CGAP Working Paper

Exploring Local Hotspots and Deserts: investigating the local distribution of charitable resources

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Rose Lindsey

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 the 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. The paper concludes with questions as to how the area of deprivation's charitable resources will be affected by austerity measures and the coalition government's Big Society agenda.

Research contexts

Until 2006, the analysis of the *distribution* of contemporary British charitable resources was relatively under-researched, with publications on charitable distribution thin on the ground. Hatch's (1980) study investigated the voluntary sector in three English towns. However, this focused on the nature of the voluntary organisations (including non-registered organisations) within these towns, rather than the comparative distribution of these organisations. Knight's (1993) study of voluntary action in 14 different localities provided an informative, although at times inconsistent, description of voluntary action in these different localities. Fyfe and Milligan (2003) undertook research on the distribution of voluntary welfare organisations in Glasgow. Prior to 2006 British literature on the voluntary sector lacked a coherent overview and understanding of the geographic distribution of voluntary organisations within the UK. In contrast the study of the distribution of not-for-profit organisations in the United States (US), aided by data collected by the National Centre on Charitable Statistics (Mohan 2011, p.5) was comparatively prolific, see for example: Wolch and Geiger (1983); Wolch (1989) Grønbjerg and Paarlberg (2001); Joassart-Marcelli and Wolch (2003); and Bielefeld and Murdoch (2004).

However, in 2006, Mohan and Rolls broke new ground with the publication of a map showing the *regional* distribution of charities in England and Wales. The map demonstrated that in regions characterised by their high-income, the distribution of charities appeared to be relatively dense when compared with low-income areas where the distribution of charities appeared to be comparatively scarce. In broad terms there was a 'very sharp contrast in the ratio of organisations to population between a prosperous rural South and a disadvantaged post-industrial north' (Mohan 2011a, p.6). This conceptualisation of charity-rich and charity-poor regions gave rise to the populist terms 'charity hotspots' and 'charity deserts' which entered political and media discourses[1] of the geographic distribution of the voluntary sector.

Whilst giving insight into the uneven and unequal regional distribution of charities the map prompted methodological questions relating to how geographical data on registered charities can be used to determine which localities actually receive benefit from charities. It also prompted empirical questions relating to whether there is: variation in charity distribution at a local/neighbourhood level (within deprived or affluent regions); variation in the way in which charities fund their activities; and evidence of geographical variation in the type of needs being met by charities.

Some of these questions are in the process of being addressed. Work by Mohan (2011a, and 2012 forthcoming) discusses some of the methodological challenges in mapping charitable distribution. Empirical work by Clifford (2012 forthcoming) using National Third Sector Organisation (NTSO) survey data on voluntary sector organisations working at the neighbourhood level demonstrates that 'less deprived local areas have a much higher prevalence of registered voluntary sector organisations than more deprived local areas' (p.1). Drawing on and summarising Clifford's analysis, Mohan (2011a) states that registered organisations are 2.5 times more prevalent in less deprived areas than in deprived areas (p.7). Clifford *et al*'s (2010) analysis of NSTSO survey data, addresses the question of variations in funding, and arrives at the conclusion that organisations which, in 2008, were bigger, newer, located in more deprived areas, and serving socially excluded or vulnerable people were more likely to receive public funding than other organisations (p.1). This analysis also identifies an increase in the numbers of registered charities set up in deprived areas since 2000, suggesting that there may be a relationship between this increase and the Labour administration's (1997-2010) area-based public funding

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[1] See for example the 2008 Conservative Green Paper *A Stronger Society*

initiatives, branded as regeneration, for deprived areas. However the study does not identify the range of needs that these organisations were set up to meet.

These analyses are complemented by Mohan *et al* (2010) in a study of *below-the-radar* activity in the North East of England, which finds that the *most deprived* areas in this region have larger numbers of non-registered voluntary organisations, but also notes that registered charities 'appear to be located in the more prosperous parts of the region than in the more disadvantaged areas, with the exception of the most deprived decile, where the numbers rise again' (p.25). Mohan *et al*'s (2011b) findings from related studies of the voluntary sector in the north of England, also provides some insight into the needs that are being met by registered charitable organisations in this area, demonstrating that there is 'a relative over-representation of charities providing social services, and of charities working in the area of economic and community development, compared to the distribution for the UK as a whole' (p.5) The pattern in the North of England is likely to reflect the influence of regeneration funding initiatives, as well as policies targeted at disadvantaged groups, for example, Welfare to Work and Sure Starts.

