



# Governing Social and Spatial Inequalities Under Enduring Austerity

*Abstracts*



# Plenary

## Inclusive Growth

**Ruth Lupton, University of Manchester**

Inclusive growth is a relatively new term which is gaining traction in policy circles internationally, nationally and locally in the UK in response to problems of entrenched poverty and inequalities despite growing economic prosperity. In this opening paper, Ruth will talk about what inclusive growth means, and the different ways in which it is being mobilised in UK policy debate, in particular in the context of devolution to city-regions. Does 'inclusive growth' have the potential to change policy and practice and to reduce the social and spatial inequalities that characterise UK cities, or is it just a 'policy fad' distracting attention from the onward march of neoliberalism?

## New Movements for Public Ownership of the City: Limitations and Possibilities in the Global Remunicipalisation movement

**Andrew Cumbers, University of Glasgow**

A growing global movement of remunicipalisation has been evident in recent years as a reaction to neoliberal inspired privatisation processes. A generalized dissatisfaction with the consequences of privatization, its failings to deliver promised cost efficiencies while creating profit avenues for financial and corporate vested interests, is leading many city and local governments to take services back into public hands. During a period when cities around the world are also facing deteriorating public finances and a broader governance framework of austerity, bringing vital utilities and future revenue streams back under public ownership and control is becoming increasingly popular. This paper critically interrogates the remunicipalisation phenomenon arguing that it holds the prospect for both democratic renewal and for evoking renewed values of municipal socialism. New and innovative forms of public ownership are emerging that combine citizen engagement with local state intervention to tackle important social issues such as poverty and climate change. However, continuing obstacles remain, not least the power of established corporate, financial and state interests and their continued commitment to privatisation and deregulation at national and international scales.

# Session one - stream one

## Spatial Policy

### The State of the Nation; Enduring Spatial Imbalance in the British Economy

**Pete Tyler, University of Cambridge**

This session examines the nature of the geographic economic divide that exists across the British economy, how it has changed over the last four decades and what is known about its causes. It considers the position at the regional level, but also across British cities. It reports on research that the speaker is undertaking financed by the ESRC grant that is exploring the historical development of British cities and the ways this has been determined by structural change and economic governance. Central to this research is the evolution of urban economies from manufacturing to services, and the different trajectories that British cities have followed. The speaker argues that the increasing spatial inequalities in economic growth and the resulting impact on economic and social welfare across Britain can only be addressed by moving to a nation-wide spatially federated system of public finance and economic governance.

### Asymmetric place-based deals in England: subnational development in austere times

**Nick Gray, Northumbria University**

A discourse of growth is endemic across Europe, pronounced since the global recession and enduring climate of austerity. Restless searches for strategies pursuing economic growth have resulted in ongoing experimentations. In the UK, political and fiscal decentralisation, articulated in “Cities and Local Growth” (CLOG), has risen up the policy agenda and is widely regarded as means to address long standing spatial inequalities.

At the heart of this agenda are place-based deals, with Devolution Deals hot on the heels of Growth Deals and City Deals. This paper examines the deal process by drawing upon qualitative interviews across all 39 Local Enterprise Partnership/Combined Authority areas in England together with documentary evidence including a content analysis of Strategic Economic Plans. Some key theoretical propositions pertaining to “austerity urbanism” are applied to the fieldwork in order to investigate the nature, content and institutional politics of growth strategies. The research reveals that lurking behind the public policy pronouncements, the opaque crafting of deals has been an asymmetric, intensely political process where evaluation criteria are unclear and territorial competition is encouraged. The paper raises further questions for research around the potential for the CLOG agenda to encourage innovative place-based policy that might address spatial economic imbalance.

# Session one - stream two

## Health and Public Service Reform

### Disconnected care: how implementing new models of integrated health and social care creates bureaucratic distance

**Gemma Hughes, University of Oxford**

New models of care are being pursued throughout England in an attempt to balance increasing demand for improved health and social care services against reduced public expenditure. Government investment in integrated care is made through pooled budgets between health and social care for an expected return of person-centred services and reduced hospital admissions.

