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The UK Community Anchor Model and its challenges for community sector theory and practice

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9 **The UK community anchor model and its challenges for critical community sector**
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11 **theory and practice**
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16 *James Henderson, University of Edinburgh, and Chris McWilliams, Heriot Watt*
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18 *University*
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22
23 **Abstract**
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25 The growing policy focus since the 1970s in Scotland, the UK and internationally on
26
27 'community', community development and community ownership and enterprise has
28
29 facilitated a certain growth of the community sector and therefore of concern for
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31 related discussions of theory and practice. This paper positions this turn to community
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33 within the shifting global political economic context, in particular the rolling out of the
34
35 neo-liberal state internationally from the 1980s and a related urban crisis management
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37 of structural inequality (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). By focusing on the emergence
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39 of *community anchor organisations* – understood in the UK context as multi-purpose,
40
41 local community-led organisations – within Scottish and UK policy-making since the
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43 2000s, the central dilemma for critical community sector theory and practice of
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45 sustaining a local egalitarian vision and practice (Pearce, 2003) given this neo-liberal
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47 context is explored. A Scottish urban community anchor provides an illustration of this
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9 challenge for theory and practice and of how it can be re-considered through
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11 discussions of 'progressive mutualism' (Pearce, 2009) and 'resilience, re-working and
12
13 resistance' (Katz, 2004; Cumbers et al., 2010).
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18 **Keywords:** community sector theory and practice; community anchor organisations;
19
20 Scottish and UK public policy; neo-liberal urban social policy; progressive mutualism
21
22 and community ownership.
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24

25 26 27 **Introduction**

28
29 This paper explores community sector theory and practice (CSTP) through
30
31 developments in Scotland, and the UK more generally, of the *community anchor model*
32
33 since its first explicit articulation within UK policy-making in the early 2000s (Home
34
35 Office, 2004). The scope and roots of CSTP are outlined and positioning the developing
36
37 community sector within a shifting political economic context and roll-out of the neo-
38
39 liberal state. This is then developed through discussion of neo-liberal urban crisis
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41 management and the political construction of the third and community sector(s) roles
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46 (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Cochrane, 2007; Mooney, 2010).
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9 In turning to the rise of 'community anchors' within Scottish and UK policy-making, a
10 limited if growing UK research literature is recognised on community anchor
11 organisations and their like (Pearce: 1993; Thake, 2001, 2006; Weaver, 2009;
12
13 Hutchison and Cairns, 2010; Baker, 2011; McKee, 2012; Henderson, 2014); and on a
14
15 related community (asset) ownership (Aiken at al., 2008; Aiken et al., 2011; Moore and
16
17 McKee, 2014). Use of the term is recognised as distinct from that of community/social
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19 anchors in North America (Clopton and Finch, 2011).
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28 Given the local egalitarian solidarity often aspired to within CSTP, theorising for a more
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30 critical CSTP concerned for progressive mutualism and challenging of neo-liberal
31
32 orthodoxy is then considered (Pearce: 2003, 2009; Cumbers et al., 2010). Such critical
33
34 theory and practice is further explored and illustrated through the practices of a long-
35
36 standing Scottish urban community-controlled housing association (CCHA) and
37
38 community anchor working within a multi-ethnic, largely working class community in
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40 Glasgow.
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46 **The scope and roots of community sector theory and practice**