Although there has been considerable recent progress in understanding the distribution of charities in the UK, and the methodological challenges involved in moving this work forward, there remain broad gaps in the study of this area. We still do not have a clear picture of the needs that charities meet in areas of affluence and deprivation; which communities actually benefit from these charities; and what incentives and motivations there are to set up and participate in charities, or an understanding of local patterns of viability and sustainability. Additionally, although empirical work has contributed to an evidence-base that describes patterns of variation in distribution, the nature of that evidence – large data-sets – means it is less able to provide a nuanced and in-depth understanding of how and why variation occurs, and for the purposes of this paper, the effects of variation on local communities[2].

The question of the *distributional effects* of charitable activity was the central concern of a year-long project which investigated quantitative and qualitative aspects of the geographical distribution of charities. Acknowledging that the distribution of registered charities in England is uneven, this project set out to find out more about: the contrasting spaces in which charitable activity takes place; the comparative distribution of resources, the distinctive features of charitable activity; the barriers to organisational success; and the challenges organisations are likely to face[3]. The results of this research form the basis of this paper.

[2] Milligan (2007) goes some way towards summing up the literature that interrogates the influences 'that have been instrumental in influencing the interrelationship between people, place and the voluntary sector and its spatial distribution' (p.191). She concludes that 'unpacking causal factors is extremely complex' (p.191). One of the complicating factors may be that as Massey (1984) argues, each place is unique. In order to understand the uniqueness of a place, or a locality, one must understand the economic, social, historical, ideological, political, cultural influences that converge in a specific locality.

[3] The aims and objectives of the research project that are the focus of this paper were conceived at the same time that the work by Clifford (2012) Clifford *et al* (2010) and Mohan (2011a) was being undertaken. These researchers are based in the same department and there has been some cross-fertilisation across the different projects (see acknowledgements below).

Methodology:

The project aimed to use a comparative case-study approach to explore the distribution and flow of charitable resources in the UK within deprived and affluent geographic areas. A mixed methodology was chosen, combining a desktop analysis of available accounts and annual reports of all the registered charities within selected, case-study areas alongside semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and the managers, chairs or treasurers of charities of registered charities in these areas. The resulting 43 interviews with 51 different respondents were analysed using *QSR Nvivo 8*. The modest timeframe and budget for the project required the desktop study to take place at the same time as the fieldwork interviews for the study.

The constraints of budget and time available to the project meant that the number of case-study areas needed to be limited. It was not possible to compare a number of case-study areas across UK regions, which whilst reflecting affluence and deprivation, also reflected a range of additional socio-economic differences, such as homogeneity of population, northern and southern economies, and urban and rural geographies. Instead the project sought a small-scale solution that engaged with Massey's (1984) insistence on 'the uniqueness of place', choosing to look at charitable distribution within two distinct neighbourhoods within a given local authority area.

The choice of case-study area was further informed by Noble *et al*'s (2004) work on measures of deprivation, which observes that deprived regions in England, such as those found in parts of the north of England, always contain areas and pockets of areas that are much less deprived[4]. The specificity and diversity of smaller localities of affluence, or areas of lesser deprivation, are drowned out by the dominance of the regional picture. The reverse occurs in regions like the south-east and south-west of England, where because of the relative affluence of these regions, deprivation is a departure from the norm of relative affluence and thus becomes elided from the regional picture. These deprived areas are most likely to be located, and polarised, within socially-housed communities.

As it was not possible to identify a case-study area that would reflect the unique regional experiences of both the north and south of the England, the research project settled on a study located in the regionally more prosperous south-east of the country. The project aimed to choose two contrasting neighbourhoods – one more affluent, and one deprived - that lie within 3 miles of each other in the same anonymised, local government district in the south-east of England.

