclusion, democratic politics requires that they be brought to the fore, making them visible so that they can enter the terrain of contestation. (Mouffe, 1993:149)

Jonathan and some other people formed a sub-committee and it became an experimental space for people to carry out an alternative organisational structure within the building. There was thus a ‘configuration of a specific world’ with the creation of Room 1 (Rancière, 1999:28).

I wanted to be involved in the Room 1 thing, because I felt that it *related* to stuff. I think it’s good to push for things within what KPC is, but I think it would take a lot of work to change this overall framework of KPC. (Jonathan)

Previously, Lindsay had managed the entire building. There were discussions, disagreements and debates amongst the board and between Lindsay and the volunteers, but at some point consensus would be reached or a pragmatic decision would be taken. Rancière would see the creation of Room 1 as breaching the ‘distribution of the sensible’ at KPC, breaking the consensus. Room 1 was created because those involved had become disillusioned at the direction KPC was going, in terms of its organisational and

management structure and its increasing promotion of arts-based activities in the building. Jonathan suggested that KPC had become a brand:

Because it is at this point where it's like, this branded thing, and it's doing a lot of the stuff that these kind of organisations are 'meant' to be doing now. But it's also getting hammered by those very people. As you more accurately fit the mould they want, you get more disciplined, they sort of treat you mean and keep you down the line they want. (Jonathan)

Jonathan's contestation to the way he could see the space being complicit and being disciplined speaks to a more contentious notion of throwntogetherness. Indeed, Massey (2005) highlights the importance of conflict, antagonism and confrontation in the practice of place-making, and this example demonstrates these aspects. Massey draws on the work of Mouffe to emphasise the chaotic nature of producing radical democratic spaces such as KPC.

Mouffe (1999) describes the difference between 'politics' and 'the political'. 'Politics' refers to 'the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions that seek to establish a certain order and to organize human coexistence' (ibid: 754). We can observe 'politics' in the formation of Room 1 at KPC, through the creation of an autonomous space within the physical consensus of the building. Mouffe (1999) then describes 'the political' as 'the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in all human society...that can take many different forms and can emerge in diverse social relations' (ibid). This can also be observed in the points of contention identified by Jonathan and the others, and in their insistence that they organise their *own* rates of room hire, bring in *different* groups with particular agendas and manage this space *differently*. Thus, politics is always affected by antagonism and 'the dimension of the political' (ibid). KPC provides the physical and ideological space for 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 1999) to play out, as spaces such as KPC are not utopian spaces of consensus. They have their own internal politics and pluralities that are actually fraught with tensions from time-to-time. Therefore, spaces like KPC really are 'creative crucibles for the democratic sphere' (Massey, 2005:153), making them important spaces for people to experiment and participate in small scale politics, which could have wider implications for empowerment and political participation more generally.

The recognition of the antagonism inherent in politics at KPC was important to Jonathan:

There's this relentless hope for things to be positive, the people who are hopeful and heart warmed about this stuff are not the people on the ground, it relates to this bourgeois mentality and not wanting to admit any negativity. It's that community centres shouldn't be shaping communities, the community centres that we need also need to be spaces where we talk about the bad stuff. Most centres are miles away from that, it would be such a long process to move it to something like that.  
(Jonathan)

Throwntogetherness is indeed a process that is imbued with conflict as this section has shown: whilst writing about this conflict is easy, it caused a strain between certain people at KPC. This highlights the importance of relating abstract notions of conflict to real life and taking these into account in academic work. The next section will show how these tensions and moments of negativity that arise at KPC expose the tacit fractures between groups and the underlying pre-conceptions that people bring to the space as part of their habitus or personal history.

### **6.6 Throwntogetherness as a space of tensions in 'community'**

In 2013, once Room 1 was up and running, the space now had autonomy from Lindsay, the building manager, to bring in the groups who wanted and charge them accordingly to use the space. Room 1 welcomed a plethora of groups and actively encouraged those with a social justice agenda to use the space. They brought in Ladyfest, a group of women who have set up and continue to run regular meetings and a music festival in Glasgow. Other groups include: World Spirit Forum Theatre Group, which produces community theatre and explores integration and the asylum process from the perspective of those experiencing it directly; UK Uncut, a grassroots movement; Sex Worker Open University, a project created by and for sex workers; Games Monitor, a project to monitor the 2014 Commonwealth Games in the city; and, finally WestGAP, mentioned earlier, an anti-poverty community group run by and for people in Glasgow. However, when the introduction of 'vulnerable groups' was proposed to the committee, there were concerns about the sorts of people that this may attract:

...When WestGAP was first proposed, there was suddenly like this stop put on it, because 'we needed to talk about the security concerns' and the concerns of bringing in 'vulnerable people'! It's so demeaning! And by 'vulnerable people', that would mean young, working-class youth from the area. Like exactly the people that I was when I was brought into a community centre, when I was young. (Jonathan)

Jonathan, one of the key organisers of Room 1, felt aggrieved by the reaction of the committee to Room 1's proposals. In this example, throwing together different and potentially problematic groups exposed class prejudice:

...like the building manager and the committee had this idea of the people and the community around them as being 'vulnerable' so much! So we were like, well, we want to do this welfare rights service as people might actually come in, you know, from around here...! Who have 'problems', and they were like, 'oh my god, we can't do it because people will come in and start stealing stuff!' and 'it presents this security issue', and 'what are going to do about the studios?' You know the people who have these studios, like, the middle-class artists, are not going to be happy... stigma and prejudice take place. (Jonathan)

Here, Jonathan has understood the exclusion at KPC along class lines. This critique rests on the classification of groups at KPC. The local community here could be regarded as class subjects. Whilst this may be an unfair objectification of a group, it is also helps to articulate Jonathan's perceived injustices at KPC, thus exemplifying the paradox between objectification and political representation. The tensions between Rancière and Bourdieu's standpoints are also played out through this scenario. Whilst the focus on class is derogatory here, it is also clearly present. In this respect, I would argue that throwntogetherness allows this to become evident to the observer. If we take Rancière's 'method of equality' in this instance, we would actually overlook a clear class-based injustice, and deny the relevance of Jonathan's comments. KPC provides an arena for this to become evident, through agonistic confrontation, and therefore potentially led to a progressive resolution. In this instance, the way this played out did disprove the prejudice:

...and then WestGAP runs, and the people around KPC really think it's a great service, they bring in tea and biscuits, it's just this is like this complete phantom that they've created, and its exclusionary...the community is, on the one hand, something

that's appealing and they want people to come in, but in this safe form that they accept. And on the other hand, you have this figure of exclusion and we don't want the community to come in because they are vulnerable and might nick our easels!

(Jonathan)

The above quotation shows how this situation was ultimately resolved, but Jonathan's frustrations are still evident. His concerns can be attributed to the nuances of 'doing activism' in the community; whilst idealised notions of participation and horizontalism are preferable, people do not leave their prejudices at the door of the community centre. Ultimately, 'all spaces are socially regulated in some way' (Massey, 2005:152) and the negotiation of the space is part of the messy everyday realities of running a public space. This links back to the earlier distinction between KPC being a community centre and not a social centre; in a social centre, a 'method of equality' would be a premise on which throwntogetherness would begin; in a community centre we observe throwntogetherness in its most contested and rudimentary sense.

### **6.7 Subjectification and construction of community at KPC**

Class and the subjectification of the local community was a theme that came up frequently in interviews. Often people would talk about 'the community', when they were actually referring to the people from the local area. This group mainly attend the sports and dance classes that happen each night of the week in the main halls. In many respects, this group provides KPC with its most regular source of income and most tangible links to people in the local geographic area. The Nicole O'Donnell School of Performing Arts has run from KPC since October 2010 and occupies the main hall space upstairs four nights a week, classes starting around 4pm through to early evening. The dance classes are busy, with around 90 under 16s attending each week.

This class brings the highest volume of local kids and parents into the complex each week and as well as being KPCs' highest individual source of income is also our closest link to the directly local community. (KPC Big Update)

The school specialises in 'disco freestyle', a modern form of dance that combines both happy hardcore dance music and acrobatic, disco moves. Others who use the building are

aware of the emphasis put on the dance school because of the number of children that attend and the links with the geographically local community:

...the dance classes, it's held up as being, 'Nicole's great' and 'the dance class is great'. I was back for a local fair at my town and there's like this parade through town, there was like 5 dance classes, quite similar to Nicole's stuff, but in KPC they are treated as though they are a fragment of the cross Jesus was crucified on or something, it's like this holy relic, you know, it shows that 'the building is linked to the community you know!' (Jonathan)

Jonathan was frustrated with, as he saw it, the fetishisation of the dance classes at KPC. As different populations are thrown together in space, different subjectivities and even structural divisions become evident. When thrown together or juxtaposed with the more avant-garde artistic practice that occurs at KPC, this group appear the most mainstream, and attracts the most 'working class' contingent. Cultural tastes and opinions emerge and clash through these interactions.

During ethnographic work, I took part in the summer play scheme, where many of the children from the dance school also attended, as well as others from the local vicinity. There was a team of youth workers and the team of artists collaborating to create a summer programme of activities for the children. During the discussion about activities, the dance classes came up as a topic of conversation. One of the artists remarked that the style of dancing that the dance school did was overtly sexualised and that the children had to wear make-up and hair styled in a particular way. There was a discussion around this topic for five minutes in which one of the artists expressed her distaste with this sort of dancing and others discussed the merits of it. The expression of particular liberal, middle class notions of the sexualised nature of working class children who wear makeup and do a less 'high-brow' style of dance was evident, and I felt that imposing these attributes on the young dancers was unfair and marked a class-cultural distinction between certain individuals. It was interesting to think about the ways that the community at KPC is envisioned through a class lens at KPC, and the ways that people construct working class culture. I discussed this idea with another one of the volunteers, who had a very nuanced take on how working class culture is perceived:

Yeah that's our experience of the working class culture. On the one hand it's the holiest of holies, and on other the hand, it's like, they only want it in certain forms, they want flat caps and folk songs, they don't want happy hard-core and make-up.  
(Jonathan)

This brings up the very tension between Bourdieu and Rancière's positions; on the one hand, we see the celebration of the working class use of the space. The local community are seen as an 'authentic community', as it were. So Nicole's dance school is distinguished as being integral to the building and representative of the 'local community', spatially and culturally connecting KPC with the population of the local area. Using Rancière, we could potentially see the dance classes as disrupting the 'partition of the sensible', disrupting the middle class notions of dance, exposing people to dance culture that is not familiar to some who use the building. However, the ways in which the cultural symbol of this dancing was looked-down upon shows that, even when there is a disruption of the sensible, the power dynamic relating to those with more social authority and cultural legitimacy still remains in place. Thus, Bourdieu's structural analysis still remains valid.

The subjectification and deployment of 'community' for funding at KPC calls into question the multiple ways that throwtogetherness can be thought of more critically as a cosmetic strategy for social mixity (Lees, 2008). If we took a non-representational approach to the critical analysis of KPC, as recommended in Rancière's work, it would be impossible to problematise the deployment of community at KPC. The earlier example of Ammie introducing the Voluntary Action Fund at KPC, a government funded scheme to bring in 'black, minority and ethnic groups' to KPC, works on an active assumption that community *can* and importantly *should* be shaped. The creation of Room 1 also aimed to shape the community, although in more radical ways with a social justice imperative. Jonathan's critique regarding the ways that the local geographic community are represented through Nicole's dance school highlights the multiple ways that 'community' is constructed and deployed for different ends at KPC:

...it is a really complex thing [community]. It's a word that's deployed for so many different purposes; arts organisations want to say they are accessing the community to justify their wages, then at the same time it's used in exclusionary terms. There's this thing with in a way KPC is like a bunch of people wanting to say that they are working with the community, whether they actually are or not ... (Jonathan)

The subjectification of the community is twofold: firstly, the benevolent subjectification that ‘we must help the community’; and secondly, that ‘community’ is a form of leverage for obtaining funds and performing projects and occupations, which, of course, are justified by the first premise, ‘we need to help the community’.

Many of the artists I spoke to at KPC also felt a pressure from above to tailor their artwork to fit community grant objectives. In an interview with Nadia, an artist with a studio at KPC and a member of the board, she expressed how she felt both a drive and a pressure to tailor projects to fit grant applications, and how evoking community development within an arts project was a both a tool as well as a personal motivation for her.

Me: Is arts funding tied to community stuff?

Nadia: More recently yeah a lot of it is. We were doing a lot with community groups up north, arts projects, community engagement, hate that word... I think that it’s a slightly tricky situation, because a lot of people want to do something good, they wanna do something useful. The Glasgow arts scene can be a bit tricky, is very geometric and fashionable, and we were like, ‘we don’t really fit in here!’ But, we were getting a bit from projects that were engaging with communities. It’s a constantly difficult one to get around as well, coz you don’t wanna be the people that think that you can come into a community and fix it all, but then there is a part of you that wants to help.

Me: Do you feel a pressure to have to use your art for something community-orientated?

