Dr Howard Gibson
Bath Spa University

Between the State and the Individual: 'Big Society' communitarianism and English Conservative rhetoric

Abstract

During his quest for leadership of the English Conservative Party David Cameron declared his intention to turn Britain into a Big Society. In May 2010, having gained office as Prime Minister, he unveiled a string of policies to bring his vision to fruition. Five years later, however, talk of the Big Society has withered in public debate such that today only the press refer to it and then as a policy in decline. This paper argues that as an attempt to revitalise citizenship and local communities, and deal with the apparent ills of state centralism and liberal atomism, it was destined to fail. This is because it coincided, intentionally some have said, with an austerity crisis that made talk of the Big Society politically feasible; left Big Capitalism, the cause of austerity, untouched; was seemingly reticent to divert power to localities; under-theorised the nature and complexity of modern communities; and was an attempt at depoliticisation by diverting risk to such bodies as charities and schools.

Less state, more society

In 1987, in an interview with *Women's Own* magazine, Prime Minister Thatcher said:

> I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand 'I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!' or 'I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!' 'I am homeless, the Government must house me!' and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves… There is no such thing as society. There is living tapestry of men and women and people and the beauty of that tapestry and the quality of our lives will depend upon how much each of us is prepared to take responsibility for ourselves and each of us prepared to turn round and help by our own efforts those who are unfortunate. (Thatcher, 1987)

For some her statement encapsulated the age, the individualism of self-seeking consumers and the Hobbesian-like belief that life was 'nasty, brutish and short' for the unsuccessful (Hobbes, 1651/2008, p.86). Such assumptions were combined with policies that would 'roll back the state' and so diminish the part it had played since the middle of the twentieth century in providing public services, like public transport, unemployment benefit and free dental care. Now individuals were to rely more upon their willingness and ability to survive and for markets to provide solutions to individual needs. For those who were unfortunate or without sufficient wit to understand the nature of this Darwinian game, there would always be a minimum of state provision and, as in Dickensian times,

philanthropy. Some commentators epitomised the age as one dominated by self-seeking, wealth-creating adventurers whose concern for society was limited to voluntary and occasional acts of compassion:

> The active citizen of Thatcherism was a law abiding, materially successfully individual who was willing and able to exploit the opportunities created by the promotion of market rights, while demonstrating occasional compassion for those less fortunate than themselves – charity rather than democratic citizenship was to be the main instrument of 'active citizenship'. (Faulks, 2006)

The Blair years followed with little change in the assumption about the benefits of a 'modern dynamic economy' (Blair, 1998) and the role of the citizen within it. In 1998 Prime Minister Blair coined the phrase the Third Way in an attempt to position his government not too far to the left, where it had become traditional for the state to intervene in individuals' lives for reasons of social equity, and not too far to the right, where it would be accused of matching too closely policies of his former ideological enemies in the Conservative Party who seemed to deny that society existed independently of competing individuals. Although Thatcher had once called Blair her 'greatest achievement' (Independent, 2013), the Third Way was an attempt to gain credence from the broadest political footing with a new concept of citizenship at its centre: 'Rebuilding Britain as a strong community, with a modern notion of citizenship at its heart, is the political objective for the new age' (Blair, 1993).

Then in 2005, in his leadership speech to the Conservative Party, David Cameron announced: 'There *is* such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state' (Cameron, 2005; see also Cameron, 2010). Thus while Thatcher had dismissed big government for its inefficiency as a service provider, for the way it inhibited wealth creation and fabricated dependency upon it, Cameron signposted his distinct reading of the relationship between state and the individual. In 2009 he declared: 'The state has promoted not social solidarity, but selfishness and individualism' and explained the enigma thus:

> The paradox at the heart of big government is that by taking power and responsibility away from the individual, it has only served to individuate them. What is seen in principle as an act of social solidarity has in practice led to the greatest atomisation of our society. The once natural bonds that existed between people - of duty and responsibility - have been replaced with the synthetic bonds of the state - regulation and bureaucracy. (Cameron, 2009a)

His solution was the Big Society:

> This means a new role for the state: actively helping to create the big society; directly agitating for, catalysing and galvanising social renewal... We need to create communities with oomph – neighbourhoods who are in charge of their own destiny, who feel if they club together and get involved they can shape the world around them. (Cameron, 2009b)

Cameron presented it in such a way that the reduction of state centralisation would work in parallel with the regeneration of active citizenship and growth of local responsibility through the development of social networks and communal action. In part it was a reaction to Blair's 'authoritarian statism' (Scraton, 2004), such as the proposal for the 2006 Terrorism Act that would have extended the period of detention of British citizens ('suspected terrorists') for up to 90 days

without charge, and in part it was a belief that by shrinking Big Government trust in communities would flourish and become the catalyst for the generation of socially-cohesive ties. The Big Society, in short, would stimulate community empowerment where 'the state has promoted not social solidarity, but selfishness and individualism' (Cameron, 2009b; see also Glasman, 2010, p.61). Moreover, it was said to be an integral part of Conservative history: '…there is a strong liberal, civic tradition within Conservative thinking, stretching back from Edmund Burke through to Michael Oakeshott, that celebrates the small and local over the big and central' (Cameron, 2009b).

Communitarianism – between the individual and the state

If the state was too big and liberal individualism too redolent of isolated citizens increasingly unmoved by 'duty and responsibility', Cameron's solution was to rekindle Conservative communitarianism. Communitarianism would not only counter the burgeoning size of the modern state and curb the excesses of atomism but, as part of the conservative tradition, would appeal across a spectrum of political allegiances that coalesced around the core belief that social organisations were most virtuous when based upon small, self-governing communities. In what follows the paper bypasses romantic-socialist advocates of communitarianism like Robert Owen, with his ambitious vision for *Harmony Hall* (1839-45), as well as communitarian critics of liberal excess like Amitai Etzioni (2015), Michael J. Sandel (2009) and Charles Taylor (1985). Here there is only space to outline its conservative lineage, stretching from Edmund Burke in the eighteenth century to Phillip Blond today, the principal architect of Cameron's Big Society vision.

