Collaborative governance under austerity: the case of Cardiff

Madeleine Pill
Lecturer in Public Policy
The University of Sydney
New South Wales, Australia
madeleine.pill@sydney.edu.au

Valeria Guarneros-Meza
Lecturer in Public Policy
De Montfort University
Leicester, UK
valeria.guarneros@dmu.ac.uk

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

Cover photo by Madeleine Pill: *a mural celebrating 'Timeplace', a community timebank running in the Cardiff neighbourhoods of Ely, Caerau, Fairwater and Pentrebane. Timeplace is run by ACE (Action in Caerau & Ely) http://www.aceplace.org/timeplace/, a community-based non-profit, in partnership with Spice, http://www.justaddspice.org/ a specialist timebanking non-profit.*

TRANSGOB: Transformations of urban governance in the context of the crisis. Evolution and prospects for participative governance in Spain and the UK

The TRANSGOB project addresses the impact of the economic crisis on forms of urban governance in Spain, contrasting the Spanish experience with that of the United Kingdom. It aims to analyse how practices of participative governance are evolving and their future prospects in a context marked by budget austerity, social conflict and political crisis. In more general terms, we want to explore the implications of such dynamics of change for the relations between state and non-state actors at the local level.
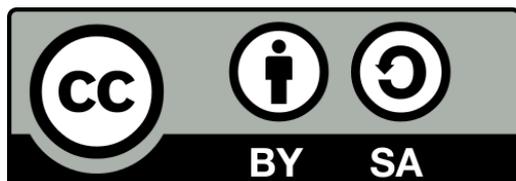
Principal Investigator: Dr Ismael Blanco, IGOP and Department of Political Science and Public Law, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
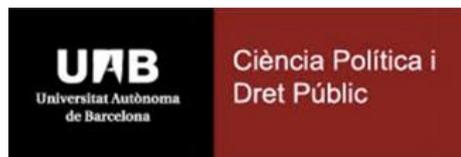
Introduction

Cardiff is the capital of and largest city in Wales (population 346,000, 2011 Census). Until 2017 the city, traditionally dominated by Labour, will carry on having a Labour Party administration. Since the 1990s a boosterist, neoliberal vision has been pursued by Cardiff Council's leadership (Morgan, 2006) prioritising 'sport, shows and shops', to 'ensure that Cardiff is a world class European capital city with an exceptional "quality of life" and at the heart of a competitive city region' (Cardiff Council, 2007).

The city's partnership model, including neighbourhood management, has worked well as a mechanism that maintains lean operational systems, while providing innovation in outsourcing or commissioning services. The expected benefits of such innovation are devolved risk to sub-local levels (such as the neighbourhood) and to non-statutory agencies; and new ways to ensure cost saving and other benefits (such as shared risk and responsibility). The city is reliant on the 'crisis management' derived from the uncertainties of the global economy and its effects upon the regional and local scales. However, the beliefs and practices of government officials and citizens show a mix of arrangements that combine formal and informal practices, which provide a more complex picture than the aggregate understanding of 'austerity urbanism' (Peck, 2012).

Wales' lack of independent tax raising powers led its public services to enjoy relative protection from austerity derived from the 2008 financial crisis, in part due to the time lag in English cuts feeding through the formula used to set Wales' funding. However, with the 2014/15 Welsh Government budget, a director of a local think tank warned 'it's time to put away the manicure scissors and reach for the scythe' (Winckler, 2013). Financial allocations to local authorities were 'by far the worst settlement since devolution' with severe budget cuts of over 5% in real terms for 2014/15, rising to 9% by 2015/16 (Henry, 2013). Budget cuts of some £100 million were sought in the following three years by Cardiff Council. Welsh Government ministers blamed the UK government for these cuts.

As a result, Cardiff Council has looked to rationalise and reorganise public services, while the Welsh Government has also encouraged the creation of a multi-authority Cardiff Capital Region to drive efficiency savings and growth (Welsh Government, 2014). In November 2013, the council commenced a 'priorities consultation' on the 2014/ 15 budget. The premise was that 'the budget shortfall will undoubtedly change the way we are shaped and operate' (Cardiff Council, 2013a). Rejecting austerity altogether was not an option and therefore the future structuring and operation of the council's policy-making had implications for participatory governance (such as via the co-production and commissioning of services). This illustrates the effects of heightened resource constraints alongside the interdependencies on collaborative practices.

Given this context, the report focuses on 'community social needs' (CSN) as an 'embedded case' (Yin, 2009: 46) through which to study the governance model of the city by pinning down the perceptions and practices of local state actors and citizens in this policy area. CSN were chosen as a topic significant to Cardiff because they have been the immediate target of public service retrenchment alongside the need to achieve cost efficiencies within the

austerity discourse. Examples of CSN services are: the maintenance and management of leisure or community centres; play and youth service provision; maintenance of parks, sports grounds and streets; public safety; and food provision. CSN encompass non-statutory services that have been traditionally provided by the local council (or other public sector agencies) but are regarded as of secondary importance compared to statutory services such as housing or education. These services tend to demand strong 'joined-up' government across council departments and other service providers. The austerity context has prompted managers to think about processes of service integration to streamline resources. CSN services can also be self-provided using citizens' skills and resources. While such self-provision can derive from the informal, voluntary action of community groups, it tends to be highly affected by changes in the implementation and management of service provision by statutory providers, for example commissioning and co-production between the council and community groups. CSN are relevant city-wide despite Cardiff's social and cultural diversity and high income differentials (a broad brush characterisation being that there is a more affluent, older population in the north, and a younger, more ethnically diverse and poorer population in the south of the city).

