

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University
Unit of Assessment: 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
Title of case study: Seaside Towns
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Traditionally seaside towns have been one of the least understood of Britain's 'problem areas'. Research by Beatty and Fothergill in the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) has broken new ground by developing and applying methodologies to assemble systematic evidence on the population and economy of seaside towns, dispelling myths about their decline, providing more subtle view of trends around the coast, documenting economic growth as well as unemployment, and highlighting the diversity of local experience. Impact has been achieved through the dissemination of findings and the provision of advice and guidance to government, policy makers and politicians. The major beneficiaries of this research have been policy makers and politicians in central and local government.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The seaside towns' research programme was conducted by Professors Beatty (1992-present, Professor- 2012), and Fothergill (1992-present). This work was largely funded through a 2001 Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant: <i>Unemployment and the labour market in Britain's seaside towns</i> (G3, Refs 4, 5), which was in turn co-financed by four local authorities and the Housing Corporation. Nine follow-on studies were subsequently commissioned by central and local government. Research was undertaken because of the marked lack of evidence in relation to the evolving economic and social fortunes of seaside towns. Four key research insights emerged.</p> <p>First, methodological advances allowed for fuller investigations of labour market change. In particular, in 2001 the researchers developed a new ward-based definition of the 43 principal seaside towns, unlocking opportunities to analyse data on each, through time. Subsequently, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Welsh Government and local partners commissioned the team to expand this research to include smaller settlements (121 in total), such that by 2010 socio-economic and statistical profiles were available for all Britain's seaside towns (G5, G6, G7).</p> <p>Second, this ward-based geography facilitated the production of 'labour market accounts' for each seaside town documenting the inter-related roles of employment change, migration, commuting, economic inactivity, population growth, and unemployment in explaining change from the early 1970s through to the mid-2000s. This work built on previous research by Beatty and Fothergill into 'labour market accounting' techniques undertaken as part of an ESRC funded study into adjustment in former coalfield areas (G1, Ref 1). Research on seaside towns also built on survey designs, estimation techniques, and theoretical frameworks which emerged from a GB-wide investigation into 'hidden unemployment' (G2, Refs 2, 3).</p> <p>Third, for the first time research generated robust estimates across seaside towns of employment supported through tourism by utilising sophisticated benchmarking techniques. Previously, employment in the tourism sector was hidden in statistics which incorporated such jobs within the larger category of 'employment supported by local consumer spending' (G8, Ref 6).</p> <p>Fourth, the resultant evidence base, including a survey of 1,200 non-employed residents in seaside towns G3, Refs 4,5), underpinned a series of overarching conceptual and policy conclusions. Research findings showed most seaside towns were growing in terms of population and employment, contrary to the myth that foreign holidays had undermined their economic rationale. Unemployment affecting a number of seaside towns was attributable not so much to local economic factors, but rather to high in-migration, often driven by housing-related factors and the benefits-system. Moreover, research insights dispelled the idea that seaside towns were broadly similar in terms of socio-economic characteristics and trends: evidence pointed to considerable diversity. These overarching conclusions in turn informed, and were further developed, in a number of wider-ranging studies by the team. These included Beatty and Fothergill building on the theoretical framework and methodologies deployed in the seaside towns research (G3), and also earlier research (G2), to co-develop and secure as co-applicants an ESRC funded</p>

study examining the growth of incapacity benefits amongst women (G4). As part of this study Beatty and Fothergill in turn secured additional co-funding of £295,000 from other local partners including three seaside towns' case study areas: Blackpool, Great Yarmouth, and East Lindsey. Outputs by Beatty and Fothergill included individual reports for each seaside town and a survey dataset of 1,100 Incapacity Benefit claimants in these three towns. In addition, the 2013 report '*Hitting the poorest places hardest: the local and regional impact of welfare reform*' (G9), highlighted the extent to which districts such as Blackpool, Thanet, Hastings and Great Yarmouth were being especially hard-hit by welfare reforms.