Burke had cast the French revolutionaries in the latter stages of the 1700s as 'turbulent, discontented men …puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, (who) generally despised their own order' (Burke, 1790/1968, p.135). These he contrasted with ordinary folk from communities that were the local source of affection for the nation and, ultimately, mankind:

> To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind. (ibid., p.135)

Burke's idea of 'little platoons' carried with it the normality of rank and naturalness of station, as well as the assumption of the need for social order to be built upon such pillars, that acted as bulwarks against the claims of an overwhelming state and the intrusion of revolutionaries like Thomas Paine and his trumped-up *Rights of Man*. Later in the twentieth century, conservative communitarianism resurfaced in the United States with Nisbet's *The Quest for Community* (1953/1990) that berated the tendency of advanced liberal societies to be blighted by alienation:

> By alienation I mean the state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or even hostility. The individual not only does not feel a part of the social order; he has lost interest in being a part of it. (Nisbet, 1990, xxiii)

As Nisbet saw it, the problem was liberalism's propensity to create abject individualism that accompanied the centralising tendencies of the modern state:

'…the modern state is inseparable from its successive penetrations of man's economic, religious, kinship, and local allegiances, and its revolutionary dislocations of established centres of function and authority'(Nisbet, 2008, p.2). Like Burke's platoons, 'the liberal heritage' was said to depend for its very survival upon 'the subtle, infinitely complex lines of habit, tradition, and social relationship' (ibid. p. xxiii). In the first edition of the *Twilight of Authority* he wrote: 'The centralization, and, increasingly, individualization of power is matched in the social and cultural spheres by a combined hedonism and egalitarianism, each in its own way a reflection of the destructive impact of power on the hierarchy that is native to the social bond' (1975, introd, & p. 238). Only a flourishing civil society with an active citizenry could adequately mediate between the individual and state: 'You cannot oppose the inexorable growth of state power by championing individualism alone. You can only oppose it by championing community', as Douthat put it recently in an explanation of Nisbet's prescience today (Douthat 2012). In 1975 the conservative attraction to communitarianism re-emerged once more with Reagan's pre-presidential appeal for:

> …an end to giantism, for a return to the human scale – the scale that human beings can understand and cope with; the scale of the local fraternal lodge, the church congregation, the block club, the farm bureau…. It is activity on a small, human scale that creates the fabric of community. . . . The human scale nurtures standards of right behaviour, a prevailing ethic of what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. (Reagan, 1975)

Conservative communitarianism today

Cameron's vision of a Big Society embraced this conservative version of communitarianism. In *Civic Conservatism* (1994) and *Renewing Civic Conservatism* (2008) David Willetts, Conservative MP for Havant, had argued for a reconciliation between the benefits of a free-market economy that brought prosperity and freedom, with the 'non-market moral values on which it depends' (Willetts, 2008. See also Sandel, 2012, who more recently developed the theme of 'moral limits of markets'). Willetts maintained that Thatcher's world had been wrongly caricatured as one 'red in tooth and claw in which the devil takes the hindmost' for it obfuscated traditional conservatism that always had placed 'as much importance on our shared values and our sense of community as it did on the role of private property and free markets' (ibid. p.2). What gave 'communities backbone and shape', he maintained, was nurtured in the love of 'English institutions', a respect for 'the wisdom in traditions' (ibid. p.17, mirroring Burke's 'wisdom of the ages') and for the other-regarding virtues of the charitable philanthrope, which he curiously likened to a vampire bat:

> As we know from all the best horror movies, vampire bats need regular supplies of fresh blood. They have had a bad press but I want to change all that. They have been misunderstood. We have now discovered that the vampire bats which come back from a night's hunting with lots of blood regurgitate some to share it with the other vampire bats who were less successful. This is not just restricted to their immediate relatives. It enables the colony to thrive. (ibid. p.11)

In yet more figurative language Willetts summed up his vision of communitarianism thus: 'We should think of society as being like a dry stone wall

or a masonry arch, holding together without social cement. The task of Government is to create the environment in which the social norms and institutions which enable reciprocity can flourish' (ibid. p.17).

Phillip Blond, Cameron's so-called 'communitarian intellectual', the theoretical overseer of the Big Society and author of *Red Toryism* (2010) *Red Tory: How Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It, London: Faber, 2010,* argued at the time that British Conservatism was still viewed as the party of free market economics and that this had degenerated 'into monopoly finance, big business and deregulated global capitalism' (Blond, 2009, p.1; see also Norman, 2010). Britain had become:

> ...a bi-polar nation, a bureaucratic, centralised state that presides dysfunctionally over an increasingly fragmented, disempowered and isolated citizenry. The intermediary structures of a civilised life have been eliminated, and with them the Burkean ideal of a civic, religious, political or social middle, as the state and the market accrue power at the expense of ordinary people. (Blond, 2009, p.2)

Cameron's quest for 'the tradition of communitarian civic conservatism' or Blond's *Red Toryism* would strike off in a new direction. The liberal notion that individual autonomy must precede everything was a misguided assumption - 'a "self" is a fiction' (ibid.p.2). On the other hand, neither was more government the answer because of the state's propensity to be deployed 'in favour of the owner and entrepreneur' that had led with Thatcher to the 'escalation of monopoly' (ibid. p.4), accompanying social dysfunction and the development of an underclass. The alternative, argued Blond, was to re-localise the banking system, develop local capital and break up business monopolies by breaking with big business (ibid. p.5). This would involve a drive toward localism that would require the devolvement of procurement processes to local bodies and, because 'the great disaster of the last 30 years is the destruction of the capital, assets and savings of the poor', restore capital to labour. In short, *Red Toryism* would embrace 'an organic communitarianism that graces every level of society with merit, security, wealth and worth' (ibid. p.6).