Nadia: Yeah sometimes, that’s also to do with what funds are available, like how do you make a living from it? Yeah so you’ll sort of change your project to get funding. There’s part of you that goes ‘what’s the point of making art useful and shit’, then there’s a part that’s like ‘no! This is what I want to do! This is what I have been doing!’ (Nadia)

Nadia is clearly aware of the multifarious ‘value’ of community, in terms of facilitating her career as an artist and the ways that the arts can have a genuinely positive role in

community development. The way the system in Glasgow functions means that she is forced to acquire multiple subjectivities as an entrepreneur, artist, community developer and ethical citizen, in order to negotiate the myriad of grant applications and buzzwords that are required for her to get paid for her art. This chimes with Ammies' aspirations to be a professional community developer. Helen also mentioned this when I asked her about her career trajectory. As aforementioned in Chapter 5, Helen began as a political activist and wanted to move away from issue-based politics but wanted to retain a socially responsible career in community development, which also combined the arts:

So I thought that what I would like to try and do is use the arts as a form of community development. Especially amongst, er, you know, what was seen as 'poorer communities' or communities that were 'dysfunctional'...From that I set up an organisation called Raring to go Festival, which was a festival for older people and we put a huge event on during Glasgow's year of culture and it was really about showing the amount of work that senior citizens actually did for their communities, in relation to running community centres and running holiday programmes. (Helen)

Again, there seems to be an acceptance of top-down development rhetoric and practice. Helen also worked alongside Glasgow's Year of Culture (1990). Since the 1990s, the trend to roll back public services and co-opt community organisations has been prevalent and many individuals, especially women, have taken leading roles in this wave of third sector intervention (Newman, 2012). Lowe (1989) describes, how during this period, worker co-ops were also being adopted as a panacea to problems and little attention was paid to the ways that these projects were being co-opted as a continuation of Mrs Thatcher's government's plans to instil enterprise and individual initiative into society.

These personal dilemmas exemplified by Helen and Nadia, surrounding how to engage with current policy agendas, caused conflicts at KPC. The varied ways in which different people negotiate from whom they are happy to receive funding was sometimes part of their political identity. The subjectification of the community also requires us to conjure up images of what we understand as 'the community' (Joseph, 2002). From interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, these personal constructions of what community means to different people at KPC are as varied as the individuals that conceive them. On the whole, people at KPC saw the community centre as a space that should aid or help the community in some way, as a positive social space.

The ways that people imagine the community outside KPC is less positive. For instance, during an interview with Ammie, her construction of community and local area was associated with disadvantage; she saw her role as a community organiser, as she referred to her role as alleviating this disadvantage

I don't know, every area is different, but here and around here and like Govanhill and everything, there's a lot of, there's a lot of tension that just comes from clashes between different communities living together and that kind of just not being just not being used to one another, and all these tensions are based on nothing but age-old prejudices and age old yeah racism, and age old... like this nostalgia that comes up of just 'oh it was great before'... when was before? I've got no idea, when was that, tell me when that was? And why not now, why does now not matter? But that's just my thoughts. (Ammie)

Here, Ammie makes large generalisations about Kinning Park as being similar to Govanhill, an area that is geographically not that close to Kinning Park and cannot really be reached by foot. Furthermore, the demographics of these areas are also different however, both are arguably economically disadvantaged. The way that she makes generalisations about the populations in both places shows how territorial stigmatisation can occur (Wacquant, 2007). These notions then become problematic, especially when they are generalised in negative terms, as areas then appear to require generic solutions. Such generalisations also 'play an important role in creating a convenient alibi for large-scale gentrification and working-class displacement' (Grey and Mooney, 2011:11). Her misgivings about the nostalgia, which she sees as characterising the area, locate her class subjectivity; this dismissive approach to people's histories is indicative of her naivety. I then asked her why she thought that communities were 'disadvantaged':

the disadvantaged communities are disadvantaged, it's a horrible term, but they are disadvantaged because of where they live, it's the areas of Glasgow that have got a whole history of... of... disadvantage really, isn't it? It's all those different factors coming in, that's where you end up working a lot of the time because that's where the need is, but then also in the West End you'll get an area like that too, you'll get a street like that, it shouldn't be black and white but you've only got so many resources. (Ammie)

Ammie's sense of place 'presupposes an assumed identity of a place and its history'; these claims rest on 'a deeply essentialist and internalist way of thinking about a place and its character' (Massey, 1995: 183). Ammie then links communities with the deployment of resources and this is where her preconceptions then become operationalised; and at KPC they were operationalised with the Voluntary Action Fund which caused so much controversy at KPC. There is a specific way that Ammie constructs the community as reciprocates of services or resources from KPC:

We are looking at more integration with community users in the day to day. But kind of, booking and usage isn't really a problem, we do little to no advertising, there's no marketing, we don't have to, so that's kind of chugging away, which is great, and now we need to get the infrastructure to catch up with that. To then start forward planning, because once you start forward planning, then that's when you can support your community, because you do your research as part of thinking about 'what do we actually need to do here? What is it we need to supply our community? And how do we get them brought in?(Ammie)

This constructs the community as an economic and political subject to be managed through technocratic professional community developers. Myself, and other volunteers, saw the introduction of the Voluntary Action Fund as emblematic of this troubling construction of the community as a potential market of service users, and KPC as providers, in line with privatised and professionalised neoliberal welfare regimes. From my observations, this is very much in contrast with the ethos of most people at KPC, which I would describe as an example of *progressive localism*, being based on principles that are part of a wider project of spatial justice, equity and solidarity (MacKinnon et al, 2010).

## **6.8 Conclusion**

Through examining the everyday empirical reality of KPC, this chapter has discussed the different dimensions of throwntogetherness. It has produced a broad articulation of throwntogetherness; from everyday encounters through to how throwntogetherness highlights stark differences between people. The spatial 'is the realm of the configuration of potentially dissonant (or concordant) narratives' (Massey, 2005:71). The diversity of people that use KPC shapes the space. In turn, the ways people use the space configures

different identities at KPC. During this chapter, many people articulated their engagement in political projects through messy, complex and multiple identities – always in the process of becoming and moving forward through experimentation and negotiation (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010:479). Ultimately, this chapter is about how throwntogetherness results in forms of dislocation and surprise that enable the opening up of the political (Aitken, 2009:64). We can then understand valuable spaces such as KPC as ‘potentially creative crucibles for the democratic sphere’ (Massey, 2005:153).

Valentine (2008), however, highlights the ‘worrying romanticisation’ of urban encounters in literature on cosmopolitanism and new urban citizenship, which ‘implicitly reproduce a potentially naïve assumption that contact with “others” necessarily translates into respect for difference’ (325). The problem, however, is not with the notion of encounters as having the definite potential to translate into respect, although they can and do, as this chapter shows. My preference for Massey’s (2005) concepts of ‘throwntogetherness’, and space more broadly, is because Massey’s work incorporates both the generative aspects of spatial encounters, and the tensions that arise in place-making. Existing urban spaces such as KPC allow throwntogetherness to be observed empirically; and this chapter shows how throwntogetherness works in reality KPC. We can observe how the throwntogetherness of different identities and subjectivities at KPC generates both progressive and generative encounters, but it also reveals tensions and power dynamics that people have to negotiate in the day-to-day running of the space. The empirical findings should reveal a nuanced picture of throwntogetherness, which fleshes out the major aspects of the concept. Throwntogetherness allows us to celebrate the diversity at KPC without assigning the space a rigid identity. Academic work that can often serve to classify these spaces as social centres, community centres, autonomous or co-opted is problematic, and I think that some literature could be guilty of this (such as Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006). In being too interested in the classification of space, we risk overlooking the progressive dynamic and hopeful nature of spaces like KPC.

The examples of exclusions, prejudice and the exposure of class and cultural tensions that I have discussed in this chapter reiterate the usefulness of both Rancière and Bourdieu’s theoretical approaches. I have observed both the existence of structures and divisions at KPC, as featured in Bourdieu’s analysis, yet also the construction of hybrid identities, antagonism and dissensus that have disrupted the distribution of sensible knowledge(s) at KPC, in line with Rancière’s approach that rejects the classification of groups. I am critical

of objective structures that some theory constructs, which perhaps do not take into account the more subjective representations of individuals. However, I would argue, in line with Bourdieu, that ‘these representations must also be taken into consideration particularly if one wants to account for the daily struggles, individual and collective, which purport to transform or to preserve these structures’ (Bourdieu, 1989:471). This means that ‘the two moments, the objectivist and the subjective, stand in a dialectical relationship’ (ibid). Thus, when applied to real life situations observed at KPC, Massey’s notion of throwntogetherness assimilates the usefulness of both approaches. Through this chapter, we can also understand the importance of material spaces like KPC, ‘which keep always under scrutiny the play of social relations which construct them’ (Massey, 2005:153).

To move away from theory and to think more practically, we must question whether people have the time to continue to run KPC on a voluntary or low-paid, at best, basis, and this question came up when I interviewed Nadia. She explained that whether the community actually has any agency in the day-to-day management of KPC often comes down to pragmatic question of *who is available* to perform the labour:

It’s supposed to be a community centre run by the community, it’s certainly not run by the community, it’s run by people that are there. You give people that feeling of responsibility or ownership then it does become community run. (Nadia)

This economic ‘value’ of the labour that goes into producing KPC, alongside the commoditisation of community and professionalisation of community development, will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

# Chapter 7: Hidden Abode of Community Labour

Since the 1990s, there has been a major shakeup of welfare provision in the UK, and the trajectory of KPC that I described in previous chapters exhibits the effects of the changing nature of the welfare state very starkly. We have seen how before 1996, KPC was a state-provisioned community centre, which became threatened with closure due to local state roll back (Boyle et al, 2008). The City Council then handed over KPC to the community for a peppercorn rent, without funding, and finally to the contemporary situation where the City Council are actively trying to attain a commercial rent for the building through the removal of the concessionary rents policy in 2011. Since the 1990s, civil society groups such as KPC have become increasingly involved in replacing welfare services once provided by the state, and ‘the post war view of the state as protector or insulator is rapidly being erased from popular political discourse and from historical memory’ (Bakker, 2007:58). Community centres such as KPC are still vital facilities in the city, as Chapter 6 on throwntogetherness shows. KPC has always fostered and facilitated a broad range of civil society groups and organisations that provide welfare services, recreational and arts facilities to the local population and beyond. Therefore, KPC’s inherent ‘use value’ to its dynamic population or ‘community’ has remained a constant, even if funding has not. However, to keep this vital facility up and running, the building users have carried out all of the labour at KPC on a voluntary or at best low-paid basis, since 1996.

In society more generally, the growth of civil society has seen it morph into a ‘loose and baggy monster’ (Kendall and Knapp, 1995) involved in the provision of many welfare services previously taken care of by the state. Wolch (1990) famously described the third sector as the ‘shadow state’ because of the government’s penetration of civil society. Authors have argued that the dependence of voluntary organizations on state grants and contracts is combined with increased administrative oversight and regulatory control, which reinforces state authority on the third sector (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). Studies have shown how the state remains instrumental, encouraging professionalization and corporatisation of many voluntary organizations (Jenkins, 2005; Fyfe 2005; Fyfe and Milligan 2003; Bondi and Laurie, 2006). Authors have also identified ways in which the state is actively fostering ‘communitarian politics’ (Frazer, 1999) and importantly the ways in which this has been used to gain value for money in delivering welfare provision

(Joseph, 2002). Some have remarked upon the state's identification with and capitalisation on the 'social economy' on various levels, from local government initiatives to global promotion from the World Bank (Amin et al, 1999:2034). Many authors now describe the huge amount of, once publicly funded, social provision that is now carried out by third sector organisations as the 'non-profit industrial complex' (Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007). In the community sphere, free, voluntary or low paid labour is carried out and so remains hidden, or at least separate from the economy. So for labour geographers, for example, 'there is an urgent need to look beyond the work-place to community struggles for analysis' (Rutherford, 2010:774), not just because these spaces remain linked to the work-place and wage relations, but because community struggles are also spaces of labour and work relations, as this chapter will show.

This chapter will show how spaces like KPC are increasingly picking up the slack from the state, and that this is even aiding and reinforcing the existing system, carrying out invisible and unpaid labour. Nancy Fraser recently referred to civil society as one of capitalisms' 'hidden abodes' (Fraser, 2014). She called for a nuanced conceptualisation of these 'hidden abodes' to pinpoint capital's reliance on unpaid and unregulated, social reproductive labour to highlight the exploitative nature of this process. This echoes the work of geographer William Bunge (1977), who referred to the labour at the point of reproduction as the 'second front'. In identifying this 'second front' or 'hidden abode', we hold both capitalism and the state (which is arguably supporting this move to independent community provision) to account.

The project begins by specifically examining who carries out this labour, how it is practised and understood by the workers and finally how it is valued in society. The Italian autonomist feminists of the 1970s first began to signpost the community as a 'hidden abode' where (mainly) women carry out social reproductive labour.

