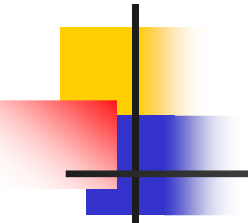


From Expectations to Aspirations: The New Politics of Sustainable Urbanism in the UK



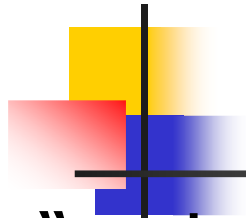
Mike Raco

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King's College London, UK



'How much talent that could flourish is lost through a poverty of aspiration? Wasted not because young talents fail to reach the stars but because they grow up with no stars to reach?' (Gordon Brown, speech to Labour Party Conference, 2007: p.4).





“aspiration is not about class, background or position. Everybody dreams of rising up in the world and everybody dreams of giving their children a better life. I don’t care where you started out in life; my mission is to help you rise higher” (David Cameron, speech to Chance UK, 2007)





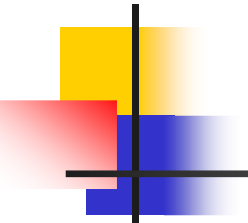
Introduction

- The new politics of aspiration-building
- The move away from a politics of expectation
- Bound up with broader discourses of sustainable urbanism and sustainable urban development
- What next???



From Expectations to Aspirations

- Aspirational deficiencies seen as both the symptom and cause of social inequalities
- The importance of *existential politics*:
 - Defining 'yardsticks' (Rorty, 1999)
 - Working on 'human nature' as a policy problem
- The celebration of inequality as a driver of social mobility – not *enough* inequality exists

- 
-
- *“rather than questioning whether huge salaries are morally justified, we should celebrate the fact that people can be enormously successful in this country. Rather than placing a cap on that success, we should be questioning why it is not available to more people. Our overarching goal that no one should get left behind must not become translated into a stultifying sense that no one should be allowed to get ahead” (Hutton, 2008).*
 - *claimed ‘aspiration and ambition are natural human emotions’*



Sustainable Urban Policy and the New Politics of Aspiration I

- New agendas provide a link between the 'private self' (Rose, 1994) and broader policy agendas
- Linked directly to urban competitiveness and renewal
- Frustration that regeneration has not trickled-down
- Series of reviews and studies



Sustainable communities: building for the future



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities

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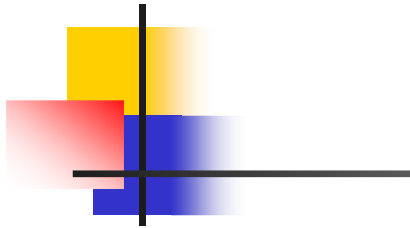


PLANNING
Planning Policy Statement 1:
Delivering Sustainable Development



Sustainable Urban Policy and the New Politics of Aspiration II

- New aspirations linked to new forms of sustainable citizenship
- Focus on creative class and the urban environments that sustain them
- Promotes a materialist conception of human nature and identity
- Little about environmental resources
- The myth of 'balance'



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What Next?

- What now for aspirational policy?
- What are we trying to sustain?
- A potentially significant moment
- The re-kindling of old models or the mobilisation of the new?
- Moving beyond sustainability?