After considering the use of Lower Super Output Areas, it became clear that these did not represent distinct neighbourhoods or localities that would make sense to respondents when asked to comment on the flow of resources in these areas. The study opted to look at two different electoral wards in the district instead. However, when preparation for interviews began in the area of deprivation, the boundaries between the chosen ward and surrounding deprived wards came across as artificial geographical constructs to respondents talking about the flow of charitable resources into the area. It became apparent that the area of deprivation and community that respondents were referring to was a distinct, locally-defined neighbourhood of deprivation, comprised of four electoral wards that make up a large post-war housing estate. All four wards thus became the focus of the study.

These wards fall into the category of 20% most deprived areas in England, whilst three fall into the first decile of deprivation. With a population of 30,000 people, the case-study area is more densely populated than the more affluent area – approximately 6,000 people per

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[4] For ease of reference, throughout the paper we refer to these as areas of affluence, whilst noting that Noble *et al*'s (2008) frames of reference relate only to degrees of, and different types of, deprivation.

square kilometre. It is dominated by social renting, high levels of reliance on state benefits, and characterised by relatively high population turnover. It benefited from several phases of regeneration initiatives, including the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) phases 2-5 (1996-2006), and area-based grants.

The affluent case-study area, parts of which are ranked as being in the 20% least deprived in the country in the 2007 Indices of Deprivation, is a prosperous village with high levels of owner occupation and high proportions of retired people. It is substantially larger in size, less densely populated with approximately 1440 people per square kilometre. It does however contain two small pockets of social housing and deprivation within this predominantly prosperous community.

Both case-study areas are ethnically homogeneous, describing themselves as predominantly white British. In the 2008 Place Survey Report 77 percent of responding residents from the affluent area, and 60 per cent of responding residents from the deprived area reported a strong sense of belonging to the areas in which they live.[5]

MAPPING FLOWS OF RESOURCES WITHIN THE CASE-STUDY AREAS

The project drew on data drawn from the register of charities. This enabled us to produce a list of charities with registered addresses in the localities being studied. An initial analysis of this list suggested that there are around three times as many registered organisations, per head, in the area of affluence compared to the area of deprivation; a variation that is slightly wider than that suggested by Clifford (2012) and Mohan (2011a).

There are, however, methodological problems related to using the registered addresses of charities to explore variation in charitable distribution. The list needed to be screened, firstly to identify a small number of charities whose records of recent income and expenditure suggest that they were inactive; and secondly to identify those charities that were not actually providing benefit within the geographical areas in which they were registered. We identified a number of charities that could be discounted from the study, and discovered that the number of ineligible charities was greater in the area of deprivation.[6] This led to the conclusion that there could four times as many eligible charities, per head, registered to and giving benefit to the area of affluence than to the area of deprivation.

Both case-study areas also benefit from charities whose registered addresses are not in the case-study area. These are discussed later in this paper.

[5] No reference supplied to maintain anonymity of the area. The overall response rate to the survey across the Local Authority area was 54 per cent. Response rates per neighbourhood area are not given, but the report identifies the number of responses from each area for each question asked.

[6] This raises the question as to whether charities in deprived areas have a shorter life-time than charities in affluent areas, unanswerable in this context because the number of charities involved is too small.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Secondary source analysis, corroborated by fieldwork, identified that most of the twenty–two charities registered to, and giving benefit to, the *affluent* case-study area are run on a voluntary basis by local residents who are actively involved in these charities. These charities are relatively small in terms of their income/expenditure, and meet a range of needs that include addressing social isolation, community development, cultural and intellectual stimulation and mutual social benefit for members. The range of charities includes: PTAs, a museum, church charities, a stroke club, friends of a cottage hospital, a community centre, a community hall, a Women's Institute, and two Universities of the Third Age. Most of these charities are not in receipt of statutory funding, an issue which was emphasised by a number of the respondents that took part in the study. The one charity that is funded from statutory sources – a local authority grant - is a community hall based in a small area of social housing and deprivation, which is physically located on the margins of the affluent case-study area, and some distance away from the centre of the village. One third of the charities that have been registered to this area, since the 1960s, are no longer operative; surviving charities registered to, and giving benefit to the area, have a range of ages. Aside from one large faith-based charity[7], the average charity annual expenditure for the year ending 2008 was approximately £13,000 with a median expenditure of £9,000.