...the community is not therefore an area of freedom and leisure auxiliary to the factory, where by chance there happen to be women who degraded as the personal servants of men. The community is the other half of the capitalist organisation, the other area of hidden capitalist exploitation, the hidden source of surplus labour. (Dalla Costa and James, 1972:11)

‘The community’, and therefore community centres such as KPC, are part of a ‘social factory’ in two ways. Firstly, the physical space of KPC also needs to be socially (re)produced; i.e. it needs to function, be cleaned, tidied, managed and organised before it is utilised by society. Society then, secondly, carries out this social reproductive labour in this space; i.e. provides welfare services and recreational clubs and functions in the community. The play scheme, benefits advice centre, women’s group and social clubs and events are aspects of social life that are vital in the social reproduction of the labour force and are carried out by volunteers and/or low-paid workers at KPC:

...there has never been enough money to pay for all the work that needs doing and we also like the ethos of people volunteering some of their time / skills in what is after all a community enterprise is. All of the paid (contracted and self-employed) staff have also given some of their time voluntarily over the last years to help KPC survive and progress. (Lindsay)

In this chapter I will explore the experiences of individuals carrying out social reproductive labour at KPC; ‘that fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life’ (Katz, 2001:711). To explore the experience of work, volunteering and activism at KPC, which ‘unfold in dialectical relation with production, with which it is mutually constitutive and in tension’ (ibid) I will draw upon my ethnographic experiences of being a volunteer at KPC and interview material with my fellow volunteers, managers and other freelance workers, artists and activists at KPC. There is a huge diversity of people working in some capacity at KPC and the pay and conditions of labour are just as varied. Furthermore, labour at KPC is certainly economically cheap – given the value it has for the community, and for the local state, which have been able to reduce their costs thanks to the work that goes on at KPC.

### **7.1 Unseen and unpaid: volunteering at KPC**

When I began volunteering, Lindsay was happy for the volunteers (Liam, Michael, Jonathan and I) to do whatever tasks we wanted to do. One of the key aspects of my initial volunteering experience at KPC was that I actively chose the amount of labour and forms of labour in which I wanted to engage, and these things were, importantly, flexible, and changed week-to-week. I enjoyed the informality of the volunteering experience; I could make the volunteering as flexible or structured as I felt necessary. This follows Sheard’s suggestion that volunteering ‘clearly taps into a natural urge which people have to help

their fellow citizens' (1995:122). At the same time, it enables individuals to place boundaries around their involvement, and thus provides a 'safe' and structured outlet for their altruism and social concern' (Hedley et al, 2005:121) The key point being that, ideally, individuals are able to place boundaries around their involvement; i.e. not the state, private organisation or indeed the organisation itself. However, there is a more coercive element to volunteering in some recent state welfare initiatives (Haughton et al, 2010):

...we would love to have your help, and all help is needed. There is plenty to do. We are kinda making it up as we go along ...we are starting to move to a situation where we can basically find a useful job for whoever, at whatever time they can be available, and we are also trying to match peoples' skills with jobs and that can be anything from web work to help chasing grants to various admin jobs – or the default job right now is painting, cause we have a lot of that to do, and for the hardy we also have clearing rubble from the attic. (Email from Lindsay to me, April 2012)

At KPC, we worked alongside Lindsay, and early on I asked him how he thought my skills could be utilised at KPC. He said that applying for grants was something with which they needed assistance and some general admin. So I also helped with administrative forms of labour. I learned how to apply for grants and I also learned practical skills, such as using power tools and re-hanging a door. I enjoyed the social side of volunteering each Thursday and I was part of a small team of around three or four people. We would all work together after Lindsay set out a task. The days spent working with the other volunteers enhanced our sense of belonging to the building as a shared social space. Furthermore, the other volunteers and I shared a certain political understanding of the building and its history; other user groups perhaps saw the building in different ways, as described in the previous chapter. For many of us, volunteering at KPC bridged the divide between radical activism and pragmatic citizenship. It created a middle ground where we could achieve both ends through our careful negotiation of the existing pressures and sometimes opportunities of contemporary neoliberalism.

Michael: Because I'm still pretty pragmatic, erm because I was using the space a lot for putting on events, well just the ways that space is used differently that has political consequences, I was doing stuff at the Glasgow social centre then I wanted to do some more radical stuff here, and that's when I started volunteering... I still do stuff at the Glasgow social centre, but ... comparably, this is me being less political.

Me: So what do you see your role as here?

Michael: Erm, I don't think... well, I see it as just being practical assisting in running the building without trying to reach an overt political agenda, it being a non commercial space and it's enough for me to be involved just now. If something was to come along that was particularly inspirational then I would maybe go along with that.

We were often based in the office around Lindsay and Emily, who were making day-to-day decisions on how the building ran at the time; this also meant we had some say in this. So at the early stage of my volunteering experience (early 2012) I felt part of the family, I had a connection to the building and I felt that I was making a tangible contribution to the space. I also felt a sense of camaraderie and shared political point of view with the other volunteers and we were often consulted on day-to-day running decisions at KPC. I also worked alongside other people at KPC who were in paid employment through the use of the space; they either held a recreational club or a service from KPC.

## **7.2 Socially reproducing the space: mundane labour**

From working at KPC as a volunteer, the incredible amount of mundane and emotional labour that it requires to run an independent space struck me. This was discussed in a recent steering group at KPC and we came up with the following key tasks required for the day-to-day running of the space; replacing and purchasing consumerables like toilet paper, cleaning products, tea coffee, bar stock etc; complying with health and safety requirements; doing alarm testing; liaising with volunteers and tenants; improving accessibility; maintaining furniture, equipment and tools; procuring trading contractors; getting and comparing quotes; repairs and improvements; cleaning, managing heating and lighting; writing a weekly rota; pricing and booking for hall hire; opening up and closing the building. Before KPC can be used by groups, it must be socially reproduced as a usable space, and these tasks are mainly carried out by the building manager, with help from the volunteers. Because KPC is a community centre, people use it as such; they show up for classes, groups or services, use the toilets, make a drink in the kitchen. KPC is not explicitly presented as a collectively run space; some people knew that it was maintained by volunteers and some did not. The groups who rented studios were aware of the way that

the social reproduction of the space was down to Lindsay and the volunteers, but they generally kept to their private studios and paid their rent accordingly. I often spent time in the communal spaces of the building carrying out painting, sweeping and cleaning, with many studio tenants passing by to use the kitchen and toilets. With regards to the completion of communal chores, I often felt that I was servicing the building for the artists to use without much input from them. I asked Lindsay about this and he said it was an issue that he also faced:



**Figure 12 The overlapping roles of activist, volunteer and paid employee at KPC**

We experimented for two years with the idea that studio users would, in return for a lower rent, do regular ‘voluntary’ work. However, in reality, that didn’t work. Most studio users are too busy to do that on the regular basis that’s needed. So around end of 2010 into 2011 the majority of the work was falling on a few members of the board on a regular basis. (Lindsay)

Artists are, of course, a group whose work is poorly paid and precarious, so it was understandable that they could not afford to spend working time doing tasks that are not directly productive, in the sense of earning an income. This also points to the ways that people at KPC are embroiled in capitalist labour logics in different ways. It was difficult to decide who should carry out the ‘social reproduction’ of the space on a regular and sustainable basis, especially when some people used the space for work and some for leisure. It was evident that volunteers were socially reproducing the building for other people to utilise in order to carry out their own individual labour to produce capital that did not go back into the building.

However, the work carried out by volunteers does serve to build social capital within KPC. Social capital, as first described by de Tocqueville (1832), refers to some kind of communitarian ‘social glue’ (Lovell, 2009). I think, however, at KPC there are different

skills and thus various forms of labour being carried out in the space, thus multiple grounds for agency and contestation (Featherstone and Griffin, 2015). In this sense, Bourdieu's (1986) definition of social capital is more fitting. He defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (ibid: 248). You have a network of people in the building with skills and talents; artists, performers, sports people; all of whom are building the social and cultural capital in KPC and in turn the image of KPC as an exciting and dynamic space. Importantly, in reductive and economist terms, the increased 'capital' from these 'resources' leads to more 'capital' or, in reality, user numbers at the community centre, therefore, creating more work required socially to reproduce the space. As the building became busier during 2011, the increased workload often fell on the shoulders of the building manager, Lindsay.

People press the bell at all sorts of times for all sorts of reasons. From hall enquiries to what class do you have, to I'm looking for this place round the corner, to I used to go to school here and wondered if... to studio people that forgot their keys to studio tenants' friends who couldn't be bothered phoning them to get access – it's easier just to get me to stop what I'm doing and answer the buzzer instead, to parents waiting for kids to get back from the play scheme, to deliveries for studios. Also, when cars get broken into outside, when the alarm goes off at 2am, when the main door lock breaks, when pipes burst or new holes in roof cause new areas of water damage, or people forget their keys. Everyone asks me. Sometimes I can do something to fix the problem...sometimes not. (Lindsay)

This quotation states some of the mundane, yet vital, tasks required of the building manager. The tone of the quote here reflects the exasperation and pressure felt by Lindsay at the time; my point here being, that as the building becomes busier – which is a good thing in terms of the social use value for the community, the more labour is necessary for the building manager. Thus, the community centre becomes capital's 'hidden abode' (Fraser, 2014) as Lindsay is paid the same amount for an increasing amount of work; in effect an intensification of his own labour process. This cycle also appears difficult to break. Lerner and Craig (2005) found a similar situation, that 'many of these strategic brokers know exactly the kinds of unreasonable demands being placed on them, but are determined, against whatever structural constraints, to make the most of the new situation'

(ibid, 420-421). From interviews with Lindsay and witnessing the amount of stress he was under, it was clear how he felt he had to repress his own anxiety to continue with the task at hand, so this emotional sacrifice ‘for the good of the community’ remains hidden under the veil of practical labour that must be attended to in a community centre.

### **7.3 Performing a heroic task: reliance on key individuals**

Despite these pressures, Lindsay continues to work at KPC. The motivations for his hard work are not for personal monetary gain. Lindsay began his role at KPC in 2009, coming from a background working for Greenpeace as a Campaigns Manager. He was local to the area and knew the old manager, Helen Kyle. Lindsay wanted to help to re-organise KPC, to keep it up and running as a community centre. Lindsay worked alongside the artists who rented studios in the building at the time and they formed a board, and this established the Kinning Park Complex Community Interest Company in 2009. The initial board was comprised of Belinda Scott, Colin Begg (Treasurer), Erin Scrutton (Secretary), Fiona Fleming, Graham Eatough, Lindsay Keenan (Chair), Richard Walker; all individuals, excluding Lindsay, were artists and studio tenants in the building. They began regular meetings and began to increase usage of the halls and had to take a decision to increase rents for the studio tenants. In April 2011, they contracted Lindsay as a part-time building manager for 5 hours per week. As the usage grew, Lindsay began to take on more and more decision-making and put systems in place; he brought the building up to the right health and safety standards and fire regulations. This period of professionalisation began a new chapter for KPC.

Probably the only reason that the building is now starting to flourish is the work that Lindsay put in to galvanising the rest of us and forcing us to examine areas like fire safety and writing a proper constitution. I could go on as the list of work he did in the first few years is long. (Richard Walker, Studio tenant, board emails)

Lindsay has always put in more labour than he was paid for at KPC, working during events in the evenings, showing up early in the mornings, which is typical of the self-exploitation and lack of value (in a monetary sense) given to this kind of work. This also highlights the reliance on key individuals in running a space like this, not only for their practical labour and expertise, but also in terms of galvanising the project to maintain solidarity, co-operation and community spirit.

I am sure that everyone recognises Lindsay's hard work, but he has also been at the heart of the idea that the building should be a resource for the people of Glasgow, to create, play and discuss. (Richard Walker, Studio tenant, board emails)

There is a clear reliance on one key individual at KPC, which was highly evident to me from working at KPC as a volunteer. There have been two building managers since KPC formed in 1996. Helen managed KPC from 1996 to 2008; the period after she left was very chaotic, according to interviews, with the artists who rented studios at KPC running the building without support or proper management:

As someone who has been in the building since Helen Kyle was here. As some of you may know we went through some very difficult times after Helen left. (Richard)

The heavy reliance on one individual at KPC, on Helen in the past and since 2009 Lindsay, highlights that, even when an organisation is collectively run, it ultimately often falls on the shoulders of one person.

From my ethnographic research and from knowing Helen and Lindsay, it is clear that their role at KPC was instrumental beyond the remit of any normal 'building manager' job description. Their perseverance and competence is not to be overlooked – both Lindsay and Helen are clearly skilled individuals, the range of tasks they perform(ed) within the organisation being practically and, especially, socially diverse: from constructing unified visions for KPC that build collective identity and solidarity, to galvanizing a critical mass of supporters, developing a strategic capacity for innovation, adaptation and learning, and creating alliances and networks of social cooperation that help to sustain an alternative model (Vail and Hollands, 2013:560). These unquantifiable tasks are essential to the job of building manager at KPC. Whilst not measurable in monetary capital, these are forms of embodied capital that allow individuals to produce KPC effectively. Authors have described key individuals in political movements as 'imagineers'; to which social capital accrues by virtue of their networking abilities (Routledge and Cumbers, 2009:64). Their existing social networks are utilised alongside new social vectors that are constantly under construction at KPC, and are essential for its survival. However, the sustainability of this model; for autonomous spaces like KPC is questionable, as too much reliance and pressure

on one individual has detrimental effects, as exemplified through Helen and Lindsay's experiences.