However, in the last five years since the initial ferment, Big Society rhetoric has quietly faded from British politics. By 2011 even Blond was claiming that 'the drive for cuts and deficit reduction is perhaps running too fast to give people the chance to take over the state and create the conditions for a civic economy' (Butler, 2011). More recently, in July 2014, the *Big Society Network*, the body set up to organise community work and volunteering, was being wound down and investigated by the *National Audit Office* and the *Charity Commission* for the way it secured and disbursed taxpayer-funded grants (National Audit Office, 2014: see also Wright, 2014). Prime Minister Cameron oversaw many policy initiatives where central government had clearly chosen to *withdraw* power from, not disburse power *to*, local communities. Locally Authority maintained Secondary Schools, for example, were being pressurised to become government or business-controlled Academies. Likewise, the authority of local councils to determine energy efficiency standards for new homes (Deregulation Bill, 2014) was withdrawn and replaced with central directives to which local pressure groups strongly objected: 'The big builders appear to have more control over policy than the local council' (Transition Bath, 2014). Thus, five years after the start of the initiative, talk of the Big Society has become far less voluble in

political circles and, when it periodically resurfaces in the press, is represented as 'a policy in tatters' (Wright, 2014).

The reasons are fivefold. First, the Big Society coincided (some would say intentionally) with an 'austerity crisis' that made the will to localism untenable. Second, it failed to address the effects of what Reagan vilified as 'giantism' or what we shall call Big Capitalism. Third, the push to localism was not only undermined by underfunding but also threated by unwarranted market competition and a predilection for privatisation. Fourth, the complexity of what a community is today was under-theorised and misrepresented by the dated Burkean notion of 'little platoons'. And fifth, the Big Society was an attempt to off-load political risk by raising the role and status of philanthropy and de-politicizing charities as service providers, a policy mirrored in more recent changes to the national curriculum for Citizenship in England. We take these in turn.

A time of austerity or public spending cuts?

The launch of the Big Society coincided with what was euphuistically called 'a time of austerity'. When the Coalition Government came to power in May 2010 it inherited a financial crisis with rising national debt:

> The Coalition Government inherited one of the most challenging fiscal positions in the world. Last year, Britain's deficit was the largest in its peacetime history - the state borrowed one pound for every four it spent. The UK currently spends £43 billion on debt interest, which is more than it spends on schools in England. (H M Treasury, 2010, p.5)

The Coalition's response was to impose cuts upon the welfare budget, the police force, libraries, Legal Aid, the Citizens Advice Bureau and in particular Local Authorities (Crawford & Phillips, 2012). For some the rhetoric of the state being too big and unaffordable masked 'the systematic depletion of collective resources for civic and community action' (Tam, 2011, p.32). The Labour Party, favouring a Keynesian approach, questioned the need for an austerity programme suggesting that only after economic recovery should cuts be imposed, while Blyth, in *Austerity: the History of a Dangerous Idea*, argued that not only would the policy of depleting state spending fail to repair the economy, it could never work:

> Hippocratic economics... we have a strange way of looking at things whereby markets are strange, virginal creatures that have been assaulted by the state, and what we're doing with austerity is restoring its purity... this is nonsense... Everyone cutting at the same time is ludicrous. To have savings you have to have income from which to save. If you're not generating income there's no point... grow and then pay back debt. (Blyth, 2013)

The New Economics Foundation suggested that the austerity programme was made 'politically feasible' by talk of the Big Society and argued that the two policies were interlocked - 'two sides of the same coin' - where poor individuals and communities would suffer the most (NEF, 2010, p.6; see also NEF, 2012).

Moreover, the cause of the need for austerity, the collapse of deregulated banks and large international corporations, remained largely untouched in Big Society rhetoric. For some commentators, the people and institutions that caused the 2008 market crash seemed inviolate: '...there was no comparable attempt to open

up business, especially large corporations, to greater influence by the public or to redistribute some of their fast expanding wealth-based power to the more powerless sections of society' (Tam, 2011, p.33). Levitas pointed out that the Government had chosen not to reduce the national deficit by taxing the rich who suffered less because of the crash (Levitas, 2012), but that, on the contrary, in April 2013 it lowered the income tax threshold of those earning more than £150,000 from 50p to 45p in the pound. Such policies, she explained, 'blame the values of the poor for their poverty and justify inequality' (Levitas, 2012, p.330). Taylor-Gooby and Stoker argued that if 'the spending programme is analysed, the cuts in services for poorer groups substantially outweigh the impact of tax increases on higher-rate taxpayers' (Taylor-Goodby & Stoker, 2011., p.8). Even the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed scepticism for what he saw as a move away from social accountability and questioned who would perform the state's role in providing mechanisms for ensuring fairness and justice across society: 'We need reassuring that the Big Society isn't just an alibi for cuts, and a way back to Government just washing its hands' (Williams, 2010). Thus the politico-economic policy of the Coalition Government and its hesitancy in dealing with Big Capitalism and redistribution was said to be in tension with very devolvement, mutuality and sense of solidarity that underpinned the Big Society's quest for stable community associations (see Glasman, 2010, p.62). In short, the policy of countering 'the growth and pervasiveness of the state' (Norman, 2010) had 'a hollow feel to it' (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p.28).

Localism or privatisation?

The move to localism was a parallel concern. Some considered it an uncertain promise and others a ploy to underfund local services or encourage privatisation by clandestine means. Above we suggested that the rationale for the impulse towards localism was that the state was said to create dependency (Norman, 2010), dissolve personal responsibility (Cameron, 2010), destroy subsidiarity (Blond, 2009), stifle local and specialised forms of originality (Glasman, 2010) and create egoists and individualism (Cameron, 2009; Blond, 2010). In contrast, the Big Society would counter 'the growth and pervasiveness of the state' (Norman, 2010, p33ff), prompt the move 'from central to local government' (Cabinet Office, 2010) and the Localism Act of 2011 would allow 'communities the right to buy public assets and run public services' (Blond, 2009, p2; see Dawson, 2013, p.88):

> Greater freedom and flexibilities for local government are vital for achieving the shift in power the government wants to see. But, on their own, these measures will not be enough. Government alone does not make great places to live, people do. People who look out for their neighbours, who take pride in their street and get involved - from the retired teacher who volunteers in the village shop once a month, to the social entrepreneur who runs the nursery full time.
> Until now, however, many people have found that their good ideas have been overlooked and they have little opportunity to get on and tackle problems in the way they want. Voluntary and community groups often find that their potential contribution is neglected, when, in fact, they carry out some of the most innovative and effective work in public services and we should be encouraging them to get more involved.