Informed by an ethnographic case study of integrated care in one sub-regional area, I draw on interpretive policy analysis to show how the integrated care policy narrative has been created from a particular framing of concerns. Rather than being new, these concerns, and the ensuing policy responses, have appeared throughout the history of the NHS. A dominant discourse has emerged about the value of community-based integrated care, despite such programmes being unable to consistently demonstrate reductions in hospital admissions, which are associated with a range of factors including age and deprivation. In contemporary health and social care, this discourse has solidified in bureaucratic funding arrangements which, I argue, perform an alienating function, contributing to the disconnect between the “system objectives” and lived experience of people. This leads to obfuscation and distraction when it comes to questions of resource allocation and distribution by the Welfare State.

### Redesigning Mental Health from the inside-out

**Laura Warwick and Paola Pierri, Northumbria University and Mind UK**

Mind is a federated charity that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people living in England and Wales. Together with their network of 150 Local Minds, they are the largest service provider of mental health services across the countries.

The £600m cuts made to mental health budgets across England and Wales (McNicoll, 2015) continue to have a profound impact on the local Minds network and the people they support. As a result, in 2013 the organisation launched a design-led programme to improve and innovate mental health services and systems to ensure those with mental health issues continued to receive the support they need.

Our paper will discuss the programme of work to date and the vision behind Service Design in Mind (SDiM) to embed design and designers into the Mind movement for social change. It will draw on data gathered through semi-structured interviews and design workshops to discuss the impact of the programme and the extent to which SDiM is contributing to systems-change. It will conclude by suggesting the implications of these findings, including impact and challenges, for organisations trying to address inequality in times of austerity.

## Social prescribing and the 'value' of the third sector in health and social care integration

**Chris Dayson, Sheffield Hallam University**

Referral by GPs to the voluntary sector - often referred to as social prescribing - is widely advocated in policy, politics and practice (NHS, 2014). It aims to prevent worsening health inequality by supporting people with long term health conditions in ways that will reduce the number and intensity of costly interventions in urgent or specialist care (Dayson, 2016). However, the growth of social prescribing is a largely normative phenomenon that has developed despite a literature which does not support its 'value proposition' about contributing to a more efficient and effective NHS. (Heins et al, 2010). In response this paper presents data from one of the UK's largest social prescribing services to demonstrate its impact on patients' requirements for emergency hospital care. The data show small reductions in the use of emergency care, with greater reductions amongst those who engage beyond their initial 'prescription'. But these reductions will not provide a positive financial return on investment to health commissioners in the short term. In response, this paper argues for a step-change in the way the 'value' of social prescribing is articulated, toward greater emphasis the things people using these services value most, such as their well-being, so that the full value of these services can be realised.

# Session one - stream three

## Changing modes of Urban Governance

### Demolishing the present to sell-off the future? 'Creative' solutions to London's housing crisis at a time of enduring austerity

**Joe Penny and Joe Beswick, University College London and University of Leeds**

As London's housing crisis rolls on, local authorities in the capital are struggling to devise 'creative' solutions beyond directly providing social housing or relying on diminishing gains from private-sector development. This paper engages with one such 'solution', the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) by the London Borough of Lambeth to 'regenerate' and 'densify' its housing stock, starting with the Cressingham Gardens estate. Caught between tight fiscal constraints imposed from above, as part of a seemingly permanent austere drive, and a lack of council owned or affordable land on which to build new housing, Lambeth's SPV is being set up as a new company capable of attracting private investment and making viable the building of new homes 'at council rent' through the demolition of existing stock and the construction of mixed developments. Through a close analysis of relevant policy documents, key council meetings, court proceedings, and interviews with relevant actors, this paper presents Lambeth's SPV as a novel mode of housing production and governance, that nevertheless borrows from, normalises and reworks established 'neoliberal' trends of accumulation by dispossession, privatisation, and financialisation in public services. The paper will unpack the significance of this move towards SPV-led regeneration for the future of affordable housing provision. It will argue that following the immediate devastation of demolition, the full implications of the Cressingham case, on the estate and beyond, will not be felt in the near future. Rather, they are likely to stretch out across a longer temporality of austerity, narrowing future possibilities for citizen-led governance, rendering tenancies more precarious for present and future occupants, and opening up a gateway for Global Corporate Landlordship in the borough.

