

EXPLORING LOCAL HOTSPOTS AND DESERTS: INVESTIGATING THE LOCAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHARITABLE RESOURCES

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether regional patterns of uneven charitable distribution are evidenced at a local neighbourhood level. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative evidence of charitable resources in two case-study areas, one affluent and one deprived, it argues that there is a clear distinction between the case-study areas. Charities in the affluent area are more numerous, run by volunteers, and meet a broad range of social, community and cultural needs of that community. Charities in the deprived area are less numerous, meet urgent needs related to deprivation, and are more likely to be larger charities run by professionals with statutory funding. There is great concern, within the deprived area, about the impact of austerity cuts and measures, and what this will mean for the future of these charities, and the community which they support.

Introduction:

The question of the distributional effects of charitable activity is the central concern of a project at Southampton on quantitative and qualitative aspects of the geographical distribution of charities. It is well-known that the distribution of registered charities in the UK is uneven (Mohan and Rolls, 2006), but this tells us relatively little about where charitable activity takes place. Extensive work needs to be done on methods for apportioning expenditure by charities to geographical areas because it is unrealistic to assume that all expenditure can be allocated to the area in which an organisation is based. In a separate paper (Mohan, 2011) this topic is discussed in more detail. In this paper we argue for case-study research to investigate the flows of charitable resources, and of expenditure by charitable organisations, on a local scale. We explore the distribution of resources, the distinctive features of charitable activity, the barriers to organisational success and the challenges organisations are likely to face.

A mixed method approach was taken, combining a desktop analysis of available accounts and annual reports of all the registered charities within the chosen case-study areas alongside up to 50 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and the managers/chairs of charities of a cross-section of registered charities in these areas.

Two contrasting neighbourhoods that lie within 3 miles of each other in the same local government district were selected for study. One case-study area is a neighbourhood defined as one of the 20% most deprived areas in the country, dominated by social renting and high levels of reliance on state benefits, and characterised by relatively high population turnover. The other case-study area is one of the 20% least deprived areas in the country, a prosperous village with high levels of owner occupation

and high proportions of retired people. Further details of criteria for selection and of the characteristics of the localities are available in a separate (forthcoming) working paper. In this paper we refer to four areas in the deprived neighbourhood (“deprived 1-4”) and to one area in the affluent neighbourhood (“affluent 5”).

MAPPING FLOWS OF RESOURCES

What the data from secondary sources can tell us: An initial analysis of a list of addresses/locations for registered charities within the case-study areas, suggests that there were around 3 times as many registered organisations in our areas of affluence compared to areas of deprivation..

However lists of registered charities can present a distorted picture of the flow of charitable resources in the case-study areas. To gain a better understanding of charitable distribution the project looked at data of recent expenditure by charities to identify a small number of the charities that appear to be inactive. The project also looked at information available from the Charity Commission website - overview, framework, annual reports and accounts, alongside growing local knowledge being acquired through fieldwork¹ - to identify the geographical areas in which charities are operating. The emerging findings of this analysis are that not all the charities in the case-study areas give benefit to the wards in which they are registered. Several charities have areas of benefit in neighbouring wards, some have areas of benefit in neighbouring local government areas, some operate nationally, and some operate outside of the UK. The project also identified that the registration addresses of smaller, volunteer-run charities tend to be tied to individuals, and are perhaps less reliable - in terms of what they tell us about charities - than the registration addresses of professionally run charities, with dedicated premises. This may change our understanding of the flow of resources in the case-study areas, but does not alter the fact that active, registered charities operating in the case-study areas are more numerous in the area of affluence.

Secondary sources have also identified that most of the charities registered to, and operating in, the affluent case-study area are run on a voluntary basis by local actors/residents who are actively involved in these charities. These charities, with a range of ages, are mostly relatively small in terms of their income/expenditure, and meet a range of cultural and social needs. They are not in receipt of statutory funding. Aside from two larger charities, the average charity annual expenditure for 2007 was approximately £14,000 with a median expenditure of £8,000.

The picture for the deprived area in terms of local actors/residents in the charities registered to and operating in the affluent case-study area is rather different. Approximately half the charities are voluntarily run by local actors, and the other half are run by professionals from outside the community. The charities that are run by volunteers are all relatively old, with set-up dates in the 1960s and 1970s -

¹ Without local knowledge, it is not always possible to identify an accurate area of benefit - descriptions can be vague, and not all charities file annual reports.

later set-up small charities tend to have merged, become inactive, or been removed from the register. All have relatively small levels of annual expenditure – in 2008 none of them spent more than £8,000, and they are not in receipt of statutory funding. The needs they set out to meet are largely related to the community and/or social need, such as scouts, pre-schools and lunch clubs for the elderly.

In contrast the eight professionally run charities registered to, and operating in, the area of deprivation have higher annual expenditures, between £100,000 and £3,000,000 (approx.) Interviews with the CEOs/managers of these charities revealed that most of these charities provide a level and standard of service within the community that requires leadership, business planning and a regular professional presence. Five out of the eight charities have some level of local volunteering – with volunteers being trained to provide some aspect of service delivery (such as advice/signposting/counselling in the case of two mental health charities), or taking on some kind of helping role behind the scenes, in the case of an arts/cultural charity. Interviews with these charities, and analysis of their annual reports and accounts, show that all, but one (an Educational Opportunities charity²), receive some sort of statutory funding, either as grants or contracts. Most are reliant on this income for financial viability.