A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted, comprising four initial exploratory interviews, 10 focused on the CSN embedded case in spring/ summer 2014; and a further 14 interviews in spring 2015. In total 22 respondents were interviewed, comprising: a Welsh government assembly member (coded AM); a senior Welsh government officer (WG); four city councillors (P1-4); one senior (SO) and two other city government officers (O1-2); four third sector representatives (coded TS1-4); five officers of community-based third sector organisations (coded CTS1-5); and four citizen activists (A1-4). Six respondents (two councillors, a city government officer, officers of two third sector organisations, and a citizen activist) were interviewed twice (coded a and b) to illuminate the progress of austerity measures in the city.

Our analysis is based on three concepts: austerity urbanism (Peck, 2012) landscapes of antagonism (Newman, 2014) and hybridity (Skelcher and Smith, 2014). Based on these concepts, the following sections discuss the effects that austerity has imposed on Cardiff's governance model coupled with the social responses to austerity in relation to social needs. The final section analyses the trends of participation (Blanco and Davies, this series) based on the data collected from fieldwork.

Austerity: a field of antagonism in building city governance

In analysing the urban governance model in Cardiff, we argue that it chimes with several analyses on the effects of neoliberalisation at the urban level (Brenner, 2004; Jones and Ward, 2002; Peck, 2012; Peck and Tickell, 2002). In particular, we borrow two of the concepts that Jamie Peck uses in his analysis of austerity in American cities: decentralisation or devolution and downloading.

For Peck, decentralisation or devolution responds to the increasing autonomy of American federalism under which fiscal devolution particularly increased in response to the 2008 financial crisis. This devolution has cascaded down from the federal tier to the state, and then to the municipal and neighbourhood levels. Peck calls this the 'scalar dumping' of fiscal discipline, prompting local governments to promote soft budget measures to offload themselves of the responsibility inherited from upper tiers of government as they realise they lack the institutional capacity to deal with the financial challenges of austerity. Soft-measure tactics include: the development of a leaner local state through service rationalisation and downsizing of the workforce, privatisation of public assets, contracting out of services and management by audit. Peck defines downloading as the management of risk and of budget crisis handed down to local authorities and other non-state actors. In particular, he underlines how soft-measure tactics tend to target non-powerful constituencies, typically the poor and marginalised, but which also can extend into middle-class terrain through the curtailment of community facilities.

Peck's analysis draws some parallels to the Cardiff case. Although the meanings of devolution and downloading show particularities of the Welsh and British contexts, their application is adequate given the repeated patterns beyond the US to which Peck's analysis alludes. Devolved powers to Wales have been mainly limited to public service provision. In fiscal terms the model is weak because Wales does not have independent tax-raising powers, leaving it with no way to counter London-imposed budget decisions. Its main source of funding is an annual block grant from the UK Treasury, determined by a formula based on equivalent public expenditure in England. However, after devolution in 1999 the then Welsh First Minister spoke of the 'clear red water' between Wales and England (Morgan, 2002). This 'red' (Labour) tint acknowledged the strong legacy of Welsh welfarism, reflected in policies such as free prescriptions for all and free bus passes and swimming for those of pensionable age.

The rhetoric of Welsh welfarism borrows values from the post-war UK welfare state in charge of developing economic growth and social wellbeing. Since devolution this rhetoric has mainly prevailed within the Welsh identity of state actors such as politicians and government officials. Bella Dicks, in her analysis of regeneration policy in the first decade of the 21st century, argues that Welsh Government's intervention, coupled with legacies of worker unionism, can be classified as being 'rescaled to the local level via appeals to the community yet steered centrally' (Dicks, 2014: 960). Regeneration is recast, she continues, into a problem of 'risk management and financial accountability (2014:959).

Following similar lines, we argue that in Cardiff's governance model decentralisation and downloading to local and sub-locals levels are steered centrally by both the Cardiff Partnership (orchestrated by the city council) and Welsh Government. As discussed below, through the city's partnership model, Cardiff's local state actors have found a systematic way to develop an integrated and lean model of governance through collaborative procurement, commissioning of services to third sector organisations and coordinating city-wide programmes alongside neighbourhood-level initiatives. In particular, the discourse of partnership and collaboration which has helped to enhance Welsh state-building after devolution has been useful in promoting the downloading of risk management.

Governance in Wales has rendered multiple state agencies working at the local level to not only be designers and implementers of new policy decisions, but also subjects reacting to the restructuring caused by austerity. In other words, they are part and parcel of the processes that lead to the buck-passing of costs and services to other non-public actors or organisations. We argue that in this process local state actors can situate themselves in the middle points of a continuum, which generally locates co-optation of citizens into government arrangements and fighting against the resistance of citizens to those arrangements as two opposite ends of the continuum. Our argument is based on Newman's (2014) concept of 'landscapes of antagonism' in local governing. These landscapes are 'contradictory fields of political forces' that go beyond party-political representation. Local governments 'are both actors in such landscapes... with their own interests and political projects, and the mediators of wider struggles in which they seek to privilege some forces and mitigate others' (2014: 3299). The tensions to be mitigated result from the assemblage of disparate elements by a broad diversity of state and non-state actors. We argue that within the state-actor camp, assemblage of elements can be materialised alongside the creation of hybrid-type officers.