### Local policies (and urban safety) at the end of policy: governing Memphis through data, grants, 'community' – and the security apparatus

**Simone Tulumello, Universidade de Lisboa / University of Memphis**

Urban security and safety are inherently linked to patterns of socio-spatial inequality, particularly in the urban USA, where strong spatial correlation of violent crime with poverty and segregation are found. In Memphis (Tennessee, USA), a city under long-term rule of austerity urbanism, the retrenchment of state provision of public services and social policy has been accompanied by the massive growth of the security apparatus, which was ultimately requested to handle increasing social problems – a process of 'mission creep' for the police department. This paper will discuss governmental practices of crime prevention at the municipal level in Memphis with the aim of emphasising ambiguities and contradictions of neoliberal policy-making and governing of crime. We will discuss how the centrality of security/safety in political discourse coexists with the disengagement of government from the political responsibility to design and implement "policies", around three trends: (i) use of data-driven policing, (ii) replacement of policies with grants and (iii) reliance on community self-defence. In short, we will show how urban security as (public) policy was fading out at the same time as the militarised police department was becoming the only "policy actor" proper.

# Session two - stream one

## Inclusive growth

### Inclusive growth and labour market policy: issues for urban and regional development

**Anne Green and Paul Sissons, University of Warwick and Coventry University**

This paper reflects on the concept of inclusive growth in the context of labour market policy in the United Kingdom, providing a critical overview of current policy before suggesting some potential avenues for future development. Concepts of 'inclusive growth' or 'good growth' have been increasingly invoked as offering prospects for more equitable social outcomes. Although definitions vary, a core area of concern is on making labour markets more inclusive, by expanding access to employment opportunities and increasing the quality of jobs. While the emphasis of labour market policy has focused mainly on the former, the latter is critical given the rise of in-work poverty, though the ways policymakers might support this are less well understood. Strategies aimed at inclusive growth primarily function within established growth orientated policy, but with greater concern for understanding and improving the mechanisms linking growth to broader base labour market benefits, for example through developing policies and practices aimed at encouraging job entry and progression. Such policies however operate within broader national and international processes of labour market change, some of which may be supportive of better outcomes, while others may mitigate against. These include the role of technological change, changes in work organisation and fragmentation of working patterns, restructuring of internal career ladders, employment relations, labour market institutions, austerity and macroeconomic policy more generally. The potential for action at the local and regional level is also strongly shaped by the pre-existing characteristics of local labour markets. This paper sets out the policy challenge around developing more inclusive labour markets in cities and regions. This includes critically examining the underpinnings of current narratives of inclusive growth in relation to labour market policy, as well as positioning the challenge of more inclusive labour markets within the temporal, sectoral and spatial trends of labour market change.

## Capacity and leadership for inclusive growth?

**Atif Shafique, The RSA**

There is growing global and UK interest in inclusive growth as an alternative approach for helping local economies to grow and succeed through more equitable means. This interest has risen against a backdrop of persistent inequality and imbalanced growth, but also as a result of growing confidence from city and locality leaders who see sub-regional devolution as a potential platform for addressing the long-term needs of their economies and communities.

The RSA Inclusive Growth Commission is investigating how a place-based approach to economic inclusivity can drive growth and productivity across the UK. As part of its inquiry it is gathering evidence from various stakeholders across a range of places about the challenges they face; how inclusive growth might help; and what tools and policies can facilitate change. This paper presents emerging findings and key policy questions and challenges, focusing on three of the Commission's 'Deep Dive' case study areas: Newcastle, Cardiff and Bradford.

## City regions and the promotion of inclusive growth via large construction projects: The reconciliation of conflicting spatialities