When I spoke to other volunteers at KPC about the leadership role that the building manager is required to take on, Jonathan saw trends with other grassroots organisations. He described how often all the power ends up in the hands of one individual:

It's interesting, though, for me, having been involved in some other types of community projects in Glasgow, I recognise it in other organisations. Like this, you know, there's like all this work and no one's getting paid for it. So one person ends up taking it on as a sort of 'heroic task' and then they come to the front and don't realise that they are wielding all the power. Like, it just happens again and again. I can give you two or three examples in Glasgow that are like very, very similar, and even funny examples when the people who are like that in those organisations meet up and they hate each other, partly because they recognise that they are both like that! (Jonathan)

The feminist critique of self-organisation and structurelessness, that it often leads to a tyranny (Freeman, 2013), can be an important reason behind the alienation of some individuals in small grassroots organisations. This is for various practical reasons, such as only one person having enough free time, or fewer outside commitments, or relationships than others do. Nevertheless, importantly, it notes that any organisation is not structure or hierarchy-free (ibid). It is problematic to assume that grassroots organisations are all inherently egalitarian. 'A "laissez faire" group is about as realistic as a "laissez faire" society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others' (Freeman, 2013:232). Autonomous spaces such as KPC are also emergent and always under social construction (Chatterton et al, 2010, Sen 2010, Massey, 2005). Therefore, to keep them organised in a collective fashion requires effort in itself. It is easy to see how one person ends up wielding all 'the power' in a community organisation, especially as community work is often tied to identity politics. Community is a designator for a range of professions: community planning, community architecture, community education, community arts, community development and so on (Newman, 2012:42). The identity that people construct around their employment is an important factor to consider, as the reasons behind this form of community work are often not monetary, but personal and emotional.

From interviews with Lindsay, he explained how he had to put his political work aside to do the practical work at KPC, thus he felt he was facilitating others rather than engaging in politics personally. For example, there have been, and are, many individual organisations and groups which use the space of KPC. Artists rent studios and produce their own work from those studios, and other groups use the halls to carry out their direct work in the community, and thus the building manager becomes the janitor rather than the community leader as they would perhaps like to be recognised. This recognition is important and justified in many ways; the financial reward for the job of building manager at KPC is disproportionately smaller than the huge amount of labour involved in this role. Lindsay and Helen essentially ended up carrying out the social reproduction of the space, whilst those within the space carry out the observable and rewarding productive labour in the form of community work.

In 2008, Helen decided to hand over the running of the centre to the artists who were tenants of the studios upstairs at the time, following a conflict between different user groups who were using the centre at that time. I asked Helen about why she eventually moved on and she said she felt that her voice was no longer necessary at KPC:

It's a hard line to make a decision as to when it's time to move on, when your voice is no longer necessary, It took me thirteen years to go through that process at KPC, I'm actually not needed here any more, KPC will probably flourish in a different way, but it will flourish. You have to say right, it's time for you to move on now. Basically community development is about working yourself out of a job. (Helen)

Helen's moving away from KPC was essentially her stepping down from her job as the manager of the community centre. From this quote she clearly sees her 'job' as 'community development'. But there is also a clear sense that she saw this as far more than a job, since she states here that she was no longer needed at KPC. But, of course, she was needed; the centre still needed her to run it in a functional sense, but it was clear from my interview that she wanted KPC to need her for something beyond practical labour. It seems that at the point where she left KPC, the emotional drivers for her to give her labour at KPC were no longer there. However, the centre needed somebody to run it and there were still groups who required the space beyond the artists who rented the studios. Helen explained how the project seemed to consume her emotional energy, which is required to

carry out a 'labour of love' for over 13 years (Hochschild, 1979). This is a very negative but understandable position from Helen, which makes us question the generic framing of community development as a creative, rewarding, socially useful and sustainable form of work.

This provides evidence for the overarching contemporary concern that this form of unseen and unpaid, mundane and emotional labour performed by people like Helen and Lindsay is what propels and facilitates, and mitigates the negative effects of the capitalist system. Furthermore, in somewhere like KPC, this problem is self-perpetuating; the busier the building gets, the more that Lindsay and Helen have to do to maintain the upkeep, and the more pressure to provide for the community in terms of keeping this facility going. A negative feedback loop of stress and pressure without any personal monetary gain occurs, hidden from view. So it does become a heroic task. These problems also have acute effects on people running them, as this kind of emotional labour 'calls for a coordination of the mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a sense of self that we honour as deep and integral to our individuality' (Hochschild, 1983:7). I put this emotional form of labour into question in the next section.

#### **7.4 Community development spirit: emotional labour**

You're relying on people to give their own time in return for the benefits of emotional labour; they are giving support to run a space and also taking self-satisfaction in doing that – and it's a really complicated issue. (Dez)

Ethnographic observations and interviews with people at KPC showed that this labour is not carried out for the wealth it produces for the individual, even though it may produce abstract forms of wealth like 'social capital' or 'value' in the community. The work done by the volunteers and building manager is carried out for the common good of the community more generally. This meant that for those involved in socially reproducing KPC, there was a certain amount of emotional labour involved. Hochschild (1983) first described emotional labour as a type of labour where 'one is required to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (ibid:7). This understanding suggests that the individual must synthesise an emotion in order to sustain an outward façade for the benefit of others. However, having worked at KPC, it is clear that there is a genuine emotional connection or feeling of

responsibility to, or with, the community, or a form of solidarity that is drawn upon as inspiration to perform labour there. This solidarity makes social and political claims that go beyond a notion of citizenship in government discourse (Pratt, 2005). I noticed such forms of solidarity in many observations and interviews with volunteers at KPC from 1996 and from the current manager, Lindsay Keenan, and the volunteers. Whilst emotional labour is hard to quantify, this section aims to bring to light the subjectivities that drive people's ambition to labour in and for the community. Interviews with Helen, the building manager at KPC from 1996 to 2008, showed that as a woman and resident of the local vicinity she had a deep connection to KPC. In another interview with Stasia, another woman who was involved in the sit-in, she described how 'Helen had a bind to the centre that was far deeper than the sit-in'. In interviews with Helen, it was clear that there was an emotional drive or 'community development spirit', as she describes it, which prompted her to drive the campaign to save the community centre.

Most of the people that were using that were young mums who had after school facilities, youth work, football clubs, you know all things they wanted for their children out of our school... So lo' and behold the community development spirit arose again, and they asked is there anything we could do... So basically we organised a committee of the people who used the centre. (Helen)

Helen's organising skills were of use to the community and she successfully adopted a brokering role between the community and the politicians, performing an 'oppositional politics of obligation' (Staeheli, 2013). Very early on in the interview, Helen began to talk about the drivers for being involved in community development:

That's a key thing about any community development, people will get involved if there's a vested interest for them and I'm not talking financially, I'm talking what's in this for me? Are my wains gonna be alright? Will my mum and dad be alright? What is it I need here? In a sense I went back to being an issue-based worker, because the issue was that that building was being closed down and the difference was the people weren't cajoled into taking part, they wanted to take part. (Helen)

These reasons for participation, obligation or taking responsibility evoke 'ethics of care' in citizenship (Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Lawson 2007). Helen's notion of citizenship articulates concerns regarding social reproduction and the day-to-day wellbeing of family and friends

in your community. Importantly, Helen's notion of citizenship is generated and articulated from below, rather than imposed from above by government objectives. These drivers are arguably the basis of a progressive localism, where people are not 'cajoled into taking part', as Helen put it. Such progressive citizenship attributes agency to the community, who hold the state to account; to challenge and make claims on the state based on their own ethics of care in order to retain a community resource that they feel is important to their social reproduction (Fraser, 2013).

### **7.5 Paid Employment at KPC: 'making it up as we go along'**

KPC does not have staff as such. We have contracted workers who are self-employed. That is a conscious decision based on the fact that we have been creating work as we have developed and that work has been created on a week to week, month to month, quarter by quarter basis. For example, we started by paying for 5 hours a week for the building manager role in 2011, on the basis that, if that generated sufficient income, it would continue and could grow accordingly, which it has, but there has never been and still isn't any guarantee past the next quarter's results. (Lindsay)

After 2011 the building became busier and generated more income. This allowed Lindsay to take on more official paid hours and employ a treasurer (Colin, an artist who rents a studio at KPC). In January 2012, Emily Roff joined, to help Lindsay with 'admin' and to organise events at KPC. Emily began to work at KPC informally to begin with, and then she was contracted to 16 hours per week as halls and events co-ordinator. The labour carried out by Emily was integral to the building in terms of the social and cultural capital it generated for KPC, as she put on large public music events that achieved a big audience and notable success from reviewers (The List, 2012). As discussed in the previous chapter, the different views that Emily and Lindsay held about the way that the space should run lead to some tensions between them. The huge workload with which they were faced also intensified this, along with the unstructured division of labour and undefined work roles.

Colin, Emily and I, as board members, now formed a working exec. There was never enough clarity or firm job description for Emily's role. It was assumed she would focus on bringing in large scale events and otherwise muck in and that she and I

would simply work together as equals, though with the reality that I had far more responsibilities. (Lindsay – written in his Big Update)

During an interview with Emily, after she had resigned from her position, she also mentioned the informality of working on a small community project where her role was not clear:

There was no job description, there was really no set way of doing anything, I had to figure out how to do it. Some things were in place, but the number of hall hires per week went up really really dramatically, we needed a new set of systems, which I just organised according to my logic...(Emily)

Emily's difficulties at KPC are stated above and point to the fundamental tension of trying to run an organisation without any guaranteed funds or established protocols, for staff or day-to-day running. The unstructured nature of autonomous spaces 'gives them their creativity, but it also means they are deeply ambiguous, unwieldy and often dangerous' (Chatterton et al, 2010:901). This danger was perceived by Emily in her very ambiguous role.

There was no guidance and no help, there was no kind of structure to it. But there was this sense of expectations, and if you got things wrong, you were in trouble. So I had a boss but he wasn't really my boss, it was actually pretty hard to tell, as there's no rule book or set of practices established I just did what felt right and sometimes it would turn out that I'd done something really wrong. (Emily)

There was clearly a huge amount of pressure on Lindsay and Emily, and the community centre continued to get busier. Both Lindsay and Emily shared the community development spirit, but the point here is that community spirit is not enough to sustain spaces like KPC alone. The amount of tangible and mundane labour required to run the space places pressures on those in charge, which can be overwhelming and have negative social impacts. As Sen points out, open-space organising is open space 'only if it is socially constituted' (Sen, 2010:1014), which takes a certain amount of time and organisational reflexivity to achieve. Lindsay often mentioned that he needed to make decisions quickly because of time pressures and workload. The community centre is continuously running, and so there is little time for political debates that Emily might have

preferred. This issue came to a head in a recent conflict amongst some of the board members. In this debate, via email, Lindsay explained some of the ways that he felt that he had to make decisions:

If the timetable is tight and a relatively fast decision is called for in order to not lose the opportunity do I have the remit to take a decision? Or don't I? Is this a decision that needs referred to the entire board or just to the exec (i.e. currently me and Nadia)? Does it need a unanimous decision or would a majority suffice? If the feedback suggested that a few people would like to take more time to discuss the matter more, then unless that discussion can happen very quickly that will be the same as them saying NO. If I don't get feedback from everyone, how many do I need feedback from in order to take a decision? Or do I exercise my good judgement and if in doubt rather take the risk of saying yes and trying to win this grant and support these groups and then work out the details if successful or do I rather play internally more politically safe and say no sorry we cant support this right now?' (Lindsay, board emails)

This meant that he ended up taking executive decisions, which caused friction between him and Emily. Again, the structureless nature of the organisation prompted this, and the time constraints and financial pressures force people like Lindsay to make the majority of decisions, once again confirming the idea that horizontality and openness has to be socially constituted (Sen, 2010) in order actually to exist in autonomous spaces. 'As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules' (Freeman, 2013:232).

This extract clearly exemplifies the pressure and frustration Lindsay is under as building manager. Whilst there are others around him who can contribute to decision-making, he was often the one with the ultimate say in a matter. Emily became frustrated about being micro-managed, and Lindsay become more and more dominant; this eventually led to Emily and Lindsay coming into conflict, so Emily eventually left her paid position and then later also resigned from the committee. The main reasons for this were her concerns over the management structure and inactivity from the board, and a conflict surrounding the nature of volunteering and funding, but we can also link in the broader pressures mentioned above. It shows how the space is socially constituted, and so with these broader, structural pressures influencing social relations, independent spaces like KPC can be put

under immense strain. These pressures should make us consider the austere economic conditions that third sector organisations must survive in because of the effects that they impose on social relations.

## **7.6 Professionalisation of volunteering at KPC**

In the previous chapter, I described the busy period after Emily left KPC when Lindsay was solely in charge of management; I continued to volunteer through this period alongside Michael and Liam. Whilst we were aware of the friction between Emily and Lindsay, we remained loyal to the building and our overarching desire to keep KPC open. During this period, GCC also sent KPC the eviction notice that placed even more pressure on KPC. The previous chapter also mentions the introduction of the Voluntary Action fund and the controversy this caused amongst people at KPC because of divergent ideological visions for the space. However, this chapter develops this point to discuss the implications that the introduction of this fund had for the division of labour and volunteering at KPC. It contributes to this debate by linking political subjectivity with emotions and the effects that these things have on volunteer labour.