Newman contends that local governments play a threefold role in this landscape of antagonism. They: align disparate projects into a seemingly cohesive unity; reconcile multiple scalar projects and regimes emanating from global, national and sub-national tiers; and align projects with different ideological temporalities. In the Cardiff case, this threefold role can be observed through efforts to operate the city's partnership model. It aims to bring together senior state and non-state actors forming the Cardiff Leadership Group, state and non-state professionals managing the model and ordinary citizens and activists, from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, working to improve the living conditions of the community/ neighbourhood. The partnership model responds to the city's main interests in terms of growth and development, but it has to be said that given the close-knit nature of Welsh central-local government relations, Welsh Government's participation can be easily identified in the design and implementation of tactics run by the partnership. Finally, through the partnership model it can be observed how different actors assemble three ideological temporalities in their daily practices: welfare (pre-devolution), collaboration (post-devolution) and, until more recently, co-production/self-government, which is more in tune with public austerity derived from the 2008 financial crisis.

The focus on local governments within landscapes of antagonism prompts scholars to direct their attention onto the daily practices developing in the governance of the city. Daily practices can be concentrated in the processes where state and non-state actors interact; this interaction is studied in this report with regard to the partnership model. The 'ambiguous' position in which local state actors are found within landscapes of antagonism - e.g. formulating and implementing a strategy or project as well as being directly affected by that same project they designed and implemented - has highlighted the role of 'hybrid' officers in our case study.

We hint at the concept of hybridity based on Skelcher and Smith's (2015) definition. In their study of public and non-profit organisations providing public services, they argue that a 'hybrid is an organisation that incorporates plural institutional logics [or rationales] and where, as a result, organisational members confront multiple identities' (2015: 434). Their

theoretical framework underlines the linkages among environment institutions (e.g. state, market, religion, corporation), organisations and individual agency. They argue that through an emphasis on agency it is possible to explain how hybridity arises through procedures and activities involving for instance: the terminology adopted by individuals' language, the type of venue in which individuals develop their activities, the ability by individuals to resolve tensions that arise from different ideologies, and their creativity to circumvent those tensions by developing informal arrangements and activities (i.e. not regulated by law or formal rules established by statutory programmes).

In the following sections, the report illustrates that contesting interpretations on the extent to which participation is constrained or enhanced by austerity are played out at the individual and institutional levels. In particular we underline how what we call officers of hybrid (public and non-profit) third sector organisations (TSOs) wear 'two hats' to deal with the 'self-work' of reconciling organic or autonomous organisational arrangements with the organisational rationale brought in by the city-led partnership model. Hybrid officers work in community-based TSOs contracted by Cardiff Council, but using funding from Welsh Government, to manage a key national programme, Communities First (CF), which has sought to establish community partnerships in Wales' most disadvantaged areas. In 2011, just after the tenth anniversary of CF, Cardiff Council became an exemplar of finding innovative ways to adopt and align CF into the city's governance model. This interplay has given rise, albeit limited, to participatory innovations which could potentially be up-scaled as alternatives within the dominant, boosterist approach pursued by the city's political elite.

Cardiff's governance tradition: the partnership model

After devolution, the Welsh political elite introduced a discourse of collaboration to distinguish it from Westminster. This referred to collaboration between national and local government, and across the public, private and third/ community sectors - known as the 'three thirds' model (Bristow et al., 2008). Martin and Guarneros-Meza (2013) argue that the Welsh Government has had a clear 'soft steer' in determining how local government organises collaborative and partnership working. A case in point was the creation of Local Service Boards (LSBs) in 2007 in the expectation that they would 'provide the joined-up leadership required to help overcome recurrent and difficult problems that can only be tackled through collaboration and partnership' (Welsh Government, 2007). The boards comprise public service leaders and representatives of the third sector plus a senior official from Welsh Government. These structures, in contrast with Leicester, remain in place since the imposition of austerity measures.

Moreover, the importance of 'outcomes' has increased in the rhetoric given ministers' need to find evidence that Welsh local services are improving, a need accentuated by fiscal tightening (Welsh Government, 2014). Many LSBs have been guided by the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) model and public sector score cards (Friedman, 2005; Moullin, 2009), where partner organisations working in collaboration agree a common approach to achieving shared results that are supposed to benefit citizens.

Through the 'integrated partnership model' Cardiff's LSB, Cardiff Partnership, developed its city-wide strategy. The plan was presented as ensuring that each partner now co-ordinates resources around seven objectives claimed to be the ones 'that matter most to the people of Cardiff' (Cardiff Council 'What Matters' strategy, 2010; www.cardiffpartnership.co.uk/). The model provides a 'needs assessment and priority areas' enabling development of specifications for services in light of the outcomes sought. A managerial board oversees the Cardiff Partnership, rather than a board led by elected politicians. The adoption of RBA positioned neighbourhood management as a 'delivery mechanism for the strategic policy agenda'. This framed under the austerity rhetoric was seen as 'particularly important in this current economic climate as the evidence-based approach will allow greater targeting and prioritisation of reduced resources in the areas which need them most' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010: 3). However, outcomes are not based necessarily on what communities want, but on the effectiveness for service providers (Pill, 2011).

