

Putting the Social back into Housing Learning through Localism?

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Localism: Making Sense of the Contradictions

- Principles of Localism overridden by Localism Act
- Empowerment or Cuts?
- Winners and Losers : Civic Core v deprived localities
- Locally based or Larger Scale TSOs?
- Assets or Liabilities?
- Property or People?
- Big Housing: Taking the Social out of housing
- Community-led housing: Help from within or help from without?
- No State or Enabling State?

Mullins D (2012) 2012) The Reform of Social Housing. Chapter 11 in Raine J and Staite C (eds) *The World will be your oyster? Perspectives on the Localism Act* University of Birmingham

Mullins D (2006) 'Competing Institutional Logics? Local Accountability and Scale and Efficiency in an expanding Non-Profit Housing Sector.' *Public Policy and Administration* 21(3) 6-24

Overview of wider evidence on Big Society in Practice

- Rhetoric & Reality: *'unsettled presence and uncertain future'* - sceptical & positioning TSO responses (Macmillan 2013)
- Continuities with New Labour Third Sector Project & Open Public Services (Alcock 2012)
- Cuts agenda Big Society's *'Achilles heel'* (Pattie and Johnston 2011)
- Civic core inverse match with communities of need (Mohan and Bulloch 2012)
- PBR, Primes and Supply Chains dis-empower smaller TSOs in practice of commissioning (Rees, Mullins and Bovaird 2012)
- Social Investment slow – BSC the bank with no borrowers!
- Surviving Below the radar. Big Society an irrelevance: *'community groups pre-existing, but largely unrecognised, Big Society'* . Little desire to 'scale-up' as service providers (McCabe and Phillimore 2012)

See TSRC Working Paper 90: Making sense of the Big Society: perspectives from the third sector, Rob Macmillan (January 2013)

Where is Housing's Big Society?

- Below the radar? Community-led sectors (pre-date localism)
 - Self-help
 - self-build
 - CLTs and development trusts
 - Mutuels, asset transfers and TMOs
- Coming in from the cold after 20 years of marginalisation
 - ***'Community ownership has the potential to empower, rejuvenate and invest in people to deliver projects they care about, retain investment in areas experiencing uplift and create sustained benefits'*** (Gooding 2013)
 - Several small Funding Streams for non-registered providers in NAHP 2011-15
- Growth dilemmas: Scaling-up or Going viral?
- Community-led or programme-led
 - In England there are policies for everything! (Francesco Minora)
 - But bureaucratic inertia in shifting programmes away from registered providers
- Facilitation
 - Big state, No State or Enabling State?
 - Specialist intermediaries
 - Big Housing the answer or the problem?

Gooding J (2013) **How to Build Community. An Agenda for Supporting Community led housing in Tees Valley.** Tees Valley Unlimited.

Moore T and Mullins D (2013) **Comparing self-help housing and community land trust facilitation: Scaling-up or Going-viral?** TSRC Working Paper 94

Growing Recognition for the Community-led housing sector

- Legitimacy a key currency in challenging better established/resourced models that have become default option for housing & community investment
- Or returning to root principles (of 60s & 70s generation housing associations)
- Self-help revisited across social policy fields (2000s PATs, 2010s community organisers)
- Coalition building (Mutuals Housing Group, CLT Network, Locality and development trusts)
- Alternative to or Natural Partners for Big Housing in 'delivering Big Society'?

see BSHF (1997) Housing, Self-help and Co-operation,
Archer, T. (2009) Help from within: An exploration of community self-help. CDF .

But who is community-led housing for?

- Community based projects
 - Tendency to develop in more affluent areas with social capital?
 - How much cross-over of user groups with Big Housing's residualised service users?
 - Real alternatives to state-led regeneration (e.g. HMRA's)???
- Community governance structures
 - Placating NIMBYs?
 - Local democracy and accountability
 - Fit with city wide governance , resources, power and legitimacy
- Space for difference or isomorphism?
 - Rent levels in self-help housing & employment poverty trap?
 - Mixed tenure or home ownership focus in CLTs?

Its all good stuff, but isn't it just window dressing and marginal to mainstream housing agendas? – after all the big switch to TSOs has already happened in housing prior to most areas of welfare state and its called stock transfer.

Or might community-led models finally transform social housing to become a community-led sector?

Big Housing: Big Society's Bedrock?

- Resilient in face of austerity?
 - most asset-rich part of third sector
 - Trading futures on historic assets
 - espoused values fit for the times
- Sought out to fix the leaks
 - Who can Big Society Capital lend to?
 - Key partners for community based budget projects
- New roles with departure of Big Money, Big Regeneration after the Credit Crisis
 - From property based regeneration to community investment
 - Self-interest with welfare benefit threats to trading income stream
- From espoused values to enacted values?
 - Restoring trust and rebuilding civil society connections?

See Wadhams, C. (2006) *An Opportunity Waiting to Happen: Housing Associations as 'Community Anchors'*. London: Housing Associations Charitable Trust. Duncan, P. and Thomas, S. (2012) *Acting on Localism: The role of housing associations in driving a community agenda*. London: ResPublica. Purkis A (2010) *Housing Associations in England and the Future of Voluntary Organisations*, London: The Baring Foundation.