> We want to pass significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live. (Localism Act, 2011)

For many, while the policy showed traces 'of an ideological commitment to localism and a new understanding of local self-government', in practice it was 'diluted by the political expediency of budget cuts' (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p.22). In 2010 under the logic of austerity the *Department for Communities and Local Government* implementing a 27 per cent cut in its local government budget with a 51 per cent cut in its community's budget over four years (see Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010). In their April 2010 election manifesto the Liberal Democrats had called for Local Councils to be given more powers to raise revenue. However, in the following month, having joined with the Conservative Party to form the Coalition, the policy was discarded (Liberal Democrat Manifesto, 2010; see also Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p.35). Similarly, while central government quotas for rural housing development were made obligatory, local councils' power to decide policies on planning applications remained heavily regulated and frequently contested by community groups (e.g. It's Our Country, 2014). While Tesco and other large supermarkets continued in their dominance of the grocery market, to which Blond referred as illustrative of the damaging effect of Big Capitalism upon the fabric of local communities, the status quo prevailed despite opposition from local pressure groups (e.g. Tescopoly, 2014). In parallel, financially strapped councils were rendered incapable of combating planning applications for fear of the cost of legal reprisals. Thus, in reality, the Localism Act did not devolve power to locally elected representatives and away from big business, but to other, centrally determined bodies such as Michael Gove's free schools (Observer, 2014), Andrew Lansley's GP commissioning consortia (Guardian, 2011), Theresa May's elected police chiefs (BBC News, 2012) and Iain Duncan Smith's private sector-led welfare reforms (Guardian, 2014). Some concluded that localism was actually little more than a masquerade to secrete creeping privatisation of the Welfare State and referred to a history of local initiatives being colonised by outside business interests, a practice that had all but driven out non-profit and mutual organisations. Spear, for example, investigating the Stagecoach and Arriva transport companies that dominated the market in England after deregulation in the 1990s, concluded that 'the demise of most independent employee-owned companies has raised theoretical and strategic issues of their viability' (Spear, 1999, p.254). North asked, therefore:

> Could it be, then, that civil society is being set up to fail? That the real agenda is privatisation? Will civil society organisations and social enterprises either fail to compete with larger, more heavily resourced private sector organisations in competitive tendering processes or, in time, find the burden of service delivery is too great and find offers of private sector support attractive? … In this case, the winners will be the wide range of private companies that routinely bid for public sector contracts. Councils will find it more convenient to outsource to private sector companies with experience and resources, and an unprepared third sector will not be competitive in such an environment. (North, 2011, p.823)

Durkheim had argued that the state 'should not do everything, but it should not let everything be done' (Durkheim, 1885/1986, p.88). The concern of Big Society

critics was what level of accountability would remain if state subsidies for local services dwindled and became dependent upon local voluntary action. This worry was not helped by the prospect by the removal of regulatory bodies, like the Competition Commission, the Food Standards Agency and the Gambling Commission, that were deemed unaffordable at the time (see North, 2011, p.820; House of Commons, 2011, p.50). Moreover, when privatised, at what level would state protection operate if a provider wished to close a service because of its lack of profitability, and in what way could the state be accused of culpability in refusing to act as guarantor of basic and equal provision (see Levitas, 2012, 331)? Put simply, because power withdrawn from the state seemed more likely to shift to corporate stake holders, the move to localism and community regeneration appeared more as deliberate underfunding and a smoke-screen for increased privatisation.

Communities and colonization

At the heart of Big Society thinking was a notion of rejuvenated communities. However today urban communities in particular are plural and often transitory in nature making them quite distinct from Burke's platoons or Owen's idealised communities that were geographically and, arguably, socially more cohesive. Some like Etzioni maintain that the term can still be defined with reasonable precision:

> Community has two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationship that often crisscross and reinforce one another (as opposed to one-to-one or chain-like individual relationship); and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, a particular culture. (Etzioni, 2015)

However others like Stacey argue that because of the complexity associated with the term the solution was to avoid it (Stacey, 1969). In part this was because increasing social and cultural diversity made it incomprehensible to consider England as a single community; it was now, in Parekh phrase, 'a community of communities' (Runnymede Trust, 2000):

> Since it is constantly exposed to external influences and its members do not share a moral and cultural consensus, it cannot aspire to be a single cultural unit and base its unity on the cultural homogeneity of its citizens. It cannot claim to embody and legitimate itself in terms of their sense of collective identity either, both because many of them no longer place much emphasis on their national identity or privilege it over their other identities, and because some of them increasingly have and cherish transnational ties and identities. (Parekh, 2002, p. 53)

In other words, because of globalisation, post-colonial migration and increasing population mobility, many citizens now have multiple identities (see Kymlicka, 2003: Kerr et al., 2002) such that today one can be English, British, a Muslim, a member of the EU, and thus have a commitment to another country by birth or marriage simultaneously.

Not only is community a more complex term than in Burke's day, the effects of global capitalism upon it have been penetrating. Habermas has tried to account for the interaction between such communities and modern economies by classifying the *Lebenswelt* (the lifeworld or 'community') and the economic and

political *system* as two distinct spheres of social interaction. The former he describes as 'the reservoir of taken-for-granteds, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication draw upon in cooperative processes of interpretation' (Habermas, 2006, p. 124). This constitutes the realm of tradition, custom and convention, the sole source of norms, values and civic pride, the very domain that the Big Society wished to rekindle. While he has been criticised for portraying this sphere in terms of romanticised communicative practices, rather than as a realm of contrasting social identities and competing values where forms of domination and power operate (see Gibson, 2013), he convincingly contrasts the lifeworld's socially integrating function to systems media in advanced capitalist societies. For systems, in contrast, constitute a very different realm of social action insofar as they survey the world merely in terms of quantities and employ instrumental rationality to do so (see Gibson, 2011). While Habermas misguidedly portrays the lifeworld as if it were in Manichaean opposition to systems media, a 'sphere of freedom in contrast to a sphere of domination' (Jessop, 2003, p.7), he describes convincingly the way systems media tend to overwhelm the lifeworld in which spheres of legitimacy-generating communicative action are displaced or sequestered. 'Colonisation' occurs because instrumental rationality surges beyond the bounds of the economy and state bureaucracy into areas of communicatively structured life where it achieves dominance 'at the expense of moral-political and aesthetic-practical rationality' (Habermas, 2006, p. 304-305). In essence, colonisation by systems helps account for the weakening of communities and the increasing marginalisation of 'norm-conforming attitudes':