Cardiff's particular use of the neighbourhood as a site for intervention and action focused until recently on formal participatory institutions (its use of neighbourhood teams); but since the city's partnership model was introduced, these teams are seeking to articulate with and encourage the actions of third sector organisations and community groups. The neighbourhood, its management and governance therefore provide a useful starting point to consider citizen participation in the city.

Cardiff's approach to neighbourhood management dates back to 2007. The city's 29 electoral wards are grouped into six neighbourhood areas, each with a multi-agency team, with members from the police, fire service, local schools and health clinics (and more recently managers of Communities First programmes). Among team members local intelligence information is shared to solve localised problems such as crime, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour or dog fouling. 'Neighbourhoods' are based on police boundaries, comprising 3 to 8 wards each, with the smallest having a population of 30,000. Pooled budgets from different statutory partners were made available to each of the six neighbourhoods, but these funds were significantly reduced given cuts to the council's budget for 2014-15 and cut altogether in 2015-16.

After a 2013 consultation, the neighbourhood management model was reformulated (Cardiff Council, 2013b). The former neighbourhood management teams were rebranded as 'Neighbourhood Partnerships' and incorporated into the city's partnership model. Strategic teams including councillors were created in addition to the operational teams of service provider partners, bringing representative forms of democracy into what has been a largely officer-driven process. But the containment of councillors, albeit as 'community leaders', into strategic teams reflects, as O1a explained, that "partners did not want the partnerships being politicised in other terms different to needs". Participatory governance is only incipient within the model, despite the efforts to include Communities First managers and other third sector organisations into the new Neighbourhood Partnerships. Concerns remain about the model's lack of accountability and transparency.

The council is trying to bring citizens into service delivery by attempting to develop co-production, 'working with communities and citizens rather than just delivering services to them' (Cardiff Council, 2013b: 27). It was proposed that each of the six neighbourhood

areas undertook at least one co-production initiative in support of the delivery of its annual action plan for 2014/15. Expectations seemed rather unrealistic given the lack of heritage and capacity of citizen participation in determining services. For example, in 2011, the city's third sector umbrella organisation encountered challenges in adopting and adapting to the neighbourhood model because it lacked the staff and funding necessary to ensure a quick adaptation into the structures designed by Cardiff Council (Martin et al., 2012). More recently, clarification of priorities among partner organisations has been a challenge within the neighbourhood approach.

Because of the organisational challenges encountered by the third sector, the whole neighbourhood model, and consequently the city's partnership model, can be criticised as following a top-down managerial approach that uses third sector organisations as critical interlocutors and treating citizens as consumers, focusing on their satisfaction rather than making them contributors to policy and service design. A recent initiative to invite citizens into the commissioning process to formulate the specification for tender of community services and be engaged in tender evaluations has been developed by the council. Although this initiative is a first step beyond mere citizen consultation that touches on service design, it shows the predominance of service management in the approach to citizen participation.

The effects of austerity on the city's governance

During first phase fieldwork, the political discourse emphasised how practices and institutions needed to change and how 2014 was a transitional phase, with 'stays of execution' on CSN services, while responsibility shifts from public to community self-provisioning and mechanisms were developed - or not - to enable this. The double effect of public sector cuts reducing both public provision and funding for TSO and community group provision (while community needs are increasing) emerged as a challenge in the city's tactics of downloading. As this section argues, the perspectives of our interviewees highlighted two effects of fiscal austerity: the lack of preparation to respond to budget cuts and hence the improvisation to create forums of discussion to raise awareness of the financial crisis; and the changing role of the local state from provider to facilitator, while acknowledging the advantage of the city's partnership model.

In agreeing about the insufficient preparation for the budget cuts, council officers and members stressed the need for citizens to be more engaged in deliberation, albeit for instrumental ends. With a better understanding it was hoped that community groups could have said 'we're prepared to consider doing things for ourselves to keep things [services] going' (P2). O1a commented with regard to a budget consultation event (in December 2013):

> 'Everyone starts off with council bashing... [but] there was a light bulb moment when they [residents] realised the difficult decision... they changed from being hostile to "we can cut the parks if you give us a building where we can store the lawnmower"'.

In 2014, Cardiff Council launched 'The Cardiff Debate', a three-year programme of events, workshops and discussions on the future of public services involving the Cardiff Council, partner agencies and local communities across the city. In the first year of events comprised by the programme, people were asked which services matter the most while asking them to put forward ideas on how the council could do things differently to save money in the future.

Inherent in comments by respondents of all types was the notion that traditionally government provision has 'crowded out' civil society voluntarism. Particularly, the Welsh dependency on the public sector, which follows from welfarism, was stressed, "everything is so reliant on the Welsh Government or local authority" (A1a), "the expectation is the council will do that" (CTS3). Promulgation of dependency was also attributed to the council's former approach to grants allocation to community groups (explained below), which ironically needs to be supported by the public sector. As O1a explained:

> 'It is about encouraging community groups to take some ownership, but the council also needs to help support that through things like asset transfers, enabling people to take some responsibility'.