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

Ref 1. Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (1996) Labour market adjustment in areas of chronic industrial decline: the case of the UK coalfields, *Regional Studies*, 30 (7), 637-650. An underpinning study in terms of methodology output from G1 (92 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI:10.1080/00343409612331349928.

Ref 2. Beatty, C., Fothergill, S; and Macmillan, R. (2000) A Theory of Employment, Unemployment and Sickness, *Regional Studies*, 34 (7), 617-630. The underpinning study in terms of theoretical framework, output from G2 (120 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI:10.1080/00343400050178429

Ref 3. Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2002) Hidden unemployment among men: a case study, *Regional Studies*, 36 (8), 811-824. (An underpinning study in terms of methodology, output from G2; 69 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI:10.1080/0034340022000012261.

Ref 4. Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2003) *The Seaside Economy*, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University. Main report from G3 (20 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). <http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/seaside-economy.pdf>.

Ref 5. Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2004) Economic change and the labour market in Britain's seaside towns, *Regional Studies*, 38 (5), 461-480. Main article from G3 (24 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). DOI: 10.1080/0143116042000229258.

Ref 6. Beatty, C. Fothergill, S; Gore, T and Wilson, I.(2010) *The Seaside Tourist Industry in England and Wales: Employment, economic output, location and trends*. CRESR Sheffield Hallam University. Main report from G8 (4 citations Google Scholar 18/10/13). <http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/seaside-tourist-industry-england-wales.pdf>.

Key research awards and grants (in chronological order)

G1. *Labour market adjustment in the UK coalfields*, ESRC, £28,000, 1994-1995, ESRC grant No:R000221198. Final Report Rated: Good. [PI Steve Fothergill]

G2. *Economic Inactivity and Unemployment amongst men in the UK*, ESRC and co-funding from Rural Development Commission, £120,000, 1997-1999, ESRC grant No:R000236958. Final Report Rated: Good. [PI Steve Fothergill, co-applicant Christina Beatty]

G3. *Unemployment and the labour market in seaside towns*, ESRC and co-funding from Blackpool, Sefton, Great Yarmouth and Thanet Councils and The Housing Corporation, £231,000, 2001-03, ESRC grant No:R000239285. Final Report Rated: Good. [PI Steve Fothergill, co-applicant Christina Beatty]

G4. *Geography and Gender: Understanding the rising number of women on incapacity benefits*, ESRC [PI Dundee University, Beatty and Fothergill co-applicants, £79,244 funding to SHU) and co-funding of £295,000 from other partners secured by joint PI Beatty and Fothergill including individual reports for three seaside towns case study areas (Blackpool, Great Yarmouth, East Lindsey), 2007-2009, ESRC grant No:RES-062-23-0086. Final Report Rated: Good

G5. *England's Seaside Towns: a benchmarking study*, DCLG, £13,000, 2008. [Joint PI Beatty and Fothergill]

G6. *Seaside towns in Wales*, Welsh Government, £15,000, 2009. [Joint PI Beatty and Fothergill]

G7. *England's smaller seaside towns: a benchmarking study*, DCLG, DEFRA and the Commission for Rural England £25,000, 2009-2010. [Joint PI Beatty and Fothergill]

G8. *The British seaside tourist industry*, Welsh Government, RDAs, British Resorts Association, £30,000, 2009-10. [Joint PI Beatty and Fothergill]

G9. *The local and regional impact of welfare reform*, Financial Times (with a grant from the Pulitzer Centre on Crisis Reporting in Washington), Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee and Sheffield Hallam University. [Joint PI Beatty and Fothergill]

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

Research insights have had direct impacts on **policy makers in central government**, virtually all of which occurred after 2007. However, brief reference should be made of one key contextual development: the 2007 DCLG Select Committee on Coastal Towns. In its report, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmcomloc/351/351.pdf> that Committee made 13 references to the evidence base in 'The Seaside Economy' (Ref 4, G3), the key output from the ESRC funded research on Seaside Towns. The DCLG Select Committee made two recommendations which informed post 2007 impact.