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48 Ridley-Duff and Bull's (2011) critical exploration of social enterprise theory and
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50 practice is pitched as two halves: firstly, considering the historical and theoretical
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9 contexts of the emerging social economy; and secondly, concerned to explore diverse
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11 current practices. They support understanding of current debates for theory and
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13 practice *and* critical aspirations for a cooperative, progressive social economy. In
14
15 exploring CSTP, this paper similarly recognises the pluralism of CSTP while advocating
16
17 for progressive, critical approaches. Here 'critical' is understood as concerned to
18
19 explore the asymmetrical distribution and dynamics of power across agency and
20
21 structure, and relative to an ethos of 'human flourishing' (Giddens, 1984; Sayers,
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23 2009).
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30 The term 'community sector' gained increasing usage in the UK under the 'New
31
32 Labour' UK Government (1997-2010) given the latter's emphasis on communitarian
33
34 thinking and a 'Third Way' (Haugh and Kitson, 2007). Thake (2006) identifies a
35
36 community sector of not-for-profit (third sector) organisations and groups working
37
38 from ultra-local level to 'borough-wide' communities of place and 'sub-regional' local
39
40 communities of interest. These vary in size from volunteer-run neighbourhood groups
41
42 to relatively sizeable community-based organisations with turnovers of millions or tens
43
44 of millions of UK pounds sterling e.g. CCHAs. Pearce (1993, 2003) similarly articulates a
45
46 'community economy' of not-for-profit community enterprises; local voluntary
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48 organisations; and informal self-help economy. He argues for diverse practice that
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9 integrates campaigning for social change; community-led local development; and local
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11 service provision. CSTP is then focused on the roles, practices and aspirations of
12
13 community organisations, groups and networks working across a broad field of social,
14
15 economic and political activity.
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20 'Community' is often presented as the earliest form of human organising, one that
21
22 coordinates through social bonds and general reciprocity (Giddens, 1984; Harvey 2009
23
24 [1973]). Researchers advocating for the community sector in the UK often articulate a
25
26 local egalitarian social vision that recognises common ground with 17th century
27
28 radicals, e.g. the Diggers in England, and the friendly societies, cooperatives and early
29
30 trades unions of the 18th and 19th centuries across the UK (Pearce, 1993; Aiken et al.,
31
32 2008; Wylter, 2009; Woodin et al., 2010). Those concerned for the social economy,
33
34 understood as an alternative to public and private sectors, likewise point to its varied
35
36 roots: in the cooperative movement in western Europe; moral 'laissez-faire' economic
37
38 thinking; and other social action, e.g. philanthropic organisations and voluntary
39
40 associations (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011; International Centre of Research and
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42 Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy, 2012).
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9 Murray (2013) argues that the arrival of mass production in the 20th century halted the
10 growth of the cooperative movement. Post-1945, the economies of western Europe
11 and North America were dominated by the interests of private (capital) and public
12 (state) sectors; with trade unions active in protecting the interests of labour (Atkinson
13 and Moon, 1994; Thelen, 2014). Although, 'community' and social economy remained,
14 of course, relevant, e.g. Alinsky's community organising tradition in the USA (Eversley,
15 2009). The growing crisis of urban poverty and related racial discrimination in the
16 1960s and 1970s in the USA and UK sparked renewed interest from the Keynesian
17 welfare state in 'community'. The US Government's 'war on poverty' in the 1960s led
18 on to a growing role for non-profit community development corporations (CDCs)
19 across the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Cochrane, 2007). In the
20 UK, state funding for community development programmes was initiated in the late
21 1960s (Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Cochrane, 2007; Craig et al., 2011), while Power
22 (2011) observes the rise of urban community cooperatives from the 1970s.

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44 The shift in the 1980s to neo-liberal UK and US governments marked a transition to a
45 focus on service-led economies and declining trades union power and working class
46 activism. Although community resistance and activism in the UK continued as 'popular
47 planning'; campaigning on gender, race, disability, environmental issues; and urban
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9 race-related protest (Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Hoggett, 1997; Ridley-Duff and Bull,
10 2011). Neo-liberal policy-making – UK Conservative Government (1979-1997), then
11 New Labour Government – turned to public, private and ‘community’ partnerships in
12 the 1990s and 2000s to manage urban spatial inequalities. Partnerships leading to
13 increased focus on community regeneration organisations – and now community asset
14 organisations – and their related roles in public service provision across Scotland and
15 the UK (Atkinson and Moon, 1994; Thake; 1995, 2001, 2006; Aiken et al., 2011; Moore
16 and McKee, 2014). More recently, there has been emphasis too on ‘asset-based
17 approaches’ concerned to build a range of community capitals (O’Leary, Burkett and
18 Braithwaite, 2011); as well as their critique as adaption to neo-liberalism (MacLeod
19 and Emejulu, 2014).
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37 These trends are more widely relevant to developed states in Europe and North
38 America. Aiken et al. (2008) review varieties of community ownership and local public
39 ownership in Europe, and in the USA where the local state often ‘contracts out’ non-
40 essential services and legislation supports investment in community organisations.
41 They also position the land rights movements of first peoples as part of such a
42 community ownership. O’Leary, Burkett and Braithwaite’s (2011) explore international
43 examples of rural and urban asset-based approaches from developed and developing
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9 countries. The re-emergence of social enterprise, cooperatives and the 'solidarity
10 economy' in Europe, North America and globally since the 1980s is explored by Amin
11 (2009) and Murray (2013).
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18 Critical accounts of the emerging community sector in the UK and internationally may
19 recognise a language of local egalitarian solidarity that seeks to inspire community
20 ownership and empowerment. Yet, identify this as being facilitated by the rise of the
21 neo-liberal state with its focus on managing communities and structural inequality
22 through partnership (Cochrane, 2007).
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32 **Neo-liberal urban crisis management**