The picture for the *deprived* case-study area is rather different and more complex. Analysis of the most recently accessed secondary data suggests that almost two-thirds of the charities registered to the deprived area since the 1960s are no longer operative. Some are inactive, some have de-registered with the Charity Commission, and some have merged with other charities or private businesses operating in the broader region. A quarter of these have ceased operating in the last five years; these include disability organisations, young people's organisations, and pre-schools.

A small proportion of surviving charities are small charities run by local volunteers. A poor, response-rate to requests for interviews with *small* charities registered to the area, hampered understanding of the nature of these organisations, whether the charities were still active, and whether they gave benefit to the area[8]. The project was forced to rely on secondary data for this information, which presented a rather fluid and changeable picture of distribution. For example, several small charities changed their registered addresses during the lifetime of the study; some small charities merged with bigger charities within the region; and others proved to have been inactive for some time.

The most recent analysis of secondary data has found that four – less than a third of the charities registered to, and operating in, the deprived case-study area - are small

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[7] A Pentecostal Christian church with an evangelical ethos.

[8] Out of nine small charities approached, only one respondent agreed, reluctantly, to an unrecorded, informal interview. This respondent found it difficult to articulate the reason why she was reluctant to take part, but referenced: uncertainty about the interview process; uncertainty about the purpose of the study; disbelief that her views might inform the study; distrust or fear of formal institutions like universities; and a fear that she might become emotionally upset during the interview. The poor response rate from volunteer-run charities, and the lack of fieldwork evidence as to which charities provide direct benefit to the deprived area, suggests that written invitations to interviews may not represent the best methodological approach for fieldwork with respondents living in deprived areas. A more visible and approachable research team might engender more trust in the process.
Note, that there was also an initially poor response rate from charities registered to the affluent area, and it took some time to gain the trust of potential respondents. Some respondents indicated that their lack of trust was related to a fear that a formal study of these charities might jeopardise their funding sources.

organisations run solely by local volunteers[9]. These volunteer-run charities do not appear to be in receipt of statutory funding. The average charity annual expenditure for the year ending 2008 was approximately £9,000 with a median expenditure of £8,000. The needs they set out to meet relate to education and social isolation, and include a scouting organisation, disability organisations, and a lunch club for the elderly.

Twenty-three per cent of the charities that have been registered, or are currently registered, to the deprived area have been pre-schools, but only 40 per cent of these are still operating in their original charitable form. The sector has experienced some recent changes - respondents referred to mergers and takeovers by larger businesses and other charities operating locally or within the broader local authority areas. Within the local charitable sector, early years' provision is now provided by a professionally-run Sure Start charity (described below) and two independent charities, both affiliated to the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Interviews were not secured with the two latter organisations, so information on these charities was gleaned from charitable accounts. The two pre-schools are governed by local, female parent-trustees (who are in post for several years) and employ staff members and pre-school managers. In the year ending 2008, the expenditure of one of the charities which is attached to a local school was £73,000, whilst its income was £80,000, the majority of which came from "funding"; whilst the expenditure of the other was £59,000, with an income of £71,000, 80 per cent of which was "funding" and 17 per cent parental fees[10].

In contrast to the volunteer-run charities, and the professionally-run but locally governed pre-schools, there are an additional eight professionally run charities registered to, and operating in, the area of deprivation. These have higher annual expenditures than the volunteer-run charities and the pre-schools, ranging between £100,000 and £3,000,000 (approximately) in the year ending 2008. They include mental health services, a charity providing residential and home-support services for people with disabilities, a Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), a community centre, all of which have existed in the deprived area for some time[11]; a Sure Start service and an arts/cultural charity which were set-up with SRB funding in the early 2000s; and an education charity set up in the late 2000s. Interviews with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and/or 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 volunteering[12] – 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 and analysis of their annual reports and accounts show that all, but one (an

[9] More recent secondary data suggests that the proportion of volunteer-run small charities is now lower (to that identified in interim reports, see Lindsey (2012) and Lindsey (2011a)). One local-volunteer-run charity has since been found to be inactive, and two others have recently changed their registered addresses and updated their electronic profiles. It is now clear that these charities do not give direct benefit to the deprived area, but deliver services from addresses in a neighbouring ward. However, given that these organisations had previously had a member or trustee living in the deprived area, it is reasonable to surmise that some residents from the deprived area may be moving across ward boundaries to attend the events provided by these charities.

