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**Workshop Theme 7: Strategies for Viable and Vital Neighbourhoods**



# **The Ups and Downs of Neighbourhood Renewal: an NDC Case Study**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper will investigate the potential offered for reviving run down urban neighbourhoods through the use of area based policies, in particular the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme in England. It will focus on the experience of one NDC over a period of five years seeking to identify and analyse the ‘successes’ and ‘failures’ of this NDC which will then be used as a basis to make a more general assessment of the possibilities that Area based Initiatives (ABIs), as part of a ‘joined-up approach’, offer for an urban renaissance that benefits the residents of run-down urban areas. The paper will also draw on other ABIs from around Europe to assess the limits and possibilities of place based approaches that emphasise community engagement.

**Key Words: NDC, Community, ABIs**

# **Housing-Led Responses to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Neighbourhoods: a Study of Glasgow Housing Association**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Registered social landlords in Scotland have statutory duties to develop and implement strategies aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods, and an increasing range of legal and non-legal measures available to them to do so. The first part of this paper presents the findings from an evaluation of the Glasgow Housing Association's (GHA's) anti-social behaviour policies and practice. The paper describes the extent and nature of anti-social behaviour in Glasgow. It continues by assessing how the GHA attempts to tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods through its network of Local Housing Organisations, the services provided by its specialist Neighbour Relations Team and its contribution to Glasgow-wide anti-social behaviour reduction partnerships. The second part of the paper discusses how the GHA has responded to the findings of the evaluation and describes its progress towards developing a Neighbour Relations Strategy and action plan and the challenges it faces in doing so.

**Key Words:** anti-social behaviour, housing, Glasgow Housing Association

# **Targeting Investments for Neighborhood Revitalization**

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## **ABSTRACT**

How should scarce public resources for revitalizing low-income urban neighborhoods be spatially allocated? Are there minimum threshold concentrations past which substantial private resources are leveraged? To address these vital issues we examine a coordinated, sustained, targeted revitalization strategy begun in 1998 in Richmond, VA. The strategy was developed through a data-driven, participatory planning process that garnered widespread support. Our econometric analyses reveal that the program produced impressive appreciation in the market values of single-family homes in the targeted areas relative to comparable homes in similarly distressed neighborhoods. Even greater impacts were evinced when site-specific investments over five years exceeded a threshold amount per block, estimated as \$21 thousand, on average. The strategy appears to be self-financing over a 20-year horizon, with City contributions offset by future increments in property tax revenues from target areas. The case provides several valuable lessons for planners and policymakers about how vital neighborhoods may be regenerated.

**Key Words:** targeting, neighborhood, revitalization

# Gender and Neighbourhood Renewal in England

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is a 'work in progress' based on research carried out in preparation of a doctoral thesis. Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration has often been said to be a gender-neutral policy area in the UK and despite attempts to highlight the need for a gendered analysis of deprivation there is little evidence of this in practice (Alsop et al, 2001; Brownill and Darke 1998; May 1997; Riseborough, 1998; Shah, 2005).

This paper will begin with a gendered analysis of policies in England that aim to tackle social exclusion within neighbourhoods and highlight issues connected to governance, partnership working and community involvement. Brownill and Darke (1998) were amongst the first to highlight the contradictions in UK regeneration partnerships. Their research demonstrated that partnerships present barriers to inclusion along the lines of race *and* gender but can also offer opportunities for the inclusion and incorporation of different interests which might otherwise be excluded from regeneration processes.

This doctoral research aims to build on previous research and examine the role of women in regeneration. There are contradictory messages in the academic literature regarding the role of women in neighbourhood regeneration. It is often said that it is women who are shouldering the responsibility of poverty and community participation in regeneration schemes rather than men (Bruegel, 2000; May, 1997; Brownill and Darke, 1998) and yet it is also said that whilst women's domestic role often brings them into community activities it also restricts their involvement since women are often time poor as a result of their commitments to their families and work (Alsop et al, 2001; Appleton, 1999). Women are said to get involved in informal, community activities whilst men take formal roles in decision making bodies (Lowndes, 2004). Furthermore research has identified a trend for men to take up paid work whilst women continue in unpaid community roles (McCulloch, 1997; Geddes, 2000; Harris 1999).