**Tony Gore, Aidan While, Richard Crisp and Will Eadson, Sheffield Hallam University and University of Sheffield**

Conventional accounts of the move to sub-national policy development and implementation at the city region scale emphasise its role as the optimum level for economic development, infrastructure provision and integrated service delivery. Cross-boundary collaboration of this kind may well achieve improved efficiency and greater effectiveness in public administration and services, both of central concern in an age of austerity. At the same time, such collaborative working is not only being inserted into a pre-existing system of local and sub-regional governance, with its inherent territorial concerns, but is also developing alongside a burgeoning involvement of private and voluntary sector organisations, often with different operational geographies, in policy making and implementation. Current concerns to utilise these emerging structures as a vehicle for promoting inclusive growth - ensuring that economic growth creates opportunities for and distributes increased prosperity around all segments of the population - also bring unemployed residents of targeted areas into the equation. Based on research into the use of large construction projects and their subsequent operation as a means of generating employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged residents in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, this paper aims to delineate the conflicting spatialities of the various actors involved. These range from Local Enterprise Partnerships through combined authorities, local branches of national government departments, unitary authorities and local councillors to building firms, retail companies and voluntary organisations of various sizes on the one hand and potential beneficiaries on the other. The analysis also traces emerging ways in which such conflicts are being mediated and reconciled, often by actors beyond official city region governance mechanisms. In the context of evolving decentralisation processes in the UK, these findings appear to herald an era in which all protagonists will have to undergo a potentially disruptive reorientation from a largely one-dimensional spatiality to simultaneous operation at multiple spatial scales.

# Session two - stream two

## Austerity beyond the State

### The Financialisation of Housing Associations in England: a case of theory running ahead of practice?

**Ian Cole, Ben Pattison and Peter Wells, Sheffield Hallam University**

The paper adds to the (fast) growing literature on financialisation and housing. It presents evidence from a formative study of English housing associations and their use of, and relationship to, finance. The paper addresses questions of what financialisation means in the field of housing studies, how do we know it is occurring and what its consequences may be for the provision of social housing. The concern of the paper is with a middle ground, neither with the wider political economy of finance and global circuits of finance, nor with the consequences of financialisation for tenants; rather, the concern is with housing organisations' navigation of financial markets and the consequences this holds for balancing financial viability with a social mission. The paper finds a mixed picture. Some, often larger, housing associations, are raising finance through major bond issues to support expansion and ambitious capital build programmes. However, opportunities to access finance vary and require housing associations to make decisions which in the long term may recast their social mission. Whilst investment in new stock is welcome, especially in the context of a long term crisis to build significant numbers of new housing in England, this comes with a push in government policy towards the provision of housing at market rent and not at a social rent. The financing of housing associations is far from a steady state and most recently we observe a slowing down in bond finance and a backtracking on consolidation and merger in the sector. Finally, we suggest that financialisation contains an important set of concepts for understanding change in housing associations, but lacks the requirements of a single coherent theory or predictive power.

### The next safety net? - Anchor Institutions and the end of the 'Peak State'

**Paul Hayes and Barbara Colledge, Wakefield Council and Leeds Beckett University**

With the shrinking of the English state through austerity, there is a recognised need for transformation and rebalancing of the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of public, private, social, and community actors and institutions in the functioning of a place. This receding 'peak state' suggests a more fundamental social and economic role for 'Anchor Institutions', as major public, private and third sector/community institutions and assets anchored in local areas, to mitigate the impact on individuals and communities.

The paper examines the potential of Anchor Institutions to facilitate social inclusion and tackle poverty and inequality as the 'peak state' in England recedes, using the Leeds City Region as a case study and drawing on experience in the United States.

It concludes by questioning whether, given the pace, scale and potential impact of spending reductions, a greater reliance on Anchor Institutions can significantly impact on the challenges facing local communities without similar transformations in culture, power, policy and actors for the re-shaping of complex regional systems.

## Big Society...or else? How third sector organisations envisage the rollback of the state and how this influences their welfare strategies

**Luke Temple and Maria Grasso, University of Sheffield**

The pursuit of enduring austerity measures can be seen to heighten the tension between the boundaries of a 'streamlined state' and those of the third sector. Utilising the framework outlined by Lyall and Bua (2015), that of 'Adapting, Creating and Imagining', and data collected by the LIVEWHAT project\*, this analysis draws out how those in the third sector envisage their relationship with government and the provision of welfare. Do organisations feel impelled, or even coerced, to take on the role of the "Big Society" in the wake of government retrenchment? Or is this embraced as an opportunity? Furthermore, what links can we identify between these different attitudes and the strategies of these organisations moving forward?

\*The LIVEWHAT project is a large European project examining citizens' resilience in times of economic hardship. The current stage of the project is collecting data in three interlinked ways: first through analysis of the online landscape of the third sector in the UK; second, with surveys sent out to organisations; and, thirdly, via in-depth interviews with both organizations and their benefactors.