Anti-Social Housing

- Taking the social out of housing

- So what's social housing for?
 - Low cost housing in high cost locations
 - Security, affordability, cushion from risk & vulnerability
 - Site for social solidarity- Big Society?
- So why would you.....
 - Erode product differentiation from PRS
 - Reduce security, increase rents, reduce choice
 - Even question rationale for affordable homes in high cost locations
 - And call this localism????
- Big Housing had choices
 - Social solidarity or new output (insider/outsider dilemma)
 - Compromise for a while, but the deal involved transforming the mainstream
 - Mortgage the future , invest in property assets or social assets?
 - Mission or Mandate?
- Where have these choices left Big Housing's ability to deliver Big Society?
 - Society exists after all but social solidarity devalued
 - Big Housing part of the solution or part of the problem?

Talking Assets and Liabilities?

- The new language: Asset returns, appreciation, income streams
- Assets talk: part of the recipe for affordable housing programme
 - No pressure to break up non-localist housing organisations
 - Centralise group structures (consolidate the asset)
 - Swap housing in high cost to produce more in low cost areas
- Tensions in practice
 - Decision making on harnessing assets to support new borrowing and building
 - Opportunity cost one off subsidy for new homes v longer term support for and solidarity with communities?
 - Big Housing with asset based logics can be closed to ideas of supporting community based sector
 - Large HAs increasing rents prior to short-life property handbacks and thereby damaging sustainability of self-help organisations
 - Community assets or liabilities?
 - Successful housing and land transfers recipe for long term sustainability
 - But Community centres, libraries, parks without revenue funding less clearly assets in this narrow sense
 - Maintain it or lose it agenda – choosing community partners
 - Tendency for partnerships within strong civic core
 - Where does this leave poorest places and communities?

Big Housing Goes Local?

- Global Financial Crisis & Austerity
 - Withdrawal by Big Government and Big Money forced new choices on Big Housing: renewed focus on the local
 - Welfare reform and impacts on rental income stream
- Rediscovering local synergies, partnerships, preserving vital infra-structure
 - Local economic impact; spending, commissioning and jobs
 - Welfare benefits and Income maintenance
 - Promoting and trading with local social enterprise (tenant or community-led)
 - Community budgets and shared premises & back office
 - Social Impact Measurement (but usually organisation rather than area partnership focused)
 - Selective asset transfers (but rarely housing assets!)
- More Local Focus but Still Unaccountable? match with Tony Benn's Three Accountability Questions
 - Who's in charge around here?
 - Who appointed them?
 - How can we get rid of them?
- Re-asserting Social Mission when this clashes with Mandate
 - restoring the disappearing campaigning edge?
 - Exploring the role of values and links to governance (Lupton 2013) 'Profiting from Values'.

Research Agenda

- The role of the scholar:
 - Assembling evidence on new times, Critical Reflection with practice, Feedback to critique and inform policy
- How much real change is there: current & prospective?
 - Change in the fundamentals –social housing & solidarity
 - Change at the margins – small scale community-led change barriers and enablers
 - Potential to transform the mainstream for the common good
- Mapping the new organisational landscape
 - Biggest changes have occurred just as big evaluations became extinct
 - Who are the community -led sector? – what does it stand for? – are there links with co-operative or community governance- what are the links with Localism agenda?
 - What is the social value generated by community-led providers?
- Exploring the connections: actual and potential links between Big Housing & community led sectors
 - Support & knowledge transfer v control and extermination
 - Asset transfers and trading between Big and Community-led sectors
 - Identifying what could be the unifying as well as the competing institutional logics
 - Revisiting Governance – devolution and interface between community governance, big resource allocations & legitimacy – devolving power within Big Housing?
- Making the Case for the Social in Housing
 - Links between service delivery and social justice and (re-)valuing the campaigning roles of community-led and third sector organisations

Promising Directions

- International Gaze
 - Assessing functions of localism through Italian 'Habitability' perspective.
 - Exploring potential of community led housing from Austrian co-operative perspective on 'vertical social capital' links with the local.
 - Delphi panel linking perceptions and strategies of English HA actors with those facing similar state/market/society tensions in other places.
- Action learning with the sector
 - What knowledge do social housing organisations need to unleash their community investment potential (putting the social back in housing?)
- Theoretical insights
 - Habitability & Theory of the Commons (Minora)
 - Co-operative governance, legitimacy and vertical capital – linking community and urban governance levels (Lang)
 - Hybridity & Social Enterprise finding new synergies between social and commercial drivers (Mullins, Czischke and van Bortel)
 - Principal ownership and re-emphasising community drivers of social housing in relation to state and market drivers (Sacranie)
 - Strategic Action Fields

Taking forward an understanding of change in both community-led housing and 'Big Housing' is essential if we are to assess the extent to which 'Big Society' and 'localism' reconciled with austerity and cuts?

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