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Geographies and politics of localism: The localism of the United Kingdom's coalition government

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Highlights

- â€¢ Localism can usefully be conceptualised as spatial liberalism.
- â€¢ The geographies of localism are not straightforwardly local.
- â€¢ Localism can be anti-political in at least two distinct ways.

Abstract

There has always been a localist element to British politics. But recently, a particular

version of localism has been moved to the foreground by the 2011 Localism Act. This paper identifies various uses and meanings of localism, maps their geographical assumptions and effects, and critiques their politics. It does this using the localism of the United Kingdom's Coalition Government as a case study of localism in practice. The rationalities, mentalities, programmes, and technologies of this localism are established from Ministerial speeches and press releases, along with Parliamentary Acts, Bills, White Papers, Green Papers, and Statements – all published between May 2010 when the Coalition Government was formed, and November 2011 when the Localism Act became law. We argue that localism may be conceptualised as spatial liberalism, is never straightforwardly local, and can be anti-political.



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Keywords

Localism; British politics; Spatial liberalism; Anti-politics

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