

Third sector policy and infrastructure: unsettlement, de-coupling and transition

Rob Macmillan

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research

Sheffield Hallam University

rob.macmillan@shu.ac.uk

*'Continuity and change in an era of instability: developing a shared
agenda for voluntary action research and practice'*

Birmingham, TSRC-BVSC

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In a nutshell...

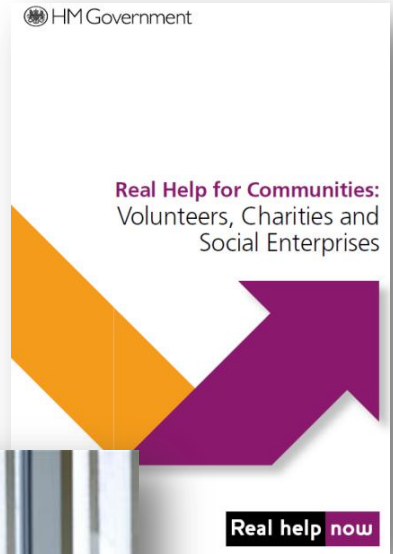
1. A double-sided **'unsettlement'** and its consequences
2. Third sector infrastructure has been **'dis-organised'**
3. A **defensive third sector** focusing on governance and leadership

But finally...reasons to be cheerful?



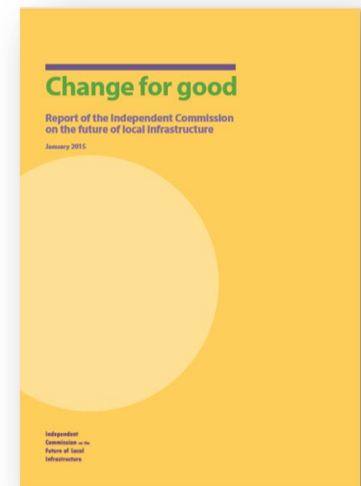
Unsettlement – economic and political

- Economic downturn - dual impact
- Recession summits - a 'strategic unity'
- 'Big Society' - de-coupling the sector and the state?
- Austerity and transition projects – the sector 'needs' to adapt, and help to adapt
- Critical voices against government – counter narratives and concerns around independence



The 'dis-organisation' of infrastructure

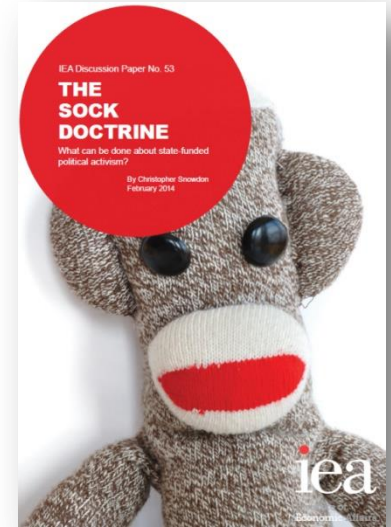
- **Squeezed resources and transition** – who is prepared to support infrastructure?
 - *Consolidation* – national, regional, local closures and mergers
 - *Experimental models* – e.g. demand-led experiments: charging and vouchers, funder plus, 'investment readiness', community organising, SPOC-social prescribing, etc.
- **A narrative challenge** – what is infrastructure, what is it for, and why is it of value
- **Dis-organisation** - from ambitious coordination plans to a make-shift system



Third sector on the defensive?

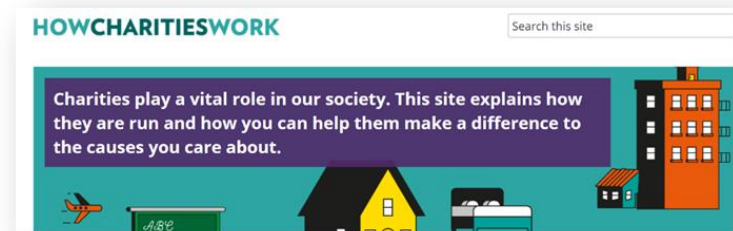


'Sticking to the knitting'
+ media-amplified scandals
= a defensive third sector...



i.e. an outward critical concern with
austerity

has partially given way to
an inward preoccupation with
governance and leadership





CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY:
BUILDING A FUTURE THAT
WORKS FOR EVERYONE

Reasons to be cheerful?

