

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University
Unit of Assessment: 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
Title of case study: Community Cohesion
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Community cohesion emerged as a distinct policy agenda in the aftermath of the 2001 disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham and was subsequently shaped by events including the London bombings of 2005 and large-scale migration from the EU and beyond. Researchers in the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) have delivered a programme of research and evaluation exploring cohesion and the effectiveness of service responses. Beneficiaries have included government departments, devolved administrations and other local, regional and national public agencies. Awareness and understanding have been sensitised, lessons learnt have informed strategy, and guidance has directed improvements in practice.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Underpinning research was developed between 2002 and 2013 through awards and publications; the team published seven refereed journal papers, nine book chapters, and 11 research reports, whilst making 22 presentations to academic conferences and policy forums. This research was supported by 13 research grants secured from research councils, charities and government bodies. All research was undertaken in CRESR. The grant holder for all projects was Robinson (1997-present, Professor since 2005). Other Category A staff involved were Casey (2004-present, Senior Lecturer), Flint (Professor, left for University of Sheffield 2011), Platts-Fowler (Research Fellow, left for University of Leeds 2012), Reeve (2000-present, Senior Research Fellow) and Wilson (2004-present, Research Fellow). Research has focused on two related themes: policy understanding and implementation of the cohesion agenda; and migration and cohesion.</p> <p>First, research has addressed the question of how policy is interpreting and implementing the cohesion agenda (Refs 1, 2, 3; Grants 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 10). The underpinning body of research includes the first ever study exploring links between community cohesion and housing (G1). This study examined understandings and interpretations of the agenda among practitioners in England through semi-structured interviews and a cohesion impact assessment of policy and practice across the social rented sector. These findings provided the basis for original analysis exploring the rationale, understandings and implementation of the cohesion agenda in England (Ref 1). The fundamental pillars that the agenda was built on were identified and subject to scrutiny for the first time. A reliance on contested notions of community and multiculturalism and presumptions about the motives and behaviours of certain groups in society was revealed, raising critical questions about the policy programme, thus scoping a new academic research agenda. The means and mechanisms through which agencies can promote cohesion were disclosed and factors with the potential to undermine positive outcomes detailed (Ref 1, 2). This underpinning body of research also includes the first study exploring predictors of community cohesion among young people (Ref 3). This involved statistical modelling of data from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England to fill a gap in knowledge about factors informing variations in cohesion among young people, as part of which new measures of cohesion were developed. Predictors of cohesion among young people were found to overlap with those within the adult population (deprivation, perceptions of crime), but to also include distinctive features relating to social and ethnic mix within school populations, and the individual situations of young people.</p> <p>Second, a specific strand of analysis focusing on migration and cohesion emerged from this portfolio of research on cohesion. Migration emerged as a key factor informing cohesion at the local level. Dominant discourses served to pit migrants against British citizens, thus working to raise community tensions. Research ventured beyond this stereotyping and scape-goating to expose the experiences and consequences of migration for new and settled populations and for community relations. This included a focus on the frequently debated issue of access to housing for new immigrants (Refs 4, 5 and Grants 5, 7, 8). Analysis highlighted how the rapid pace of change driven by new migration posed real challenges for the housing system, but also revealed moral panics surrounding migrant access to social housing had little or no association with a clear, apparent and rational threat (Ref 5). Indeed, the first exploration of housing pathways for new migrants revealed that, far from being skilled players of the British welfare state, migrants were</p>

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frequently unaware of possibilities provided by the social rented sector (Ref 4). This strand of work also involved a leading contribution to efforts designed to fill gaps in knowledge and understanding about the local effects of new migration. Robinson and Reeve authored the first review of the evidence base on neighbourhood experiences of new immigration for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Grant 3). Subsequently, a programme of work explored the integration of new migrants in the UK, through in-depth, qualitative analysis of migration experiences and an evaluation of initiatives promoting integration (Grants 8, 9, 11). Drawing on these empirical insights, a conceptual framework was developed to support explorations into the neighbourhood effects of new immigration (Ref 6). This approach recognised that migration could be a driver of change at the local level, but its consequences were often more complex and varied than commonly assumed, not least because place both informed, and was in turn influenced by, new immigration.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Ref 1. Robinson, D. (2005) The search for community cohesion: key themes and dominant concepts of the public policy agenda. *Urban Studies*, 42, (8), 1411-1428. Highly cited peer reviewed article (100 citations, Google Scholar 18/10/13) DOI: 10.1080/00420980500150755.