## Session two - stream three Austerity at the Frontline

**Governing austerity, structural violence and working on the front line**

**Annette Hastings, University of Glasgow**

Critical commentary on the public sector 'reform' underway since the 1990s has argued that the transformation of government and services represents an ongoing process of neo-liberal alignment. That the associated New Public Management agenda has led to changes in the conditions of public service work - including its intensity, security and degree of regulation - has also been catalogued. However, the impacts on public service work of post-GFC austerity cuts - arguably the most recent phase of this reform agenda - is less well understood. This paper explores how the 'super-austerity' experienced by local government in the UK is impacting on front line public service work. Drawing on evidence from four in-depth case studies, the paper finds that front line staff are acting as 'shock absorbers' of austerity cuts and that the changes to working conditions they are experiencing can have emotional consequences. The paper argues that while the progress of the neo-liberal project may appear to be smoothed by staff at the front line, the emotional injuries they experience as a result betray the violence of austerity politics.

## Lives changed under austerity? Insights into the experience of mothers in Stockton-on-Tees

**Amy Greer Murphy, Durham University**

This paper discusses emerging findings from ongoing PhD research. The research is examining the experiences of mothers living in Stockton-on-Tees, a borough in the North East of England with wide health inequalities. The study aims to capture how mothers conceptualise their position and experiences in relation to ongoing austerity reforms. It is employing qualitative methods of ethnography and qualitative longitudinal interviewing. I will discuss early findings gathered through the use of a qualitative longitudinal methodology, to examine how narratives of everyday experiences map onto the broader political, social and economic mechanisms operating under austerity. The paper will argue that gender should be seen not merely as incidental, but central to a reading of austerity. In this reading, gender, politics and political economy are inherently connected. This paper seeks to challenge readings of austerity which critique welfare state retrenchment without focussing on its' gendered structure, the ongoing emphasis on household finances which obscures inequalities within households, and a political economy of health which places male life expectancy as its' central variable. Furthermore, through reflecting on the experiences of mothers from a mixture of affluent and deprived wards, I will explore how austerity is shaping not only gendered, but classed narratives. This will be used to develop a gendered understanding, ultimately, of the politics of deepening inequality in the UK.

## Welfare conditionality and offenders: Promoting engagement with or rationalising state support?

**Del Roy Fletcher, Sheffield Hallam University**

UK welfare reform has been characterised by concerted moves towards greater conditionality and sanctioning. This reflects the powerful influence of ideas that have increasingly attributed responsibility for poverty and unemployment to the behaviour of marginalised individuals. Mead (1992) has argued, for example, that the poor are not competent self-regarding individuals who act rationally, but are dependants who ought to receive support on condition of certain restrictions imposed by a protective state that will incentivise engagement with support mechanisms. This presentation critically reflects upon this paternalistic justification for growing welfare conditionality by examining the 'lived experiences' of those subject to it.

# Session three - stream one

## Devolution and employment

**Rescaling employment support accountability: from defensive national neoliberalism to positively integrated city-region ecosystems**

**Adam Whitworth and Eleanor Carter, University of Sheffield**

Waves of successive 'devo deals' are transforming the UK's landscape of spatial governance landscape and transferring new powers to city-regions, facilitating fundamental qualitative policy reconfigurations and opening up new opportunities as well as new risks for citizens and local areas. Focused on city-region's recently emerging roles around employment support policies in the UK context, the article advances in four ways conceptually and geography currently underdeveloped literatures on employment support accountability levers. Firstly, the paper dissects weaknesses in the accountability framework of the UK's key national contracted-out employment support programme for 'harder-to-help' unemployed claimants and identifies the value-added of city-regions in responding to these weaknesses. Secondly, the article highlights the centrality of the nationally neglected network accountability lever in supporting these claimants and advances further by arguing for the need to introduce a conceptual distinction between what we term 'positive' and 'negative' forms of these accountability levels that currently remain homogenized within the literature. Thirdly, the paper argues from a geographical perspective that it is city-regions that are uniquely positioned in the UK context to create the type of positively networked integrated employment support 'ecosystem' that 'harder-to-help' claimants in particular require. Finally, the discussion situates these city-region schemes within their broader socio-economic and political context and connects with broader debates around the lurching development of neoliberalism (Peck and Theodore, 2012). In doing so it argues these whilst these emerging city-region ecosystem models offer much progressive potential to claimants they can at the same time be seen to further embed, refine, and buttress the problematic neoliberal employment support paradigm to which they respond.