It is interesting to look across at the affluent case-study area, with charities that have direct counterparts to some of the charities in the areas of deprivation - for example, the community centre, cultural charity, and the educational opportunities charity - these counterpart charities are not reliant on statutory funding and/or professionally employed CEOs for their financial viability. Why can the area of affluence provide these particular types of services, on a voluntary basis, without statutory funding, when the area of deprivation is reliant on this funding? The qualitative evidence emerging from interviews with chairs, managers and CEOs of charities, comes into its own when exploring this and other questions relating to the flow of charitable resources in the case-study areas

BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT IN CHARITIES:

Respondents indicate that time, skill-sets and confidence play a big part in providing the right conditions for volunteering, setting-up charities, and running charities; skills and opportunities that are in abundance in the area of affluence, but not in the areas of deprivation. This contrast is well-summed up by a respondent, who has worked with communities in the affluent and deprived case-study areas:

.... running a charity, running some sort of community organisation, you need that, sort of, management structure, that governance, and you need people who've got suitable backgrounds to do that, and they tend to be people who've run... worked in business, senior public sector figures, maybe people who've been senior roles in the armed forces, but people who can organise things, get things done, and I think that's probably the difference between the affluent areas and the poor areas. The poor areas, although they have the need, and they have many great people who are willing to spend time trying to do something, they just lack that core of the retired professional people.

² This charity is linked to a school which is a statutory funded body. The charity allows the school to access grant funding streams, from which statutory bodies are usually excluded, when applying for funding.

Because I think most of the trustees, people on committees, tend to be retired, because, you know, most people are working, and working long hours, they're probably commuting, they've got families, it's very difficult to give up much time but, certainly, in a place like [Affluent 5], and [Other affluent ward], which is very similar, really, demographically. There are a lot of people who've got a lot of spare time, a lot of expertise, and I think that's why organisations in those areas are very well supported, whereas, in [the estate], it is much more difficult, because you just don't get people who've got that professional background. (Andrew, Local Government Officer)

Alex, the leader of a local church, indicated that the number of participating and influential local actors in the deprived community is actually very small and is composed of 'the usual suspects' who are mostly retired individuals; a view that was also put forward by Frank, the chair of the educational opportunities charity. This charity was unable to get the parents of schoolchildren to become involved in the running of the involved school, at a PTA level, as governors, or as trustees or volunteers involved in the running of the charity. Local school governors are of the 'older generation' and tend to be grandparents and/or people who have retired. When asked why it was so hard to involve parents, Frank's response was that these were time and lifestyle issues:

I think there's probably just a general business isn't there? And I think many of the lives people lead here are probably more chaotic rather than less chaotic. As a parent, you know, I know how busy I can be, and I'm an organised person. Do I really need to go and do other things? I don't think so and I think there's probably an element of that. (Frank, Educational Opportunities Charity)

It's an interesting point, one that resonates with the work of Mohan³, which notes that people who are most actively engaged in their communities are much more likely to be older, well-off, middle-aged or retired people with spare time. Placing himself in the category of 'busy parent', Frank represents a cohort of people who can feel too busy to take part in activities outside of work, home and family. However in this case-study area respondents note that some parents experience greater difficulty in managing their time, describing their 'chaotic lifestyles' as a barrier to becoming involved in any community-groups and events⁴. There is a sense that 'spare time' as perceived by retired less deprived communities, is not a well-understood concept amongst parents who comprise the majority of this deprived community⁵.

³ Mohan, J. 'Is there a British "civic core"?' – paper presented at the Researching the Voluntary Sector conference, September 2011.

⁴ A couple of respondents noted that people were much less likely to attend things on a regular basis, or to guarantee attendance at a meeting. This was again put down to chaotic lifestyles, where other things get prioritised instead. One respondent felt that single-issues were more likely to be attractive. Frank, quoted above, also noted:

I guess part of it may just be that way society has changed as well, that there's a bit more individualism isn't there - or people will associate with groups they want to be a part of rather than more formal structures.

⁵ There is a tension in this analysis that could do with further study. There are clearly pockets of younger people who have been involved with charities in the area – this is evidenced by the existence of pre-schools. However an interview with a

Besides the issue of time, a number of respondents observed that one of the main barriers to people taking on leadership or administrative roles in the deprived area is a lack of project-management skills in the deprived area. Echoing Andrew's comments quoted above, another respondent commented:

Again it's this thing with... we've got a good group of trustees, willing to work, they put a lot of work in but they haven't got the skill base to lead. So they're very much willing workers but, as I say, we haven't got retired businessmen who know how to drive a project along. We haven't got project managers. The skills just do not exist in [the estate]. (Mike, manager of a charity)

This respondent noted that there is a historical trend that anyone with an interest in leadership on the estate is more likely to take up a political role, which might, at a later date, be channelled into charity trustee roles. His view was that people learn their leadership skills on the job, as councillors. This phenomenon is evidenced at monthly local community meetings which are attended by local councillors and interested members of the public – a large proportion of which appear to be ex-councillors. However, it was surprising, when researching the addresses of local councillors and ex-councillors for the estate, to find out that a large proportion of these local politicians do not actually live on the estate, but elsewhere in the local government district. This was also noted by the leader of one of the local churches

Our local councillors are good, and I suppose they take on a similar sort of role in that they have a job description as it were as a local representative, but they are also involved with the community association, the strategic partnerships and the community boards and one or two other things they get involved with, and that's good. Again, not many of them are hugely resident in this area but they serve the area and that's fine. (Alex, leader of a local church)