This paper is focused on empirical material gathered in two case study neighbourhood regeneration partnerships in England – Sure Start and New Deal for Communities. It will explore the views of women working in regeneration and focus on some of the opportunities for and barriers to their involvement in both paid and unpaid work and their experiences of participation in decision-making processes. The argument presented is that consideration of gender at all levels from policy development, to local partnership creation and implementation, is necessary to achieve effective neighbourhood renewal. The paper will conclude with some thoughts on some of the key challenges to incorporating gender equality into neighbourhood renewal.

**Keywords:** gender, neighbourhood partnerships and community involvement

# **New Strategies for Private Sector Involvement in Area Development: Neighbourhood and Housing Improvement Districts**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Germany's second largest city with approx. 1.8 million inhabitants, is planning to introduce a new legal instrument for a stronger private sector involvement and investment in area development: Neighbourhood and Housing Improvement Districts (NID/HID). The Ministry of Urban Development entrusted the Hafen-City University / Department of town planning with a research in fundamental questions about this strategy and international experience of comparable instruments and strategies. The political and public debate about this new instrument will take place in summer 2007. It is envisaged to pass the requisite legal framework in autumn 2007.

Since 2005 Hamburg already offers a statutory basis for Business Improvement Districts (BID) in commercial areas. Two BIDs are already working under this scheme, some more are in preparation. The City Council is planning to transfer the BID idea, now - e.g. to housing areas or mixed function areas.

In addition to the public sector driven area-development instruments and strategies on the Federal and the Laender-Level (e.g. urban regeneration), NID/HID could offer the opportunity to involve private proprietors in the development of private and public spaces in neighbourhoods. One central characteristic of both the BID and the NID/HID instrument is, that "free riders" will be included in the process and forced to pay for the envisaged measures.

In BID and NID/HID public and private sector in urban development will have to take new functions as e.g. discussed in the debate about "urban governance". The future role of the public sector will evolve to a more enabling and controlling function. The private sector will have to be more active and responsible. One important issue in this context will be to guarantee a proper participation of the local community in the process and the legitimacy of the measures.

The discussion about BID and NID/HID is a fairly new issue in Germany. It is also about a paradigm-change from the strong public sector (Etatism) to a more managing and enabling public sector. A stronger private sector involvement is seen as a risk by many, e.g. because of a feared dominance of economical criteria in urban development and a lack of participation. At the same time BID and NID/HID offer the chance for a new instrument in the "tool-kit" of urban regeneration.

**Key Words: Housing Improvement District, public-private-partnership, Urban Governance**



# **New Deal for Communities in England: Is Area Based Urban Regeneration Possible?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme, announced in 1998, is one of the most intensive area based initiatives (ABIs) ever to be launched anywhere. This is a 10 year Programme designed to narrow the gaps between these 39 deprived English neighbourhoods and national benchmarks in relation to education, crime, health, jobs, and housing and the physical environment. Each of the 39 schemes is overseen by an NDC Partnership Board normally with a majority of resident members. Each of the 39 local schemes is funded by £50m over 10 years. This is a significant sum but Partnerships have been given a very clear steer that in order to achieve their outcome targets they should work in conjunction with other delivery agencies such as the police, local authorities, health agencies, schools and so on.

Since 2001 the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University has been carrying out the national evaluation of the Programme. This has primarily involved 3 household surveys carried out by Ipsos MORI in 2002, 2004 and 2006; collation and analysis of government administrative data by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre at Oxford University; and locality and case study based qualitative work.