...We also had to have a meeting today regarding the moves forward for KPC following the eviction notice from the council. We were also to meet a new person, Ammie. We had heard Lindsay mention Ammie in passing saying that she was really keen to get involved. We were introduced to Ammie for the first time and had a meeting, there was a good atmosphere; everybody seemed to be anticipating pulling together for the potential upcoming battle with the council. Ammie then put forward a possibility for funding called the Voluntary Action Fund. This is a fund of £10,000 available to small and medium-sized community organizations to promote volunteering amongst certain groups, e.g. BME. Not sure if we should be accepting funding with all these strings attached, it infringes on the autonomy of KPC plus I don't want to be managed by a volunteer co-ordinator as we were managing fine without one. (Me, field notes)

The other volunteers shared these feelings; and agreed that it enrolled KPC into a more coercive form of state welfarism, which ultimately reduced the autonomy of KPC. The fund brought in £10,000, but over £5,000 would be spent on Ammie's wages, the agreement being, that she would be paid for 16 hours per week for 12 months (ending June

2014) at £7 per hour. The remaining money from the fund was to be spent on volunteer resources and expenses. Her role was to bring in 'hard to reach groups'; this was black, minority and ethnic groups, people with a physical disability, young people at risk of offending, people with a learning disability, people affected by homelessness, etc. (Voluntary Action Fund website, 2013). Ammie was also going to formalise the volunteering at KPC, through assigning specific hours and roles to people according to what needed to be completed. It also raised concern amongst the existing board members and volunteers (myself included) that we were being incorporated into a shadow state apparatus that paid someone a wage to manage us and formalised something that we self-organised previously. 'As organisations professionalise, they increasingly seek to recruit 'targeted volunteers' whose networks can facilitate access to key funders and policy-makers' (Fyfe and Milligan, 2005:431). This can have an alienating and disempowering effect on the community and actually inform passive forms of citizenship rather than active or progressive forms.

The Voluntary Action fund application had wider implications for the running of the building as a whole and would have an impact on existing volunteers who had not been consulted about it (Simon)

We based a broader critique on the idea of rejecting the subjectification by the state: through signing up to the VAF we were making people who use the building into subjects, based on their identity. This links into the previous chapter where we saw the local community at KPC become subjects, with Nicole's Dance school fetishised and utilised as representative of the local community. For me, the VAF was an even more formalised version of this subjectification, not to mention those the reasons behind it were to gain funds, which were not distributed in a way that would benefit KPC collectively. This debate caused a divide at KPC, between those who saw the space as autonomous and political in how KPC should function, with a prefigurative politics in mind, and those who saw the space as a pragmatic community space and were happy for that to fit into current government agendas. This meant that autonomy became 'a site of political struggle over what it could possibly mean in practice' (Böhm et al, 2010:27). For example, Ammie saw the connections with outside funders as something that was productive at KPC:

It's about always keeping accessible and driving equality and diversity and some groups are harder to reach than others, and certainly with black and minority and

ethnic groups, they are harder to reach and harder to bring into services, and a lot of the funding at the moment is hinged on that, because they are hard to reach, but because of the community that we are in we should be taking that step because we have a wide Asian population. (Ammie)

Ammie's aim was to have a career in community development; this clearly shows the professionalisation of caring roles in the community, as this role is now seen as an aspirational career for people. This contrasts with others in the building who see the community development at KPC as something more organic, rather than the sort of top-down community development discussed in government rhetoric.

I attended a meeting with Ammie in her new role as volunteer coordinator. It felt strange to be formalising something that already seemed to work quite well. The thing I enjoyed as a volunteer was the unstructured nature of it, as it always seemed fun and felt like we were a group of friends meeting up to help out, rather than to do a specific job, with a line manager. Ammie was keen to put me in the diary for specific hours and days, asking me how much time I had available. The old times where we just showed up and got our overalls on seemed like a thing of the past and it felt like this was a definitive step in a professional direction; it changed my attitude to the volunteering at KPC considerably. It felt like my autonomy as a volunteer and KPC's autonomy as an organization was fading. For me, this took away some of the radical aspirations out of the project. I interviewed some of the volunteers following these events and we recognised these feelings in other instances, and experiences, which allowed us, collectively, to explore a critical perspective on voluntary work and activism. Most obviously, the introduction of Ammie's position created a division between the paid volunteer co-coordinator and unpaid volunteers. In many ways, the work already performed by the volunteers became undermined.

Working for a wage reduces work's purpose to an empty, abstract monetary reward. Work done for its own sake is fundamentally different. Defined by the person doing it, deemed good and necessary on its social and/or ecological (rather than financial) merits, un-waged work fulfils and confirms a multidimensional sensibility, providing a whole range of feelings and experiences beyond the narrow instrumentalism of work for money. (Carlsson and Manning, 2010:949).

Whilst there is labour that should be paid at KPC, how this paid labour is structured impacts upon groups differently. Introducing a level of management above the volunteers called our competency to self-organise into question, took away the autonomy of the volunteers and formalised the labour. This had negative effects on us all; many people have since drifted away.

### **7.7 The politics of collaborative funding**

Play schemes have been running from KPC since 1996, and various people have run these projects with different funding sources. Since I began at KPC there has been a play scheme with the same children, and I have followed the progression of this integral project at KPC closely, having worked at the play scheme at Easter and during the summer of 2013. The play scheme has also had its fair share of pressures and conflicts, both interpersonal and economic. The play scheme not only provides an important child care facility for local families, it also employs youth workers and artists at KPC. The play scheme at KPC consisted of a group of around 30 children between the ages of five and ten during school holidays. It had a core staff of three and set up a programme of activities for the children each day between 10-3pm. This group used KPC as the base of the play scheme; the children arrived and were picked up from KPC every day and the main gym hall was used as their base. The scheme is purposely aimed at children from low income and 'difficult' backgrounds from the local geographical vicinity; the organisers' handpicked the children according to these criteria. The scheme cost parents very little, a £10 contribution (or whatever their guardians could afford to pay). Many of the children's parents suffered with substance addiction, while some children were abandoned when they were very young and were brought up by other family members, and some were from asylum-seeking families. The play scheme provided these children with two weeks of sports, arts and crafts, and trips out to the park, soft play centre and cinema. From my experience, the children were all incredibly enthusiastic, well behaved and positive about the play scheme; they clearly enjoyed it and all the members of staff were a great source of energy and guidance for the young people, and no doubt provided a great respite to the children's parents.

After the success of the play scheme in the Easter holidays, Michael, the coordinator, was no longer available to run the programme again in the summer. So he passed the task on to his colleague Lynn, who had the contacts with the parents and children. She applied for the

funding for a new play scheme from the local authority. The funding that they had been receiving had been steadily decreasing and the council returned with a figure of £1,000, to carry out a 6-week programme for 30 children with three staff, due to budget cuts from higher up. This was presented as non-negotiable, as 'take it or leave it', from the local authority. Due to this incredibly small amount of money, the programme did not get off the ground, as it would fail to pay even the staffing costs, let alone to provide a good service for the children and parents. In turn, this affected KPC, as it would not receive the hall booking for this period to provide the space for this local group who initially used KPC due to its low cost and flexibility.

It is difficult because you juggle money, to try and give the kids the best experience, you try not to get it boring for them, you have to rob Peter to pay Paul then you have to rob Paul to pay Peter, we are constantly on the phone, like 'its us, can you do us a favour, we've got thirty kids, can you knock a bit of price off', sometimes they go for it sometimes they don't. (Lynn)

Lynn eventually managed to find other funding of £6,000 from Riverside Community Centre, a community centre based in Govan, around one mile away from KPC and funded by the Central Govan Action Plan, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Housing Association, and Community Land Trust. Three artists who rent studios at KPC, Nadia, Ruby and Jenny also collaborated with Lynn to find a further £10,000 from a Big Lottery Communities and Families Fund. Together, they designed a new programme of arts activities for play scheme during summer 2013. The funds enabled them to organise a programme, employ a rota of seven staff, including myself, with a budget of £16,000. The programme involved arts, sports, day trips and creative learning activities, for the group of around 30-35 children every weekday between 10-3pm. The grant fully covered all the costs of the programme, from staff to materials to transport for the staff and children. This meant that the parents no longer had to pay the voluntary contribution of £10. This project involved a large sum of money and was valuable to those employed in it, as well as the local parents and children. For this reason, there were various stakes in the project. Lynn, a 39 year old women, came from a childcare and youth work background and had formed the original play scheme, so had the contacts with the parents and children. Some of the parents were friends and she had known the children for a few years from these previous play schemes. For Lynn, the relationships she had built over years with the children allowed her to do her job well, as the children knew and trusted her:

I remember one day in Pollock Park last year and a dialogue opened up between myself and a group of about five of the boys, it started about knife crime, and gangs, we sat under the tree and we talked for a good hour about territorialism, about knives, touched on drugs... and these are kids of ten. They obviously trusted me enough that they could open up and that's because of me working with them for years, and when you're a community youth worker that's where your job starts to kick in. It takes a while to build that up that trust, and when this dialogue opens up you can get through to them... There has to be consistency. If there's constant change in a child's life, if there are constantly new faces, that's no good, but actually knowing the kids opens avenues not only now when they're 8 but when they are 16 they might come to you. And it also builds trust with parents. (Lynn)

For the artists, Nadia, Jenny and Ruby, this was the first time that they had organised a play scheme, although they had some experience from working on community arts projects and applying for grants in this area, as explained in the previous section. However, this working relationship had underlying power dynamics, and the competitive nature of obtaining grants set an uneven basis for Lynn, who felt that she was only valued for social contacts and the monetary contribution that she brought to the project: 'I was paid lip service because I brought in £6,000 but because they brought in £10,000 they were pulling the stops' (Lynn). The artists paid themselves £20 per hour and the youth workers were paid £10 per hour; these rates were just created ad hoc and not based on any benchmark. The project was to be arts oriented, with the artists delivering specialist activities. This created divisions between the play scheme employees; Lynn was also unhappy about this and so were the artists who felt they were carrying out more youth work than arts work:

It was frustrating to see the money and see how much they were paying themselves, there are strict rules through Riverside funding – there's only so much I can spend on wages and nothing on food - the Lottery money's more flexible... Like there were four artists and two youth workers and there should have been four youth workers and two artists... they [the artists] were like 'oh we feel like we are doing the youth worker's job', and I was like yeah that's coz you are. (Lynn)

The autonomy given to the group to decide the portion of the grant spent on wages presented divisions and conflicts. As Lynn states above, the Riverside money from the

local authority has strict rules attached to the division of the grant whereas Lottery funding is more flexible. 'The grant system makes its decisions in the shadows, if not in secret' (Wainwright, 2003:106); the grant economy is 'better than nothing, but it stifles the debate about allocation of public resources and about how to raise these resources' (ibid, 107). This means that deeply political issues about priorities for limited resources 'become administrative decisions and different sections of the population are propelled into positions of competition with one another, rather than collaboration or open debate' (ibid, 107). This presents a problematic situation in trying to make this funding benefit the community, as it does so through paying wages and through providing the children with a rewarding play scheme, but which of these benefits are prioritised is up to the individuals running the programme. In a situation such as this one, with two sources of funding coming from different groups, the negotiation was heated and power dynamics came into play. In our interview, Lynn described a moment of conflict that arose in discussion about taking the children to the cinema. There were clear divisions in the ideas that she had with the three artists:

I think there are egos here, to be honest the egos have to be lost, this is about the children, these kids in this community and giving them positive experiences. I remember one day I was sort of scoffed at because I wanted to take them to the cinema, and they were like 'oh you wanna take kids to the cinema?' I was like yeah...well for some of these kids this is the only chance they'll get to go to the cinema, some of these kids' homes are chaos through drug abuse, alcohol abuse, domestic abuse. Some of the kids have been abandoned, been through the care system, bereavement, and these children are all under ten! (Lynn)

Lynn felt aggrieved after working alongside some of the artists at KPC, and she told me that next year she would be setting up her own play scheme as an independent Community Interest Company, she stated that they would not necessarily use KPC as a space, but would perhaps find a cheaper one through the council elsewhere.

I felt that money was wasted because, for me, if I had £16,000, I could have done a much bigger project, I could have had much more children, I could have split it into two age groups, I could have employed more people. It was difficult; I just felt that kids didn't get the benefit of £16,000. Again, it's community politics where it's different community groups trying to work together, and against each other, or

there's a hierarchy, one over the other, its frustrating, I find it really frustrating!  
(Lynn)

The feeling of competition that Lynn felt at KPC was shame. Furthermore, she said that she found it stressful trying to obtain grants and that the Local Authority had offered to seek grants for next year's play scheme on her behalf. Lynn's experience shows how throwing together different actors in a space like KPC is not always positive or productive. There are clear tensions that arise when community work is carried out, as this process often involves money and people's livelihoods. It is also clear that there are external pressures that are exacerbating competition between community groups and how these groups have to adopt increasingly competitive and individual modes of working. However, this example clearly shows the agency of local people, which chimes with Wainwright's assertion that:

When there is a chance of having a real influence over the allocation of resources, a real chance to improve the quality of life of a neighbourhood, and when people are aware of it and are at least half convinced that it could make a difference, then they engage. (Wainwright, 2003:109)

### **7.8 Dark Spaces of Activism**

At certain moments the gulf between hoped-for ideals and actual lived reality can appear huge and confounding for participants, and the more oppositional and utopian the spaces and activities, the greater and more difficult these border crossings become. (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010 et al:484)

The work that goes on at KPC traverses the fields of activism and more mainstream forms of volunteering, combining pragmatism and idealism, community and politics. However, the darker sides to this work were disillusionment, personal conflicts and disempowerment, some of which have been described earlier. We often overlook these aspects of community in favour of painting a positive picture; however, this section looks at some of the realities of the volunteer labour at KPC.