Mike, the manager of a charity, quoted earlier, also noted that confidence plays a huge role in preventing involvement in community activities. He observed that people with experience of local politics are more likely to have the confidence to speak up in meetings, whereas those without that experience can be too low in confidence to voice their views, so that they don't take on effective roles in the organisations that they are involved in. (The irony in this situation is that potential local actors appear to be disenfranchised by their well-meaning, but non-local political representatives). He also believed that lack of confidence inhibits many people from getting involved in the first place:

And there's this confidence thing, I think that is one of our biggest problems with being an area of deprivation, is building people's confidence to get involved in things in the community. (ibid)

Respondents noted that lack of confidence is often related to having low basic skills, which are a characteristic of this area of deprivation. The manager of a local Sure Start commented that written

local Sure Start charity indicated that this centre had taken on responsibility for some of the pre-schools in recent years, suggesting that there is currently less involvement from younger people in the area.

posters advertising events do not help to encourage client take-up of promoted events – many clients do not have the requisite skills with which to read these posters. More visual material is much more successful. Respondents also reported that for some residents of the estate, there appears to be a collective memory of school as being a very bad experience. Getting barely literate adults to engage with initiatives to help them acquire literacy and financial skills is very difficult⁶. These adults tend to struggle with very basic tasks, such as form-filling, and without help and/or advice (from someone close to them who is literate or statutory agencies or local charities) can run the risk of encountering financial and legal problems with statutory authorities around their lack of response to official forms. These adults are more likely to be service-users than service providers.

Remarking on the community's lack of engagement with the formal charitable sector, Alex, the church leader, noted an attitude towards formal bodies/institutions:

So I think there's a bit of a reluctance to take responsibility, and a bit of reluctance to clash with authority in any sense, be that the charity commissioners or the borough council or the tax man or whatever it may be. I think that shying away from authority is a bit of an issue.

It is hard to pin down why this attitude exists – it could stem from negative experiences with authority figures or institutional bodies in the past. But in a sense the reason or cause isn't particularly important – what it reflects is a collective and engrained habit/attitude that exists across the estate.

Similarly, looking across the spectrum of respondent's views on the barriers to participation in charitable activities within the area of deprivation, there is no one cause that stands out as the key cause of lack of participation. Instead there appear to be a confluence of influences that converge - such as low-income, chaotic lifestyles, lack of skills, experience and confidence – in the community, that are a manifestation of this community's experience of multiple deprivation and which contrast clearly against the skills, experience, time and confidence which characterise the more affluent case-study community. The lived experience of deprivation as a barrier to participation is summarised by the manager of a professionally run charity (for clients with specific social problems) arguing that, for many people living on the estate, their lives are too full to volunteer for anything:

When we went to the church looking for volunteers [...] and it was Dan said "you won't get anybody here because everybody's running on a maximum". Everybody's life is so difficult that there is absolutely nothing else that they can bear. They can't give to anybody else. We see a lot of that. It's not that people don't care, it's actually they can't, you know, their lives are so complex that there is nothing else that they can give. They can't give within their own families, let alone their neighbours, so people don't have the support networks that you know somebody from [affluent nearby town] will have. (Jo, charity manager)

⁶ Respondents also report that adults with low basic skills find it difficult to support their own children's education, so that there is a danger of cultural replication of poor educational achievement.

LOOKING BEYOND THE DATABASE: THE FLOW OF LOCAL CHARITABLE RESOURCES INTO THE CASE-STUDY AREAS:

Our databases of charities registered to the case-study areas of affluence and deprivation provides useful information on charities that have a local contact address, most of which provide benefit to the community in which they are located. However, the database does not provide information on charities that operate within the case-study areas, but whose registered premises are elsewhere, in another ward, district, or county⁷. We therefore set out to map out the additional charitable activity that takes place in the case-study areas and investigate how these charities impact on the case-study areas.

Area of affluence: Field work in the area of affluence is still under way, however, at the time of writing the emerging picture is that there isn't a great deal of additional activity from charities located outside of the ward. Respondents indicate the presence of a small number (3) of charity shops within the town, raising funds for popular local hospices. There is a meals-on-wheels service, transport service and an elderly lunch-club, operated by a charity registered to a neighbouring affluent ward, which rents additional premises in the case-study affluent area and has a contract with the local council to provide these services. (The level of need identified by this charity, for elderly assistance with meals and transport, is as yet unknown; the project is currently waiting for a response to a request for an interview with this project).

A Registered Social Landlord (RSL) owns 470 social housing units in the northern part of the ward (this represents 11% of all residential housing in the ward). The RSL has a fairly strong presence in the ward, offering activities for children and young people during the holidays, which appears to have quite a strong uptake from children and young people of all economic backgrounds from across the ward. It also runs one-off events in collaboration with other local community charities. Discussion with respondents about these activities, has met with a mixed reaction. Although the activities are on respondents' horizons, the fact that these are run by an RSL wasn't always noticed. The local housing plan identifies Affluent 5 as an area with a dearth of affordable housing. It is not known whether this RSL intends any further developments in this case-study area. However, a local tendency to contest affordable development was noted by another respondent:

But [Affluent 5]'s a bit NIMBY-ish, people don't want... The plan for [Affluent 5] is that 40% of the housing bill should be affordable housing. I think that's very healthy because I think we do need more young people in [Affluent 5], there's a very big retired population in [Affluent 5], I think it's something like 28%. It's high anyway, of retired people, so we do need that. But there's resistance to it. (Barbara, Chair of a local charity)