In overcoming the dependency culture, a civil servant (WG) expressed the hope that the public sector could adapt to identifying grassroots community activity happening despite "well-meaning government initiatives":

> 'That government will learn... to get behind what works and what emerges out of communities, instead of feeling it has to make it all happen itself. [It has to] recognise that the cheapest and best way to achieve real things is to spot what people are doing for themselves and support them'.

But some expressed concern about how "ill-equipped" (A1a) community groups are to self-provision for CSN, with P2 commenting they were not at "any stage where they could consider providing services" [outwith council systems]. TSOs such as housing associations which play a role in developing and supporting civil society associative activity via community groups have also had to cut funding for CNS activities, refocusing instead "on what's going to help people in this recession, and its jobs and skills" (TS3a).

The council saw itself as deepening its transition to a role of facilitator rather than provider, "we commission more for other people [including TSOs] to deliver but we provide some quality assurance in management and the strategic stuff" (O1a). A hybrid officer saw the transition as a "definite opportunity, commissioning, tendering for local services... with a community-grounded approach in a way that's going to work for [the TSO] and not over-commit ourselves" (CTS3). Council officers and members stressed that community engagement in identifying service needs and developing specifications was vital, "there are a lot more opportunities for that direct involvement from people" (O1a). 'Who' and 'how' is of course open to critique.

Council officers and cabinet members see the city's partnership model as the formal governance structure able to provide the response to austerity. A member explained the

value of the model's approach "in terms of saving money and getting better outcomes, collaboration between other partner organisations" (P2). When asked how the economic crisis had affected the model, a council officer commented it had not, "we were doing this anyway even before it got really bad" (O1a). But the model was seen as "enabl[ing] us to have the foundations to respond". The 'locality focus' of the partnership model was seen as key because of the efficiencies it enabled, "we can actually see who is doing what in a neighbourhood... it has shone the light about the duplication, the lack of coordination" (O1a). A Wales-wide TSO commented that "a learning we've had from austerity is around how we broaden and vary the underpinnings of any local spatial partnership" (TS2a).

The Neighbourhood Partnerships were seen as key to 'starting again' in the way the council makes grants to TSOs and community groups. A previous grant scheme stopped, as a result of budget cuts, in part to limit political partisanship in the process and reduce dependency. This caused the demise of some highly regarded community groups, such as two running 'good neighbour' schemes in the north of the city. In 2014/15 the council made £180k[1] of resource (in total) available for bids from the Neighbourhood Partnerships, with the intent that each prepared a neighbourhood strategy aligned to the objectives set by the city's partnership model, ideally involving all the "groups that are already working within the community", and with the hope that "we [are] all working to the same aims... collectively [for] greater impact" (P2).

Overall, the neighbourhood approach was applauded by those interviewed. But it was clear that the council's stated ambition of using this formal governance mechanism to involve and co-ordinate all (formal, statutorily provided or contracted/ commissioned; and informal, self-provisioned) neighbourhood activity remained just that. A third sector officer commented "it's great stuff, but we need to be able to contribute more" (TS3a). Others recognised that the "messy picture" (CTS3) of the "model has got an awful lot of potential... it's taken a long time though for it to be considered as more than a council structure, and an inclusive structure" (TS1). But crucial was the perceived lack of community voice. A council officer recognised that "a lot of the work to date has been on the organisations doing stuff together, joining up and less about direct public involvement" but that the "next stage is how do you get proper community and participation in all that" (O1a). However, a year later, this same officer claimed that the city's partnership model was about coordinating services and not for promoting participation. Since the start of fieldwork there were interviewees who were sceptical. An activist provided the 'usual suspects' critique, and made clear that in their view such structures co-opt citizens, as "it all seems top-down... is it a meaningful exercise in restructuring power?", adding that "everywhere I go no matter whether you are in a wealthy or poor area, people are angry and alienated. They don't have much control of the destiny of their neighbourhood" (A1a).

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[1] However, a year later this pot was scrapped.

Social responses to the crisis

The community activist mentioned that in Cardiff "at grassroots level, as in most of the rest of the UK, the state of civil society participation is grim" (A1a). In South Wales in particular, the decimation of the mining and steel workers' unions by the Thatcher government in the 1980s severely undermined the organisational culture required to protest and negotiate with government. However, since the mid-2000s, citizen protest with regard to public space has become a rich site of contestation for both middle-class activities (e.g. Cardiff Civic Society, promoting recreational use of parks) and residents' groups in deprived areas (e.g. Ely Garden Villagers against housing development).

Although not surprising, the relative lack of protest against budget cuts and austerity measures in Cardiff was commented on in different ways, though it was evident that it "depends who you ask, where you look" (WG). The most pessimistic observation was that "mounting despair in the face of austerity and poverty... is a real possibility... you just get people giving up... not organising in any recognisable way, not engaging with anything else" (WG). Several commented that activism is not "there in the way we all like to say it is" (P2).

At a macro level, the relative delay in UK government cuts affecting Wales is a likely factor in the lack of protest. But the sense that these cuts had been imposed by the "Tory/ Lib-Dem government", and were not the fault of the (Labour) City Council, also pervaded (P1a). As a community activist commented, "this is a Westminster Conservative agenda and local authorities have to deal with it. The anger is diffused" (A1a). Path dependency was also cited as a factor by some, as "protest in Wales has always been very formalised... through the trade union movements… when the unions got smashed it ground to a juddering halt" (TS2a).