I have a friend who was burned out by an organisation, which is really typical of how horrible a social campaign can become for people who are deeply involved with it.

Like, he said ‘you know at least when you go into a bank you know you’re gonna get screwed over’, when you go into a community association or a campaign you expect things to be really nice and collectively orientated, but unfortunately there is this huge exodus of young people who have gotten deeply involved and then burnt out, erm by having really negative experiences. This dominant culture can exist in organisations, and from my experience it exists in many of them. People give so much then they feel like there’s too many fucked up things going on. A lot of social campaigns and NGOs, underneath the structure, can be extremely dark spaces for people who give an awful lot through volunteering and become really disillusioned and end up moving away from social change at the grass roots level. I think most of my friends have experienced burnout, which is very common for activists or volunteers. People need to create spaces where people can grow like, so it’s also mutually beneficial, it’s not just like this white saviour complex (Dez)

This quote gets to the heart of the ‘(im)possibility of full autonomy’ (Böhm et al, 2010; Holloway, 2002; Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; Chatterton et al, 2010). It begs the question of how we do autonomy in a practical way, which does not reproduce exploitative social relations and new forms of alienation. Rather, maybe we could think of autonomy as ‘a tendency, a partially fulfilled desire that is fought for and struggled over’ (Chatterton et al, 2010:899). This has been evident at KPC since 1996. The trajectory of the space shows how autonomy and general organisational structure is something that is constantly being negotiated (and re-negotiated) within the broader political and economic context of crisis, austerity, grants and social contexts of the everyday lives of those involved. All of these aspects are connected. It also suggests that waged jobs can ‘no longer be assumed to define us’, that they are not the primary basis for politics, which is in precisely line with Rancière’s thesis in *Proletarian Nights* (1989). ‘Because so many people find their work lives inadequate, incomplete, degrading, pointless, stupid and oppressive, they form identities and communities outside of paid work— in spaces where they are not working class’ (Carlsson and Manning, 2010:925).

There’s a period I associate quite strongly with KPC, where I was trying to do a lot of shit. Like I just wanted to help out with a bunch of stuff and then KPC was part of the thing that made me realise that isn’t helpful. You can end up doing lots of stuff

quite badly and actually make things worse. It's true with things like Unity<sup>9</sup> and it's true with things like Westgap and it's true with things like KPC. The importance of doing them isn't just to make them function, the importance of doing them is to make them function but also make them be able to spread why they are absolutely fucked because of the way society is set up. Unity is an unpaid labour force that mitigates the main effects of asylum seeker policy in the UK, you know, if it was to work well for me, and yeah it should do that shit so it can speak with authority and stuff, but it also needs to produce criticisms of that policy and that way of organising society. It's true of Westgap, it materially improves people's conditions to get housing benefit sorted or to deal with debt stuff, but if you just do that you are just mitigating the main worst effects of the thing, it needs to be allied to this critique of the whole thing. (Jonathan, volunteer at KPC)

When volunteers like Jonathan attached a deep political subjectivity to their volunteer labour at KPC, it becomes problematic if KPC fails to function in the idealistic way that someone envisages, and often this results in burnout (Haiven and Khasnabish, 2014). Therefore, having a more realistic sense of how an organisation like KPC can deliver radical political agendas is more useful than a pre-figurative political stance, which risks a deep sense of disillusionment and burn out, as described above. This suggests that autonomy needs a lot more planning and collective understanding and discussion of what it means to be an autonomously run space. Organisations like KPC develop organically, where rules about practice simply emerge over time, instead of being set out clearly and democratically. It is often very difficult to carry out the 'dirty, real work of activism that expresses a pragmatic 'get on with it', an antagonistic 'no', and a hopeful 'yes'' (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010:476). These three things are very difficult to carry out all at once, as shown at KPC. This can be very damaging to activists.

KPC is a good example of if you've done all this for free and then if it feels like its gone pear-shaped how damaging that can be as well? Because all those hours you've put in...I think of like 'maybe I'll learn something?', but at the same time fuck it, that's shit. (Jonathan)

Furthermore, Jonathan found it problematic to describe himself as 'an activist'

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<sup>9</sup> The Unity Centre is a charity that gives practical support and solidarity to all asylum seekers and other migrants in Scotland, based in Glasgow.

I don't like this word activist, I just don't think of myself in those terms, because I think it's a particular erm identity... well for me it relates to being a hippy and I hate hippies because I'm a punk haha! But it's easy to fall into that mould of thinking that you as an individual can deal with the problems that exist in society and you can't; you will work for free, all the hours of the day. Increasingly, I think that, I'm going from that to a point where you don't engage you just sit in some room by yourself because there's no outside either way. For me, KPC has been really illuminating about this need to be involved in stuff. (Jonathan)

This self-critique is also an attempt 'to transform activism into a more accessible set of practices and politics that can resonate and influence the political mainstream rather than existing on the political fringe' (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010:480). In other discussions with Jonathan about activism, we both agreed that 'the self-sacrifice of the militant or the activist is mirrored in their power over others as an expert' (Anonymous, Do or Die 1999). Although Jonathan refrains from identifying as an activist, he is very political person. He makes the critique that the work that goes on at KPC should be funded.

The basic argument about having to work for free and, if you put in all this unpaid work for something, not only are you getting exploited as you are not getting paid for what I think should be provided. A lot of people are volunteering and it's ridiculous that they are not getting paid, it's ridiculous that that's the only way to do it, given the way society is organised is with unpaid labour. (Jonathan)

This shows how, more positively, volunteering experiences do provide us with a deep understanding about the ways that an organisation functions and produce deconstructive and critical volunteer perspectives that 'reveal power structures and inequalities and thus potentially create the conditions of their own critique, thus making their innocent performance impossible' (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2012:393). Illustrated through Jonathans' agonising experience, he described how:

It does make me think about it, coz I think there are these more general questions about what you can do, given how things are right now, are so at the forefront of my mind right now partly because of the kind of work I've ended up going into now. I worked shitty jobs for years then like volunteered and stuff and got jobs and stuff,

and that stuff is the kind of thing where when you say that to people what you do and they say ‘oh that must be so rewarding’, ‘oh you’re making a difference’, but the perspective of doing that and from the other people who work in it are, like, lots of these things just do fuck-all, because the bases are so loaded, these kind of reformist things, there are big questions about whether its worth doing or what you can expect to achieve. (Jonathan)

## **7.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the labour that goes into producing KPC as a community facility. I have focussed on the hidden, precarious, pressurised and mundane nature of this labour and touched upon the negative social effects that this has on people at KPC. It argues that, while participation in non-profits is articulated as gift-exchange, such exchange is not external to for-profit economic exchange, but rather is a supplement to such economic exchange. Therefore, I have presented the labour carried out at KPC as concrete and tangible, multifarious in its nature; from mundane labour such as cleaning and fixing and maintenance, to emotional labour that takes its toll on social relations inside the building.

This chapter has emphasised how state withdrawal has forced the community at KPC to be resourceful in the face of reduced funding and services and how this is something from which the state, wider community and society more generally benefits, despite it being carried out outside the normal sphere of production. Volunteers carry out much of the work at KPC and many of the earlier volunteers, and those who protested, occupied and managed the building, were women. This is supporting the argument that, as the state reduces, the impact upon women is often disproportionate to men, as women are still the ones who must pick up the slack in terms of performing the increased social reproductive labour; such as childcare and caring duties more generally. KPC is a space where tangible social reproductive labour is carried out through facilities such as the play scheme, which politicises the work that goes on at KPC and those who carry it out.

For those who believe the struggle in the social factory is not political let them note that here, more than in the factory, is the state directly the organiser of the life of the worker, especially if she is a woman, and so here the worker confronts the state more

directly, without intervention of the individual capitalists and the mediation of trade unions. (Dalla Costa and James, 1972: 20, footnote 7).

Finally, this quote above situates the community and community spaces like KPC not only as places of tangible, unpaid social reproductive labour; but importantly, of struggle. KPC must confront the state directly and without mediation – as the state remains the owner of the building, so KPC negotiates its precarious position as a quasi-autonomous space that facilitates a complex network of civil society groups. These groups undergo processes of reworking, resistance and resilience (Katz, 2004), to survive in, against and beyond the current system (Cumbers, 2015). In many respects, the language used by activists and service providers echoes the language of many government officials and politicians, who also make arguments about responsibility and community (Stacheli, 2013:522). However, understandings and practices of volunteering are capricious; they alter over time and in different contexts – which has been evident at KPC, as was discussed in this chapter. Many volunteers and paid workers at KPC also see themselves as activists and relish the autonomy of KPC, but as KPC has developed, it has actively shaped experiences of volunteering, work and activism within the space.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has explored the interaction between space, politics and the community, by focussing on a case study of an independently run community centre in Glasgow. One of KPC's most integral qualities is its ability to evolve over time whilst remaining true to its founding ethos and this has been a key finding during my time at the community centre. This thesis is not a nostalgic examination of a past utopia; it is a discussion of a space that remains dynamic today through a refusal to be politically, economically and socially categorised. Thus, KPC is not presented as a 'static slice through time' (Massey, 2005); instead, I have described the evolution of a space that has been in constant flux since 1996. A primary contribution of this thesis is to foreground the contestation of neoliberal urbanism, through a community space, in a grounded way that takes into account all its tensions, problems and possibilities over time. At KPC, there is a constant stream of people attracted to this relational space in Glasgow, who are willing to perform volunteer and low paid labour to maintain the space. This turnover of people is one of the main reasons that the space has evolved and remained over time. These roles or forms of employment, albeit precarious, temporary and low paid, are essential to the survival of this public space based in an economically deprived area.

Despite the seemingly insecure situation that KPC has found itself in since 1996, people at KPC have retained an awareness of their complex relationship to the state. Thus, I have presented them as dynamic political subjects rather than passive victims of structural violence. KPC shows us that there is no ideal political subject, or indeed subjectivity, in line with Rancière's thesis. However, people are not free agents; but affected by histories and structures both personally and collectively, as suggested in Bourdieu's theory. When people are thrown together, differences become illuminated; I have shown how diverse articulations of politics are evident in a physical social space, whilst acknowledging how these collisions also generate new political subjectivities and unusual solidarities between very different people.

Using Rancière alongside Bourdieu has formed a central theoretical contribution of the thesis. Using their theories, I have analysed complex empirical realities, which demonstrate the validity of both a structural and poststructural analysis, highlighting how both perspectives can be brought together productively to help understand the prospects for progressive localism and autonomous community politics. Furthermore, the disagreement

between Rancière and Bourdieu echoes the contradictory and conflictual nature of real life at KPC. In independently run community spaces such as KPC, it is possible to observe both structures and agency, and the entanglements between both articulations of politics. Massey's intervention in this debate has also been essential in contextualizing and grounding the theoretical tension. This thesis showed the 'nitty-gritty' of community politics, focusing on how people are shaped by community struggles and this is how differences can be reconciled in physical space. Thus, Massey's ideas inspired a relational and generative lens through which to see KPC as hopeful space.

This concluding chapter pulls together key aspects of the thesis around three overarching themes, ending with an account of the current situation at KPC. Firstly, focusing on the contribution of this thesis, to debates on the role of the state. Secondly, the contribution to the concept of throwntogetherness, by grounding it in a particular setting I was able to carry out a focused analysis of social practices, to help produce a deeper understanding of how social practices bear upon, and are informed by, broader social relations. Finally, this thesis provides an account of the social and economic impacts of austerity in a particular space, to show that austerity is not a new project.

### **8.1 Contested role of the state**

The experience of KPC calls into question the role of the state. To begin with, this thesis has highlighted the tensions between governance agendas across scales, from the local to the national scale. The case study of KPC demonstrates the incongruent nature of the national state's broad objectives for 'community empowerment' and 'participation', in contrast with the reality of reduced funding and lack of supportive facilitation at the local level. In Chapter 4, such contradictory realities of neoliberal governance were discussed, where I elaborated on how local government in Glasgow, has paradoxically been left with reduced funding and increased responsibility. However, I have demonstrated how such forms of 'spatial liberalism' have both been a problem and also an opportunity for those at KPC (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013). Chapter 5 then discussed the positive implications of neoliberal urbanism for mobilising grass roots autonomy. I provided a historical account of how people collectivised their resources to shape the political process, by playing one politician off another and holding politicians to account during the 55-day occupation by building users in 1996. This thesis therefore conceives of the state as paradoxical, both as an instrument of power and form of domination for urban populations. Thus, the

engagement between KPC and local government chimes with Newman and Clarke's (2014) portrayal of the state, as both an;

Expression of publicness as something more than the sum of individual interests or choices – and, paradoxically, as an instrument for the destruction and evacuation of public attachments and identifications. (Newman and Clarke, 2014:2)

I have presented people at KPC as thinking and 'speaking beings' (Rancière, 1999) and as possessing reflexive and critical knowledge of their situation. As speaking beings, building users have always tried to negotiate with the state on their terms, rather than straightforwardly rejecting the state. Therefore, KPC's relationship to the state is characterised by contention and this thesis unsettles the binary opposition between autonomous spaces and the state-run spaces. I have thus contributed to an argument which presents spaces like KPC as politically dynamic, not wholly rejecting the state but also not acting as an arm of the state, through highlighting the contradictions, conflicts and debates at KPC. KPC's relationship with the state retains an element of critique, but I have also shown how those at KPC use this relationship to generative ends.