A late 2006 review of available change data indicated that although progress had been made in all 39 areas, change in ultimate outcomes (more jobs, better health, better educational attainment rates, and so on) was relatively limited. Other deprived areas not in receipt of ND funding were often showing similar signs of positive change.

NDC is one of the most intensive and well funded of ABIs. Why are there not more obvious signs of improvement?

- It may be that analysis to be undertaken in 2007 of longitudinal data sources -i.e. of those who have stayed in NDC areas-will show more obvious signs of positive change.
- Positive change is more obviously evident in relation to place based indicators of change (crime, satisfaction with the area, etc), rather than people based indicators (health, education, jobs); maybe ABIs are better at helping to create positive place based outcomes than to attain much in the way of change for people.
- Some changes-say in health-will simply take many years to become fully evident; these are very deprived areas and will take decades to 'turn around'.
- There is the inherent problem to all ABIs: people based interventions and any positive associated outcomes may well seep away as individuals leave these localities.

- Although relatively well funded, total resources are small compared with the needs of these areas.
- Area based regeneration is very complex requiring NDC Partnerships to eke out 10 year plausible strategies to improve the lot of constantly evolving populations, in an era of considerable market and institutional flux.

**Key Words:** neighbourhoods, regeneration, community

# **Understanding the Vitality of Neighbourhood Governance in Terms of Sites, Spaces and Spheres**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Targeted neighbourhood action is a long-standing feature of urban policy and a neighbourhood focus has been part of New Labour policy initiatives concerned with tackling disadvantage, improving service delivery, renewing democracy and reinvigorating civil society. The aim of this paper is to consider insights into the practice of neighbourhood governance as applied in English neighbourhood renewal relative to a conceptual framework proposed by Lepine, Smith, Sullivan and Taylor (2007). It is suggested that neighbourhood governance can be understood in terms of sites, spaces or spheres.

It is argued that the neighbourhood has most often been a site for actions determined beyond it - a defined spatial territory within which policies are enacted and services delivered. Smith et al's (2007) examination of the theory and practice of neighbourhood governance since 1997 suggests that opportunities have been created for involvement in new governance spaces, but that it is far from clear that a new sphere of governance (which would be characterised by devolved power and effective connections to other governance levels) has been – or will be – created.

Although rhetorical appeals to neighbourhood sometimes suggest that simple solutions are to be found in the neighbourhood, persistent tensions and dilemmas characterise attempts to establish a new approach to governance at this level. Also explored by contributors to Smith et al, these include issues of citizenship and democracy; targeting, efficiency and equity; and cohesion and diversity (in the foreground of recent debate). Further developments in neighbourhood governance can be expected as the Local Government White Paper published in October 2006 (CLG) is implemented. The neighbourhood may have a place in mechanisms for scrutiny and challenge, alongside the promised reduction in central performance management, but there is more to the creation of an effective sphere of neighbourhood governance than this. The paper will review some of these developments and will argue that addressing the tensions inherent in neighbourhood governance requires dialogue, openness to learning, a willingness to take risks and “a capacity on the part of government to exercise its meta governance role in a way which allows the development of other effective spheres of power and action” (Lepine, Smith and Taylor, 2007).

**Key Words:** neighbourhood, governance, renewal

# **The Ethopolitics of Housing Habitus: Exploring the Power Dynamic of Mixed Communities and Urban Renewal Projects**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper uses Rose's concept of 'ethopolitics' to explore the use of various technologies of governance involved in neighbourhood regeneration and housing policies. Specifically, it explores the emerging power dynamics underpinning two distinct but inter-related housing issues of mixed community development and gentrification.

Gentrification represents both a process and strategy which involves the re-construction of space for progressively more affluent users; mixed communities represent an idealised policy outcome which seeks to ameliorate problems of social, economic and spatial segregation through the intentional diversification of house and tenure types by means of planned communities.