> In modern societies, economic and bureaucratic spheres emerge in which social relations are regulated only via money and power. Norm-conforming attitudes and identity-forming social memberships are neither necessary nor possible in these spheres; they are made peripheral instead. (ibid., p. 154)

This narration of the way the economy and state penetrate ever more deeply into the symbolic reproduction of communities helps explain how shifts in economic and political power affect cultural and local communities. Changes in retail banking, for example, have been away from a culture based upon human relationships to one based upon transactions and trading. Rising economic inequality in England has led to an expansion of second-home ownership that is said to brought 'social consequences' (Second and Holiday Homes, 2014) that has affected the price of housing stock, jeopardised the local infrastructure and thus the viability of socially cohesive institutions like local schools and pubs. More generally, 'trust in each other and in our wider society has fallen' (Blond, 2011; see also Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004). However, while Blond flagged up the problem, in practice the Big Society failed to account adequately for its decline and for the impact deregulated markets have upon the social fabric. The rise of what Macpherson called 'possessive individualism' (Macpherson, 1962) is not answered by visions of communitarianism that fail to account for the constant buffeting by systems of power that, in Habermas's terms, jeopardise 'norm conforming attitudes and identity-forming social membership'. In other words, Tönnies nineteenth century vision of *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 2002), as an all-encompassing community that members unreflectively endorsed, seems 'distinctly ill-suited for complex and conflict-ridden large-scale industrialized societies' (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2014). Put simply, how Burke's little platoons

would fare today against a backdrop of short-sellers, speculators and the prospect of foreclosure from multinational banks is highly questionable.

In such a context, the claim by Big Society advocates that there were 'large numbers of people willing to get involved' (Wei, 2010, p. 6), or Blond's assertion that there was 'a massive demand from local communities to run public services' (New Statesman, 2010), is at best doubtful. Indeed, Sloam found that 'the empirical evidence does not support this claim' (Sloam, 2012 p.102) while Pattie and Johnson argued that there has been only a 'lukewarm enthusiasm for public participation in civic life' (Pattie & Johnston, 2011, p.143; see also Hudson, 2011). Not only were the numbers of civic actors low but, because of time constraints, family commitments and the pressures of employment, those available and willing were shown to be spread unequally across communities: 'Localities vary greatly in the economic and cultural resources of the people who live in them, as well as in their material character, and thus in the available resources for absorbing the additional labour implied by the Big Society' (Levitas, 2012, p.331). The *Institute for Volunteering Research* found that 'rates of formal volunteering vary greatly by socio-economic classification. In 2007/08 those in higher/ lower managerial and professions were the most likely to formally volunteer' (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2014). In other words, issue of unequal wealth, expertise or time meant that the better educated and retired middle class were more active in volunteering (see Pattie & Johnston, 2011, p.415; Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p. 32; Hudson, 2011, p.21), while 'people classified as being at risk of social exclusion (defined here as having a long-term limiting illness or disability, having no formal qualifications, or being from an ethnic minority group) were less likely to regularly participate in volunteering' (TimeBank, 2014).

Depoliticising philanthropy and citizenship education

Big Society reasoning coincided with a broader tendency in Conservative policy towards the political advantages of diverting risk. This involved a process of 'off-loading' that meant that local providers, like schools and charities, could be policed by central government and, if required, blamed for inadequate provision:

> Cameronism could be read as a particular type of statecraft designed primarily to service the continuation of power and the maintenance of political office by reducing the risks of policy failure... Importantly, the concept of depoliticisation should never be taken to imply an absence of governmental control or the absence of politics itself. Quite the opposite; depoliticisation is about finding new means of control at a distance. (Kerr, Byrne & Foster, 2011, p.199-200)

The implication here is the state has not withdrawn to devolve power to local communities but externalised its responsibility for service delivery by placing the burden of failure onto others (see Milbourne & Cushman, 2012). In countering such moves, the Charity Commission recently launched a counter offensive to draw attention not only to the depletion of its resources but against 'direct attacks by Government and others on the freedom of expression of voluntary bodies working with the state' (Baring Foundation, 2013, p.3). What they choose not to emphasise, however, is that while charities have had to make choices about the extent to which they work in financial partnership with government for fear of losing a critical footing on policy, many of these 'depoliticised' bodies now operate as proxy suppliers providing at lower cost what used to be state services

(from home help to palliative care) and today cannot escape the pretence of active engagement in the political process. Furthermore, the link with politics is even more evident in countries like the US with the rise of mega-charities. While England has so far escaped the excesses of philanthropy on the scale of the Gates Foundation, now worth more than $43 billion, it raises serious political issues concerning questions of accountability, the challenge to democratic institutions, as well as the legitimacy of what is in effect a body so powerful it can substitute for government in its pursuance of foreign policy (see Gibson, 2008, p.64; Frumkin, 2006; Katz, 2007):

> This brings to the fore an inherent tension regarding the role of philanthropy in the Big Society. Philanthropic donors are encouraged to bring resources which can enable the Big Society to flourish. These resources epitomize social action which, within the Big Society, is integral to citizen empowerment and control over public services and communities. However … emerging philanthropic relationships risk enhancing rather than addressing unequal power relations in civil society and between state, market and civil society. They legitimate the predominantly market-led forces which give rise to the need for philanthropy in the first place and affect the transformative potential of philanthropy, that is, whether it encapsulates the need for, and has the capacity to ensure, social change. What is more, they stifle the development of a democratic counter-discourse about the role and practice of philanthropy. (Daly, 2011, p. 1080-1)

Education has also been subjected to a similar process and depoliticisation has clearly influenced the recent revisions to the Nation Curriculum for Citizenship in England (National Curriculum, 2014). Frazer argued that 'citizenship is, properly speaking, a political relationship' and that 'it has become something of a standard complaint by educationalists and political theorists that citizenship education is consistently depoliticised' (Frazer, 2007, p. 257). One of the central tenets of the Crick Report (1998), which underpinned the previous national curriculum (DfEE/QCA, 2000), was to engender more community activism in pupils:

> There are worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life. These, unless tackled at every level, could well diminish the hoped-for benefits both of constitutional reform and of the changing nature of the welfare state. To quote from a speech by the Lord Chancellor…: 'We should not, must not, dare not, be complacent about the health and future of British democracy. Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens, our democracy is not secure'. (Crick Report, 1998, p.8)

More than a decade later some have concluded that the programme for civic engagement of school-aged pupils 'must be seen as a failure' (Sloam, 2011, p.101). Youth turn-out at UK elections over the last twenty years has reached such a low profile that it now 'ranks 21st of 22 European countries' (Sloam, 2012, p.96). In 2008 a longitudinal survey carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research suggested that while 'the important fact to underline about the introduction of citizenship education is that one of its key aims is the development of young people's trust' (Benton et al., 2008, p.30), it observed the opposite, i.e. 'declining levels of trust in authority figures and institutions, including family and teachers' (ibid, p.vii). To grasp the enormity of Crick's anxiety for the levels of apathy and cynicism in the young one would need to set aside crude invective concerning the duty of young citizens to becoming more

active, responsible and charitable, and devise a curriculum that responded to the complex reasons for political and civic disengagement, including the link between the media and politicians through to the lack of trust in the mainstream political process (see Gibson, 2015, forthcoming).

However from September 2014 the state required that all maintained schools in England adopt a revised curriculum for citizenship (National Curriculum, 2014). This chose to emphasise civics or the learning of 'facts' about the British Constitution, like 'the operation of Parliament', 'the justice system' and 'the functions and uses of money'. Putting aside the paradox of a *national* curriculum and a powerful *state* inspection service during a time of apparent localism, Michael Gove MP, then Secretary of State for Education, said: 'I'm not going to be coming up with any prescriptive lists, I just think there should be facts' (Gove, 2011). Facts, however, shroud what Clark aptly calls 'the bias beneath the facts' (Clark, 2012). To illustrate the point, the Crick Report referred to the distinction between 'law and justice' that in principle opened up the possibility of political difference and contestation (Crick Report, 1998, para. 2.4). Thus one might acknowledge the 'fact' of Ghandi's two hundred mile civil disobedience march to the sea to collect salt and avoid paying the coloniser's taxes, but this fact merely raises more complex questions concerning the rule of law and whether such action was illegal *but* just. Teaching facts cleansed of politics is arguably not only epistemological questionable in educational contexts, it does little for the regeneration of trust or the revival of pupils' civic engagement, said to be fundamental to the Big Society project.

Conclusion

On my route to work I cycle through the villages of Limpley Stoke, Freshford and Midford south of Bath on a path that was formerly a railway track. This was the set for a 1953 Ealing comedy by Charles Crichton called *The Titfield Thunderbolt*. Filmed during what seems like an idyllic English summer, it is a story of how a group of villagers fight to retain and operate their local branch line when threatened with closure by central government. In order to do so they require financial support and find it in a local retired businessman, a philanthropist and alcoholic played by Stanley Holloway attracted by the prospect of an ever-open railway bar. The villagers also have to overcome the opposition of the local bus operator, Pearce and Crump, a benign version of *Arriva* today, with much of the film focussing on the machinations and disasters between these waging factions. It is a charming film where local initiative is shown to triumph over Big Government that leaves the viewer with a rosy glow of little England in a bygone age. However, mirroring the concerns raised by this paper about Big Society rhetoric the film leaves many questions unanswered, such as the appropriate role of the state, the nature of self-interested philanthropy, the limitations of unbridled competition within a context of monopoly capitalism, and the nature of community where the structure and cohesiveness of Burke's 'little platoons' appear thwart with division and social hierarchy and far from idyllic. The original film succeeds, suggests Barker, only because 'it has the support of local privilege and local wealth that is accepted by a small town which is socially homogenous save when divided by the bribes and machinations of capitalism' (Barker, 2011, p.50-1). One wonders what a Big Society filmic equivalent of *The Titfield Thunderbolt* might look like today.

References

BBC News (2012 6 Nov) *Police commissioners will have mandate - Theresa May* Available online at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20218584> (accessed 10 Nov 2014).

Baring Foundation, (2013) *Independence Under Threat: The voluntary sector in 2013.* Available online at: <http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/IndependenceUnderThreat.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Barker, R. (2011) Big Societies, Little Platoons and the Problems with Pluralism. *The Political Quarterly* 82 (1) 50-55.

Benton, T., Cleaver, E., Featherstone, G., Kerr, D., Lopes, J. & Whitby, K. (2008) *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS): Sixth Annual Report Young People's Civic Participation In and Beyond School. National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).* Nottingham, DCSF Publications.

Blair, T. (1993) Why Modernisation Matters. *Renewal* 1 (4).

Blair, T. (1998) *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century.* London, Fabian Society.

Blond, P. (2009 28 Feb) *Rise of the red Tories.* Available online at: <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/riseoftheredtories/#.UZIx86K Ty7w> (accessed 15 Feb 2014).

Blond, P. (2010) *Red Tory: How Left and Right have Broken Britain and How we can Fix It.* London, Faber.

Blond, P. (2011 31 Jan) *The Big Society will only get bigger.* Politics and Society. Available online at: <http://www.ilsussidiario.net/News/English-Spoken-Here/Politics-Society/2011/1/31/UK-The-Big-Society-will-only-get-bigger/146304/> (Accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Blyth, M. (2013 27 May) Austerity: the History of a Dangerous Idea. In *The Guardian.* Available online at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/video/2013/may/24/austerity-history-dangerous-idea-video> (accessed 15 Nov 21014).

Burke, E. (1790/1968) *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* London, Pelican.

Butler, P. (2011 24 Jan) Message to big society charities: expect 'disproportionate' cuts . In *The Guardian.com.* Available online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2011/jan/24/big-society-charites-expect-big-cuts> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Cabinet Office (2010 18 May) *Building the Big Society.* Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-the-big-society> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Cameron, D. (2005 6 Dec) Cameron victory speech. *BBC News*. Available online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4504722.stm> (accessed 16 Nov 2014).