[10] Source - charitable accounts for year ending 2008. The accounts provide no detail of the funding provided, but it might be fair to assume that this is government funding for nursery/pre-school spaces.

[11] Set-up dates in the 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s.

[12] Local and non-local volunteers

Educational Opportunities charity) of the charities, receive some sort of statutory funding, either as grants or contracts[13], and depend on this income for their financial viability.

As well as being reliant on statutory funding, and being run by professionals, the charities registered to the deprived area address different types of needs to those registered to the affluent area. The majority appear to focus on addressing urgent social problems such as mental health difficulties, financial difficulties, and the need for health and educational support for young families; whereas the affluent area addresses a broader, more diverse, less urgent mix of needs. However it is interesting to look across at the affluent case-study area, at charities that actually have direct counterparts to some of the charities in the areas of deprivation - for example, a thriving community centre, and a charity with a cultural focus[14]. 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 dependence on statutory funding, when the area of deprivation is reliant on this funding?

BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT IN CHARITIES:

Respondents indicated 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. These observations, described below, concur with Brodie *et al* (2011) who describe these barriers to participation as an absence of practical, learnt and felt resources (pp.40-41); and Billis and Glennister (1998), who describe these barriers as combinations of financial, societal, and community disadvantage. (pp.87-88).

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'*[15] who are mostly retired individuals*;* a view that was also put forward by Frank, the chair of an educational opportunities charity. Frank described how the school that is supported by this charity has been unable to get the parents of schoolchildren to become involved with the school: at a PTA level; as governors of the school; 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[16].

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[13] The Educational Opportunities charity is effectively the charity arm of a school. The school is eligible to apply for statutory funding, but tends to be ineligible to apply to charitable trusts. Having a charity arm enables it to apply for all forms of funding. It has similarities to the Sure Start charity mentioned later in this paper.

[14] The affluent case-study also has a variety of non-registered but structured cultural organisations offering access to music, art and history. This is in contrast to the deprived area, whose non-registered or 'below-the-radar' activity is much less overt, and according to respondents, smaller in size.

[15] Here, and elsewhere in the paper, reported speech and direct quotes appear in italics and are drawn from interviews with charities based or operating within the case study areas.

[16] Other respondents commenting on the 'usual suspects' noted that in the deprived area this is comprised of a very a small group of retired people who have continued to live in the deprived area – less than ten in number – who have additional skills learnt or acquired in the workplace. The female parent-trustees of the two independent charitably run pre-schools were not discussed by respondents.

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, deprived community)

This observation resonates with Mohan and Bulloch's work on the 'civic core' (2012), 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[17]. Placing himself in the category of 'busy parent', the respondent, Frank, empathised with a cohort of younger people who can feel too busy to take part in activities outside of work, home and family. However, respondents noted that some parents that live in the deprived area experience greater than usual difficulty in managing their time, and described 'chaotic lifestyles' as a barrier to parental involvement in community-groups and regular or one-off events. There is a sense that 'spare time' as perceived by retired less deprived communities, is not a well-understood concept amongst many parents who comprise the majority of this deprived community.

Besides the issue of time, a number of respondents identified a contrast in the skill-sets of those living in the case-study areas, which impacts on the communities' abilities to set-up and run charities. Andrew, a local government officer, noted that the affluent area has a core of active, retired, professional people with project-management skills that they bring to the organisations with which they are involved. Although the deprived area does have active, retired people who might be willing to volunteer, it lacks people with project-management and leadership skills. Nevertheless, respondents commenting on the deprived community were clear that the community would not welcome the input of outsiders and would be unlikely to take part in any events or meetings organised by those perceived to be outsiders.

> ***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 [an 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 in the deprived case-study area)

The community values its sense of ownership of those events that are organised in the area and there is great suspicion of outsiders importing ideas or projects into the community. This resonates with the findings of Knight (1993), who encountered similar levels of suspicion when researching voluntary action, in a deprived Scottish housing estate, in 1989 (p.129). Although not fore-grounded, it is also implicit in Pierce and Milne's more recent study of 2010.