Crucially what both these processes represent is not just physical renewal, but a more subtle but nonetheless pervasive power dynamic that seeks to realign citizen's aspirations towards individualisation and responsabilisation (Gough 2002; Keil 2002).

Using ethopolitics as a lens, it will examine how habitus has influenced and in turn been influenced by local housing policies and discourses which have been used to problematise social housing tenures and legitimise certain consumption practices, especially in the form of gentrified owner-occupation and mixed communities. This paper argues that in many cases, these forms of renewal act to reinforce market-driven consumerist hegemony while simultaneously pathologising those who are unwilling or unable to participate fully within the system. Ultimately, there is a danger that these processes may serve to depoliticise social reproduction and disguise the structural causes of poverty and deprivation.

**Key Words:** mixed communities, regeneration

# **What Rationales are Driving Neighbourhood Governance Initiatives? An Investigation in the UK and US**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the UK and US, policy and academic communities regard the neighbourhood as an important unit of identity and action. “Neighbourhood governance” is used here to refer to formally established neighbourhood-based structures that guide participation, decision-making, co-ordination, and implementation of activities in the neighbourhood.

The policy case stated for neighbourhood governance tends to be based on a twin rationale of democracy (“local rights”) to increase the level of decision-making vested in the neighbourhood; and competence (“local knowledge”) to improve and tailor service provision to neighbourhood needs and priorities. In the academic literature, different political motivations are attributed to such initiatives. Do they reflect a devolutionary, empowerment strategy on the part of government, providing a means for government to be responsive to communities (of place) and encourage development of their own capacities? Or do they reflect a new form of centralisation, with government controlling what powers are devolved and seeking to realise its political priorities by “steering” the actions of governance entities? Or are such initiatives a palliative measure that pass responsibility from government to communities while distracting from the structural causes of deprivation?

The aim of this ESRC-funded PhD research is to consider the rationale for neighbourhood governance initiatives according to the form they take and the functions they perform, rather than taking any stated rationale at face value. This paper sets out the findings of a literature review about why neighbourhood governance has come to prominence and the different drivers for this in different contexts. It then sets out a proposed international case study methodology for the next stage of the research, providing a set of propositions to be methodically tested in the field.

**Key Words:** neighbourhood, governance, rationale, comparative

# **Fixed Boundaries, Dynamic Housing Policy: a Necessary Tension?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite the significant academic attention focused on the merits of particular area based initiatives (ABI) and the ABI approach in general, there has been rather less attention to the process of defining the actual geographical boundaries which delimit the areas where these programmes operate. Determination has traditionally been an expedient, pragmatic activity, yet is arguably as much an important starting point as clarifying policy aims, objectives, terms of reference and responsibilities within wider policy development.

As with the need to ‘fix’ concepts and thought when moving from policy to practice (Harvey, 2000), by definition, ABIs have required a fixing of space, identifying the scope of interest and legitimacy for governance, decision-making and the exercise of power. How does such fixing accommodate the ever-increased connectivity and complexity that shapes our cities, and recent policies that seek to be dynamic and iterative, responding to changes in context over time? Against this fluidity, the act of delimitation would appear a rather perverse enterprise: seeking to fix places which are constantly renegotiated by factors and drivers operating at scales not coterminous with those boundaries drawn. Or indeed, disrupting existing flows and negotiating new ones.

This paper explores the process of boundary definition for fluid, dynamic policy, drawing on a range of recent UK and US housing market and neighbourhood renewal initiatives. In particular, early negotiation of the nine ‘pathfinder area’ boundaries for the UK Housing Market Renewal programme is considered: an initiative defined by the tensions between citywide and sub-regional drivers and actions necessarily focused at the neighbourhood level. While the geographies established were sub-regional, and the programme intended to respond as markets changed, ‘spatial fixing’ was a core to policy development. The back door was always left open for boundaries to shift as the programme evolved, and the 2006 Report of Pathfinder Chairs moots that the next scheme update round (2008) may be an appropriate time to do so. The implications of shifting boundaries within the context of the future trajectory of HMR policy will be discussed, with considerations put forward for the ‘matter of geography’ in future spatially defined policy.