Cameron, D. (2009a 10 Nov) Big society can fight poverty. In *The Guardian*. Available online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/10/big-society-government-poverty-inequality> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Cameron, D. (2009b 10 Nov) David Cameron: The Big Society. In *ResPublica: changing the terms of debate*. Available online at: <http://www.respublica.org.uk/item/ResPublica-mentioned-in-Camerons-speech-ggtc#sthash.xzQrzFOx.dpuf> (accessed 14 Nov 2014).

Cameron, D. (2010 19 July) *Big Society Speech*. Available at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-speech> (accessed 12th March 2012).

Clark, D.L. (2012) *The Bias Beneath the Facts: Education in a Democratic Society*. San Diego, Cognella Academic Publishing.

Crawford, R. & Phillips, D. (2012) Local government spending: where is the axe falling? Available online at: <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/6054> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Crick Report, (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship 22 September 1998*. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Daly, S. (2011) Philanthropy, the Big Society and Emerging Philanthropic Relationships in the UK. In *Public Management Review* 13 (8) 1077–1094.

Dawson, M. (2013) Against the Big Society: A Durkheimian socialist critique. In *Critical Social Policy* 33 (1) 78-96.

Deregulation Bill (2014) *House of Lords Deregulation Bill: (HL Bill 33 of 2014–15)*. Available online at: <file:///C:/Users/Howie/Favorites/Downloads/LLN-2014-024%20(4).pdf>
(accessed 17 Nov 2014).

DfEE/QCA (2000) *National Curriculum - Citizenship*. London: Department for Education and Employment/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Douthat, R. (2012 30 Jan) *The Quest for Community in the Age of Obama: Nisbet's Prescience*. Available online at: <http://www.firstprinciplesjournal.com/articles.aspx?article=1810&theme=coth o&loc=b> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Durkheim, E. (1885/1986) *Durkheim on Political Representation and the State*, (ed.) A. Giddens. Stanford California, Polity Press.

Etzioni, A. (2015) *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought,* First Edition. (Ed.) Michael T. Gibbons. Wiley & Sons. Available online at: <https://icps.gwu.edu/sites/icps.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Communitarianism. Etzioni.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Faulks , K. (2006) Rethinking Citizenship Education in England: Some lessons from contemporary social and political theory. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 1 (2) 123 – 40 .

Frazer, E. (2007) Depoliticising Citizenship. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 55 (3) 249 - 263.

Gibson, H. (2008) Ideology, Instrumentality and Economics Education: on the secretion of values within philanthropy, financial capability and enterprise education in English schools. In *International Review of Economics Education* 7 (2) 57-78.

Gibson, H. (2011) Management, skills and creativity: the purpose and value of instrumental reasoning in education discourse. In *Oxford Review of Education* 37 (6) 699–716.

Gibson, H. (2013) Home–school agreements: explaining the growth of 'juridification' and contractualism in schools. In *Oxford Review of Education* 39 (6) 780–796.

Gibson, H. (2015 forthcoming) *The Teaching of Democracy: Challenging the Meaning of Participation, Discourse and Dissent in the English School Curriculum*. In R. Smith (ed.) Major Themes in Education: Philosophy of Education II (5-vol anthology covering 1998-2013). London, Routledge.

Glasman, M. (2010) Society not State: The Challenge of the Big Society. In *Public Policy Research*, June-August, 59-63.

Gove, M. (2011 20 Jan) Gove: We need to have facts in the curriculum. *Radio 4: Today*. Available online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9367000/9367626.stm> (accessed 16 Nov 2014).

Guardian, (2011 14 Nov) *Fear and loathing in Lansley's new GP consortia*. Available online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2011/nov/14/fear-loathing-andrew-lansley-gp-consortia> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Guardian, (2014 16 Aug) *Welfare reform: will Iain Duncan Smith's benefits revolution happen?* Available online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/aug/16/welfare-reform-iain-duncan-smith-benefits-universal-credit-logistical-nightmare>(accessed 10 Nov 2014).

H M Treasury (2010) *Spending Review Oct 2010 Cm 7942*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/203826/Spending_review_2010.pdf> (accessed 14 Nov 2014).

Habermas, J. (2006). The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 2. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Hobbes, T. (1651/2008) *Leviathan*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hudson, B. (2011) Big society: a concept in pursuit of a definition. In *Journal of Integrated Care* 19 (5) p. 17-24.

House of Commons (2011) *The Big Society* Vol 1. London, Stationery Office.

Independent (The) (2013 8 April) *Margaret Thatcher's legacy*. Available online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/margaret-thatchers-legacy-spilt-milk-new-labour-and-the-big-bang--she-changed-everything-8564541.html> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Institute for Volunteering Research (2014) *Who Volunteers in the UK?*. Available online at: <http://www.ivr.org.uk/ivr-volunteering-stats> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

It's Our Country (2014). *Housing quotas imposed on* villages. Available online at: <http://www.itsourcounty.org/2013/07/housing-quotas-imposed-on-villages> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Jessop, B. (2003). The gender selectivities of the state. Lancaster: Department of Sociology, Lancaster University. Available online at: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/research/publications/papers/jessop-gender-selectivities.pdf> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2010) *Social Policy in a Cold Climate*. Available online at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/events/summary_of_main_proposal.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Kerr, D., McCarthy, S. & Smith. A. (2002) Citizenship Education in England, Ireland and Northern Ireland. In *European Journal of Education* 37 (2) 179-191.

Kerr, P., Byrne, C. & Foster, E. (2011) Theorising Cameronism. In *Political Studies Review* 9 (2) 193–207.

Kymlicka, W. (2003) Two dilemmas of citizenship education in pluralist societies. In A. Lockyer, B. Crick and J. Annette (eds). *Education for Democratic Citizenship: Issues in Theory and Practice*. Aldershot, Ashgate. pp.47-63

Levitas, R. (2012) The Just's Umbrella: Austerity and the Big Society in Coalition policy and beyond. In *Critical Social Policy* 32 (3) 320–342.

Liberal Democrat Manifesto (2010) Available online at: <http://www.astrid-online.com/Dossier--R3/Documenti/Elezioni-2/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf.> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Localism Act (2011). *A plain English guide to the Localism Act - Gov.uk Communities and Local Government*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Lowndes, V. & Pratchett, L. (2012) Local Governance under the Coalition Government: Austerity, Localism and the 'Big Society'. In *Local Government Studies* 38 (1) 21–40.