Development issues are clearly a contentious issue amongst some residents. This is evidenced in the town's local residents' association, which is currently discussing changing its status from an association

⁷ Nor does it provide information on unregistered organisations and groups operating 'Below the Radar' of the Charity Commission

to a charity. The mission of the association encompasses a range of issues for the betterment of the town. This includes strong opposition to planned developments that it feels are out of keeping with the town's needs:

Well, I think now we look far more to what is going to make the town a better place to live, in lots of different ways. So planning is still very much at the heart of it, and making sure that there's a balanced infrastructure to go with it. We don't want the town to die. We welcome development, but it has to be matched with the roads, the schools, the environment and stuff like that. So we, therefore, look at those strands.

It is currently contesting an application by a private developer to build an estate of approximately 280 residential units in the ward, 30% of which are earmarked by the developers as affordable housing.

Area of deprivation: Additional charitable activity from charities registered outside of the locality is a little different in the area of deprivation. Many respondents report that although local charities have benefited from statutory 'deprivation funding' earmarked for the area over the last few years, there has also been a lot of short-term activity from external charities that have been attracted by this funding. There is a tendency amongst residents to be suspicious of new initiatives, projects and charities because of the short-term nature of this activity.

Residents are very unhappy about that, that it gets helicoptered in - they set something up, as the money runs out they don't make it sustainable and as the money runs out, they get helicoptered back out again. So then suddenly something's been fantastic for a year, a year and a half, and the next minute it's gone and they don't like that. (Karen, manager of a local charity)

Andrew, a local government officer, noted that the area had benefited from different types of area based grants in the late 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, with interesting projects run by different organisations (most of these appear to have been projects run by agencies or charities, rather than new charities set up with the regeneration money⁸⁸) that met a lot of the area's needs. But the ending of funding for different projects had a negative impact on the local community:

This went on for about seven years so, clearly, when the SRB funding, and its successor, Area Investment Fund ended, it did leave quite a gap in the local community, which meant that many staff that had been employed, primarily on SRB-funded projects, had their employment terminated.

On the short-term nature of funding, Andrew noted that:

Well, that is a common thing, really, that, whatever sort of grant-funding you get, it's always going to be time-limited and, if you could get two or three years, you're doing well and, increasingly now, it may only be just for a year, so services do come and go. I

⁸⁸ The only two surviving SRB funded charities are an arts charity and a Sure Start charity

think the problem with, particularly services for deprived people, is that there is no realistic exit strategy [.....]

SRB funded about 50-60 separate projects and they all went through, you know, the most meticulous scrutiny and, you know, they all had to report and, you know, they obviously did a lot of good work, but it's those sort of things just aren't sustainable, you know. If you put money into a capital project, you know, you build a building, that's fine, a building will be there for 30 years. You put money into a revenue project, it does vaporise by the end of the year and the legacy is probably quite minimal.

Karen, who commented on local suspicion of short-term projects, also noted that some external charitable agencies are quite predatory, and move into the area if they feel there is potential funding being targeted at areas of deprivation. She felt that although they may have credentials in terms of the sector they work in, some of the agencies have little understanding of the needs of the area, or the negativity of residents towards new projects, in comparison to locally based charities:

It still surprises me how much ignorance there is of what goes on. So I think within [the estate], it probably works quite closely but where you get these organisations which are more at [a county] level or bigger, they probably don't know so much and they will identify [the estate] as a place to come to and do some work.

There are, however, professionally run, external charitable agencies that have come from out of area and sustained a presence within the estate. These include: a domestic violence charity whose confidential registered premises are elsewhere in the local government district, but has worked primarily in the deprived area for nearly 35 years; another long-standing charity which provides volunteers to help struggling parents; a charity located in a city in the same county, that works to help short-term and long-term unemployed people to gain skills to get back into employment; a city-based charity working with young people who might be at risk of offending; and several regional RSLs providing affordable rentable housing, and supported housing to vulnerable people living on the estate. What these charities all have in common is that they all meet social needs associated with deprivation; funding is primarily through short-term contracts or Service Level Agreements with local or central government; and almost all employ staff to deliver their services. Additionally they have all built strong links with existing charities and local agencies delivering similar or complementary services.

THE WHOLE CHARITABLE PICTURE IN THE CASE-STUDY AREAS:

Small charities:

When comparing the whole picture of charitable activity in the affluent case-study area with the deprived case-study area, some similarities are evidenced. Both case-study areas have small, home-grown charities, with small incomes and expenditures that are run by members of the local community. The difference between the two areas is that the charities in the affluent area are more numerous, with a healthy turnover of old and new organisations - as older charities are removed, new

ones are set up. In the deprived area, there is less turn-over - a small number of older charities survive, few more recently set-up small charities have been sustainable, most have merged, been removed from the Charity Commission register, or become inactive.

The types of needs being met by these surviving groups also have some cross-over with the affluent area – scouts, pre-school, a community group, a lunch club for the elderly. However the charities operating in the affluent area have additionality that is lacking in the deprived area. There is a comparative abundance of charities operating in a wider sphere that encompasses history, music, two Universities of the Third Age, PTAs, churches, benevolent clubs and societies, friends of the local hospital.