**Key Words:** boundaries, market dynamics, neighbourhood renewal

## **Strategies for Viable and Vital Neighbourhoods**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is based on the longitudinal study of 200 families in 4 low income areas, tracked over eight years. It offers an insider perspective on what makes neighbourhoods viable and alive for families with children.

The bulk of the population is based in urban areas. Families need to survive in cities because the provision of low-cost services creates the need for a low-cost workforce to carry out these tasks. Children, meanwhile, anchor parents, particularly mothers, within neighbourhoods, and therefore neighbourhoods matter a great deal to families. But low-income families, although they provide many vital urban services, have little choice and often have to cope with many problems of poor neighbourhood conditions, services and low-income populations. Families develop survival strategies within their neighbourhoods, based on parenting, the acceptance of incomers, and reliance on community activities. The study shows a major need for wider public support and intervention to equalise conditions but it also shows the need for fine-tuning interventions to local social conditions, and particularly to local networks of mutual support which should be enhanced, rather than damaged by improvements.

The families make many proposals for improving neighbourhood conditions, principally asking for more family-friendly facilities, with more mixed income services, as well as more affordable housing, more local supervision and a more pro-children, pro-youth environment. This would require more hands-on local services. Our overall conclusion is that cities need to hold onto families but that families with choice will only stay if city-neighbourhoods become more viable for children and young children through more local control of conditions.

**Key Words:** families, city neighbourhoods, local control

# **Rethinking Urban Neighbourhoods: Territorial Outputs/Impacts and EU Lessons**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, a lot has been made and a lot has changed in urban neighbourhoods. This process is clearly testified by the broad and diversified international literature on “difficult neighbourhoods”, on the different meanings of outskirts (such as an area far from the city centre, a place without history, a multiethnic area, a space of high decay, a place of innovation, etc.), on the policies and instruments of implementation, but also on the study of the many practices carried out in the latest ten years (from EU to local experiences).

Undoubtedly, the renewed attention to cities and its difficult neighbourhoods carried out through pilot projects, community initiatives and European networks, has helped to leave aside the “old” idea of neighbourhood, considered fringe and decay area and has drawn attention to a more positive vision which is able to recognize potentialities and territorial resources, a planning laboratory par excellence. Nevertheless, despite the strong attention to the issue, phenomena of distress (we cannot forget the recent episodes of uprising in the French “banlieu”) and of economic, physical and social decay and exclusion are unchanged in some European neighbourhoods.

The aim of this paper is not to enter into the complex and multifaceted issue of neighbourhoods but to think and re-think about the experiences carried out, trying to outline a “territorial outcome” of praxis of intervention and neighbourhood renewal. It is not our aim to draw a frame of the current situation, neither to establish a list of the “best practices”. Our goal is to re-read the neighbourhood initiatives through the assessment practices, using it as an interpretation to re-consider cities, policy and practice interventions for cities.

What does “assess the practice of urban renewal mean today”? Can we speak of EU lesson also in this field? First of all, assessment is not only a research of coherence between objectives and results; it implies thinking the territory with a new viewpoint, through an assessment process that is focused on efficiency, efficaciousness, territorial outputs and impacts. Moreover, we should acknowledge that the experiences of evaluation proposed at European level for Structural Funds, but above all for the Community Initiative Urban (ex ante, on going, ex post) have originated and sparked off other “good practices” at national and local level. Without entering into specific experiences, this paper aims at pointing out some, seemingly, more original processes and think about their implementation, both in the whole city and in other European urban areas.