Mike, the charity manager quoted above, also noted that there is a historical trend whereby an individual who is interested in leadership is more likely to take up a political

[17] Note an anomaly within the affluent case-study that mirrors these difficulties. The affluent area has small charity attached to a secondary school for children with learning difficulties. All but one child attending this school, and benefiting from the charity, come from outside of the case-study area. The majority come from the deprived case-study area. The respondent commenting on this charity noted that lack of time, confidence, and skills, exacerbated by the demands of supporting a disabled child, means that there is very little parental participation in this particular charity.

role, which might, at a later date, then be channelled into a charity trustee role. Mike's view was that people learn their leadership skills on the job, as councillors. It was, therefore a surprise to discover that a large proportion of these local politicians, and ex-politicians, do not actually live in the deprived case-study area, but elsewhere in the local government district (including some in the affluent case-study area)[18].

The same respondent also noted that confidence plays a huge role in how people participate 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, which means 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. (Mike, manager of charity in the deprived case-study area)

Lack of confidence is often related to having low basic skills - a characteristic of individuals living in areas of deprivation[19]. The manager of a local Sure Start commented that written posters advertising events do not encourage client take-up of promoted events – many clients do not have the requisite skills with which to read these posters. Alternative, more visual materials are much more successful. Respondents also observed that there is a collective distrust of education in the area, which makes it particularly difficult to engage illiterate adults with initiatives to help them acquire literacy and financial skills. Illiterate adults tend not to be able to support their children's education, resulting in a risk of cultural replication of poor educational achievement and subsequent worklessness within particular families. Adults with low basic skills struggle to carry out basic tasks such as form-filling, and are at risk of encountering financial and legal problems with statutory authorities relating to 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 a collective 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.*[20]

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[18] Power imbalances, inequalities and leadership issues are also noted by Pearce and Milne (2010, p.7) and Lawless (2011. p.60). It is interesting to note that although voluntary help from outsiders with skills would not be welcome when the community is organising events, indeed it would be an imposition, the local electorate will vote for volunteer local authority politicians who come from outside the area.

[19] See for example Lupton and Power (2002 p.123)

[20] The issue of trust, active disengagement and the role of peer group pressure within deprived communities has been discussed elsewhere, particularly in relation to New Deal for Communities programmes; see for example, Mathers *et al*, 2008. In their study of a NDC community in the West Midlands, by Mathers *et al*, argued that lack of participation did not necessarily indicate lack of capacity to take part.

It is hard to pin down why this attitude exists – it could stem from negative experiences with authority figures or institutional bodies (such as schools) in the past. But in a sense, the reason or cause isn't particularly important – what it reflects is a collective and engrained habit and attitude that exists across this particular area of deprivation.

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, competencies, time and confidence, and 'mental complexity' (Rowson *et al* 2012), 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:

> *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.* (Jo, charity manager)

Although respondents commenting on the deprived area were quite articulate about the multiple barriers to participation in charities in the area, what was missing from many of their analyses were unprompted references to the very tangible problems of unemployment and poverty; perhaps because these problems are so pervasive in the area. Similarly, those commenting on the area of affluence did not mention, explicitly, the relative wealth of the case-study area, although most respondents were very helpful in describing the way in which their charities were funded. What stood out from these descriptions of charities is that there is a lively flow of charitable resources within the affluent area. A number of charities hold fundraising events that are well-supported by other charities and by a large core of local residents; some charities apply successfully for grants to other local charities that hold large (and well-invested) financial assets; donations to individual charities by their members take the form of membership fees, monetary gifts, legacies, or in-kind donations such as raffle prizes; some small charities make donations to other small charities, or to larger national charities. There appears to be a charitable economy within the affluent area that is nurtured and stimulated by those involved with the charities and by many of those living in the area, which is dominated by inter-charity reciprocity. This particular local, charitable economy and reciprocity is only tenable because of the relative affluence of a number of the local residents, and the relative wealth that they bring into the locality. The poverty of those living in the deprived area rules out the development of this type of vibrant, local, charitable economy within their community[21].

However, there is an anomaly in this analysis of the affluent area predicated on the fact that the project was unable to secure interviews with respondents from the two small areas of deprivation that lie within the area of affluence[22]; these are areas of social-housing representing 11 per cent of the affluent area's residential housing stock.