The differential impact of cuts geographically is also a factor. The non-statutory services that meet CSN which bore the brunt of 2014-15 cuts in the council's budget were "very important for small numbers of people or active users like youth services, play centres" (A1a) but were localised. There was a sense that each community of place was negotiating for its own needs in an atomised, fragmented way rather than being co-ordinated by activists mobilised city-wide. Such protests around youth and play services had some effect. But these were manifested in terms of budget cuts where the council, as O1a explained, "will give a year's grace and will work with you to come to a solution" (likely to be of community-self-provision or none). Council members, following the idea of awareness raising on austerity, complained that "activism seems to be about protest rather than what can we do" (P2), which would compromise the self-provisioning for CSN which was being sought.

While interviewees generally recognised the democratic deficit and the importance of citizen participation and an engagement in decision- and policy-making, most discussed this in terms of being within rather than outside or against the formal governance structures. This was borne out by hybrid officers (CTS3):

'We'd always advocate that we work within systems [run by Cardiff Council]... We always take a fairly pragmatic, you've got to work, you've got to get on. There may be some things that need to be shouted about, but I don't think [the TSO] would be that organisation promoting protest'.

In contrast to the 'system-related' practices of the hybrid officers, since 2013 Citizens UK has funded a professional community organiser to establish a Cardiff chapter of the organisation as part of an emergent Citizens Wales. This umbrella organisation follows the model of Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, which is 'really rooted in traditions of self-reliance, getting on with what you can but holding the state and market to account'. It seeks to organise citizens 'anchored on the [large] institutions of civil society',(such as churches, Cardiff University, and the union Unison) to organise mass protest around specific issues. Participants are described as 'not the activist type but common rooted citizens... who wouldn't see themselves as politically radical'. The organisation makes a sharp distinction between TSOs and 'civil society institutions':

'We organise big actions and we don't go to these organisations [TSOs] to move turn out... the number of people they relate to is quite small whereas these larger, older institutions, more people are involved in meeting and building relationships, you can organise and mobilise people more effectively' (A1a).

Citizens Wales' work on developing a 'citizens' agenda' in 2014 had striking similarities with the city's partnership model and its basis in the 'What Matters' strategy. It was anticipated that people would nominate themselves to create action teams to work on the issues identified for which training will be provided. Its potential to generate city-wide action on themes likely to mirror those of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Communities First – incorporated into the city's partnership model, may generate some interesting dynamics, alignments and tensions. Its potential to mobilise mass protest and promulgate change remains to be ascertained and until our last visit to Cardiff this was yet to be realised.

Discussion and conclusions

We first apply the types of trajectory of participatory governance as defined by Blanco and Davies (this series) to Cardiff. The combination of the continuity and retrenchment trajectories is most appropriate to characterise Cardiff's experience, but the city's governance arrangements and actors' practices also exhibit specific characteristics that have been peculiar to the enhancement and innovation of participation in the city.

Continuity and Retrenchment

Cardiff Partnership Board, the overseer of the governance model, continues to be dominated by officer representatives of the statutory partners, primarily the City Council. TS1 commented that "the council is definitely the primary partner, health is a very close

second, and then there's the rest of us". Third sector interviewees displayed a pragmatic, 'realistic' stance of alignment, indicating that the sector, prompted by the narrative on collaboration, has been absorbed by the institutions and practices of the formal governance system, given its reliance on grants and more recently commissioning of local social services.

Signs of central steering are evident in how the partnership model is operationalised, and its focus on locality delivery and outcomes. O1a commented that Welsh Government programmes as well as Cardiff's Neighbourhood Partnerships can be used as a downloading strategy, "I make them all work together. You use the contracts and finance levers to force people to do it if they don't want to". Central steering by Welsh Government is also clear, with a senior Welsh Government officer recognising its influence on shaping Cardiff's participatory governance in terms of "structures like LSBs... our expectations" as well as via its programmes. Cardiff is regarded as a

> 'good example of collaboration and joint working… Welsh Government, Cardiff Council, community involvement - those are the three main dimensions, and all of those have a very substantial stake in the delivery of key services at a local level in Cardiff' (WG).

A significant example of the adoption of TSOs and community groups into the practices of the formal institutions is the 'clean slate' approach adopted for grants rather than the former 'continuation of funding', now apparently determined in terms of outcomes. As P2 explained, funding "should be on the basis of the service they're providing" and "what the strategy is for that Neighbourhood Partnership". This has resulted in some groups 'dying', with CSN examples cited of lunch and recreational clubs and 'good neighbour' schemes. While some protest focused on CSN is evident, this tends to be localised in terms of for example cuts to non-statutory services such as play provision. The budget cuts that some community groups/ TSOs have experienced for CSN provision show the council's attempt to push the transition to community self-provision after a culture of dependence. Attempts to meet CSN were framed within council and other statutory partner discussions about city-wide priorities. There were divisions within the city's Labour administration regarding this, but the focus on economic boosterism remains.

