

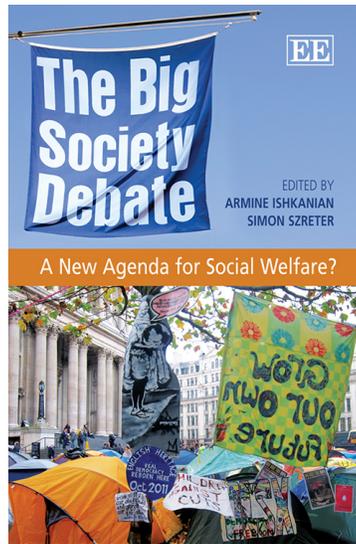


## The Big Society Debate

### A New Agenda for Social Welfare?

Edited by Armine Ishkanian, Lecturer in NGOs and Development, London School of Economics and Simon Szreter, Professor of History and Public Policy and Fellow of St John's College, University of Cambridge, UK

The book is divided into two sections, history and policy, which together provide readers with a historically grounded, internationally informed, and multidisciplinary analysis of the Big Society policies. The introduction and conclusion tie the strands together, providing a coherent analysis of the key issues in both sections. Various chapters in this study examine the limitations and consider the challenges involved in translating the ideas of the Big Society agenda into practice.



'... the collection provides valuable insights into the use of rhetorical devices and how "real life" examples are distorted and disguised to provide evidence of "what works". At the time of writing, the Big Society seems to have disappeared from government's central platform, but if the debate is rekindled in the future or elsewhere in the world, then I strongly recommend the book as a source of criticism and counter-evidence.'

– Alison Gilchrist, Community Development Journal

'... this book offers an absorbing, scholarly and highly readable critique of "Big Society" and is to be recommended to students, academics and readers who want to learn more about current British social policy.'

– Catherine Forde, Voluntas

'This text is a worthwhile contribution to a burgeoning field we may wish to call "Big Society studies". The breadth of the discussion, not only regarding the topics covered but in encompassing both sociological and social policy perspectives, makes this text relevant to a variety of readers. The editors have delivered contributions with historical and contemporary claims, as well as providing space for critical writers seeing the Big Society as neoliberal rhetoric alongside those engaged in more detailed perspective on the government's policy agenda.'

– Matt Dawson, Journal of Social Policy

'Before the 2010 General Election, David Cameron placed the "Big Society" at the heart of his efforts to rebuild Britain's "broken society". The essays in this volume probe the historical origins of the concept and seek to evaluate it in the light of both historical and contemporary evidence. They raise profound questions about the provenance of the "Big Society" and its relevance to contemporary social concerns. They should be of interest to anyone who cares about the past, present or future of British social policy.'

– Bernard Harris, University of Southampton, UK

'There is nothing new about the notion of a Big Society. This book combines historical scholarship, international research and grassroots experience to shine a critical spotlight on the rhetoric behind the coalition government's big idea.'

– Bill Jordan, University of Plymouth, UK

'Armine Ishkanian and Simon Szreter's fascinating book provides important insights into the way political elites use slogans and imagery to sway public opinion on social policy issues. This highly original work will be a major scholarly resource for years to come.'

– James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley, US

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