KPC paints a complex picture of the relationship between the state and grassroots civil society as 'inter-mingled, dynamic and ongoing', which can be both stifling but can also promote a progressive politics of the commons (Cumbers, 2015:10). KPC appears to work within the structures of governance to collectivise skills and capacities to keep the community centre open, working in, against and beyond the state (Cumbers, 2015). This thesis has demonstrated both the impossibility of autonomy and the challenge of negotiating a structurelessness organisation (Bohm, et al 2010). During an interview with Liam, a volunteer at KPC, he explained how groups negotiate the shadow state. Liam described how KPC 'takes on institutional forms' in order to 'appear' to meet the box ticking agenda, where in reality how they utilise the funds that they obtain can be more creative.

I kind of feel like it's good sometimes to take on an institutional form to get something done. Some like copyright theft of the capitalist form, and just try and invert it somehow. Me and Jonathan were calling it empowering institutions for a while, kind of presented it as like taking on an institutional identity really quickly for the use of what you need, but actually you kind of believe and hope to make it

actually true that, its institutional identity is actually completely rotten to the core  
(Liam)

I would suggest, from this case study, that core funding from the state is still required for public facilities like community centres. This is ‘the paradox of the state – that we must address: that the state is both despised and desired’ (Newman and Clarke, 2014:2). However, this funding should economically facilitate their existence, rather than pull structural and organisational strings in order to meet its own ‘box ticking’ agenda (Asenova and Stein, 2014). As aforementioned, communit(ies) like those at KPC are not victims but have agency, and the research here suggests the need for an increased respect for and focus on the practices of organisations like KPC in the context of austerity. A closer dialogue with grassroots organisations would benefit those involved in governance and with those on the ground; it would build trust and co-operation. KPC’s experiences could help inform other organisations that are negotiating and contesting neoliberal urban governance.

## **8.2 Placing throwntogetherness**

By focusing on the local scale, I have presented the heterogeneity of the community at KPC. I have shown that ‘urban space is relational, not a mosaic of simply juxtaposed differences’ (Massey, 2007:89). The thesis contributed a temporal aspect to Massey’s (2005) concept of ‘throwntogetherness’ by incorporating Bourdieu’s notion of habitus in Chapter 4, to account for personal histories. Habitus has also helped present the unevenness of the community, as this concept helps us think about the different forms of capital embodied in each individual in a space. Rather than using habitus in a deterministic way, I have retained the generative aspect of throwntogetherness to show how capitals are uneven, but can be collectivised and shared in solidaristic ways in political struggles over space. Using Bourdieu’s work in a geographical context, alongside Massey’s notion of space, I have characterised KPC ‘not as a simple diversity, but as a meeting-place, of jostling, potentially conflicting, trajectories’ (Massey, 2007:89).

This thesis is not a synchronic account of the community centre; instead, it provides an example of ongoing social relations within a diverse community, revealing concrete evidence of the structural violence inflicted on communities through state roll back, local government crisis and neoliberal welfarism. The cultural backdrop of Glasgow, being a

city rich in historic working class politics, art and culture also contributes to the character of KPC. Chapter 5 discusses the birth of KPC as a product of historic urban struggles in the area. This cultural history has produced novel strategies to cope with the demands of keeping the centre open with little funding. The messy encounters that Chapter 6 describes, paint a picture of the reality of producing community spaces today, showing how those at KPC continually develop strategies in relation to changing circumstances. Sometimes particular strategies cause conflict, as discussed, but, despite conflicts, I have shown how KPC is a creative space for instituting grassroots politics. Chapter 6 also explores the conflict inherent in the concept of throwntogetherness, through examining how individual difference plays out at KPC on an interpersonal level. The divisions between people's political identities are evident within the three main users groups, the local community, artists and activists. Chapter 6 showed how identity politics have been a ground for conflict in the space since 1996. The three user groups are occasionally pitched on an internal battleground, but their differences are negotiated to allow different groups to co-exist harmoniously. As aforementioned, I would suggest that core funding and support from state agencies would at least remove basic economic worries so progressive social relations and pragmatic common sense could potentially prevail with reduced interpersonal conflict, allowing for a broad and inclusive politics to arise at KPC. This thesis has used the case study of KPC to highlight the importance of spaces where throwntogetherness can be observed in the city. These spaces and places are important to urban populations through facilitating encounters between disparate members of the community, to form unusual political coalitions.

### **8.3 Contemporary history of austerity**

In the current climate of austerity, we are seeing spaces like KPC disappear, struggle to survive or at least feel the pressure. KPC reminds us that austerity politics and austerity localism are nothing new. The survival of KPC since 1996 has been testament to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of people to be more than a reaction to crises (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2013). Therefore, the case study of KPC was relevant in helping us to understand the current crisis and resulting austerity politics as part of a longer trajectory of crises in capitalism. Moreover, the space that the building users saved became a fertile ground for progressive and creative politics in the city. Today the space is still used by a vast array of political groups, recreational groups and arts groups, despite the current economic crisis.

The current climate of austerity has been focussed on economic policy. However, spaces like KPC are social spaces and are relational, thus built on social relations to sustain their survival, so we need to take social relations, rather than just economic relations, seriously, for two reasons. Firstly, these social relations are mitigating some of the worst effects of roll-back welfare and are important sites of social reproduction, which requires us to ‘rethink social relations from another perspective’ (Massey et al, 2013:13). Thus, I have considered the specific forms of violence we can observe at KPC, such as those highlighted in Chapter 7; the underpaid, overworked staff and volunteers at the centre, the competitive agendas put in place by the state in the form of shaping initiatives such as the Voluntary Action Fund. Furthermore, the removal of concessionary rent rates and the creation of arms-length property management companies all place pressure on people at KPC. Such forms of local state intervention are then revealed as highly damaging to the social relations, observable in the, at times, fraught social relations at KPC, discussed in Chapter 6.

Secondly, the social relations within KPC have fostered a local politics of responsibility (Massey, 2004). Chapter 5 shows how during the occupation in 1996 so many different identities rallied around a common cause, for the pragmatic concern to keep the space open, and this pragmatism still prevails today. But KPC is also an important local space in raising political consciousness and envisioning and acting out alternatives to neoliberal globalisation beyond the state. Thus, ‘local places are not simply always the victims of the global; nor are they always politically defensible redoubts against the global’ (Massey, 2004:14). Community spaces like KPC are ‘the moments through which the global is constituted, invented, co-ordinated, produced’ (ibid) and, through bringing together outward looking groups, KPCs activity is formed around progressive localism agendas (Featherstone et al, 2012).

In the Kilburn Manifesto, Hall and O’Shea argue, ‘after forty years of a concerted neoliberal ideological assault, this new version of common sense is fast becoming the dominant one’ (2013:5). This thesis has shown however, that since 1996 KPC has challenged ‘common sense neoliberalism’ (ibid). KPC demonstrates how social divisions and austerity politics *can be* reworked whilst ‘sometimes being reinforced and sometimes refashioned in ambiguous ways’ (Massey et al, 2013:13-14). This thesis grounds the politics of the Kilburn Manifesto in a particular space to show how neoliberal processes

are working out in particular communities They require core funding from the state as a gesture of commitment to ‘publicness’ (Newman and Clarke, 2014) because spaces like KPC are important sites of encounter in urban life.

#### **8.4 Ongoing contestation at KPC**

In Chapter 4, I described the current situation at KPC, explaining that the board received a Notice of Removal on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 from the letting agent Ryden, due to be enforced on the 27<sup>th</sup> May. The current situation at KPC speaks to broader debates around the impacts of the current austerity politics at the national level, by exposing the impacts of subsequent local government cuts. The negative impacts of the notice of removal highlight two points, firstly, the important role of the local state (Blanco, 2014) in instigating and reproducing neoliberalism, through enforcing austerity localism; and secondly, the social impact of this decision. In relation to the first point, the local state instigated the privatisation of public spaces through transferring council properties to private hands. The City Council did this by creating an arm’s length company, City Property, to whom they transferred the rental agreement, which then employed Ryden, a property management company that is legally bound to extract rents based on market value. We can thus see how national austerity politics lead councils to promote rent seeking and privatisation, thus prioritising exchange value over more socially progressive and useful purposes. Not only has KPC’s ‘bargaining power’ has been greatly reduced (Wainwright, 2003) though being forced to negotiate the rent with a private company, rather than the City Council, but the City Council’s actions also highlight the contradictory aims of local governance in Glasgow with the national Scottish Community Empowerment Bill discussed in Chapter 4. However, the contestation remains at KPC at the grassroots level, whilst the national objective to empower the community appears empty as it fails to materialise at the local level.

In relation to the second point and perhaps more importantly, the impact that the notice of removal caused social pressures that damaged relationships at KPC. As aforementioned, these social relations are fundamental to the space. The notice of removal signalled the beginning of a period of social and organisational conflict that I experienced first-hand as a volunteer at KPC. The notice of removal became a catalyst for an internal crisis regarding the structure of the community centre, which was unclear in terms of organization, management and employment, as Chapters 6 and 7 discussed. These chapters reveal a number of structural issues with the various forms of labour at KPC and the negative

effects on social relations at KPC. Chapters 6 and 7 showed how job roles were unclear; funding routes were a source of conflict and how there was heavy reliance on one individual. So a steering group was formed in 2013 and a proposal was drawn up by volunteers Liam, Nadia and Emily, with input from Jenny (studio tenant), Janine (Room 1), Michael and myself (volunteers).

The steering group identified the structural and organizational issues and presented them to the board at KPC in July 2013. The proposal took a formal approach to quantifying the job roles and tasks that KPC requires. However, this proposal coincided with interpersonal conflict; and the proposal was unfortunately not acted upon, as there was no one willing to put these changes in place as people were leaving due to interpersonal conflicts. This is the reality of producing KPC and illustrates the true relationality of the space. Positive social relations are required for KPC to work and overarching structural pressures create conflicts between people. At this time, I also moved away from volunteering as I began to write up my findings, and I found this a useful time to step away to avoid becoming embroiled in the conflict myself. Since this time, KPC has begun a community consultation to decide on the future of the space.

We are planning a period of community consultation, feasibility study and staff/board development to ensure we have the skills, the knowledge and the community support required to identify funding to commission major repairs and improvements to the fabric of the building over the next years. This will secure the future of the building as a core community hub to support generations to come and build confidence within the communities of KPC and wider user groups (Plan B collective)

The consultation culminated in a meeting that I attended in November 2014, where we discovered that City Property and Ryden have refused to allow community ownership. Ryden have offered a 25-year lease, with a review after 10 years. They have proposed to increase the rent from £1 per year to £750 per year plus £2,000 insurance. They also stated that they had the right to change the rent rate at any point. This has implications for KPC as it affects their access to funding; if KPC are to obtain a large grant from the Big Lottery Fund they need to have a long-term lease. However, if the community agree to this lease the space will be subject to changes from Ryden at any time, as aforementioned. This leaves KPC in a situation, where it cannot obtain funding to do large-scale repairs without the lease. Furthermore, any capital value gained through rejuvenating the space will belong

to City Property, who legally own the building. At the meeting, it was clear that the main objective was to keep the space open and functioning. However, it was also clear that the structural power still lay with the Council. Despite this, KPC remains as a challenge to neoliberal politics and as a space of contestation in the current crisis.

The meeting also described the space as ‘a social space for social action’. The role and inherent use value of the space is obvious to the building users, regardless of the formal funding and lease agreements. Thus, we can frame the survival of KPC since 1996 in more positive terms. KPC’s survival can be attributed to the resourcefulness (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2012:255) of the dynamic building users, who have ensured its survival for almost two decades. Furthermore, the survival of KPC can be seen as an ongoing interrogation of urban crises in Glasgow, ‘rather than as an isolated crisis moment where neo-liberalism has suddenly become challenged’ (Featherstone, 2012:216). Thus, when thinking about the current crisis, we are able to conceive of neoliberalism as being unstable, whereas social solidarity and political contestation within local spaces like KPC are more constant. KPC has existed since 1996, prior to the current political conjuncture, and it exists as more than a reaction to changing economic climates or a co-opted version of ‘localism’. The dynamism demonstrated by groups such as KPC presents us with a remarkable, and importantly enduring, example of progressive localism (MacKinnon et al, 2011 and Featherstone et al, 2012). Place is essential in this process, as an institutional context for progressive localism, which sustains alternative urban relations and politics through a tangible presence on the urban landscape.