Below the Radar activity:

Alex, the leader of a local church, observed that although the deprived area had benefited from area based grants such as Single Regeneration Budgets, which had resulted in some quite substantial charitable players coming into, or being set-up in the area, this type of funding has tailed off in recent years. He thought that this lack of statutory incentive and impetus may have opened up the way for the set-up of smaller groups.

I think in the last five years we haven't seen so much money coming in, because it hasn't been there, and so maybe that has allowed some of the smaller groups to set themselves up and to organise themselves.

These are groups that address local need that help to combat problems of isolation, such as elderly lunch-clubs, a newly set-up women's group, and a 'Good Neighbour's project, where individuals help others with specific tasks. However, the groups referred to are unregistered groups, some with clear church connections and/or support, that are effectively 'below the radar' of the Charity Commission. Alex emphasises that these groups are small in scale:

So I think smaller things have maybe stepped in, but the scale is very parochial and very small, and I think that one of the things that would be a hesitation to people is that they do what they do for their members as it were without looking beyond that. So that's fine and that's good, but I don't think it – there's very little that I could point at that would say that's outward looking beyond itself. And I think possibly because of the nature of residents here, taking on responsibility, becoming the chair person or becoming the treasurer and having to deal with the money, or becoming the secretary and have to write everything up, or applying for charitable status, those seem a bit beyond people still.

Additional activities provided by schools in the area and the local community centre (itself a charity) add to 'below the radar activity' addressing young people's needs, and some educational needs. But the emphasis remains on addressing social isolation and exclusion.

Looking across to the area of affluence, there are comparative unregistered organisations operating 'below the radar' of the Charity Commission – these include lunch clubs, 'Good Neighbours', and women's groups. However in comparison to the area of deprivation, these groups are much more numerous, and although some of them address clear social needs, and combat social exclusion, others

are well-established groups and societies. These include: a horticultural society; a French-speaking society; a table-tennis club; various art and craft groups; choirs and instrumental ensembles; and conservation groups. The primary needs being met are cultural, leisure and personal development needs.

Larger charities:

The affluent area has three larger charities operating in its locality: a charity that operates across the local government district, but specifically provides meals and transport for the elderly within the affluent area (income, as a whole, is close to £1000,000, but before interview it is uncertain what proportion of its income relates to the provision of this service); an organisation raising funds for the 2004 tsunami⁹ and a New Life Church, both with expenditures of approximately £300,000 in 2008. These charities are essentially outliers - their size is unrepresentative of the other charities in the area.

In contrast there are a greater number of larger charities operating in the deprived area. These include the professionally-run charities described earlier in this paper, and the charities from out of area described in the section above. A brief look at Table 1, which shows the type of needs that these charities meet, demonstrates that the majority of these charities meet needs that are associated with deprivation and social exclusion. Most of these charities are, as discussed earlier, dependent on statutory funding. Until the recession and austerity measures were introduced, most looked like they were sustainable with relatively long charitable shelf-lives. However drilling down, and picking over the narratives provided by respondents on how and why the charities were set-up, the financial problems they encounter, the trajectory of their aims and objectives, the relationships between charities, their successes, strengths and weaknesses, reveals a complexity to this charitable landscape that can inform understandings of the flow of charitable resources in this sample area of deprivation. The complexity and depth of information available might merit a separate paper. However for this paper, a briefer summary of the issues is provided (with some comparison with the affluent case-study area)

NEEDS BEING MET	SET-UP HISTORY
Educational Opportunities	New charity - statutory body with charity side-shoot to access voluntary funding
Adult Mental Health	Long standing local charity
Youth Mental Health	Long standing local charity operating in locality (and in another district, which replaced annual

⁹ The expenditure for the aid charity has tailed off in the last couple of financial years, and it seems possible that the charity is on its way to becoming inactive or being removed from the register (an interview is scheduled after the deadline for this paper).

	local statutory funding with SRB funding, leaving a funding gap when SRB funding came to an end)
Community Centre	Long standing local charity
Youth Offending	From out of area, strong local links with Sure Start, Apprentices, Unemployment charities
Unemployment	From out of area, strong local links with Sure Start and Youth Offending charities
Advice	Long standing but with now resolved sustainability issues in recent years
Domestic Abuse	From out of area, but charity with long-standing provision in the area
Help with parenting problems	From out of area, but charity with long-standing provision in the area
Disability	Long standing local charity recently sold to national charity/RSL
Sure Start Family Centre	Newer charity, some of set-up funds from SRB funding - statutory body with charity side-shoot to access voluntary funding for diverse projects, including apprenticeships, literacy projects, assistance with specific emergency welfare issues, cafe.
Supported Housing	Long standing RSL
Affordable rented housing	Long standing RSLs
Arts	Newer charity set up with SRB funding

Table 1: Description of type of charities operating in the deprived area

THE COMPLEX CHARITABLE LANDSCAPE WITHIN THE CASE-STUDY AREA OF DEPRIVATION

Paternalistic or embedded charities?

The professional nature of these organisations was touched on earlier in this paper. All of the larger charities operating in the area of deprivation are run by CEOs and managers who are not local to the area of deprivation, and who employ members of staff of whom most are not local. Most of the charities are dependent on statutory funding for delivery of their core services, most meet the type of social needs that are associated with areas of deprivation, and all were set-up by professionals who identified these charities as potential solutions to these social needs. They are, in essence, paternalistic charities (Salamon, 1992). Their managerial styles of practice, their reliance on statutory funding, and the influence of the state funder on many of their practices resonate with debates on managerialism and state-funding in the voluntary sector (Salamon 1999; Brown, Kenny, Turner and Prince, 2000). The practice, funding and policies of these charities provide a definitive contrast with the predominant voluntarism demonstrated in the area of affluence.

