

“Its all up for grabs!” – charities managing change in times of crisis

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Malin Arvidson and Rebecca Taylor
Third Sector Research Centre, University of
Birmingham and Southampton

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Real Times

- A qualitative longitudinal study of 15 TSOs in England
- How do TSOs operate over time? What happens and why does it matter?
- A diverse set of organisational cases including:
 - A national campaigning organisation, an environmental social enterprise, community activities in contrasting villages, a large housing association...
- Coinciding with a period of ‘crisis’ for the sector

The presentation

- Two service delivery organisations - Fig and Mimosa
 - Crisis in focus
 - Analysing the data - focus on experience and process
 - Presentation structure...
 - Making sense of a 'crisis'
 - The dynamics of a crisis
 - Putting this crisis in perspective
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Making sense of a 'crisis'

- What do we mean by 'crisis'?
- How do organisations articulate what is going on?
 - *'Fears, risk, worries, hard, scary, painful, challenging, uncertainty, limbo, survival...'*

‘making sense ...’

- Practical realities:
 - contracts ended, top-sliced, renewed monthly, more for less...
 - opaque policy direction
 - changing relationship with commissioners
- Resulting in:
 - restructuring, service reduction, redundancies, uncertainty/inability to plan

The dynamics of a crisis

Stories tell of...

Uncertainty

Anxiety

Stress

Low morale

... but also ...

Professionalism

Opportunities

Organisational
development

Putting this crisis in perspective:

'we've been on the edge of a crisis since I've been here. It just happens to be that this is the crisis this week...' (Mimosa 0077)

So what is different?

'It feels far more uncomfortable, I wouldn't quite say competitive, but just [more] uncomfortable than it has done in the past'

(Mimosa 00xx)

Concluding remarks

- What about the concept of ‘a crisis’?
 - How does ‘crisis’ relate to ‘change’?
 - Capturing and portraying dynamics, dimensions and process in organisational change
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