

Governing austerity, structural violence and the “cumulative incapacitation of the state”

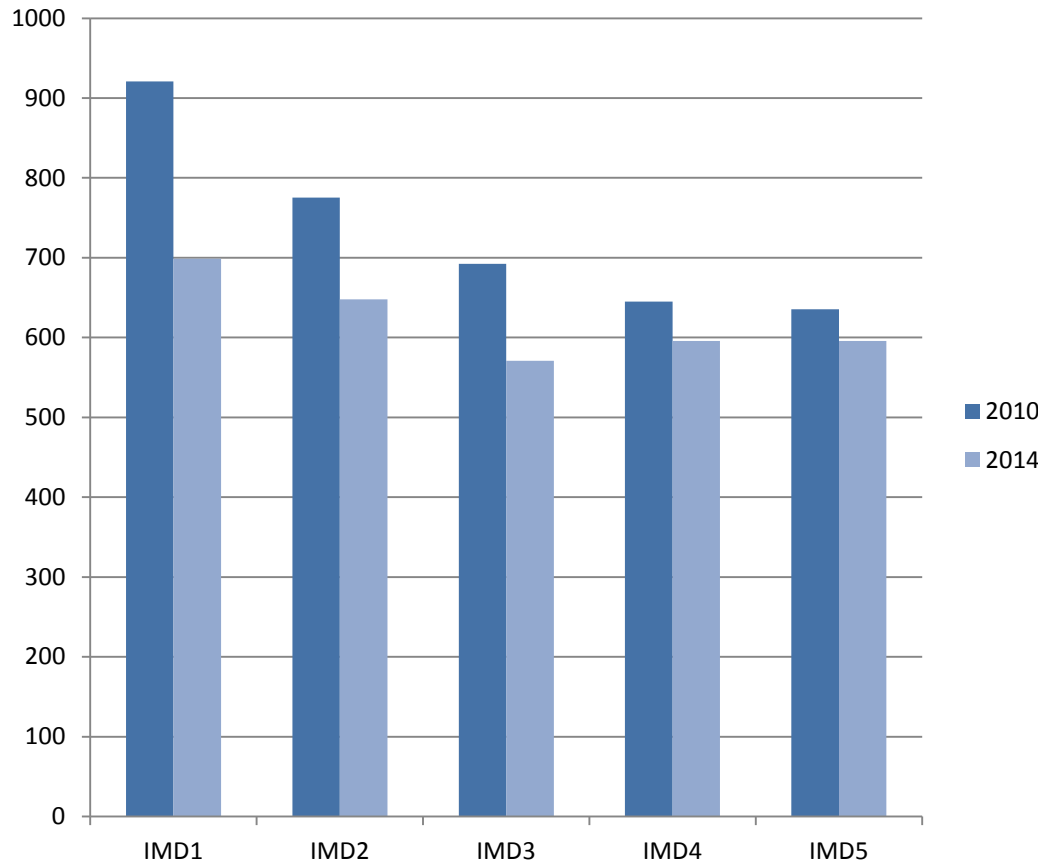
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The Cost of the Cuts: The impact on local government and poorer communities (with Nick Bailey, Glen Bramley and Maria Gannon)

- Analysis of budget cuts at the national level
- Four case studies of the impact of austerity on councils.
- Quantitative analysis of budgetary info on ‘savings’ 2011-2016
 - ‘Savings’ assessed according to who uses what kind of services
- Qualitative analysis of impacts on poor people and places
 - Service users - parents living in more or less disadvantaged neighbourhoods
 - Staff from voluntary organisations providing local services
 - Strategic officers within the case studies
 - Front-line council staff

The spending differential between disadvantaged and better off councils is in sharp decline



- 2010: **45%** difference between most and least deprived
- 2014: **17%** difference
- **Dismantling of the ‘spatial strategy of equality’**

Structural Violence

“Structural violence ... describes... social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm’s way. The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people”

Farmer, 2006: 1686

Governing austerity and structural violence

- Dismantling the ‘spatial strategy of equality’
 - Between cities
 - Within cities - dismantling of neighbourhood governance. *“We knew what was going on in the estate...where the real issues were...”* (Neighbourhood Services Provider)
- Individualisation and stigmatisation of need
- Responsibilisation of civil society:
 - *adult care achieved thru things “available in the person’s own life and neighbourhood”*. (NCC, 2012; appendix 2)
 - *The Council “will require individuals to take personal responsibility for supporting their neighbourhoods, with the council focusing on those services which only the council can do”* (NCC, 2012; p.25)
- Disinvestment in ‘capacity building’ – *‘we’re living on borrowed time’* (Senior officer, council 1)

Three injuries caused by structural violence

- Unmet needs *“I had to do a (safeguarding) referral about our own council, about the social care team because they weren’t meeting the needs of the tenant”* (Neighbourhood services provider)
- Front line workers become ‘shock absorbers’ *“having to be part of the process that feeds ...restructure options upwards to senior managers weighs heavily on my mind... I am tired, tearful and unhappy and am struggling to lead a normal active life.”* (Library service provider)
- The isolation (incarceration?) the poor *“I only go out once a day now. I’ve stopped taking the baby out.”* (Disadvantaged service user)

Daring to look forward...

- A deep and long process of residualisation underway – the “cumulative incapacitation of the state” (Peck, 2012)
 - Stigmatisation of ‘need’ and reciprocal effect of undermining the capacity to address it
- Can the way we govern austerity stop it being down loaded onto the marginalised?
- What can we do to slow down the hardening the social hierarchy?
- How can we begin to rebuild a politics of redistribution?

References and selected project publications

- [Bailey, N.](#), [Bramley, G.](#), and [Hastings, A.](#) (2015) Local Responses to ‘austerity’. *Local Government Studies*, 41(4), pp. 571-581. (doi:[10.1080/03003930.2015.1036988](https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2015.1036988))
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- [Hastings, A.](#), [Bailey, N.](#), [Gannon, M.](#), Besemer, K., and [Bramley, G.](#) (2015) Coping with the cuts? The management of the worst financial settlement in living memory. *Local Government Studies*, 41(4), pp. 601-621. (doi:[10.1080/03003930.2015.1036987](https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2015.1036987))
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- Newcastle City Council (2012b) *Newcastle City Council’s budget proposals 2013–2016: Fair choices for tough times.* https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/drupalncc.newcastle.gov.uk/files/wwwfileroot/your-council/budget_and_annual_report/appendix_2_-_draft_budget_proposals_summary_2013-16.pdf