However, when looking at the networks between charities, and the working partnerships that these charities have with local community boards and other community groups and organisations, there is a sense that although these charities are applying solutions from outside of the locality, they have charitable identities that have a very local core. The acceptance of service users and local residents reinforces these local identities.

The Sure Start charity stands out as an example of a charity that has effectively embedded itself in the community. Like the Educational Opportunities charity, it exists as a statutory body providing regulated statutory services, but has an additional charity arm that allows the charity to apply for non-statutory funding, to respond quickly to need, and to make unregulated decisions within the parameters of its

charitable work¹⁰. This means, for example, that if a mother is diagnosed with an illness which requires regular attendance at hospital, the charity can provide emergency childcare for her, whilst waiting for a decision and payment from Social Services, which will take some time to process. The charity has also branched out in different charitable directions. It provides nursery care outside the Sure Start governance and parameters of service – perhaps not a great departure from the type of services it usually provides. However, it also provides volunteering activities, basic skills training for adults, other types of vocational training, apprenticeships, a community cafe, with apprentices providing the catering, and community space available for rental. The CEO of the organisation describes the training and skills aspect of the charity:

....but it is about what skills have you got round, and as you constantly nurture skills to grow there is some aspiration of moving away, or we see – and we've had some stunning success with people going up to degree level education, but then they're going into paid work. So you've got this churn, and there is a lot of transfers in and out in the housing in this area, which makes it interesting work.

Although the charity embraces its original Sure Start clientele – children under the age of five, and their parents or carers - it has moved to work with other sectors of the community in which it has perceived unmet needs: those lacking core basic skills, young people not in education or employment, and other unemployed people. It has strong relationships with other charities operating in the area, and particularly strong collaborative relationships with the charity working with young people at risk of offending, and the charity providing unemployment training whilst providing opportunities to local people to improve their skills and life options.

There are clear groupings and networks (and in some cases the appearance of potential cliques) between different charities and between local organisations and those charities that appear most confident about their future sustainability tend to be those with the strongest networks. The poor track record of some local charities and/or projects that have folded has tested the patience of locals (as discussed earlier). Overt success may be, in part, a recipe for acceptance.

Connected communities:

As discussed above, many of the charities operating in the case-study areas appear to be well-connected with each other. Beyond the good networking skills of the charity chairs, trustees, volunteers, CEOs, managers, and employees, it is uncertain, at this point in time, how all of these connections have evolved – a gap in the project and existing literature on the distribution of charities, that would merit further study.

There is evidence that in both case-study areas, the charities are being carried and sustained by 'the usual suspects'. Certainly, in the area of affluence, there are clear connections between different

¹⁰ This independence was noted by the manager of a local Sure Start that was being run by the county council for this area. The guidelines and rules for this organisation sometimes impeded the effective day-to-day running of the organisation, whereas the charitably run Sure Start could make common sense decisions about diversion of resources without censure from the council.

charities, either through trustees or active volunteers being involved in several charities, or through husband and wife, or friendship-group connections. In the area of deprivation, the connected relationships seem more professional, with professionals making links across organisations. There are a one or two involved locals, and district and county councillors who make up the 'usual suspects' by being involved at a volunteer, trustee, or interested supporter level. An additional connection, mentioned by a number of respondents, is the existence of a strong church network on the estate, whose leaders are highly supportive of the local charities, either by direct involvement, or through limited financial and in-kind support. There are a number of churches, some with quite small active congregations. However several of the leaders of these churches live and work on the estate, as part of an *'incarnational ministry'*. One church leader described how this impacts on the community:

So when some people ask what I do I often say "It's grouting, I'm sort of filling in the gaps between and building bridges and making connections so that things can happen".

Although there is no evidence available to support this view, the feeling of this project is that churches may provide additional local channels of connectedness and acceptance between the charities themselves, and some of the local community in the area of deprivation. It is too soon to comment on whether the same church connections exist in the affluent area.

Dominant discourses

The existence of strong networks between charities and community groups is evidenced in both case-study areas through the discourses that are being used in interviews, and through references to other charities. An example of this phenomenon was demonstrated in the area of deprivation during an interview with two professionals who are members of a local community partnership; their strong links with a domestic abuse service were clearly evidenced by the discourses they were using, which demonstrated an unusual level of awareness of the impact of domestic abuse in the area, and by their references to collaborative work achieved with this organisation, and the number of times the name of this organisation was inserted into the conversation.

At a neighbourhood/area level, there is evidence of strong discourses that promote a policy or vision for the area. In the area of affluence (so far) that vision relates to the strength of the community as a force for action, juxtaposed to the cross-cutting relationship between sense of community and the desire to help others, the economic and business health of the town, and residential rights and responsibility. In the area of deprivation the vision is invested in the key words – *'aspiration'* and *'excellence'* - which are used by almost all the charities who took part in the study. There is a sense that some of the resident/community have signed up to this vision, but that the charities, community groups and partnerships, and the statutory agencies within the neighbourhood have become the 'flag-bearers' of the vision, taking on the responsibility for the realising of this vision.