Ref 2. Flint, J. and Robinson, D. (2008) (eds.) *Community Cohesion in Crisis? New Dimensions of Diversity and Difference*. Bristol: Policy Press. Highly cited collected volume (102 citations to chapters, Google Scholar, 18/10/13); key reference point for further research. <http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?k=9781847420244>

Ref 3. Demack, S., Platts Fowler, D., Robinson, D., Stevens, A. and Wilson, I (2010) *Young People and Community Cohesion*. London: Department for Education. End of grant report, peer reviewed, published by DfE. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181542/DFE-RR033.pdf.

Ref 4. Robinson, D., Reeve, K. and Casey, R. (2007) *The Housing Pathways of New Immigrants*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Highly cited report (49 citations, Google Scholar, 18/10/13); first detailed study of migrant housing pathways during the first five years of settlement in the UK. <http://www.irf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2103-housing-immigration-asylum.pdf>.

Ref 5. Robinson, D. (2010) New Immigrants and Migrants in social housing in Britain: discursive themes and lived realities. *Policy and Politics*, 38, 1, 57-77. Peer reviewed journal paper (11 citations, Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/030557309X458407>.

Ref 6. Robinson, D. (2010) Neighbourhood effects of new immigration. *Environment and Planning A*, 42, 10, 2451-2466. Peer reviewed journal paper presenting a conceptual framework to support analysis of the place effects of new migration (12 citations, Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI:10.1068/a4364.

Key research awards (Robinson PI on all grants, unless otherwise stated):

G1. 2002-2004: Delivering Housing Services to Support Community Cohesion, Chartered Institute of Housing/Housing Corporation. (£52,000).

G2. 2003-2004: Housing and Community Cohesion in New Deal for Communities Areas, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. (£15,000).

G3. 2004-2005: The Experiences and Consequences of New Immigration at the Neighbourhood Level, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (£13,500)

G4. 2005-2007: Housing and Cohesion in the Bridging NewcastleGateshead Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, Gateshead Council (£24,000).

G5. 2006-2006: The Housing Pathways of New Migrants, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (£32,000).

G6. 2006-2007: Housing Market Renewal and Community Cohesion. Department of Communities and Local Government (£12,000).

G7. 2008-2008: New Immigrants and Migrants in Social Housing in England, Local Government Association (£3,000).

G8. 2008-2010: Neighbourhood, Community and Housing in Bradford (£69,800); PI: University of Leeds.

G9. 2009-2011: Integration and Cohesion - evaluation of Projects Funded by the European Integration Fund and European Refugee Fund, UKBA (£175,000/£230,000).

G10. 2010-2012: Evaluation of the National Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales, Welsh

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Government. (£90,000).

G11. 2011-2011: New Immigration, Community Change and Conflict, Arts and Humanities Research Council (£26,500).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Research insights impacted on policy within the two themes outlined in Section 2. Key beneficiaries were central government, devolved administrations and other regional and local agencies. First, **knowledge regarding the rationales and challenges of implementing the cohesion agenda and an understanding of factors limiting its effectiveness** (Refs 1, 2), **informed a series of evaluations and the provision of advice and guidance to policy**. An evaluation of the role of housing in promoting community cohesion as part of the National Evaluation of Housing Market Renewal (2009), explored Pathfinder approaches to mainstreaming cohesion, which revealed a lack of understanding about what community cohesion was and what Pathfinders should be aspiring to achieve. In response, recommendations and guidance on good practice were provided, and fed back to Pathfinders through personal communication in a bid to prompt improvements in policy and practice. In turn these were disseminated nationally in a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published report (Housing Renewal and Community Cohesion, 2009), which secured coverage in the professional press (Inside Housing 28/10/09, Regeneration and Renewal 2/11/09). Subsequently, Robinson and colleagues were commissioned by the Bridging Newcastle Gateshead (BNG) Pathfinder to conduct research and to develop a strategy for promoting cohesion in meeting housing needs through housing market renewal (G4). Delivery of this contract involved the provision of advice to BNG officers on an on-going basis about how to open up new housing opportunities to different ethnic groups and to manage the cohesion challenges that might ensue. In a report to the Audit Commission, the strategy produced by CRESR was credited by BNG with helping to ensure that housing market renewal responded to the needs of all groups within the pathfinder area and in promoting cohesion (S6).