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34 The shift to the neo-liberal state during the 1970s and 1980s, its emphasis on the
35 private sector, 'competition' and 'market fundamentalism', and its rolling-out in
36 diverse forms across the globe is well-documented (Cochrane, 2007; Peck, 2008;
37 Harvey, 2011; Cumbers and McMaster, 2012). Such global political economic change
38 has had profound social, political and ecological impacts, including increasing capitalist
39 urbanisation, global migration, political conflicts, pressures on eco-systems, and
40 widening uneven development and inequality (Alperson, 2002; Katz, 2004; Cochrane,
41 2007; Harvey, 2011).
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11 Further, the 2007 international financial crisis and state policies of 'austerity' that seek
12 to reduce public spending and increasing privatisation have sought to shift
13 responsibility and blame, 'responsibility dumping', onto the local state rather than
14 holding to account failing international financial structures and central state policy-
15 making (Peck, 2014). Within this context, the neo-liberal state continues to seek
16 reductions in welfare spending and services through an urban social policy of
17 partnerships, 'managerialism' and control of 'disorderly' communities. The political
18 construction by the state of third and community sector roles should then be
19 understood as primarily concerned with urban crisis management of structural
20 inequality rather than the flourishing of work class communities (Brenner and
21 Theodore, 2002; Cochrane, 2007; Mooney, 2010; Gray and Mooney, 2011).
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39 In the UK, the shift from Keynesian welfare state to neo-liberal state during the 1980s
40 was characterised by substantially increasing economic inequalities that have since
41 been sustained (Belfield et al., 2015). Shifting urban social policy as a focus on
42 partnership and managerialism through public sector, private sector and 'community'
43 has, Johnstone and McWilliams (2005: 172) argue, sustained a 'dual society' offering
44 only "*the participation of the excluded*" to working class communities. While such
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9 partnership can also undermine existing community organisations (Collins, 1997) and
10 offers little prospect of a deeper vision of social justice (Cochrane, 2007).
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15 Most recently under the UK Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition
16 Government's (2010-2015) 'Big Society' agenda, localism in England has been
17 promoted as an alternative to 'Big Government' and solution to the 'broken society'
18 (Blond, 2010). This agenda has been widely critiqued as seeking voluntarism and an
19 apolitical civil society over an activist third sector, and providing cover for public
20 spending cuts and privatisation (Gray and Mooney, 2011; Coote, 2011; Alcock, 2012).
21
22 The key legislation, the Localism Act 2011, aims to support a shift to localism and
23 provides limited community sector opportunities including a community-right-to-bid
24 for land, community-right-to-challenge service provision, and neighbourhood
25 planning.¹
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42 In Scotland, Danson and Whittam (2011) characterise Scottish Government public
43 service reform as tending to a 'European Public Service' model with the third sector a
44 key partner within the state's collective provision. The Scottish Government's version
45 of localism as community empowerment can, therefore, be viewed as distinctive from
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53 ¹ Some sections of the Localism Act 2011 will apply in Wales.
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9 developments in England (Moore and McKee, 2014). However, whilst its Community
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11 Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 emphasises tackling inequality, the Act treads
12
13 similar ground to the UK Government's Localism 2011 Act in terms of community
14
15 sector opportunities.² Both are seemingly closer to the 'localism' that Painter et al.
16
17 (2011) highlight as a decentralising of state and public sector structure and services,
18
19 rather than a 'community empowerment' as citizen activity that includes independent
20
21 community action that may conflict with the state.
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27 The Scottish Government's public service reform agenda, as articulated by the 'Christie
28
29 Commission' (Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, 2011), accepted
30
31 the UK Coalition Government's strategy of reducing public spending. The Commission
32
33 highlights partnership-building strategies – 'strengthening communities', partnership-
34
35 working and preventative approaches – that aim to improve performance and reduce
36
37 service demand. However, the Commission's acknowledgement of the role
38
39 independent community action and organisations (2011: 34) and the damage to
40
41 society of inequality (2011: 6) *arguably* provide leverage for community sector
42
43 advocacy on inequality and sector development.
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51 ² The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 extends the community 'right-to-buy' to all
52 communities in Scotland; further supports public asset transfer to community bodies; and supports the
53 involvement of 'community bodies' in improving public service delivery and community planning.
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11 The fundamental ambiguity for critical CSTP is then further clarified. The neo-liberal
12 state seeks to engage the community sector in its urban crisis management strategies
13 of the consequences of structural inequality. It directs the community sector's role via
14 policy and funding and therefore generates challenges to the sector's local egalitarian
15 ethos and solidarity (Cochrane, 2007).
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25 **Community anchors and the challenges of policy and practice**