Enhancement

While the discourse has long been founded upon notions of collaboration, this has been heightened, stressing the growing interdependence between the public and third/ community sectors in providing for CSN in 'tough times'. While none felt that the changing roles of these sectors could be fully realised in terms of community self-provisioning for CSN, practices of council withdrawal and some of facilitation were evident, with the redistribution of risk in managing and delivering services. Some practices of 'joining up' with TSOs and community groups were clear, such as the rebranding of Neighbourhood Partnerships and their opening up to other partners such as CF hybrid officers; and in the realignment of grant-giving to community groups in light of neighbourhood plans. However, whilst examples were cited of the ability of Neighbourhood Partnerships to facilitate 'joining

up' for reasons of efficiency and 'good outcomes', these involved statutory and TSO partners rather than the more informal voluntarism of community groups. As CTS3 commented:

'What [Neighbourhood Partnerships] doesn't have is much element of co-production... how on earth do you include local people in this kind of process?... It hasn't got to the stage where it can be as creative because it's locked up in [the] council or LSB [Cardiff Leadership Group]'.

Cardiff's distinctive model for the relaunched CF programme, with hybrid officers in community-based TSOs managing each cluster (and the council retaining responsibility as 'lead accountable body' to Welsh Government), does point to an institutional turn to open up and facilitate cross-sectoral interdependence. O1a explained it is:

'Working really well because it means clusters are going to carry on doing what they want without the confines of a big political organisation but they have the support from a big organisation in the assistance of process and audits which are not their strong points'.

A hybrid officer referred to the values of welfarism against downsizing government, explaining that at the time of the programme's restructure, the council 'were going to be making big cuts... the last thing they wanted to do was take on the liability for a programme [Communities First] which now carries about 80 staff' (CTS3). But the officer added that the resultant decision to engage TSOs as delivery agents not only shared the risk but was combined with "a vision", aided by the fact that the council team responsible for the programme "drives a lot of the council thinking around policy, around co-production, around the Neighbourhood Partnership approach".

Changes to the practices by which services are commissioned do indicate enhanced voice, albeit contained within a managerial approach to citizen participation. The council has sought to engage service users and their representatives in the formulation of tender specifications and their evaluation. A hybrid officer stressed the importance of how their organisation should become "a point of influence on the commissioning process" (CTS1). Key to meeting CSN at the neighbourhood level was that bids from consortiums of providers were encouraged, "the idea was to have one lead provider... but we did not want to push out the other small providers involved with the communities" (O1a). Hybrid officers saw this as providing their TSOs with opportunities to deliver services "with a community-grounded approach" (CTS3). Again the redistribution and downscaling of risk in managing and delivering services is evident in these shifts.

One of the most significant shifts in discourse which points to the possible enhancement of participatory governance was the emphasis on 'co-production', though only early signs of related changes in practices were evident. All commented on the challenge of defining co-production and the extent to which it could be realised. In some case the values of welfarism, collaboration and austerity overlapped in some interviewees' interpretations and one third sector respondent made an important distinction in the intent and realisation of such shifts:

'Co-production at its best is this Bevanite[2], socialist tool for driving equality… and giving people power, a voice. At its worst it's an easy way into coercing citizens into filling the gap… just allowing the state to roll back and leave citizens to it… a tool for inequality' (TS2a).

A community-based TSO already engaged in a tangible form of co-production, timebanking (see below), stressed that its broader adoption would involve "taking a bit of a risk, releasing some funding" but did feel that "some of the new Neighbourhood Partnership thinking allows that" (CTS3).   Examples were cited of co-production at different stages on a continuum between joint community-council service provision and community self-provision.   One was gaining council agreement for community volunteers to be working alongside staff in running a (council-run) 'community hub' (combining the local library, housing office and other services). Another example was school holiday activity provision, now largely self-provisioned by nine community groups:

> 'A lot of the activities are community-generated. When we started it, it was very much heavy in terms of [the council] youth service, Communities First staff, maybe some [council] play centre staff, and gradually through training, support and encouragement, community volunteers have started to overtake that staff, and now they're just inviting us in and they're running activities' (CTS3).

These examples provide some evidence of the enhancement of collaborative governance through the growing interdependence of the public and community sectors via self-provisioning for CSN. Overall, there were signs of growing trust between the sectors, such as management of the Communities First clusters by TSOs, but citizen voice and accountability of statutory actors were still lacking, as were significant shifts in interpretations and practices towards realising co-production.   A theme amongst community-based third sector respondents was recognition of the need for more creative, less risk-averse responses which were co-produced with citizens.   Council officers and members generally stressed the need for citizens to 'step up' and take responsibility.

Innovation

There were small indications of social innovation, evident in the discourse and to some extent in (predominantly TSO) institutions and practices to meet CSN. These had some potential to become significant if there were to be a culture change amongst public sector partners/ statutory service providers to engender innovation through the acceptance of growing informality and lighter regulation in service delivery. This may be spurred, or constrained, by ongoing funding cuts. During fieldwork such innovations were not city-wide but fragmented.

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[2] Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960), the (Welsh) founder of the UK's National Health Service and its provision of universal health service.

