

***Community Profiling to Analyse Community
Information Needs, and Providers: Perceptions from
the People of the Broomhall Neighbourhood of
Sheffield, UK***

By:

Zapopan Martín Muela Meza

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Abstract

Research question: This study sought to investigate the community information needs of, and information provision available to, the residents of the Broomhall neighbourhood of Sheffield (UK), as perceived by them.

Objectives: The research objectives were: 1) To identify the community information needs of the residents of the Broomhall neighbourhood; 2) To establish to what extent information providers satisfy the community information needs of the residents of the Broomhall neighbourhood; 3) To explore the effectiveness of the community profiling tool to analyse community information needs and provision; and 4) To understand the possible implications of this study for policy makers.

Research design: The theoretical framework was based around the following concepts: a) the materialist conception of history, b) the social class struggles concept, and c) the concept of configuration as an open structure of theory. The methodologies used were qualitative research and interpretivism. Data were generated using snowball or chain sampling within a purposeful sampling approach and through triangulation of a) semi-structured interviews (individual and group-focused); b) non-participant observation and c) document analysis methods, themselves entailing the triangulation of literal, and interpretative data analysis.

Findings: The major findings relating to community information needs were related to the following *issues*: 1) territoriality and uses of the land (e.g. housing for poor and working classes; expansion of Sheffield and Hallam universities in the form of university student villages); 2) poverty, social and economical inequalities (e.g. unemployment, debt, and crime); 3) health (e.g. drug addiction, lack of: green public open space, playgrounds, and sports and leisure facilities); 4) politics (e.g. inadequate allocation of funding for community projects); 5) culture (e.g. multicultural, ethnic, religious, and national issues; tribalism of BMEs); 6) communication (e.g. people socially excluded due to lack of English classes). The findings also related to the following *features*: 7) transport (e.g. transport for the elderly); and 8) education (e.g. nurseries, and socially inclusive primary schools. Territoriality related to all the other 7 issues and features in negative ways.

Conclusions and recommendations: For Broomhall residents it was recommended that they should change their neighbourhood name to *Holberry Gardens* and create a strategic alliance to save their neighbourhood from being taken over by developers; they also need to distance themselves from Broomhall and The Park, and to resist anti-working class policies from the European Union, central, regional, and local government and private/voluntary sectors. For the LIS community a community profiling tool has been found to be effective as long as it is used within the contexts of qualitative research and territoriality. Policy makers should abandon their privatisation policies relating to the provision of social services (e.g. information, help and advice) which have worsened the quality of life of the poor classes, and have fostered poverty and crime. The need for the creation of a new and free-of-charge health and sports facility that includes a library was also recommended.

Dedication

To my parents,

In Memoriam to my father, Everardo Muela Caballero (1938-2004), my beloved and immortal “open book” and “mark of fire” whose material body did not resist to be alive to see my PhD lifetime goal accomplished before it transformed and melted into another cosmic forms.

and

to my mother, Celia Montserrat Meza León, my beloved “gypsy” who happily is still alive to see this *magnum opus*, of the many to come, finally concluded.

To my daughters,

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To my brother Abraham Everardo, and my sisters Gabriela Eduviges, Georgina Viridiana, and Yadira Alejandra for their love, friendship, motivation, strength, and support.

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"But ever since the dawn of civilization, people have not been content to see events as unconnected and inexplicable. They have craved an understanding of the underlying order in the world. Today we still yearn to know why we are here and where we came from. Humanity's deepest desire for knowledge is justification enough for our continuing quest. And our goal is nothing less than a complete description of the universe we live in." -- Stephen Hawking (1988: 13)

"The library connects us with the insights and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all of our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. Public libraries depend on voluntary contributions. I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries." --Carl Sagan, Cosmos (Sagan, 2001: 282)

*"Community / for Broomhall
Poem by Shirley Cameron*

*Community
you and me
a space / a time / where we live
a type of living
a timeless yearning
for unity
from indifference
to love of your difference
as you sense mine
so we can be known here
feel at home here
see and be seen
and somehow
be a community" (Broomspring Writers Group, 2002: 158)*

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List of acronyms

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation.

BCC: Broomhall Community Centre.

BCG: Broomhall Community Group.

BF: Broomhall Forum.

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic.

BPA: Broomhall Park Association.

CAB: Citizens' Advice Bureau.

CAQDAS: Computer-Assisted Analysis of Qualitative Data.

DII: Documental Information Institutions or Institutions of Information Recorded in Documents.

ED: Enumeral Districts.

EU: European Union.

FG: Focus Group (type of interview).

HMC: Hanover Medical Centre.

ICT: Information and Communication Technology.

IP: Individual interviews to information providers.

LIS: Library and Information Science.

NHS: National Health Service.

HMO: House in Multiple Occupancy.

PCT: Primary Care Trust.

RI: Individual interviews to residents.

SCAB: Sharrow Citizens' Advice Bureau.

SNIS: Sheffield Neighbourhood Information System.

SOA: Super Output Areas.

UANL: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México (Nuevo Leon Autonomous University, Mexico).

UNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México (Mexico National Autonomous University, Mexico).

YMCA: Young Men's Christians Association.

Translation note

Unless otherwise noted, all Spanish to English translations are my own –Z.M. Muela-Meza.