## **Devolution and economic and social disadvantage in the age of austerity: A critical assessment of employment, skills and welfare in Sheffield City Region**

**David Etherington and Martin Jones, Middlesex University and University of Sheffield**

The paper explores the implementation of the devolution of employment and skills with respect to disadvantaged groups within the Sheffield City-Region. The Government has established the 'Northern Power House' and Devolution Agreements in which local actors can play a role in shaping employment and skills funding and programmes as well as co-commissioning of welfare to work (in 2017). The key arguments put forward in the paper are that devolution strategies exacerbate and reinforce uneven development; they play a crucial role in depoliticizing the consequent tensions and contradictions associated with austerity cuts within the City Region, and the challenges that policy makers face by ever increasing economic and social inequalities that permeate city-region economic governance. We analyse how growth strategies are undermined by a neoliberal dominated strategy involving austerity driven cuts to welfare and employment services and an orientation towards the market in provision of services. We explore how market orientated policies are unable to sufficiently coordinate effective responses to address a legacy of de-industrialisation, and deep-rooted labour market and social inequalities. The paper argues that these dilemmas are replicated within the Government's national employment and skills policy, its funding regimes, and the various 'Devo-Deals' approaches to labour market policy interventions in the local economy.

## **The participation and experience of young unemployed adults involved in local employment partnerships**

**Nadia Bashir, Elizabeth Sanderson and Peter Wells, Sheffield Hallam University**

This paper explores the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of programmes to combat youth unemployment. Eichhorst et al (2013) recognise that addressing youth unemployment is not simply an economic problem but may also be part of the crisis in the legitimacy of public and private institutions (see also Ritzen and Zimmermann 2013). This paper looks beyond the now well established repertoire of the European Union's Structural Funds (European Commission 2013), such as the Youth Employment Initiative longer term structural reforms, notably around VET (Vocational Education and Training) and practices to encourage hiring by SMEs. Rather, this paper explores the role young people themselves play in the governance of local employment initiatives. The focus throughout the paper is on young people furthest from the labour market. This paper presents interim findings from a large scale evaluation of a €130m seven year programme (called Talent Match) in England which is being funded by the United Kingdom's Big Lottery Fund (the main distributor of Lottery funding in the UK). The findings suggest a somewhat mixed picture. Young people's involvement does apparently improve programme design but sustaining involvement is difficult. Moreover, involvement is partial and may reinforce rather than challenge youth employment interventions.

# Session three - stream two

## Theorising changing governance

### Youth unemployment, “co-production” and “employability”: tensions, resistance and ambivalence

**Richard Crisp and Ryan Powell, Sheffield Hallam University and University of Sheffield**

This paper explores the complex and shifting relations pertaining to the governance of youth unemployment in England. We first frame youth unemployment as an increasingly global concern, beyond the preserve of central governments, with its governance involving a wide range of actors across different sectors and scales. Drawing on qualitative empirical material from a non-mandatory, “co-produced” and VCS-led youth (18-24) unemployment programme, we then detail the complex networks involved in the governance of the programme locally. We highlight the tensions inherent in “co-production” with marginalised young people at a time of increasing welfare conditionality: deficient, pervasive and globalised institutional discourses of “employability” influence local approaches to youth unemployment, stifle innovation and reproduce questionable narratives on the self-discipline and attitudes of young people. However, we also draw attention to the various ways in which resistance to “employability” and conditionality as a tool of governance can manifest through these alternative, co-produced initiatives.

### Strategic Planning as a Field of Power

**Will Paterson, University of York**

This paper argues that seeing city-region planning as a field of power, with different actors competing over different goals through different means, allows the implications of retrenchment presented as localism, claims of citizen empowerment and assertions of pragmatic policy to be explored both in principle and in specific spatial consequences. Working with data gathered from series of public planning hearings in Bradford in 2015, the paper explores how this bureaucratic field is built upon claims of ‘common sense’ peculiar to neoliberal governance. It examines how these claims are challenged by the practices of residents groups whilst being supported by the practices of representatives from development industries. In doing so the paper demonstrates the ways in which different groups advance conflicting aims and how this process is embedded within, and exists as a manifestation of, the wider field of power. Field is therefore argued to be a powerful explanatory framework for contemporary governance, in particular when considering the meso-scale of city strategic planning as a site of enquiry.