26
27 Increasing policy focus on the community sector is also fuelling the community sector's
28 own aspirations. Pearce (1993, 2003) seems the first to articulate the concept of a
29 facilitative, locally-controlled 'core community enterprise' concerned for local
30 economic and social development; building the local community sector; and working
31 productively with local state and business.
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41 Thake's (1995, 2001, 2006) research into community regeneration in the UK advocates
42 for multi-purpose neighbourhood regeneration organisations working as a 'local
43 anchor' (Thake, 2001) – later 'community anchor' (Thake, 2006). Thake (2001: viii)
44 identifies these organisations as possessing a board or committee "*accountable to*
45 *local constituencies*". Further, anchors are holistic and undertake local strategic,
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9 leadership and facilitative roles; have strong organisational structures that support
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11 working with state and 'the grassroots'; and provide a range of local services and
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13 support for local community groups.
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18 Such local ownership and 'control' provides a crucial *divergence* with the use of the
19
20 term 'community anchor' in the USA. There local public sector institutions, private
21
22 companies, and larger non-profits – sometimes known as 'anchor institutions' e.g.
23
24 universities and hospitals – can be termed 'community anchors'. Clopton and Finch
25
26 (2011) develop a 'social anchor theory' where these institutions are seen to strengthen
27
28 social capital and community identity. The UK community anchor model is better
29
30 understood as influenced by the North American CDC model of often sizeable non-
31
32 profit community-based organisations leading local economic and social development
33
34 (Pearce, 1993; Thake, 2006; Cochrane, 2007).
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41 Thake (2001, 2006) explicitly aligned community anchors with UK New Labour
42
43 Government policy on welfare reform, tackling of 'social exclusion' and promotion of
44
45 communitarian approaches or 'third way' (Haugh and Kitson, 2007). Anchors received
46
47 a limited airing alongside community asset ownership in UK Government policy-
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49 making (Home Office, 2004; Her Majesty's Treasury/Cabinet Office, 2007). However,
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9 the UK Coalition Government (2010-15), in shifting narrative from third sector to civil
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11 society (Alcock, 2012), has ignored anchors in its policy rhetoric whilst generating
12
13 certain opportunities for community ownership through the Localism Act 2011.
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18 In Scotland, the previous Scottish Executive (1999-2007) – a Labour-led coalition with
19
20 the Scottish Liberal Democrats – pursued regeneration and public service reform
21
22 through a partnership model (Johnstone and McWilliams, 2005; Matthews, 2013),
23
24 without drawing on the community anchor narrative. The SNP Scottish Government
25
26 (2007 – current) has emphasised community empowerment, place-based approaches
27
28 and community asset ownership (Matthews, 2013; Moore and McKee, 2014) and
29
30 promoted community anchors through community-led regeneration, recognising the
31
32 potential of CCHAs and community development trusts (CDTs) to fulfil this role
33
34 (Scottish Government and COSLA, 2009; Scottish Government, 2011).³
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42 Community sector representative bodies across the UK have advocated for community
43
44 anchors as community-led, multi-purpose organisations that provide local leadership,
45
46 local development and services. In England, the then Community Alliance (2009) – now
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51 ³ Other community-based organisations including community councils, community-led health
52 organisations and community social enterprises are recognised as potential anchors within the 2011
53 Regeneration policy.
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9 effectively Locality – and in Scotland, the Scottish Community Alliance (SCA) – then
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11 Local People Leading (2008) – have advocated for community anchors too. A small but
12
13 growing research literature illustrates the model’s application within urban, rural and
14
15 remote contexts in Scotland, England and UK (Pearce, 1993; Thake: 2001, 2006;
16
17 Weaver, 2009; Hutchison and Cairns, 2010; Sampson and Weaver, 2010; Baker, 2011;
18
19 McKee, 2012; Henderson, 2014). Weaver (2009) stresses the ‘inherent complexity’ of
20
21 anchor roles and functions, while Hutchison and Cairns (2010) point to their ‘hybridity’
22
23 in working across community-based ‘associational’ approaches, public service delivery
24
25 and social enterprise market-based trading activity.
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32 One particular challenge highlighted by the literature is that of the working
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34 relationship between anchors and the state, and how the former can sustain
35
36 commitment to community interests (local mission) rather than simply become a
37
38 vehicle of state policy implementation (Local People Leading, 2008; Weaver, 2009;
39
40 Hutchison and Cairns, 2010; Cotterill and Richardson 2011). Weaver (2009) argues for
41
42 a ‘sustainable independence’ from the state via robust governance and reliable
43
44 sources of income generation from community ownership and enterprise. However,
45
46 Weaver (2009) also recognises the state’s crucial role in enabling or blocking such
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48 sustainable independence.
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11 The potential of community enterprise working through the market is likewise
12 explored and advocated (Pearce: 1993, 2003; Thake, 2006; Weaver, 2009; Hutchison
13 and Cairns, 2010). Yet there is also deep unease at the 'marketisation of society'
14 (Weaver, 2009) and of private sector intent to colonise social enterprise (Pearce, 2003,
15 2009; Demarco and Henderson, 2014). Further, Cochrane (2007) argues that the reality
16 of CDTs (UK) and CDCs (USA) as self-sustaining social enterprises is questionable given
17 they often draw on state subsidy and can tend to generate insecure, low paid
18 employment.
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32 Crucially then CSTP must consider political economic dimensions – and relations
33 between state, market and community – in order to deepen understanding of the
34 multi-purpose, leadership practices of community anchors (Pearce, 2003; Henderson,
35 2014; McKee, 2015). Pearce (2003, 2009) provides the most developed narrative of a
36 community sector concerned to empower 'ordinary working people' to challenge
37 inequality and state and private sector interests. He brings together social, economic
38 and ecological goals as a 'working for the common good', and outlines political
39 economic aspirations for 'mutualism as dominant'. Here a socially-owned sector or
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9 'third system' is positioned as providing alternatives to the public and private sectors
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11 (or systems) – each understood as part of a 'modern mixed economy'.⁴
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16 Peace (2003) argues that this 'dominant mutualism' provides an alternative to a
17
18 'dominant capitalism'. This supports critical CSTP in positioning itself relative to other
19
20 progressive political economic practices concerned for ownership, inequality, uneven
21
22 development and ecological sustainability (Jackson, 2009; Reid Foundation, 2012) and
23
24 the "promotion of inclusive and responsible forms of decentralisation" (Pike et al.,
25
26 2016: 3). Such deepening political economic dialogue supports the community sector
27
28 as it necessarily works across tensions between: (1) advocating for diverse local
29
30 community interests (leadership); (2) developing viable organisations and sector
31
32 (survival); and (3) sustaining an egalitarian, progressive social vision (commitment)
33
34 (Henderson, 2014). Given the pluralism of CSTP, such dialogue can support as well
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36 recognition of the differences between neo-liberal 'austerity localism' and a
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51 ⁴ Pearce's three systems have a certain resonance with Polanyi's three forms of economic
52 coordination as market exchange, redistribution (state), and reciprocity (community) –
53 (Harvey, 2009 [1973]).
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9 'progressive localism' that is outward-looking and challenging (Featherstone et al.,
10
11 2012).⁵
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15
16 Cumbers et al. (2010) offer one such tool for critical investigation of UK practice and
17
18 context using Katz's (2004) three-fold framework of: (1) *resilience* – working class
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20 communities working together to 'get by' in the face of neo-liberalism; (2) *reworking* –
21
22 generating 'autonomous' spaces relatively free of the interests of capital; and (3)
23
24 *resistance* – more fundamental challenges to capital and inequality by developing
25
26 'oppositional consciousness'. Such a framework can be used to enrich discussions of
27
28 progressive mutualism (Pearce, 2009) and re-think community sector ambitions to
29
30 integrate community leadership, sector survival and social vision and commitment
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32 (Henderson, 2014) in the midst of urban crisis management.
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39 **Learning for theory and practice from actual urban community anchor practice**