**Key Words:** neighbourhoods, evaluation and good practices, territorial outputs and impacts, EU lessons



# **Explaining the Democratic Performance of Governance Networks for Neighbourhood Renewal in Denmark, England and The Netherlands**

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## **ABSTRACTS**

This paper is concerned with questions of whether and how democratic imperatives are incorporated in the design and operation of neighbourhood governance institutions. The paper develops a line of research that is investigating ‘democratic performance’ in new governance settings – in other words, how questions of legitimacy, consent and accountability are negotiated and evolve in public policy institutions that operate beyond representative government (Skelcher 2007).

The paper’s focus on neighbourhood institutions reflects a policy agenda now common across many European countries. This policy agenda is of relatively long standing in some countries and a more recent priority in others but in either case it identifies the ‘neighbourhood’ as an important site, space or sphere for urban revitalisation and/or democratic renewal (Lepine et al, 2008).

Neighbourhood institutions offer an important opportunity for researchers interested in explaining the design and democratic performance of governance institutions as they operate across the boundary between representative and participative democracy, combining a concern for democratic discourses with those of managerialism, and identifying new and important roles for neighbourhood residents as co-governors and co-producers of policies and services (Sullivan, 2001).

This paper reports research on the design and evolution of neighbourhood governance networks in three contrasting European cities – Birmingham, Copenhagen and Rotterdam. Each is home to neighbourhood governance networks, but with different designs and forms of democratic performance.

The paper explores various explanations for the way in which legitimacy, consent and accountability are resolved in these neighbourhood institutions. We begin by drawing on Dryzek’s work (1996). He argues that institutional designs are largely pre-determined by the prevailing discourse. We refine this to focus on the policy discourse in relation to each city, responding to Kriesi, Adam and Jochum’s (2006) conclusions about the lack of consideration of the relationship between policy field and governance design. We then elaborate this analysis by reference to the work of Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) who identify four ‘ideal types’ of neighbourhood governance, each with its own institutional shape and form. Finally, we draw on the work of Barnes et al (2007) who suggest that state and non-state actors may draw on/give preference to different discourses and institutional forms and that these differences are played out in the

processes of deliberation and contestation that occur between these actors as neighbourhood institutions are developed.

The paper draws on in-depth qualitative research combined with criteria-based assessments of governance institutions using the 'governance assessment' methodology (Mathur and Skelcher 2007). It may also include Q methodology analysis, subject to data availability.

**Key Words:** democratic performance, neighbourhoods, governance networks

# **Spreading EU Innovation into Mainstream Urban Regeneration Policy: a Neighbourhood Initiative in Southern Italy**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims at highlighting changes in practice of neighbourhood regeneration initiatives in the Italian Mezzogiorno. It focuses on a specific neighbourhood regeneration policy initiative (Programma Integrato di Riqualificazione delle Periferie – Peripheral Neighbourhood Regeneration Integrated Programme – PIRP), targeting social housing neighbourhoods, promoted and funded by the Apulia region in 2006. The PIRP can be considered as an attempt to ‘translate’ the ‘innovation’

introduced (mainly) by EU within the urban policy instruments in Italy during the 1990s in the local neighbourhood initiatives ‘language’.

Area-based urban policy initiatives promoted and/or funded by EU Structural Funds have been acknowledged to have played an important role within the evolution of urban policy initiatives in Italy, which has been going on since the early 1990s. The latter involved a shift from a top-down and sector approach mainly based on physical interventions towards bottom-up and integrated initiatives based on the involvement of public, private and voluntary sectors. However, assuming a bottom-up and local perspective it is possible to highlight that beyond the ‘formal’ changes in policy instruments, it is not clear what kind of changes have been going on within local level practice. In other words, it is not clear if the ‘formal’ changes in the urban policy instruments imply concrete changes in the modes of tackling the complex problems of deprived neighbourhoods. Moreover, many doubts can be raised concerning the durability of these ‘new’ initiatives and their ability to influence local development paths.