Research insights also enhanced development and delivery of the Welsh Government's community cohesion strategy. Robinson and colleagues were commissioned to evaluate the national cohesion strategy for Wales (G10). Regular feedback, recommendations and guidance were provided to civil servants in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division during the two years of the evaluation through numerous feedback and briefing sessions at Welsh Government offices. Recommendations directly informed Ministerial decisions about the future direction of policy. For example, the evaluation raised concerns about a lack of strategic thinking and limited attention to mainstreaming among local authorities. In response, the Welsh Government promoted the development of local strategies and funded the appointment of a network of dedicated cohesion officers across Wales charged with promoting collaborative working and in mainstreaming the cohesion agenda (S1). CRESR was also commissioned to author guidance on mainstreaming cohesion for local authorities, which was published by the Welsh Government (S8). As part of the evaluation of the national strategy, the CRESR team also provided the Welsh Government with detailed advice about how to measure cohesion and specific advice regarding cohesion questions to be included in the Living in Wales survey. Robinson also authored guidance on community profiling and tension monitoring, designed to enhance the practice of local authorities in Wales. This was launched by the Minister in 2011, forwarded to all local authorities in a bid to support good practice, and made available as a free download on the Welsh Government's website (S8). This built on research exploring determinants of community relations in the context of new migration (G11), and applied research testing techniques for promoting engagement between long-standing and newly arrived residents in Bradford (G8). The impact of this work is confirmed by the comment from a senior civil servant in the Fairer Futures Division of Welsh Government that this body of work was *"influential in the development of a model in Wales of Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators...to mainstream work on community cohesion. Further recommendations from the evaluation have ensured that there is a key focus on the delivery of community cohesion in Wales, where a renewed action plan is being developed in 2013. The guidance has ensured that Co-ordinators are delivering work consistently, with coverage across all 22 local authorities in Wales"* (S1).

Second, research insights played an important role in **informing the terms and influencing**

popular and political perspectives about one of the most divisive issues **associated with new migration: access to social housing**. Empirical insights into the housing experiences of new migrants (Refs 4,5) and quantitative analysis of the profile of A8 migrants in social housing in England (S5), were referenced in a report on housing allocations to the Migration Impacts Forum (2008), a government convened group exploring the local level impacts of migration. The professional journal 'Inside Housing' drew on these findings to challenge comments by the Margaret Hodge MP about migrants living in social housing (S6). Subsequently, Robinson was commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to deliver one of three pieces of analysis examining whether there was any validity in the contention that recent migrants had received preferential treatment in social housing allocations (S7). This evidence informed the letter subsequently sent by the LGA to all local authority chief executives in England clarifying the facts about the allocation of housing to migrants (08/04/08). Research in the field also led to invitations to briefings and presentations challenging thinking and policy. Examples include briefings to: civil servants in DCLG and the Home Office (30/01/08); practitioners and policy officers from local authorities on the Yorkshire Migration Partnership (25/03/11); and the first meeting of the Housing and Migration Network, which brought together policy makers and practitioners to develop ideas for improving the housing of refugees and new migrants (15/10/09).

Findings emerging from five evaluation reports (2010-2012) into the effectiveness and efficiencies of local and national initiatives supporting the integration of refugees (G9), helped the Home Office to deliver on its obligation to evaluate and to learn from, European Refugee Fund and European Integration Fund initiatives and to share such insights with other EU states (S2). Key insights from research also informed Home Office understanding of the impacts of migration and options for monitoring these effects through Robinson's membership of a Home Office expert panel on the impacts of migration on public services in England (2012). Other contributions include a presentation on the local impacts of migration to an invited audience of 30+ government policy makers, civil servants and voluntary and community sector interests, as part of the Westminster Breakfast Briefings series on migration convened by the University of Oxford, discussing topical, cutting edge research on migration related issues (22/06/12). In 2013, Robinson was recruited to provide expertise on housing, migration and cohesion to the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA's) Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group, which advises and challenges the HCA on all aspects of its work.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S1. Individual user able to collaborate claims: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division, Welsh Government.

S2. Individual user able to collaborate claims: Home Office Science: Migration and Border Analysis,

S3. The final report of the Welsh Government evaluation is available at:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/evaluation-getting-together-community-cohesion-strategy-wales/?lang=en>

S4. See pages 20 and 24 of Audit Commission report <http://archive.audit-commission.gov.uk/auditcommission/SiteCollectionDocuments/Downloads/BridgingNewcastleGateheadMarketRenewalJun07.pdf>

S5. See <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ppp-online/european-union-accession-state-migrants-in-social-housing-in-england/>

S6 See <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/%E2%80%98no-evidence-that-migrants-snatch-social-housing/1449648.article>.

S7. Details of LGA analysis can be found at http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/local-government-intelligence/-/journal_content/56/10180/2824813/ARTICLE. The CRESR LGA review is lodged at http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6a03ed1e-6fbd-4bfc-91cc-031018966cca&groupId=10180.

S8. For mainstreaming guidance and community profiling guidance see

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/communitycohesion/publications/?lang=en>