First, the Committee recommended *'that the Government conducts an immediate study on coastal tourism,'* (p47 par 8) because *"seaside towns are the least understood of Britain's problem areas"*. In response to this recommendation, in 2008 via its Neighbourhoods, Cities and Regions Expert Panel, DCLG (S1) commissioned Fothergill to draft, *'England's Coastal Towns: a short review of the issues, evidence base and research needs'*. That paper suggested various topics for further research. Two of these, a statistical 'benchmarking' study (G5, S1, S9), and a report on tourism (G8, S2, S9), were subsequently commissioned from Beatty and Fothergill. A further piece of research suggested by Fothergill's 2008 report, was undertaken by DWP in 2009. This involved an analysis of trends in incapacity claimants in seaside towns, an exercise facilitated by the use of the CRESR-developed ward-based definition of seaside towns (output from G3, Refs 4,5) which Beatty and Fothergill licenced to DCLG for use across all Government departments (S1).

Second, the 2007 Select Committee argued that Government needed to appreciate the diverse needs of seaside towns. This recommendation resulted in the 2008 commissioning by DCLG of a benchmarking study (G5, S1), findings from which were presented (29/7/08) to the Whitehall cross-government Coastal Towns Working Group comprising senior civil servants with lead responsibility for coastal issues (S1,S6 par 7-9)). This led to Beatty and Fothergill being commissioned to provide an evidence base on smaller seaside towns (G7, S1, S6 par 61-63). Two further presentations were made to the Coastal Towns Working Group (24/11/09) (G7,S6) and in 2010 (G8). Similarly two presentations were made to the Regional Development Agencies' Coastal Areas Network on coastal communities (26/6/08) (G7), and (7/7/10) (G8) and also to Welsh Government officials (10/6/10) (G6). In turn the March 2010 *CLG Update Note on Coastal Towns* (extract below from S6) documented the impact of the Beatty and Fothergill Benchmarking study (G5, S1, S3, S4) and the subsequent commissioning of G7:

62. England's Seaside Towns - A 'Benchmarking' Study published by CLG in 2008 has been well received. The study helped to fill the evidence gap that existed on seaside towns. It reveals that the nature and extent of the challenges faced by seaside towns vary considerably from one location to another..... The study is helpful to local authorities covered in the report, as evidence for developing their community plans and priorities.

63. A benchmarking study of smaller coastal towns (below 10,000 population) funded jointly by CLG, Defra and the Commission for Rural Communities has been commissioned. It will report in Spring 2010.'

The DCLG press release (S7) (4/3/11) accompanying the launch of the subsequent smaller seaside towns research (Par 63 S5 above,G7, S1) included a statement from Secretary of State, Eric Pickles MP:

'A new report by Sheffield Hallam University on small seaside towns, paints a compelling picture of economic and social challenges, enterprise and resilience over the last decade.'

'Mr Pickles believes today's report underlines the need for a new approach to coastal resorts, which have growth potential that needs to be harnessed locally.'

The Secretary of State was also quoted in the press release:

"Today's report paints a picture of resilience and enterprise in rural seaside towns, despite missing out on the London centric growth and prosperity of the past decade."

"Small coastal resorts have shown they can build stronger, more diverse economies when given the chance."

Informed by evidence developed by Beatty and Fothergill, the Coalition Government's new approach to seaside towns, was announced on 22/7/11 with the creation of a Coastal Communities Fund, worth approximately £25m a year. Fothergill was subsequently invited to a ministerial

seminar on coastal towns (11/7/12), at which the CRESR studies were the only academic studies alluded to by the Secretary of State in his opening remarks (S1). Moreover, Government Policy Statements supporting economic development projects in coastal and seaside areas (23/8/13) (S8) used the 2008 Beatty and Fothergill benchmarking study (G5) as background evidence supporting the policy decision to develop the Coastal Communities Fund.