The existence of an arts based charity on the estate – which stands out as a cultural anomaly that, at first glance, might seem more in fitting with the cultural expectations of the affluent area, is seen as part of this vision. Set up with the help of SRB funding, and sustained by local statutory funding and Arts Council funding (alongside smaller grants), its CEO describes the rationale for its existence:

... and the reason they set it up was because there was a lot of work being done around, well nationally recognising the contribution that the creative industries make to the economy and I think that there's always a debate going on in the arts about the sort of intrinsic value and sometimes funders or policymakers can ignore the fact that there's a huge contribution that the creative industries make to the economy of this country and the knowledge economy and also it has audience tourism, etc, etc.

Bringing an arts charity into an area of deprivation opens up the area to a new type of economic activity and opportunity, encouraging artists, participants and buyers that would not necessarily come into the area without this incentive. Alex, the leader of a church observed that the charity has an additional function:

So out of that I think has been an awareness for residents of [the estate] and an opportunity to aspire to something great, you know, academic qualifications are not good here, it's clear that literacy and numeracy are still nuts to be cracked across the estate, but to do something a bit more practical, to do something with a bit more artistic creativity is a way of giving people an idea of self-worth and aspiration, so that's good. I like also that it rubs alongside this sense of a regional centre of excellence, so that people can aspire to something excellent in their midst.

Discussing the impact of the organisation on the local community, (like the Educational Opportunities charity) the CEO of this charity believes that the charity provides unusual opportunities for the 'cultural entitlement and enrichment of people's lives', alongside the opportunity to take part in activities and ways of thinking that are very different to those they normally take part in. The charity works at a number of levels, bringing together different generations, bringing under-confident/vulnerable members of the community into a culturally enriching environment, connecting children with their parents, and providing the opportunity to the community to aspire to something very different. There are similarities with some of the opportunities being provided by below-the-radar arts groups in the affluent area. The difference lies in how the organisations are run – voluntary rather than professional, and in how they perceive access to culture. There is an unspoken acceptance, in the affluent area, of entitlement to cultural enrichment, whereas the issue of entitlement forms the central vision of the arts charity for the deprived area – in turn feeding into the message that this community is entitled to aspiration and excellence.

At a district level, the arts charity has not always been popular, and there have been attempts in the past to cut off funding to the charity. Respondents reference a sustained district level tension about equality of funding between local district wards, with concern from some local politicians about inequalities for their own wards, if the estate consistently receives funding because of its deprivation status.

So that's an interesting one because some people think [the estate] gets too much. So the other perception is that when you've got an area of deprivation, people think that an area can get too much. And I think when it's on somebody's tick box, as a criteria [sic] for funding, everybody swarms to that area as well and I think that's... I've experienced that. (Jane, charity manager)

It would seem an almost ironic statement if this organisation, which is a flagship for aspiration for the community, was shut down by local politicians¹¹. This has been, so far, successfully resisted, and the organisation perceives itself to be relatively financially buoyant.

Aspiration as a double-edged sword:

Although aspiration and excellence are one of the prime motivators for most of the charitable organisations operating in the area of deprivation, there is a disjuncture between the ambition that charities have for the community – to raise the aspiration and levels of excellence in the community - and the aspirations held by the community, which comes at a cost to those working to change the levels of deprivation in the area:

Part of the story of [the estate] is that the aspiration is to move out. You do well and you leave, and that's what you aspire to do. (Alex, church leader)

Although respondents do not believe that there are particularly high levels of transience amongst those communities living in affordable rented housing (although several respondents referred to a small core of families that are constantly on the move)¹², they note that residents that do well tend to move out of the estate, creating opportunities for tenancies for more people from deprived socio-economic backgrounds.

Certainly there's a sense that, I guess if we do a good job, many of our students may then choose to move on, other families will move in. Again, because it's public housing stock, it's... We're dealing always with the same group of people in a sense. It's not the same people, but the same group and therefore, it's always a needy community. And I think that has, I guess that has challenges for it doesn't it? Because one.. I would like to change the community I suppose, and you know, we have a role in doing that and making a difference. But actually whether your community stays still for long enough - because people aren't owning their own homes because it's a rented public housing stock. When people's circumstances change, they move on. Or when people feel like a change of scenery they might move on. (Frank, manager of Educational Opportunities charity)

The regular leakage of the more successful and the more able out of the community, and their replacement with new sets of people manifesting the problems of deprivation, represents a potential barrier to enabling the community as a whole to develop and sustain the levels of voluntarism and community realisation experienced by the affluent case-study community. It also represents a barrier to raising the bar in terms of defining what the needs of the community are. Need will continue to be defined and framed by the urgency of the social problems of the community, rather than by the

¹¹ A not unlikely risk, given that public funding for cultural activities is often the first thing to be culled in times of austerity/recession.

¹² The issue of transience will be one of the focuses for forthcoming interviews with a local RSL and a local government housing manager.

community's entitlement to engage with cultural enrichment – in essence, provision will always focus on what the community must have, rather than what it would be nice to have.

Concern was voiced by some respondents that some families living in the community are disabled by their lack of basic skills, which impacts on their ability to participate within the community, and in particular in their children's educations, generating cultural reproduction of social needs. This imbalance in skills, and ability to participate, impacts on the area as a whole. Responding to this, there is a policy push in the Sure Starts of the area, to increase the skills of very young children in these families, so that their education is enabled at an early age. But it will be sometime before the benefit of this initiative is felt by the whole community.