[21] The study did not, however, investigate the cashless, informal charitable economy of neighbour reciprocity in either of the case-study areas.

[22] This mirrored a poor response rate from potential respondents involved in the small charities in the deprived case-study area.

Interviews with other respondents living in the affluent area suggest that these are marginalised communities, not necessarily integrated with the broader, more affluent community. Some respondents were vague about the location and existence of these areas. One respondent reported that some parts of one deprived area are seen as '*no-go roads'* by elderly volunteers delivering written material to the affluent areas. Respondents with charitable links with these two areas of social housing commented on a lack of engagement with community and charitable initiatives, whilst Roger, a local politician, was of the view that there are power imbalances between the affluent and deprived communities:

> *But a lot of these people think that no-one cares. They don't have a voice and often, they don't have a voice because they don't use their voice effectively because they don't know how to.* (Roger, local politician from the affluent case-study area).

Without interviews, it is not possible to comment on the experience of marginalisation of these small deprived communities. Nor is it possible to establish how they may or may not benefit from the mix and variety of registered and unregistered charitable organisations within the affluent area and whether they take part in the charitable economy described above.

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

Although, at its outset, the project was able to gain a good picture of the registered charities providing benefit to both case-study areas, it was uncertain what additional, registered charitable activity was taking place in these areas. Through interviews, desk-top research, and research whilst out and about in the locality, the project set out to map the charities providing additional benefit within the case-study areas.

Area of affluence:

The village has three charity shops which raise funds for popular local hospices. These are supported by local volunteers and the local business association. The village also has several local fundraising branches of national charities which are run by local committees and are well-supported by the local community.

A meals-on-wheels service, a service for people with mobility problems, and an elderly lunch-club, are operated by a charity registered to a neighbouring affluent ward. This charity has a contract with the local authority to provide these services. It rents additional premises from the local authority in the affluent case-study area from which it runs all three services. Those that benefit from these services live across the local authority area. However the primary beneficiaries of the elderly lunch club, which provides value-for-money lunches, tend to be elderly people who live in the area of affluence. Respondents noted that some elderly residents within the community are socially isolated, particularly after spousal bereavement. Additionally although some beneficiaries are owner-occupiers of houses with high re-sale values, these individuals can be cash-poor. The location of these services is currently jeopardised by the potential demolition and/or sale of the premises it currently rents from the local authority.

The affluent area also has some social housing stock in the village (11 per cent as noted above). Originally owned by the local council, this was transferred to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), who now owns and runs this housing, and offers affordable rented housing to the two small deprived communities within the affluent case-study area. During the time in which we were conducting our research, the RSL had a strong profile in the village. A number of respondents observed that it offered activities for all local children and young people during the school holidays. It also ran one-off events in collaboration with other local community charities. Discussion with respondents about these activities met with a mixed reaction. Although the activities were on respondents' horizons, the fact that these are run by an RSL whose primary beneficiaries were experiencing deprivation wasn't always noticed. Since the fieldwork for this project ended, the RSL appears to have ceased offering these additional activities.

The local authority housing plan identifies the affluent case-study area as having 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 development was noted by a number of respondents.

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 in the deprived area).

It is worth noting here, that Knight's (1993) study of voluntary action makes a similar point about local suspicion of short-term funding in a deprived area in the Welsh valleys, twenty years previously[23].

Andrew, a local government officer, observed "*I think that the problem with, particularly services for deprived people, is that there is no realistic exit strategy".* He described how the deprived area had benefited from different types of area based grants 1996-2005, with locals involved in choosing projects to meet a range of different needs for the locality. Most appear to have been projects run by agencies or charities, rather than new charities set up with the regeneration money. But the ending of funding for different projects had a negative impact on the local community because of a lack of legacy.

[23] Lack of community engagement also forms the focus of Lawless' (2011) critique of the 2011 New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme which ran from 1998-2011, and is discussed by Pearce and Milne (2010). Clearly, it is not a new phenomenon, although it has certainly challenged those trying to engage communities for some time. As discussed earlier in this paper, successful engagement with this particular deprived community seems to have been achieved through several means: being seen to be a successful project (a potential Catch-22 situation); being seen to provide tangible legacy; and being seen to have local interests at heart.