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41 Material from case-study research on Govanhill Housing Association (GHHA), a CCHA in
42
43 Glasgow, is used here to explore critical CSTP (Henderson, 2014). Initially, the research
44
45 methodology is outlined, then GHHA is illustrated in the community anchor role. The
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49 ⁵ For instance, Blond (2010), one of the architects of the UK Coalition Government's 'Big
50 Society', presents a 'post-liberal' mutualism of economic egalitarianism and social
51 conservatism.
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9 community of Govanhill and the 'slum housing crisis' there is described, and the latter
10 then provides focus for discussion of GHHA's work to advocate for community
11 interests. This in turn supports consideration of the learning for critical CSTP.
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16 17 18 ***A qualitative case-study methodology*** 19

20 Henderson (2014) presents case-study investigations of three Scottish community
21 anchors – urban, rural, remote. The research aimed to deepen understanding of the
22 realities of community anchor practices, challenges and contexts. A qualitative case-
23 study research methodology (Giddens, 1984; Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009) provided
24 the diversity of data collection methods and interpretative analysis from which to
25 illustrate such complexity and explore critical perspectives. Given the emphasis of
26 community sector representative bodies on the relevance of anchors across varied
27 geographies, an organisation from each of the urban, rural and remote contexts was
28 studied to enrich discussions of CSTP.
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44 Given this paper's focus on urban policy, GHHA is considered here, although many of
45 the themes arising have relevance to the other two anchors. The case-study material
46 was developed through: (1) interviews with local staff, activists and volunteers, and
47 others with relevant knowledge re. organisation, context and policy; (2) observation
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9 and participant observation at local meetings within the organisation, the community
10 and services, and by walking around the community and talking informally; and, (3)
11 extensive study of a range of internal and external documents and local media
12 reporting relating to policy, research, service provision, community activity and GHHA
13 activity. Triangulating across this breadth of material informed the researcher's
14 interpretative case-study development of GHHA as a community anchor and related
15 learning for critical CSTP.⁶
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Govanhill Housing Association as community anchor

