



Localism: meet the Gorgons

or: three ways to defeat the best intentions



Once upon a time...



‘...a new Britain where there is genuine devolution of power, not centralisation, and respect for localism and self governing communities’

Gordon Brown, NCVO conference,
9 February 2000



‘We are convinced that effective local and regional institutions and dynamic communities hold the key to unlocking a series of intractable problems confronting our society’

*New Localism: refashioning the centre-local relationship,
New Local Government Network, 2002*



‘The Government’s proposed new funding framework for local authorities in England represents an important part of the overall agenda to decentralise decision making’

*A Modern Regional Policy for the United Kingdom,
DTI, 2003*



**Three structural
problems that may
defeat localism**



The first Gorgon: education



A 10% increase in the pass rate in Standard Assessment Tests at the nearest school adds on average 3.3% to the price of a typical house

Nationwide survey, 24 November 2009



- **Private education drives migration to wealthier neighbourhoods**
- **A premium on high performing state schools drives migration to wealthier neighbourhoods**
- **Poor school performance drives migration out of poorer neighbourhoods**



The second Gorgon: housing



In 1984 the average first-time buyer's mortgage was worth 1.99 times their income. In 2004 the multiple was 3.03 times their income.

National Housing and Planning Advice Unit, 2009



- **Jockeying for educational advantage prices low-income people out**
- **Housing as the signifier of personal wealth undermines affordability and access**
- **‘Like it or lump it’ social housing allocations undermine neighbourliness and attachment**



The third Gorgon: employment



There has been unprecedented growth in the number of people with qualifications in the last decade... but the number 'not fully proficient' at their jobs rose from 1.3m in 2005 to 1.7m in 2009

UK Commission on Employment and Skills, March 2010



- **The paper chase: do you need a degree for every job?**
- **The rat race: I must earn more to live somewhere nicer to give my kids a better education**
- **The super-mobile workforce: why invest in your community when your job might move next year?**



**No localism
without
localisation?**

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