In particular, in the Apulia region some experiences of neighbourhood initiative promoted and funded by EU were successful for some aspects. But this ‘success’ was limited to specific experiences (and the people involved in them), while the urban policy arenas were not opened to the ‘new’ bottom-up and integrated approach: many experiences of ‘mainstreaming’ often failed both within programmes included in the mainstream of EU Structural Funds and within national programmes.

In the Apulia region, these processes of ‘innovation’ have become particularly interesting to observe since 2005 when a new left regional government, willing to break strongly with the past government policy approach, was elected. This coincided with a ‘season’ of deep innovations introduced also by the regional level in the neighbourhood initiatives. The latter aimed at grasping the specific problems of urban deprived areas in this region of the Italian Mezzogiorno, where neighbourhood regeneration is deeply linked to interventions in the social housing stock.

**Key Words:** EU, innovation, neighbourhood regeneration

# Whose Public Spaces? Neighbourhood Renewal, Conviviality and Place Making in the Milan Urban Fringe

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## ABSTRACT

This paper will evaluate the *Urban Italia* regeneration programme in Cinisello Balsamo, a former industrial town in the Milan urban fringe. The programme, financed for the period 2003-2006 by the Italian government, was aimed at tackling social exclusion (especially of the Youth) and urban decay, by transforming three unused areas (a former industrial building, an ancient bourgeois villa under decay and an egg factory) in collective spaces for a convivial city. The term “collective space” refers to the programme’s goal of creating places, building and infrastructures for culture, education and recreation particularly targeted to non-individual use: spaces for sport teams, cultural associations, informal groups and other collective uses. The term “convivial city” – that was actually used as a slogan – refers especially to the purpose of creating opportunities for social encounters, recreations and creativity, as complementary activities of a vital and viable city.

The case-study analysis, drawing from a vast empirical material collected over ten months of full-time participatory observation, has shed light on several key issues both on the policy building and implementation phases:

- conviviality and conflicts among populations within the neighbourhood: what sort of collective places have been asked by the population participating to the planning phase, who have been involved and who excluded in the consultation, whose needs have been recognised
- neighbourhood spaces as city-wide resources? the issue of scale and the degree of exclusiveness in accessing and targeting collective spaces
- technical/practical knowledge, political opportunities, intersectoral collaboration: the constraints of the implementation phase.

Framing the discussion of these three issues within the structure-agency debate (Bourdieu, Giddens, Jessop-Moulaert), this paper will contribute to build a methodology for the policy transfer, decompounding the empirical material in its structural and conjunctural elements and identifying a number of strengths and constraints to human agency that should be taken into account and evaluated in any given contextual frame.

**Key Words:** neighbourhood renewal programme, convivial city, participation

# **The Sustainable Communities Agenda for Europe – how viable is it?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper will seek to assess the potential of the Sustainable Communities Agenda, the Bristol Accord, to integrate and refine the nebulous concepts

of cohesion, competitiveness and sustainability. The Accord, which was initiated by the British presidency of the EU December 2005, set out eight key characteristics that should inform future European governmental endeavours to deliver sustainable communities. Such neighbourhoods are characterised as: active, inclusive and safe; well run; environmentally sensitive; well designed and built; well connected; thriving; well served and fair for everyone. The approach is thus a holistic one, encompassing social, economic and environmental objectives. With a focus on integration it has a consciously place-making orientation.

However, do such virtuous objectives and definitions really provide a realistic means of firming up previously ambiguous concepts? At its inception the Accord was ambitiously depicted as the ‘first step towards a European Charter for Sustainable Development’. If such a potential exists, what specific measures need to be taken to monitor and independently assess the progress of cities and neighbourhoods within them? Finally, does the Agenda, conceived in the British context, have any value or applicability which is transferable to the rest of the EU-27?

The paper will draw on research recently completed by CUDEM and ERBEDU at Leeds Metropolitan University for the European Parliament (Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies) into the potential and progress of the Sustainable Communities Approach.

**Key Words:** sustainable communities, Europe