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30 GHHA was formed in 1974, one of the earliest of the CCHAs (Glasgow and West of
31 Scotland Forum of Housing Associations [GWSFHA], 1999), and has a management
32 committee of local tenants and residents. It owns over 2200 properties, almost all of
33 the social housing in Govanhill, and employs approximately 50 staff. GHHA works with
34 the local public sector as part of Govanhill Service Hub to coordinate housing
35 management, other public services and community development activity in the area.
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37 GHHA has had a long-standing role in local regeneration and has developed capacity –
38 through subsidiaries Govanhill Community Development Trust and Great Gardens – to
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50 ⁶ The research specific to GHHA included 13 interviews – six with staff; four with board members; three
51 with others from (local) third, public and research organisations in 2012. Two interviewees were from
52 Black and Ethnic minority communities. One interviewee had direct experience of working with the
53 Roma community. Seven different meetings were observed and over 110 documents were studied.
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9 lead and support: community-building activity, tenant and resident participation,
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11 community enterprise development, employment training, community sector
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13 development, environmental project work and local workspace provision. It also
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15 provides welfare and advocacy services, including those developed with Black and
16
17 minority ethnic residents, and office space for other community organisations.
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22 The 'community-controlled', multi-purpose roles of CCHAs in Glasgow are long-
23
24 documented (GWSFHA: 1999, 2015; Paddison et al., 2008; McKee: 2010, 2012).
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26
27 GWSFHA promotes the community anchor model (McKee, 2011), although not all
28
29 CCHAs would seek the role. The summary of GHHA's role above, and the material that
30
31 follows, illustrates the 'inherent complexity' of the anchor role (Weaver, 2009) and the
32
33 importance of the long-term relationship with the state – Glasgow City Council (GCC)
34
35 and, initially, the Scottish Office, now Scottish Government. GHHA (2010) is a
36
37 registered mutual organisation; an Industrial and Provident Society with not-for-profit
38
39 status, an asset lock, and democratic local governance. Its participation within national
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41 umbrella bodies GWSFHA and the Scottish Community Alliance points to its
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43 commitment to advocate at national policy levels.
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51 ***Govanhill and the 'slum housing crisis'***
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9 Govanhill is an urban, mixed but largely working-class, multi-ethnic community of over
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11 15,000 people (Bynner, 2010; Lynch, 2010) positioned a mile to the south of Glasgow
12
13 City Centre. 19th century industrialisation led to the building of tenements for
14
15 immigrant workers, in particular Irish people and later East European Jewish people
16
17 (Thomas, 1999). It has continued to be a 'first point of call' for many immigrants
18
19 including: Pakistani/South Asians settling since the 1960s (Thomas, 1999); in the last
20
21 decade, Eastern Europeans, following A8 and A2 EU state accession⁷ in particular
22
23 Slovak and Romanian Roma; and a wider range of global migrants, asylum seekers and
24
25 refugees⁸ (Bynner, 2010). Bynner (2016) illustrates Govanhill as a 'superdiverse'
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28 community with complex ethnic and other social relations set within the context of
29
30 wider dynamics of international migration and structural inequalities.
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37 High levels of deprivation are revealed across most health, income and educational
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39 indicators in many parts of the community (Glasgow Centre for Population Health,
40
41 2008; Scottish Public Health Observatory, 2010) in particular within the social housing
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43 neighbourhoods and private rental tenement housing areas. State investment in
44
45 housing improvement in Govanhill, managed by GHHA, through the state-funded
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50 ⁷ In 2004, eight Eastern European countries (A8) – Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania,
51 Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – joined the EU; Romania and Bulgaria (A2) joined in 2007. A8 citizens
52 gained full access in May 2011 to UK welfare and employment benefits; A2 citizens at the end of 2013.

53 ⁸ Some reporting suggests the use of over 50 different languages (Bynner, 2010).
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9 'Comprehensive Tenement Improvement' approach halted in 2004, leaving some 750
10 tenements in south-west Govanhill as 'unimproved' (GWSFHA, 2015). Many private
11 landlords have failed to invest in the maintenance of their properties within these
12 tenement blocks, yet have continued to rent them out in often appalling states of
13 repair and over-crowding to vulnerable immigrant workers and families. The resulting
14 'slum housing crisis'⁹ led an initial 2008 GHHA survey to estimate the costs of bringing
15 the tenements back to a safe, liveable standard to be of the order of £187m (Berry,
16 2008).¹⁰
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30 Many Eastern European EU immigrants, particularly from the Roma communities, have
31 also struggled to find sustained, adequately paid employment – leaving them open to
32 exploitation by landlords and gang-masters – and often lacking access to, or
33 experiencing discrimination from, the UK benefits system (Roma-Net, 2011; Paterson
34 et al., 2012). This, in the context of the Roma escaping discrimination in Eastern
35 Europe (Poole and Adamson, 2008), further illustrates the complexity of social,
36 political and economic factors – locally, nationally, internationally – that are
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47 ⁹ The term 'slum housing' was used in the 2008 Scottish Parliament Petition (GHHA, 2008).

48 ¹⁰ The 2008 Scottish Parliament Petition (PE1189) (GHHA, 2008; Scottish Parliament, 2008) notes that
49 2300 homes were improved to above 'below tolerable standard' (BTS) in Govanhill between 1974 and
50 2004; with an estimated £120m spent on this process indicated in press reporting. GHHA estimated that
51 about 750 tenement flats (largely privately rent/owned) remained BTS in the unimproved area(s) in
52 2008; with a wider body of almost 2000 properties reported as needing essential repairs (Berry, 2008).
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9 constructing this community and across which GHHA as a community anchor must
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11 seek to work.
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16 ***GHHA and challenging the slum housing crisis (2008 to 2012)***
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18 Since 2008, GHHA and its community partners – including Govanhill Law Centre (GLC),
19
20 Crosshill and Govanhill Community Council and later Govanhill Community Action
21
22 (GoCA) – has been actively advocating for state intervention and re-investment in the
23
24 community’s housing. Discussions with interviewees supported understanding of the
25
26 complexity of GHHA’s role, with one interviewee (1) providing a core narrative:
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30 *The Association submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament in 2008, saying*
31
32 *we still had poor housing conditions in the area, because in the south-west of*
33
34 *the area there were still a number of tenement blocks that hadn’t had*
35
36 *comprehensive improvements or repairs. It’s very much in the private sector*
37
38 *and 80% of it is in the private rented sector. So we had lots of issues with rogue*
39
40 *landlords, and EU (im)migrants being exploited. We worked with the Govanhill*
41
42 *Law Centre to prepare a petition to the Scottish Parliament to complain about*
43
44 *the sub-standard housing in the area, and that people were being exploited.*
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9 *A number of serious challenges are still to be addressed in Govanhill, and we*
10 *needed resources and changes in legislation to address all these issues. It ran*
11 *through the Scottish Parliament for about three years and I think it was the*
12 *longest running petition in the Scottish Parliament. The Director of the*
13 *Govanhill Group went through to give evidence, along with another committee*
14 *member at the time.*
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25 Their petitioning was influential on Scottish housing legislation (Harkins, Egan and
26 Craig, 2011)¹¹ and provided the central state, local state and community sector with
27 the opportunity to work together: developing a public services hub; investing in the
28 community sector and community-building; and developing a regeneration and
29 housing investment plan for the area through Govanhill Regeneration Taskforce.
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39 The work of Govanhill Service Hub has been reviewed through the Scottish
40 Government's Equally Well initiative and is illustrative of the potential for public sector
41 – community sector partnership-working (Harkins, Egan and Craig, 2011; Harkins and
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50 ¹¹ The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 – both include
51 measures to empower local authorities to deal with private rental housing problems.
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9 Egan, 2012a). GHHA was also able to support further community sector development,
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11 in particular a community sector forum, as interviewee (1) illustrates:

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13 *We've always argued that regeneration of this community should be*
14 *community-led. And that is, led by local people deciding for themselves what*
15 *needs to be done, and how to go about it. So, I suppose GoCA, Govanhill*
16 *Community Action, has been the start of providing a kind of voice for the people*
17 *that is recognised within community planning structures. ... I think it has now*
18 *been accepted that the Govanhill Partnership, the new Neighbourhood*
19 *Management Group, will actually recognise GoCA as a platform for local people*
20 *to influence ...*
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34 GHHA and community partners established GoCA from 2010 as a core group of 10 – 12
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36 local community and voluntary organisations to coordinate local activity; take
37
38 initiatives, e.g. participatory budgeting pilot; and seek to network widely across the
39
40 local ethnic and class diversity (GHHA, 2012; Harkins and Egan, 2012a; 2012b).
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46 While the Govanhill Regeneration Taskforce (2010-2012) might have offered
47
48 expectations of a step-change, the final report lacked actual further investment and
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50 related policy commitment (Govanhill Regeneration Taskforce, 2012). By the end of
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9 2012, the area was still lacking housing investment on the scale needed to seriously
10 impact on the housing crisis.¹² More recently, further actual funding of £4.3m from
11 Scottish Government and £5m from GCC has been agreed and is to be used from 2015
12 to 2017 by GHHA on an 'acquire and repair' scheme in the four worst tenement blocks
13 (GWSFHA, 2015).¹³ In the meantime, the community has continued in crisis and levels
14 of local frustration have risen leading to oppositional grassroots community
15 campaigning in the area.¹⁴
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27 ***State urban crisis management and aspirations for a progressive mutualism***

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29 The illustrations above of GHHA as community anchor and its leadership and advocacy
30 on an issue fundamental to local community interests, may highlight the potential of
31 public sector – community sector partnerships to coordinate local services. Yet, in the
32 process, the community sector has been absorbed within state urban community crisis
33 management (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Cochrane 2007) as part of 'responsibility
34 dumping' on the local state and community (Peck, 2014). The management committee
35 and staff were keenly aware of the scale of the housing crisis and the failure of state
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46 ¹² Glasgow City Council Executive report (2013) records £18m of GCC's Private Sector Housing
47 Programme Grant from the Scottish Government over the previous 6 years as being spent on Govanhill.

48 ¹³ including Enhanced Enforcement Area powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 to regulate
49 private landlords in 'exceptional cases'.