With the overview of being a resident as well as a church leader, Alex was more optimistic about the possibility for improving the deprivation within the community:

I do think that people are going forward, a bit like climbing a mountain and you sort of tap in your little clasp to keep safe. You might fall back a bit but you don't fall back to where you've started, and I think we are climbing still, and I think that's something quite positive. From my personal experience of having children at school I think there's some hope there as well, I think that parents are getting more supportive, that the ethos of schools certainly at infant and junior level are starting to trickle through to an extent that people feel more encouraged about that. Maybe the parents who are now educating their children at the school are a generation on from those who had a very bad experience and so on. So you're never going to carry everybody forward, but I think a cumulative effect is positive. So I don't know what the statistics are, obviously we've had a census just done so it'll be a little while before we get some of that information, but I would say that [the estate] is a community on the up. The only danger is that, you know, how far behind are we being left from the rest of society as it were? You can match yourself against [the estate] of ten years ago, but should we be matching ourselves against, you know, [neighbouring more affluent ward] or [neighbouring more affluent ward] constantly? I don't know.

Summing up:

The finding of this project, so far, is that there are some similarities between the case-study areas, but there is a clear imbalance between the charitable resources of the area of affluence, and the area of deprivation. The area of affluence has a greater number of charities, which are run and funded through voluntary action by a small core of residents, and which meet the broad range of social, community and cultural needs of the neighbourhood. In contrast the area of deprivation has fewer charities. Some, which meet social and community needs, were set up and run by local residents some time ago, and continue to be sustained by a small core of volunteers. However the stronger charities, which have the most impact on the community and meet urgent social needs, are run by professionals (with some input from volunteers) and funded from statutory sources. In contrast to the area of affluence, there is just one charity which addresses the issue of the cultural need and entitlement of the community.

It is interesting that respondents from both case-study areas note that community participation and charitable activities are undertaken by a small core of volunteers. The difference between the area of affluence and the area of deprivation lies in the skills of its volunteers. The area of affluence has an

abundance of people with project management skills, whilst the area of deprivation lacks leaders/project managers, and relies on professionals or outsiders to take on these roles. In terms of the 'community wealth' (Keohane, Parker and Ebanks 2011)¹³ of the area of deprivation, respondents are divided. Some subscribed to the notion that the area is 'a doubly deprived' (ibid) community, not rich in community wealth, and unable to contribute to the vision of the Big Society¹⁴.

I just think you're asking people who have nothing to give. If you have nothing, you have nothing to give. That's the reality, you know. Nice idea and, you know, it's already working in areas that have the ability to do that, but in communities where actually everybody has high needs, how is that going to work? (Jo, charity manager)

It would be great for more people to volunteer but the kind of people who are prepared to volunteer tend to be older people with time on their hands who don't necessarily have the life experiences to be working with this kind of group. They may have the kind of experiences where they can go and volunteer at a day centre for people who've had a stroke but not necessarily with people who are exhibiting the needs and the lifestyle choices that some people in our client group and in other client groups that are similar to ours may make... (Anna, manager of a local charity)

Whereas as others, such as Alex, the church leader, are more cautiously optimistic:

And I think possibly because of the nature of residents here, taking on responsibility, becoming the chair person or becoming the treasurer and having to deal with the money, or becoming the secretary and have to write everything up, or applying for charitable status, those seem a bit beyond people still.

Although he perceives these skills to be 'a bit beyond people', his addition of the word 'still' holds some hope for the future. However, at this point of time, assistance with voluntary projects is needed, either from professionals, the religious bodies embedded in the community, or from outsiders willing to volunteer their time. (Although it isn't certain that outsider help would be welcomed)¹⁵

There is, clearly, a mismatch between supply and demand for volunteers. The demand is greater in the deprived area, but there is a dearth of the right calibre of volunteer, with the level of life experience

¹³ Realising Community Wealth: Local Government and the Big Society

¹⁴ Note that Keohane, Parker and Ebanks (ibid) advise 'However, Government should consider the broader implications of how social wealth is distributed when it considers how funding is distributed from government departments so that areas which are "doubly deprived" – deprived both economically and socially – are given attention and focus' (p.25)

¹⁵ ***It's finding that help that's difficult and then again the theory is always we could get businessman coming from outside the area to help them pull [estate event] together but then it stops being... it stops belonging to the people of [the estate]. So it's that ownership thing and it's having that pride.*** (Mike, manager of a charity)

and/or skills, the desire to volunteer, and willingness to engage with formal voluntary organisations. This represents a substantial challenge if there is an expectation from central and local government that volunteers should shoulder the burden of public expenditure cuts in this area.

There is an irony that a paper which aimed to focus on the flows of charitable resources in case study areas of affluence and deprivation has ended up speaking in some detail about the barriers to engaging people in participating in charitable activity. However, the state-led expectation that communities should substitute unpaid labour for paid labour to provide for their community needs is changing the nature of the term charitable resource (giving it a volunteer focus). There was perhaps some inevitability that this would become the trajectory of this paper.

The final point of this paper is that whilst the charities in the area of affluence seem relatively buoyant, charities in the area of deprivation face huge challenges in terms of the level of urgent social need in the community in which they work. They are operating in a challenging economic environment of increased competition for shrinking pots of funding (ironically increasingly competing with affluent areas for this money). There is, unsurprisingly, huge concern amongst these charities about: their continued survival; how the urgent social needs in the community will be met; the impact that cuts to funding will have on the future of the community; and the negative impact that cuts will have on the positive progress these charities have made with this community in the last few years.

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