Timebanking: The most significant example of social innovation in Cardiff was timebanking, an approach which adherents explained provides "points of cultural and historical connectivity" (TS2a) with the heritage of Welsh mutualism, predating the 1980s. Timebanking is a form of co-production wherein, under a 'one hour equals one hour' principle, people can spend 'timecredits' earned in volunteering on activities, such as swimming, which are underpinned by statutory partners (see Gregory, 2014). Spend options are augmented by 'community spend opportunities', or community self-provisioned activities, as these develop. Spice, the TSO at the forefront of the approach in Cardiff, explained that the economic crisis "opened up conversations at a very senior level" (TS2a) with public sector bodies including Welsh Government, a continued funder of three Communities First cluster-targeted timebanking initiatives across Wales. By its adherents and practitioners, timebanking is seen as able to support and network the transition to community self-provisioning for CSN, but alongside public sector provision, as "we don't believe that they're a way of replacing frontline services". This line was likely to become increasingly hard to negotiate as further funding cuts took place. Spice's ambition is to have a city-wide timecredit system in Cardiff. At the time of fieldwork, discussions included council officers and TSOs such as housing associations and the hybrid officers managing the CF clusters, but these had not been elevated to the Cardiff Partnership Board.

Community Asset Transfer: This extremely relevant tool to enable community self-provisioning for CSN provides an example of the obstacles facing attempts at innovation, especially given the need for lighter regulation. A hybrid TSO which was working with a community group seeking to take over from the council the management of a recently closed community centre explained that the process:

> 'Involves setting up that group, constituting it, becoming a charity... a heck of a lot of work... it's been a waiting process, it had to go to [Cardiff Council] cabinet... for the community that's really frustrating, some of these processes are so drawn out' (CTS3).

In the meantime the TSO had to gain a licence to operate the centre while developing and formalising the community group so that it could take over its management.

Overall, the need for a culture change towards more informal practices to enable community self-provisioning was captured in P1a's comments regarding the management of public space:

> '[Council] staff don't know how to deal with it. For people who manage sports pitches and fields, the thought of rank amateurs who know nothing about any of these issues actually being in charge, it probably fills them with horror. But the problem is, they [officers] are not being paid to deliver this service any more'.

Following the above assessment of the trajectories of participatory governance (Blanco and Davies, this series), it is clear that in the case of Cardiff, governance to date is playing out with the 'devolution, decentralisation and downloading' characterising 'austerity urbanism' (Peck, 2012). These characteristics are carried out at two scales - that of the Cardiff Partnership prompted by Welsh Government; and of sub-local (neighbourhood) structures

and practices by Cardiff Partnership, orchestrated by Cardiff Council. During fieldwork up-scaling strategies also became evident with Welsh Government attempting to formalise a city-region covering Cardiff and nine neighbouring local authorities. This signifies the continued predominance of economic imperatives to develop the economies of scale perceived as necessary for city 'competitiveness'.

The interviews revealed signs of citizen activists rallying in defence of specific public services and spaces, but there did not seem to be a generic movement against the cuts on any scale. The relative delay in UK government cuts affecting Wales was a likely factor in the lack of protest, but pertinent to the embedded case of CSN was the differential impact of cuts geographically within the city and the neighbourhood-structured response to these changes in service provision. The non-statutory services that meet CSN affected by the first wave of budget cuts was localised. Each community of place was negotiating for its own needs in an atomised, fragmented way rather than being co-ordinated by activists mobilised city-wide. The fragmented nature of citizen activism prompted organisations like Citizens Wales to search for more organised attempts at developing a mass protest culture, but ironically the strategy to organise this mass protest resembled similar procedures at reaching the neighbourhood as those designed within the city's partnership model.

The effects of austerity have also strengthened the need to promote implementation of the city's partnership model as an alternative to share risk and responsibility not only with other public organisations different to the council (e.g. police, health), but also with local councillors (previously excluded), TSOs and community groups. The council saw the model's retention as 'the foundation' for responses to the challenges of the economic crisis, hence finding opportunities to render it more systematic and coordinated in a multi-scalar way. Although the partnership model has been criticised for its lack of transparency, accountability, and citizen voice, its dissemination and awareness raising across a myriad of agencies and actors in the city was observed at the time of fieldwork. As a result, diverse interpretations of the concepts used such as 'co-production' were one of the challenges beginning to emerge. This diversity responds to a significant extent to the values assembled from the ideologies of welfarism and collaboration that have permeated the state-building process of Wales since 1999.

The way different (state or non-state) individuals assemble these values can be portrayed as a field of struggle or antagonism (Newman, 2014). The struggles can be observed in the study of organisational procedures where individuals develop daily activities. Our emphasis on the hybrid officers portrays this struggle in two ways: first, in the creation of these posts; and second, in the promotion of localised projects that require facilitation and cross-sectoral interdependence through their role. Hybrid officers did stress the clear separation they maintained between the Communities First programme and the activities carried out by their TSOs. But hybrid officers involved in the innovative cases, such as community asset transfers, also saw an opportunity to challenge the partnership model by, for example, showing that informal arrangements with lighter regulation might be equally successful in providing services than those provided via the partnership model's formal processes.

In applying the types of trajectory of participatory governance to Cardiff, the combination of continuity and retrenchment is appropriate. An emphasis upon enhancement is also valid

given signs of facilitation for community group/ TSO engagement in co-production of or self-provisioning for CSN, which include some indications of innovation. However, such enhancement of participation risks falling into the narrow, instrumental purpose of management of service provision. The model's reorientation - and emphasis on co-production - indicates an attempt, at least in discourse, to open rather than close the network, indicating enhancement. However, responsibilisation of communities of place to engage in self-provisioning via the continued focus on the neighbourhood as a key scale, and the interdependency of TSOs and community groups to at least 'join up' with other statutory providers at this scale, are clear evidence of the central steering of the local state, which can allude to the retrenchment of participation.

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