> *You know, they obviously did a lot of good work, but 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, the 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 quite minimal.* (Andrew, Local Government Officer)

Only two charities funded through regeneration monies – a Sure Start and an arts based charity, both with purpose-built premises – have been successful in providing a legacy and in gaining resident acceptance of the services they provide.

Karen, who commented on local suspicion of short-term projects, also noted that some external, out-of-area, charitable agencies move into the area if they feel there is potential funding being targeted at areas of deprivation. Her view was that although these agencies may hold credentials within the particular sectors in which they work, 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.* (Karen, manager of a local charity in the deprived area)

There are, however, professionally run, external charitable agencies that have come from out of area and sustained a presence within the deprived area for a number of years. These include: a domestic violence charity; a Home-Start charity; a charity working to help short-term and long-term unemployed people to gain skills to get back into employment; a charity working with young people who might be at risk of offending; 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 have all responded to social needs associated with deprivation rather than generating services in response to short-term deprivation funding; all receive statutory funding; 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

An overview of the entire charitable landscape of the area of deprivation suggests that it is dominated by larger, professional charities which 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 these larger 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 most (except for the community centre and possibly the pre-schools) were set-up by professionals who identified these charities as potential solutions to these social needs. In outward appearance they seem to be 'paternalistic' charities. 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 professionalism and the influence of statutory funding in the voluntary sector (Salamon 1992 and 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, their organisational identities have a very local core – they appear embedded within the community. Their success, evidenced in the acceptance and engagement of service users and local residents, reinforces these local identities.

There are clear groupings and networks (and in some cases the appearance of potential cliques) between different charities and different local organisations. Those charities that appear most confident about their future sustainability tend to be those with the strongest collaborative networks. They are also forward thinking, non-risk-averse organisations with strong leadership and diversity of provision. As noted earlier, the poor track record of some local charities and/or projects that have folded has tested the patience of locals. Overt success may be, in part, a recipe for acceptance by the local community.

Neighbourhood vision and aspiration

There is evidence of strong discourses that promote a policy or vision for the case-study areas. In the area of affluence 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, residential rights relating to planning, and residential responsibilities. This appears to sit alongside an ignorance, or elision, of the lower-income, more deprived communities that also make-up the neighbourhood.

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, and echoes the rhetoric of the Labour administration's 1997-2010 educational policies. There is a sense that some of the residents 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 its realisation.

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 part of this vision. Its CEO describes the original rationale for its existence as economic: it was hoped that bringing an arts charity into an area of deprivation would open 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, a church leader, 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, 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 affluent case-study area's 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.

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), 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. (*Frank, manager of Educational Opportunities charity)

The regular loss 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 greater proportion of 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 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*.

Conclusion:

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 most of the neighbourhood (although there is some question over the level of integration of the small areas of deprivation within this neighbourhood). In contrast the case-study 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 (concurring with Salamon's work on US charitable social services in 1992). In contrast to the area of affluence, there is only 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' of the area of deprivation (Keohane, Parker and Ebanks 2011), respondents are divided. Most subscribed to the notion that the area is *'a doubly deprived'* community, not rich in community wealth, and unable to contribute to the vision of the Big Society.

> *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)

Some also noted that some social problems can only be addressed by trained, paid professionals. Other respondents, such as Alex, the church leader, were more cautiously optimistic about the future, yet agreed that at this point of time, assistance with the running of voluntary projects is needed, either from professionals or the religious bodies embedded in the community. Respondents agreed that it is unlikely that outsiders willing to volunteer their time would be accepted by the community. 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 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 the deprived area and use community and charitable resources to bridge the gap between need and provision. Meanwhile, the threat of austerity cuts and the imperative rhetoric of the 'Big Society' appear to be engendering a perceptual change in the nature of the economy of philanthropy in England: from a cash-based flow of charitable resources to a state-led expectation that communities should substitute unpaid labour for paid labour to provide for provide for their community needs. In affluent areas this may not be a problem. But in economically, educationally and socially deprived communities dependent on state-funding for their professionally-provided charitable resources, cash-funding is the only form of philanthropy that can address their needs.

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