## Articulating housing justice in contemporary times: a case study of overcrowding standards

**Helen Carr, University of Kent**

Advocates for housing justice in the UK have, since the industrial revolution, included, as part of their demands for decent, secure and affordable housing for the working poor, the necessity for adequate housing space. The current overcrowding standards, designed to ensure that accommodation provided sufficient air space for the sleeping bodies of the labouring classes, were framed by the philanthropic, scientific and imperial imaginations of Victorian activists who sought to disrupt then dominant classical liberal rationalities by highlighting the moral and physical dangers posed by the slums. The standards, anachronistic from their initial legislative formulation, although never repealed, were rapidly superseded by the emergence of welfare rationalities which turned to national programmes of slum clearance and council housing as the preferred means of delivering housing justice and physically and morally healthy working bodies. The eclipse of welfare by neoliberal rationalities has demanded a different approach. Technologies of risk have been deployed to develop the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This provides an evidence based system to inform the actions of regulatory authorities. It relies upon an expert assessment of the risks posed by hazards in the home based upon the national averages for both the likelihood of the occurrence and the severity of any ensuing harm. However the re-emergence of the distribution of housing space as a political problem has highlighted the limitations of the HHSRS in relation to overcrowding which generates little medical evidence of harm.

This paper charts the emergence of overcrowding and its regulation. It will then turn to three contemporary legal decisions which have drawn on the overcrowding standards despite their anachronistic nature, to demonstrate what is distinct about the current problematic distribution of housing in England and Wales and the shifting shape of overcrowding. Finally it will reflect on the difficulties inherent in articulating housing justice in times of austerity.

# Session three - stream three

## Housing, inequality and austerity

### The role of housing in the decisions to take up work and to progress in work

**Ken Gibb, University of Glasgow**

This paper presents an overview of a recently complete project for Joseph Rowntree Foundation that asks how does housing affect work incentives for people in poverty? We use mixed methods – evidence review, longitudinal modelling and 5 qualitative case studies to draw a series of conclusions and policy recommendations. The cases studies involved: Islington, Oldham, Larne, Mertyhr Tydfil and the Scottish Borders. The work was carried out by Ken Gibb and Sharon Wright (University of Glasgow), Mark Stephens, Filip Sosenko and Kirstin Besemer (Heriot-Watt) and Darja Reuschke (St Andrews). The report can be accessed at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/>

### Understanding Tenancy Failure in the Social Rented Sector: the role of inadequate 'furniture' provision

**Paul Hickman, Will Eadson, Aimee Ambrose and Elaine Batty, Sheffield Hallam University**

Austerity, declining real incomes, welfare reforms, and the increasing use of benefit sanctions, are resulting in the incomes of many social housing tenants being squeezed. As a result, an increasing number are finding it more difficult to sustain their tenancies, a trend which is likely to become more pronounced as the impact of welfare reforms bite. This presentation explores tenancy failure in the social rented sector, with particular attention focusing on the role of furniture provision in this process. It draws on data drawn from two (primarily) qualitative studies to do so: a study which examined the reasons for tenancy failure for 'younger' tenants (i.e. those aged under 35) for the Hyde Housing Group and partners; and, a study for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive which examined the role of furniture provision in sustaining tenancies.

**Gareth Young, University of Sheffield**

On the 3 August 2011 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched a consultation Strengthening Powers of Possession for Anti-Social Behaviour. On the 15 August 2011, five days after the 2011 riots, Grant Shapps - then incumbent Housing Minister - announced that the consultation would be broadened to seek views on the extension of possession to include those convicted of riot-related offences. Despite opposition from the housing sector, the amendments were successfully passed into law and now form part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014).

Given the inequality in punishments afforded to rioters depending upon the tenure they reside in, a key aim for this research was to explore the local-level perspectives of these new powers and what these may mean for the future of the housing and anti-social behaviour governance landscapes in the future. Drawing on empirical research conducted with frontline and strategic practitioners from across England, this presentation aims to explore the way in which social housing – and social housing tenants – became part of the narrative in response to the 2011 riots, as well as being posited as a policy solution to the prevention of future outbreaks of disorder.