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## Appendix

<b>Figure 1</b>	Letter of permission from KPC
<b>Figure 2</b>	Notes from council meeting
<b>Figure 3</b>	Kinning Park Community Newspaper, 1996
<b>Figure 4</b>	Letter from City Property, 15 <sup>th</sup> April, 2013
<b>Figure 5</b>	Photos from 1996

## Figure 1 Letter of permission from KPC

### Kinning Park Complex

48 Cornwall Street • Glasgow G41 1BA • Phone: 01414190829 •  
E-Mail: [kinningparkcomplex@gmail.com](mailto:kinningparkcomplex@gmail.com) Web: [www.kinningparkcomplex.org](http://www.kinningparkcomplex.org)

Date: 10/08/2012

University of Glasgow Ethics Committee

Dear :

As Events Coordinator and a director at Kinning Park Complex, I am writing to give my consent to Laura-Jane's research project that will be carried out here. I give my permission for her to carry out interviews and focus groups with adults who use the center. She has outlined the project to me and it presents no cause for ethical concern.

Sincerely,



Emily Roff  
Events Coordinator and a director

## Figure 2 notes from council meeting

Item 2 27th November 2009

Glasgow City Council - Executive Committee

Report by Councillor George Ryan, Executive Member for Business and the Economy

Contact: Steve Inch

Ext: 76006

Generating Capital Receipts

Disposal of Council Property Investment Portfolio to City Properties (Glasgow) LLP

Purpose of Report:

To request Members to approve the preparation of a Business Case into the potential disposal of the Council commercial property investment portfolio to City Properties (Glasgow) LLP in order to secure the capital resources necessary to finance the Council's forward expenditure commitments.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Notes that the ongoing difficulties in the land and development market are delaying the sale of surplus land and property assets;
- b) Notes that the changes in the land and property purchase market will affect the rate at which future capital receipts are secured by the Council;
- c) Notes the potential for the Council to sell its commercial property investment portfolio to City Property (Glasgow) LLP in return for a significant capital payment;
- d) Notes that any properties disposed of to City Property (Glasgow) LLP would remain in the ownership of the Council family of companies;
- e) Agrees in principle to the sale of the Council Property Portfolio to City Property (Glasgow) LLP; and
- f) Notes that a further report will be brought to Committee once the business case is finalised.

### 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1.1

Over the period 2005/06 to 2009/10 (to date) the Council has generated capital receipts from its land and property transactions totalling £181.99m. This included £92m through "normal" day to day disposals, and £89.92m of "exceptional" disposals - including the major retail sites at Pollok and the long leasing of the Council Car Parks to City Parking (Glasgow) LLP. The sales ensured that DRS met the targets set by the Council for the disposal of surplus assets. The annual profile over the period is shown below.

Year	General	Exceptional	Total Receipts
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	Receipts(£m)	Receipts(£m)	(£m)
2005/06	20.72	21.10	42.82
2006/07	29.98	11.11	42.09
2007/08	22.60	56.80	79.40
2008/09	15.44	0.91	16.35
2009/10 (6 mth)	3.33	N/A	3.33
Total	92.07	89.92	181.99

### 1.2

As the table above shows the land and property development market has weakened considerably since early 2008, with many of the sales transactions which were ‘in process’ or ‘in pipeline’ now either delayed, or in some cases cancelled. Although there are some tentative signs of a market recovery this is largely confined to the commercial sector. The overriding factor affecting the residential market at present is the continued difficulty faced by developers in raising commercial finance to allow developments to go ahead.

### 1.3

Discussions with developers suggest that the recession has led to a fundamental shift in the land and property purchasing market. While there are encouraging indications that major house builders are becoming more active in the land market it is clear from the discussions which have been held with both the Director of DRS and the MD of City Property (Glasgow) LLP that the financial market will not (generally) finance outright land purchases. Increasingly the funders are ‘pushing’ developers into developing partnership and risk sharing approaches to development. Typically this involves deferred purchases, staged payments, profit sharing and overage payment arrangements etc. There are many variations to these basic models. The point Committee will wish to note however is that these new approaches to land purchase now mean that while sites can be marketed and sales agreed, payment to the Council is now becoming much more likely to be made on a deferred basis spread over the life of development projects. Committee will appreciate the significant cash flow implications for the Council.

## 2. ROLE OF CITY PROPERTY (LLP)

### 2.1

The formation of City Property (Glasgow) LLP is intended to position the Council for the anticipated recovery in the construction industry. The LLP has now taken on responsibility for the disposal of all surplus land and property and, now that it is formally established it is in the process of prioritising sites with the greatest potential for early disposal. It is also developing a planning and land investigation programme on council sites which have longer term development potential in order to make them more ‘market ready’ for disposal at the appropriate point in the property cycle. Any sales through the Property Company will however take place within the market context outlined above, and its own disposal programme is increasingly likely to secure income on a deferred or extended basis.

2.2 The Council has set a capital income target from property related activity of £120 million over the period 2009/10 to 2012/13. Early indications are that the full impact of the decline in the development industry will be felt in 2009/10, with capital receipts likely to be around £10m. This would leave £110m to be generated in capital receipts in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

## 3. THE INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

### 3.1

For all of the reasons outlined above this target is not achievable through the outright disposal of surplus land and property. The Financial Challenges Group and the Service Reform and Efficiency Groups have therefore investigated additional ways of generating the capital finance necessary to meet the Council's ongoing capital commitments and future spending plans. These options have revolved around the potential disposal of the commercial and property portfolio in the DRS 'owning account' - which consists of over 1,000 commercial ground leases, retail, shops, offices, workspaces etc – with an annual income of approximately £15m per annum.

### 3.2

The Administration has rejected any proposal to dispose of the Council's commercial portfolio on the commercial market, since the availability of property is an important component in the Council Economic Development "tool box". The formation of City Property (Glasgow) LLP does however provide an opportunity for the Council to dispose of its property holdings to the LLP - which is in a position to borrow from the commercial property market against the value of the annual income stream in a way that the Council itself is not empowered to do. Tentative discussions with potential lenders suggest that based on a portfolio with a baseline annual rental of £15m the Council could be expected to generate a loan of in excess of £100m if the entire portfolio was disposed off. The Council would in turn have to budget for the loss of commercial property income which is currently in the DRS income account, since this income would be required to service the commercial loan. The commercial property income would of course revert to the LLP at the end of the loan period – with the option at that point of either refinancing a second loan or simply retaining the income in the company with a potential payment back to the Council.

### 3.3

Any commercial lender would of course require to undertake a very substantial amount of due diligence prior to agreeing any loan based on such an extensive and varied portfolio.

Such diligence would take account of the prospects of sustaining rental income levels over the period of the loan – which will depend on the condition of the properties, the length and terms of individual property leases, the prospects for rental growth through rent reviews etc.

The Council itself would have to take account of wider considerations including the desirability of retaining direct management of properties including concessionary rentals, properties within certain areas which are important to its regeneration efforts, the potential transfer of staff within the DRS Property Division to the LLP etc.

## 4. PROPOSED BUSINESS CASE

4.1 . As this report indicates the Council has extensive current and forward capital commitments which rely on impact on the generation of capital receipts from land and property assets. The impact of the current recession is that the capital receipts targets set by the Council are unlikely to be achieved. The disposal of the commercial investment portfolio is perhaps the only short term which is open to the Council to generate very significant capital payments over a very short space of time.

### 4,2

The proposal to dispose of the commercial property portfolio to the City Property (Glasgow) LLP offers the potential to:

- a) To generate significant capital income on the scale required by the Council
- b) Protect the ownership of the portfolio within the Council group of companies
- c) Segment the portfolio to ensure the Council's economic and social regeneration objectives are not compromised.

#### 4.3

It is proposed, therefore, that a business case is prepared to examine all aspects of the proposal before any final decision is taken on whether this option should be implemented. This work will be undertaken over the next few months with a view to preparing a final report to Committee on the proposal during the current financial year.

### 5. SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

#### Financial:

The proposals will generate additional capital income for the Council through the disposal to the LLP but will mean a loss of revenue income of up to £15m pa depending on the actual amount of property disposed.

#### Legal:

The proposal will require the use of external legal assistance to undertake all of the necessary due diligence on property ownership and the preparation of legal and funding agreements between the Council, the LLP and the commercial lender.

#### Personnel:

The proposals will have significant implications for the DRS Property Management and letting function.

#### Service Plan:

The requirement to manage the Council property stock to maximise the in flow of capital receipts is in line with the DRS Service Plan Programme on "efficient and effective services."

#### Environmental:

No implications.

Figure 3 Kinning Park Community Newspaper, 1996

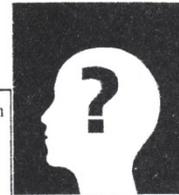


KINNING PARK COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER  
 EST. 1989  
 MAY 1996  
 "CLARION"...A CALL TO THE COMMUNITY TO USE THE PAPER AS YOUR VOICE.

# Betrayer or betrayed!!



M.P. Mike Watson and Baillie Butt were alongside the local people in support of keeping a valuable asset open-the question to be asked? What is the role of a Councillor and community worker in 1996



Photograph courtesy of the Evening Times

Well, its finally happened ! Kinning Park Neighbourhood Centre closed on Friday the 3rd of May 1996. The ambitious plan proposed by the Management Committee and Scotland in Europe had promise and if allowed we would have done our damndest to make it work. But, the 'powers that be' did not give it a chance but suggested that we try again in six weeks time. We are not at all hopeful and it would come as no surprise if buyers are not already waiting in the wings to snap up the centre, which by rights is your centre (Previously sold Lambhill Court building- monies?)

KINNING PARK COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER "CLARION" K.P.C.N. CORNWALL STREET GLASGOW G4 1TA THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER IS PREPARED TO PUBLISH A WIDE VARIETY OF ITEMS REFLECTING ALL SHADES AND INTEREST ITEMS PRINTED DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE POLICY OF THE K.P.C.N "CLARION" STAFF INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY.



REPORTERS WANTED WHERE ARE ALL YOU YOUNG FOLK WITH A NOSE FOR FERRETING OUT NEWS WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE TEAM OF K.P.C.N. AND PANDER TO YOUR HOBBY IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY! NOT ONLY THAT IF YOU SHOW KEENNESS TO LEARN AND ARE ANXIOUS TO HELP YOUR LOCAL AREA AND YOURSELF, LEARNING DESK TOP PUBLISHING COULD COME YOUR WAY IT WON'T BE ALL SUGAR AND SPICE BUT THINK OF THE FUN YOU COULD HAVE CHASING UP OUR RESPECTIVE COUNCILLORS, HEAD TEACHERS, CONSTABULARY! THE PROSPECTS ARE ENDLESS IN FINDING OUT WHAT THEY ARE DOING FOR OUR LITTLE PATCH HERE IN KINNING PARK.

COME ALL YE!  




Believe me, once these facilities have gone, they will never return. Councillors have been threatening for years to take K. Park out of the 'area of priority' which means no longer will Kinning Park be eligible for Urban Aid funding for Community Projects. However, you can sit back and watch your neighbours enjoy projects galore while you help to pay for them. One area of priority is Gorbals < Govan is another. What category do you think Kinning Park comes under? Are you the fat cats of the South Side! with no shops and and now no amenities!! Cllr. Lavelle, who recently retired told us he was 'stabbed in the back' over the use of the Kingston hall, and the people responsible were his fellow councillors, perhaps the same councillors who signed the papers to authorise the closure of your centre. This campaign has a Nasty Smell about it.

**Figure 4 letter from City Property, 15<sup>th</sup> April,**

**Ask For:** Richard Rae  
**Phone direct:** +44 (0) 0141 287 6151  
**Email:** richard.rae@citypropertyglasgow.co.uk  
**Date:** 15 April 2013



**RECORDED DELIVERY**

**Kinning Park Community Centre  
Community Interest Company  
Kinning Park Complex  
43 Cornwall Street  
Glasgow  
G41 1BA**

Dear Sir/Madam

**LEASE RENEWAL  
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 43 Cornwall Street, Glasgow G41 1BA**

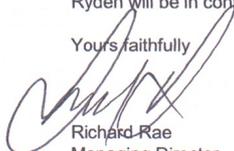
I refer to my email message of 28 March 2013 to the Chairperson of your organisation.

*As stated within this communication 'I note that KPCC has been unsuccessful in obtaining lottery and other funding which, as you will appreciate, may have an impact on the terms and conditions agreed with City Property for the long lease of this property'. I believe that our managing agent Ryden LLP is now reviewing this.*

However, and notwithstanding this the existing lease on the above property is due for renewal at 27 May 2013. Therefore, I have enclosed a Notice of Removal in this regard. This is standard documentation, which protects the Landlord interest, and we are legally required to issue to all tenants whose lease is due for renewal.

Ryden will be in contact in due course to discuss these matters further.

Yours faithfully



Richard Rae  
Managing Director

City Property Glasgow (Investments) LLP,  
Exchange House, 229 George Street, Glasgow, G1 1QU  
T: +44 (0)141 287 6161 E: info@citypropertyglasgow.co.uk  
www.citypropertyglasgow.co.uk

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Figure 5 photos from 1996