Macpherson, C. B. (1962) *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Milbourne, L. & Cushman, M. (2012) From the third sector to the big society: how changing UK Government policies have eroded third sector trust. In *Voluntas: international journal of voluntary and nonprofit organisations*. Available online at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/44455/1/From%20the%20third%20sector%20to%20the%20big%20society(LSERO).pdf> (accessed 16 Nov 2014).

National Audit Office (2014 21 July) Investigation into grants from the Big Lottery Fund and the Cabinet Office to the Big Society Network and the Society Network Foundation. Available online at: <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Investigation-into-grants-from-the-Big-Lottery-Fund-and-the-Cabinet-Office-to-the-Big-Society-Network-and-the-.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

National Curriculum (2014) *The national curriculum in England: Framework document*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335116/Master_final_national_curriculum_220714.pdf> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

New Economic Foundation (NEF) (2010 Nov) *Cutting it - The 'Big Society' and the new austerity*. London, NEF.

New Economic Foundation (2012) *The New Austerity and the Big Society: Interim Briefing*. Available online at: <www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/the-new-austerity-and-the-big-society> (accessed 10 Nov 2014).

New Statesman (2010 18 Nov) *The sham of Cameron's "big society"*. Available online at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/11/local-government-cuts-society> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Nisbet, R. (1953/1990) *The Quest for Community: A study in the ethics of order and freedom*. ISI Books: Wilmington, Delaware Press.

Nisbet, R. (2008) *Conservatism: Dream and Reality*. Transaction, New Jersey.

Nisbet, R. (1975) *Twilight of Authority*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Norman, J. (2010) *The Big Society: The Anatomy of the New Politics* (2010). Buckingham: The University of Buckingham Press.

North, P. (2011) Geographies and utopias of Cameron's Big Society. In *Social & Cultural Geography* 12 (8) 817-827.

Observer (The) (2014 10 May) *Michael Gove's 'lunatic' £400m raid to rescue his free schools vision*. Available online at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/may/10/gove-lunatic-raid-free-schools> (accessed 10 Nov 2014).

Parekh, B. (2002) Reconstituting the modern state. In J. Anderson (ed.) *Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings*. London, Routledge. pp.39-55

Pattie, C. & Johnston, R. (2011) How Big is the Big Society? *Parliamentary Affairs* 64 (3) 403–424.

Pattie, C., Seyd, P. & Whiteley, P. (2004) *Citizenship in Britain: Values, Participation and Democracy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Reagan, R. (1975 26 Sept) *'Let the People Rule': Executive Club of Chicago in September*. Available online at: <www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/.../1980%20Campaign%20inventory.ht.> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Sandel, M. (2009) *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Sandel, M. (2012) *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. London, Penguin.

Scraton, P. (2004) Streets of Terror: Marginalization, Criminalization and Authoritarian Renewal. *Social Justice* 31 (1–2) 130-158.

Second and Holiday Homes (2014 Nov) *Cornwall Local Plan: Housing Evidence Base - Housing Evidence Base Briefing Note 11*. Available online at: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/3642941/BN11-Second-and-Holiday-Homes-v2-Nov-13.pdf> (accessed 23 Nov 2014).

Sloam, J. (2012) 'Rejuvenating Democracy?' Young People and the 'Big Society' Project. *Parliamentary Affairs* 65, 90–114.

Spear, R. (1999) The Rise and Fall of Employee-Owned UK Bus Companies. In *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 20, 253-268.

Stacey, M. (1969) The Myth of Community Studies. In *The British Journal of Sociology* 20 (2) 134-147.

Stanford Encyclopedia (2014) *Communtarianism*. Available online at: <plato.stanford.edu/entries/communitarianism/>(accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Tam, H. (2011) The Big Con: Reframing the state/society debate. In *Public Policy Research* 30, March–May, 30-40.

Taylor, C. (1985) Atomism. In C. Taylor (ed.) *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Pp.187-210

Taylor-Gooby, P. & Stoker, G. (2011) The coalition programme: a new vision for Britain or politics as usual? In *The Political Quarterly* 82 (1) 4–15.

Tescopoly (2014) *Campaigning to curb supermarket power*. Available online at: <http://www.tescopoly.org> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Thatcher, M. (1987 23 Sep) Margaret Thatcher Interview for Woman's Own, with Douglas Keay. Available online at: <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Runnymede Trust (The) (2000) *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: the Parekh Repot*. London, Profile Books.

TimeBank (2014) *Be Challenged. Be a Volunteer*. Available online at: <http://timebank.org.uk/key-facts> (accessed 16 Nov 2014).

Tonnies, F. (1887/2002) *Gemeinshaft und Gesellschaft*. Dover: Newton Abbott.

Transition Bath, July 2004. *B&NES Core Strategy: planning inspector removes Code for Sustainable Homes requirement*. Available online at: <http://transitionbath.org/bnes-core-strategy-planning-inspector-removes-code-sustainable-homes-requirement> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).

Wei, N. (2010 10 Sept) Unlocking Hidden Wealth Part 1- Finding Time, Nat Wei's Blog. In Stott, M. (2011) *The Big Society Challenge*. Thetford, Keystone Development Trust Publications.

Willetts, D. (1994) *Civic Conservatism*. London, Social Market Foundation.

Willetts, D. (2008 20 Feb) *Renewing Civic Conservatism*. The Oakeshott Lecture, London School of Economics. Available online at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/PublicEvents/pdf/20080220_Willetts.pdf> (accessed 17 Nov 2014).

Williams, R. (2010) Two and a half cheers for the Big Society (24 July). *The Telegraph*. Available online: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/7907830/Dr-Rowan-Williams-Two-and-a-half-cheers-for-the-Big-Society.html> (accessed: 12 March 2012).

Wright, O. (2014 26 July) Exclusive: David Cameron's Big Society in tatters as charity watchdog launches investigation into claims of Government funding misuse. In *The Independent*. Available online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/exclusive-camerons-big-society-in-tatters-as-charity-watchdog-launches-investigation-into-claims-of-government-funding-misuse-9629848.html> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).