Networks and Fault Lines: the role of housing associations in supporting vulnerable places and people; a way forward in the ‘Participation Society’?

Speaker: Dr Gerard van Bortel, Assistant Professor of Housing Management, Delft University of Technology

This seminar will explore how housing associations in the England and the Netherlands have positioned themselves in relation to changing political discourses such as ‘Localism’, the ‘Big Society’, and the ‘participation society’ to support vulnerable places and people. The seminar builds on Gerard’s recently completed PhD “Networks and Fault lines: Understanding the role of housing associations in neighbourhood regeneration: a network governance perspective”.

The Dutch government has introduced an ambitious programme to devolve responsibility for welfare services to local authorities. Central to this new policy paradigm is the more active involvement of citizens in the co-production of solutions to complex societal problems. However, there is still a limited understanding of how public and third sector professionals are able to successfully collaborate with residents in solving place-related and people-related problems.

Applying a theoretical framework combining governance network theory with Habermas’s concepts of ‘system world’ and ‘lifeworld’, this research explored the incongruities between the system logics of professionals and the lifeworld experience of residents and local communities. It highlighted the need for awareness and craftsmanship among housing professionals to overcome these incongruities. In this seminar Gerard will discuss implications for research and practice.
Programme

3.45 Tea and Coffee available

4.15 Introduction and Welcome; Professor David Mullins

4.20 Gerard van Bortel

5.00 Questions and Discussion

5.30 Close and informal networking in Staff House Bar

If you would like to attend, please email Helen Harris on h.m.a.harris@bham.ac.uk

Speaker Details:

Dr. Gerard van Bortel is Assistant Professor of Housing Management at Delft University of Technology, and coordinates the Housing Team within the Architecture Faculty’s Management in the Built Environment (MBE) Department.

Gerard began his career as a social housing professional in the early 1990s in the Netherlands, and switched to academia in 2006. In 2003 Gerard completed his MSc in Organizational Strategies with a study on the governance and strategic business processes of Dutch housing associations. In March 2016 he completed his PhD on the role of housing associations in the governance of neighbourhood regeneration. Since 2006, Gerard has worked, with David Mullins and others, as a coordinator of the ENHR Working Group: Social Housing Institutions, Organisations and Governance.

Gerard still combines housing research with housing practice. In 2010 he joined the supervisory board of mid-sized housing association Parteon (16,000 units), working just North of Amsterdam. Since early 2016 he is chairman of the board. From April 2012 Gerard also chaired the Audit Board for Flemish Housing Associations in Belgium, and is involved in the performance assessments of Dutch housing associations.

An overview of Gerard’s activities can be found on his personal website: www.gerardvanbortel.nl

His academic publications include:


