

<p>Institution: Coventry University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 21</p>
<p>Title of case study: White working class views of neighbourhood, cohesion and change</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study is underpinned by the first qualitative research study of national significance into the views of white working class communities on community cohesion. It builds on over 10 years of research into community cohesion at Coventry University. The case study includes impacts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity, culture and society: by being cited in public debate amongst stakeholders through discussion in social media, national and international press and media; • Public policy: by leading parliamentary debate amongst MPs, influencing the development of political party policy and by citation in parliamentary proceedings; • Practitioners and professional services: by informing debate amongst policy-makers and housing professionals including at international practitioner-led events in Chicago, San Francisco and New York. <p>Beneficiaries include central and local government policy-makers, members of charities and funders, lobbying groups, think tanks and political parties, political commentators, housing professionals, journalists, social workers and the general public.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Community cohesion has been a core research theme at Coventry for over 10 years. Professor Richard Farnell's research started in 1992 and continued until his retirement in 2011. During that period Farnell's interest was in the role of faith communities in social exclusion, which framed the themes on disconnection and disadvantage underpinning this case study [1]. David Jarvis (UoA 19) joined the group in 2004 and continues Farnell's research on faith communities [2]. Throughout the period, the group worked on commissioned and funded research which has produced influential reports in addition to research outputs. For example, Farnell was supported by the Church Urban Fund, and considered the role of faith in supporting cohesion and renewal [3]. Similarly, the research group produced a report for the Local Government Association (LGA) that considered the impact of immigration on public services [4].</p> <p>Professor Harris Beider joined the group in 2008 and his research continues the focus on the views of different groups in building community cohesion. His critical research perspectives on white working-class views of neighbourhoods, cohesion and change followed the successful ESRC Seminar Series on <i>Community Cohesion: Retrospective and Prospective</i> [i], which brought together academics, policy makers and activists to identify potential solutions to improve community cohesion. Between 2009 and 2011, Beider was then funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [ii] (JRF) to explore the perspectives of white working class communities on community cohesion and neighbourhood change. The JRF-funded research project found that, in contrast to many studies on visible minority groups, white working class communities had not been the subject of extensive research or debate since the emergence of the community cohesion concept. His research found that communities were disconnected from policy makers. White working class communities perceived themselves to be the 'last in line' when trying to get the attention of local government. Surprisingly, there was little support for the 'far right' amongst those interviewed, however there was interest in developing grassroots responses to build greater understanding between different groups. This project and its unexpected findings helped to shape the current research direction and academic outputs for Beider [5, 6].</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research

1. Farnell, R. (2001). Faith communities, regeneration and social exclusion: developing a research agenda. *Community Development Journal*, 36 (4), pp.263-272. (IF: 0.989; citations: 9).
2. Lambie-Mumford, H., & Jarvis, D. (2012). The role of faith-based organisations in the Big Society: opportunities and challenges. *Policy Studies*, 33 (3): 249-262.
3. Farnell, R. (2009). Faiths, government and regeneration: a contested discourse. In A. Dinham, R. Furbey, & V. Lowndes (Eds). *Faith in the Public Realm: controversies, policies and practices* Bristol: Policy Press, Bristol. pp.183-202.
4. Local Government Association/Institute of Community Cohesion (2008) *The impact of Migration on Local Public Services – Phase 2 research: Identifying the costs in Local authorities*. Local Government Association/ iCoCo <http://tinyurl.com/nef9xv8>
5. Beider, H. (2011). *White working class views of neighbourhood, cohesion and change*. Retrieved from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/working-class-views-neighbourhood>
6. Beider, H. (2012). *Race, housing and community: perspectives on policy and practice*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Key funding

- i. Beider, H. (PI). ESRC Seminar Competition Community Cohesion: Retrospective and Prospective; £17,000; (2009-2010).
- ii. Beider, H. (PI). Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Responsive Mode Community Cohesion: A White Perspective; £95,000; (2009-2011).

4. Details of the impact

The group's research on community cohesion has made a considerable impact. For example, the Local Government Association report (LGA) [4] on immigration was part of the LGA submission to the House of Commons Select Committee on Migration [a]. This resulted in the setting up of the Migration Impact Fund of £250 million per annum. Farnell's research [3] led to the Church Urban Fund report *Churches in Action* (with a foreword from the then Archbishop of Canterbury) that underpinned the new £5 million Near Neighbours programme. These two projects show how cohesion research was used by various agencies to address the impact of migration. These projects establish the context for Beider's JRF research that has had rapid, far reaching and significant impact following its launch in November 2011 [5]. The report was viewed 5,270 times after publication, downloaded 1,150 times and the summary downloaded an additional 825 times from the JRF website. This puts the report and the summary in the top ten downloaded documents from the Foundation's Website during 2012.

Impact on creativity, culture and society

The report "*White working class communities*" [5] has caused public and stakeholder debate because the research has challenged conventional wisdom. Following publication of the report, Beider was interviewed live on Radio 5Live, Radio WM, Radio Coventry and Warwickshire, Capital Radio, BRMB and Three Counties Radio. The report was also covered in the BBC Today Programme (28 November 2011) and BBC TV Breakfast News. The report led to considerable comment in the media including feature articles in *the Independent* and the *Daily Mail* [b] and coverage in the *Telegraph*, *The Times* and the *Huffington Post* [c] and many more national and regional outlets.

Beider's research and the report continued to generate press coverage and stimulate debate beyond the initial launch event. For example, on the BBC *Today* programme (4 January 2012), Mark Easton, the BBC Home Affairs Editor, spoke about the need to heed the findings from the report in the context of discussion of race relations. Similarly, an article in *the Guardian* on 19 April 2012 used the report to explore race, housing and a changing society. The debate was extended through social media, where it has been significantly commented upon and shared. Over 1000 Tweets were sent about the report including comments from Phillip Blond (Respublica think tank and influential conservative thinker), Steve Hilton (formerly strategic advisor to Prime Minister Cameron) and Quentin Letts (Conservative journalist for *the Daily Mail*). The report continues to

Impact case study (REF3b)

stimulate debate nearly two years after publication amongst politicians, journalists, activists, housing professionals, social workers, political commentators and the general public.

The contribution of the report and the underpinning research was highlighted in a confidential independent evaluation in 2012 for JRF. This found that it is “...*the single most commonly referenced report ... One reason that this report may have been memorable and resonant with journalists is that it confounds usual expectations that white-working class communities, rather than ethnic minority groups, suffer from social exclusion. The report was considered to be surprising, challenged assumptions, and was clearly of great interest to a wide range of reporters and broadcasters ...*” [d].

Impact on public policy

Policy debate has been stimulated and informed by research evidence of disconnection and isolation in white working class communities. **Beider** has been being requested to deliver workshops and private briefings on the findings to politicians, policy makers, funders and think tanks. For example, **Beider** delivered a ‘teach in’ to more than 20 JRF Senior Managers on 20 June 2012 to discuss the policy implications of his research. This group is responsible for framing strategy for JRF and for peer-reviewing research proposals. Bana Gora, Programme Manager at JRF stated “...the event had provoked new thinking within JRF staff and stimulated debate within the organisation”. She went on to say “... the research had an influence on the Foundation’s Poverty and Ethnicity programme (budget £1.3 million 2011-2015) and the Westminster briefing in 2012” [e]. The latter was organised by JRF, the Runnymede Trust and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration on 5 July 2012. This reached across MPs and think tanks from all parties to discuss practical implications of the research. Attendees included MPs who led on equalities and cohesion portfolios as well as staff from think tanks such as *British Futures* and the *Equality Development Foundation*.

Beider was subsequently invited by Kate Green MP (Stretford and Urmston/Shadow Minister of State for Equalities) to discuss the implications of this research at a local political level [f]. She organised a workshop with community activists in her constituency specifically to share findings and develop new ways to connect with low-income, white communities. This took place on 14 September 2012 with more than 50 people attending including residents, activists and local stakeholders. As a result, Green has bid with **Beider** to the JRF for funding to look at ways to engage disenfranchised white working class communities. On the basis of the research, Green is also using new ways to engage with white working class residents in her constituency and improving their political representation.

Following the July 2012 Westminster briefing, **Beider** was invited by Chris Williamson MP (Derby North/former Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government) to draft the Cohesion and Integration consultation report that is being used to shape Labour Party policy in the run up to the 2015 General Election. The document, *Citizenship, Cohesion and Integration*, which names **Beider** as a co-author, was published in December 2012. It was made available to all Labour Party MPs, their staff and Labour councillors across the UK prior to being published on the *Your Britain* Labour Party website [g]. This has been discussed at five regional consultation meetings in 2013 attended by over 150 political activists. The document is currently with the Leader of the Labour Party for further elaboration prior to incorporation in the manifesto.

Almost two years after the launch of the JRF report, **Beider**’s research continues to inform and stimulate political debate. For example, it was cited in a House of Commons briefing on housing entitlements and EU migrants discussed in mid-2013 [h].

Impact on practitioners and professional services

The report challenges conventional wisdom and generates debate among professionals. For example, the report is available on the website of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) [i]. The BASW is the largest professional association for social work in the UK and promotes the best possible social work services for all people who *may need them*, while also securing the well-being of social workers. Similarly, **Beider** published an article on the 8 June 2012 in *Inside Housing* based on his research, which is evidence of an on-going debate among housing professionals [j]. *Inside Housing* is the leading weekly magazine for housing professionals in the UK. It has a weekly

Impact case study (REF3b)

circulation of 25,512 with a total readership estimated to be more than 80,000.

The research has stimulated debate and extended its reach internationally. **Beider** has been regularly invited to speak about his research at practitioner-led events in the United States. For example, **Beider** was invited to speak at a practitioners' seminar convened by the University of Illinois in Chicago (UIC) on 24 January 2013 [k]. This was attended by 25 people including the Executive Directors of the Woods Fund of Chicago (a grant-making foundation whose goal is to increase opportunities for less advantaged people and communities in the metropolitan area) and the Wieboldt Foundation (funder of activities that empower local neighborhoods), and a representative of Erie House (Chicago-based organization that works to strengthen low-income, primarily Latino, families through skill-building, access to critical resources, advocacy and collaborative action).

Beider's research was the basis of an international policy workshop convened on 29-31 July 2013 in New York City [l]. The workshop included participants drawn from Citizens Housing and Planning Council (a not-for-profit organisation established in 1937 offering practical solutions to people in New York who are in housing need and disadvantaged), JRF and the Open Society Foundation. **Beider's** research has also influenced the establishment of an international project on the views of majority communities funded by the Open Society Foundation. The impact of the research in the United States shows the considerable reach of a UK-based project and its applicability in different contexts where the majority population may feel disenfranchised.

Conclusion

Beider's research has had impact by being cited in public and parliamentary debate among stakeholders and through discussion in social, national and international press and media. In addition, the research has influenced the direction of funding priorities/programmes of major grant awarding bodies and charities.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a. Testimonial from Director for Analysis and Research: Local Government Association.
- b. *The Daily Mail* (2011) Poor whites 'feel like they are last in line for council housing'. Tuesday 29th November 2011. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/762a2h4> [Last Accessed 28 November 2013].
- c. *The Huffington Post* (2011) White Working Class Britons Feel Alienated and Disenfranchised, claims Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report. Monday 28th November 2011. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/nugg55b> [Last Accessed 25 November 2013].
- d. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2012) *Internal report on research and impact*. COMRES.
- e. Testimonial from Programme Manager, (Previously) Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- f. Testimonial from MP (Stretford and Urmston/Shadow Minister of State for Equalities).
- g. <http://tinyurl.com/pzz6hhf> [Last accessed 25 November 2013].
- h. <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN04737>.
- i. <http://tinyurl.com/pstfqds> [Last accessed 25 November 2013].
- j. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/6522234.article> [last accessed 25 November 2013].
- k. Testimonial from Co-Director, Nathalie P. Voorhees Center, Associate Professor, Urban Planning and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago.
- l. Testimonial from Director of Neighborhoods and Youth Programme: The Urban Institute, US.