Paralleling this impact on government policy, research insights have also informed and benefited broader **political debate** (S9) by providing evidence on the needs of seaside towns. The tourism report (G8, Ref 6) was quoted by several MPs including John Penrose MP for Weston-Super-Mare (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport) (S9) (25/6/10). Subsequently, Fothergill was invited by Mark Simmonds, MP for Boston and Skegness, to address MPs in the Conservative Coastal Towns Group (7/7/10) with regard to evidence on seaside towns (G5-8). In addition, the tourism, (G8) and the benchmarking, studies (G5,G7), were quoted extensively by five different MPs – including the minister responding on behalf of government – in the Parliament Adjournment Debate on Coastal Towns (S9) (20/7/10). Media coverage resulting from G9 also focused on the finding that some seaside towns had been particularly badly hit by welfare reforms, with research findings also eliciting a response from the Prime Minister (S10).

Finally, research insights have had an impact on **policy development within seaside towns**. Since 2008, presentations have been given at four Annual Conferences of British Destinations (formerly BRADA) (S2) representing local authorities (S3) and trade bodies in seaside towns, Coastnet (2009), and the Local Government Association tourism and leisure network (2010). The *Coastal Regeneration Handbook*, published in 2010 by the Coastal Communities Alliance (S3), which lobbies on behalf of seaside towns, gives 14 references to this CRESR research programme. The research team was also commissioned by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (S5) to provide an evidence base for SE coastal communities which was disseminated at a seminar (12/9/12) attended by thirty representatives from local authorities around the SE coast. This culminated in further research in 2013 setting out ten priorities for the region's coastal communities (S5).

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

- S1. *Government* -Head of Urban Policy Support, Local economic growth and regeneration policy division, Department for Communities and Local Government.
- S2. *Seaside tourism sector* - Director, British Destinations.
- S3. *Seaside towns lobby* -National Co-ordinator, Coastal Communities Alliance, c/o Lincolnshire County Council; *Coastal Regeneration Handbook*: <http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/library/pdfs/coastal-regeneration-handbook.pdf>
- S4. *Seaside local authorities* - Head of Economic Development, Blackpool Borough Council.
- S5. *Seaside LEP* - Director, South East Local Enterprise Partnership; *Evidence base* - <http://www.southeastlep.com/images/THE%20COASTAL%20COMMUNITIES%20OF%20SOUTH%20EAST%20ENGLAND.pdf>; *Policy recommendations* - <http://www.southeastlep.com/images/SE%20coastal%20communities%20-%20recommendations%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf> .
- S6. *Government policy development* - March 2010 *CLG Update Note on Coastal Towns* <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/memo/coastal/mis03.htm>
- S7. *Government evidence base* - DCLG Press release for Smaller Seaside Towns Benchmarking Study: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1858297>
- S8. *Government evidence base for policy development* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-economic-development-projects-in-coastal-and-seaside-areas--4>
- S9. *Politicians* - House of Commons debate on Coastal Towns (Government Policy), Hansard source (Citation: HC Deb, 20 July 2010, c24WH): <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100720/halltext/100720h0001.htm#10072021000537>; Blog from Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport http://blogs.culture.gov.uk/main/2010/06/why_we_do_like_to_be_beside_th_1.html.
- S10. *Media Coverage* - The Financial Times Austerity Audit and including a case study of Blackpool <http://ig.ft.com/austerity-audit/>, additional coverage included: <http://ig.ft.com/austerity-audit/#policy> <http://news.sky.com/story/1076572/welfare-cuts-will-widen-north-south-divide>. <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/UK-britain-austerity-audit-sheffield-hallam-economy-welfare-benefits>