50 ¹⁴ including a march for women's safety in 2014, and an ongoing 'Lets Save Govanhill' campaign
51 (Swindon, 2015). Note, the increasing complexity of community relations since 2012 is beyond the scope
52 of this research.
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9 institutions to invest on the necessary scale. Interviewee (2), for instance, highlighted
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11 growing social tension and frustrations with the scale of local state intervention:
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13 *Community Spirit is leaving. There's some parts of Govanhill that are still really*
14 *lovely. When the 'right-to-buy' came in that was a big problem¹⁵. ... The over-*
15 *crowding is absolutely horrendous: cockroaches as big as mice, how can people*
16 *live like this. People don't believe that this is happening, until you tell them. Too*
17 *many people are shutting their eyes to this. Why is the council allowing this to*
18 *happen? They've topped and tailed some buildings but what good is that, as*
19 *some people wouldn't open their doors to let them in.*
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32 Interviewee (3) pointed to the very real limitations that poverty, deprivation and
33
34 inequality have brought to peoples' lives and the capacity for community-led
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36 regeneration:
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38 *You can't expect people to give of their time and skills when they themselves*
39 *are living in poverty. I'm not saying that people in poverty don't do those kinds*
40 *of things. Often it's the complete opposite; those who are most in need are*
41 *giving the most. But it's not for us to expect people to get involved in their*
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51 ¹⁵ UK Conservative Government policy in the 1980s switched the focus of housing policy from public
52 sector to supporting owner-occupation and private rental. The sale of public housing was facilitated
53 through 'right-to-buy' legislation (Housing Act, 1980) and mortgage tax relief.
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9 *community or create community spirit or be active in their community when*
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11 *they are living in poverty.*
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16 Indeed, this slum housing crisis illustrates the failing private rental housing market in
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18 Govanhill with its roots in the policies of neo-liberal UK Conservative Government in
19
20 the 1980s of shifting to owner-occupation and private rental including through ‘the
21
22 right-to-buy’ (Atkinson and Moon, 1994).¹⁶ Furthermore, the lack of long-term state
23
24 investment of the necessary scale in public and social housing; and a related dearth of
25
26 socially-controlled (mutual) investment institutions to support this objective.
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32 The persistence, commitment and skills of the activists and staff of GHHA and local
33
34 community sector – evidenced across interview, observation and documentation
35
36 (Henderson, 2014) – continue to impress. Many have been working for one or more
37
38 decades, some now into a fourth decade, as part of a *resilience* or ‘getting by’ (Katz,
39
40 2004). A human solidarity that supports diverse community interests, sustains the
41
42 organisation and local community sector, and provides the bedrock for any progressive
43
44 mutualism.
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49 ¹⁶ Within Govanhill there has been increasing private rental tenure at the expense of social housing –
50 see Thomas, 1999: 121; Bynner, 2010: 6. Comparative figures (1991-2009) from these reports only
51 highlight the broad trend as the area considered as ‘Govanhill’ shifts but support the observations of the
52 interviewees.
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11 There is, too, a *reworking* here to create an ‘alternative space’ distinct from the
12 interests of capital and increasing marketization of society (Katz, 2004; Cochrane,
13 2007; Weaver, 2009). Not in the current political economic realities where the
14 constraints of neo-liberal state and market remain dominant, rather in the
15 commitment of community anchor and sector to sustain the visibility of the crisis and
16 generate leverage to pressure for extended state investment in social housing and the
17 local community sector (GWSFHA, 2015); a shift then of investment to socially-owned
18 alternatives to private sector approaches.
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32 Cumbers et al. (2010) argue that *resistance* to capitalist social relations is little evident
33 in the neo-liberal era given it requires ‘oppositional consciousness’; although point to
34 the (UK) Living Wage Campaign as one current example.¹⁷ The advocacy of GHHA and
35 community partners likewise provides material for illustrating and developing such an
36 oppositional consciousness, given the ongoing focus on public and social investment,
37 approaches and solutions in the face of the private sector market failure. For critical
38 CSTP, this gives substance from actual practice to dialogue as to what it can mean to
39 seek mutualist alternatives (dominant mutualism) and in the process to resist the
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52 ¹⁷ UK-wide campaign for levels of a minimum hourly wage sufficient for a decent basic standard of living.
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9 interests of capital and market (dominant capitalism). It offers insights into the
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11 democratisation of capital in the interests of labour – those depending on a wage
12
13 rather than capital – and the ongoing commitment, advocacy and leadership needed
14
15 to make progress towards such a goal. This is thinking and dialogue that can enrich
16
17 understanding of community sector aspirations – to provide leadership, support sector
18
19 development and sustain a progressive social vision – and the strategies needed to
20
21 pursue them.
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27 **Conclusions**

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30 The growing international policy emphasis on ‘community’, community sector and
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32 social economy, particularly from the rise of the neo-liberal state in the 1980s, has led
33
34 to a limited visibility within Scottish and UK policy-making for community anchors from
35
36 the 2000s. Yet neo-liberal state strategies of urban crisis management of structural
37
38 inequality contradict the local egalitarian aspirations commonly articulated within
39
40 community sector theory and practice (CSTP).
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47 Pearce’s (2003, 2009) progressive mutualism offers a re-imagining of relations
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49 between state, private sector and the socially-owned community sector. The central
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51 tension for CSTP of working within such neo-liberal crisis management whilst
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9 sustaining community leadership, sector development and such a progressive social
10 vision (Henderson, 2014) has been illustrated in this paper through the actual workings
11 of a Scottish urban community anchor. By drawing from Cumbers et al.'s (2010; Katz,
12 2004) exploration of strategies of 'resilience, reworking and resistance', this
13 community anchor's practice has also been used to illustrate the potential for:
14
15 community *resilience* in the face of structural crisis; *reworking* focused on socially-
16 owned and coordinated activity and 'space'; and narratives of *resistance* to capitalist
17 'market fundamentalism' through assertion of the central roles of both state and
18 mutual institutions in tackling structural crisis.
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32 In the process, both opportunities and need for further development of critical CSTP
33 are made visible. Ongoing research from a mutualist perspective that explores critically
34 the wealth of community sector and wider socially-owned practice in Scotland, the UK
35 and internationally can provide material for deepening CSTP. An increasingly rich
36 practice dialogue can emerge that: engages with the practical realities of community
37 sector practice and aspirations for progressive social change; provides a structural
38 political economic model that reasserts the roles of mutual and state institutions; and,
39 supports development of strategies for change that build from current practice
40 examples of resilience, reworking and resistance.
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