



Learning lessons from tenure restructuring: British stock transfers

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Housing in Great Britain

Post-war reputation as nation of

- home-owners
- council tenants

Variable local distribution of council housing:

- Regional differences within England, Scotland, Wales
 - Accidents of history, geography, economics
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Tenure restructuring since 1979

- Tenants purchase existing home
 - Right To Buy (RTB) at discounts reaching 70%
 - main impact from early 1980s
 - left all councils with houses for rent ('000s)
 - Poor quality, expensive maintenance, subsidised rents
- Change of landlord (same house, same tenant)
 - from public to 'social' to access private £
 - 'Stock Transfer' (LSVT): from late 1980s
 - new landlords 'Registered Social Landlords' RSLs
 - Formerly 'Housing Associations', voluntary, not-for-profit
 - at least 1 in 3 councils no longer own housing for rent
 - variable local distribution

Perceptions of problems & solutions

Problem: lack of capacity to manage, maintain, develop

- Declining asset
- Not enough investment
- Political control
- Disinterest, despair and frustration

Solution? – panacea for some

- Access to finance
 - Private borrowing
 - Government assistance – various
- Renewed governance
 - ‘Community’ involvement
 - Regulation

Process of transformation

- Problem identified by managerial staff
 - with appetite for change and capacity to persuade
 - so, not everyone in the same circumstances
- Solution adopted - or not - by
 - Elected representatives on public bodies
 - Tenants
 - Staff below managerial level
 - Blue and white collar
 - Buyers and their lenders
 - Ministers

Powers and rights

- Building by state (municipal councils) used
 - resources &
 - *powers*, rather than duties
 - power to build & to sell: 1890
- RTB
 - *individual right*, to enforce purchase against reluctant (public) landlord
- Stock transfer
 - initiative & *power* to sell lies with Council, subject to
 - collective tenant *veto* ,
 - duty to consult
 - ministerial *consent* to terms & conditions
 - willing buyer and lender – mediated by contract

What's new? & who's learning ?

- Policy innovation to transfer started locally
 - Paid officials more powerful than elected members
- Argument for change does not make itself
 - Stakeholders, (e.g tenants, staff) have power to contest and resist
- Central government captured policy, but cannot determine outcomes
 - Only clear blockages, streamline processes
 - Identify & allocate incentives
- Stated policy objectives may not materialise
 - Unintended consequences of process
 - Is there more investment? Who wants to know?