

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Bristol</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 23 – Sociology</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Transforming the definition and measurement of social exclusion and poverty world-wide</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research by Professor Ruth Levitas (solely-authored and co-authored as indicated below) has transformed the definition and measurement of social exclusion and poverty in the UK and worldwide by national governments, the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU). It has also shaped the work of local actors in diverse contexts. It fed into the measurement of social exclusion in the 1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) survey, which was distinguished by its incorporation of a social dimension into the measurement of social exclusion. Levitas took the lead role in developing the measurement of social exclusion in the 1999 PSE. Subsequent work involving Levitas on these issues was taken up by the UK Cabinet Office in 2006, resulting in the B-SEM (Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix) in 2007. The B-SEM forms the basis of the measurement of social exclusion in the 2012 PSE survey, the largest poverty survey ever undertaken in the UK. The impact of the 1999 PSE and the B-SEM has been global and profound since 2008 - nationally in the measurement of poverty and the use of direct indicators of material and social deprivation; and internationally in the measurement of both poverty and social exclusion. Public interest in the initial results of the 2012 PSE is indicative of the fact that the impact is continuing.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research was undertaken by Levitas at the University of Bristol, initially as Senior Lecturer (1991-98), then Reader (1998-2001) and later Professor (2001-), either solely authored or, where indicated, co-authored.</p> <p>Politicians in all countries agree that social exclusion is a 'bad' thing which should be reduced or eradicated. However, they disagree on what social exclusion is or what the 'best' policies are to address it. Reliable and accurate measurement of poverty and exclusion is an essential prerequisite of providing policy makers and the general public with scientific evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of such policies. In addition without good measurement, such policies and programmes cannot be evaluated.</p> <p>Levitas's original research in 1995-96 involved a critical analysis of the concept of social exclusion as deployed in the EU [1]. She used this approach in further research in 1996-97 to critique the discourse of New Labour in relation to social exclusion [2], supported by an ESRC grant [7]. The research in this early work [1] [2] and subsequently [3] [4] found that it was clear that the dominant mode of understanding social inclusion in both public and political discourse was inclusion in paid work. The research labelled this a social integrationist discourse (SID). Also present were a redistributive discourse (RED), although this was being displaced, and a moral underclass discourse (MUD), which focused on the behaviour of the poor. The specifically social aspects of social integration were conspicuously lacking from public discourse and official indicators of social exclusion. In 1998-99, as part of the preparatory work for the PSE 1999 and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) [8] [9], Levitas worked with Peter Townsend, David Gordon and Christina Pantazis - all School for Policy Studies (SPS), University of Bristol - on operationalising social exclusion for the survey. It was innovative in having a social dimension in terms of participation in common social activities, social support and the extent and quality of social networks. The PSE 1999 - which Levitas led conceptually - developed a rigorous, theory-based, scientific methodology of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion indicators which are suitable, valid, reliable and additive. The use of consensual methods incorporates the views of the public into the measurement of poverty: it also allows the direct measurement of material deprivation and restricted social participation in relation to democratically set norms. The PSE 1999 was a cross-institution study funded by the JRF [9] in which the Principal Investigator (PI) was Jonathan</p>

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Bradshaw (York) with Levitas as a Co-Investigator (CI) and resulted in an influential publication in 2006 of which Levitas was one of three co-authors [5].

As a result of this high profile success, Levitas as PI and a group of colleagues in SPS, Bristol, named below as CIs were commissioned in 2006 by the UK Cabinet Office to undertake an assessment of existing data sets in terms of their potential for examining social exclusion [10]. This project devised the Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix (B-SEM) as a framework for assessing multi-dimensional poverty and social exclusion. It incorporates distinctive dimensions of social participation and quality of life. This study reported in 2007 [6], and was used by the Cabinet Office as the basis for commissioning further research conducted in 2007-08 [11] with Levitas as a CI, Eldin Fahmy as PI and David Gordon as the other CI (both SPS, Bristol) [11]. The B-SEM then provided the underpinning theoretical framework for assessing social exclusion in the 2012 PSEUK (Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK) project, funded by a £4.3 million grant from the ESRC [12] (<http://www.poverty.ac.uk/pse-research/pse-uk-2012>). Launched in 2010 and due to conclude in 2014, this is the largest study of poverty and social exclusion ever undertaken in the UK. It involves a team of over twenty researchers in six universities and two survey organisations, with David Gordon (SPS, Bristol) as PI and Levitas as a CI. The B-SEM framework of social exclusion incorporates social relations, social participation and quality of life as key components. The research will provide the most detailed and theoretically grounded assessment of experiences of poverty and social exclusion among the UK population since the onset of the financial crisis and subsequent long and deep recession.

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

#### Outputs

- [1] Levitas, RA (1996) 'The Concept of Social Exclusion and the New "Durkheimian" Hegemony', *Critical Social Policy*, 16 (1), pp. 5-20. DOI: 10.1177/026101839601604601. Peer reviewed. 377 citations.
- [2] Levitas, RA (1998) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, London: Macmillan, 2<sup>nd</sup> updated edition 2005. 1,516 citations. Can be supplied upon request.
- [3] Gordon, D, Levitas, RA, Pantazis, C, Patsios, D, Payne, S, Townsend, PB, Adelman, L, Ashworth, K, Middleton, S, Bradshaw, J, and Williams, J. (2000), *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/73358/1/Document.pdf>. 574 citations.
- [4] Levitas, RA (2006) 'The Concept and Measurement of Social Exclusion', in Pantazis, C, Gordon, D and Levitas, RA (eds.) *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain: the Millennium Survey*, Bristol: The Policy Press, pp. 123-160, [http://www.poverty.ac.uk/system/files/poverty-and-social-exclusion\\_chap5.pdf](http://www.poverty.ac.uk/system/files/poverty-and-social-exclusion_chap5.pdf). 73 citations.
- [5] Pantazis, C, Gordon, D and Levitas, RA (eds.) (2006) *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain: The Millennium Survey*, Bristol: The Policy Press. Can be supplied upon request. 138 citations.
- [6] Levitas, RA, Pantazis, C, Fahmy, E, Gordon, D, Lloyd, EHRR and Patsios, D (2007) *The Multi-dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion*, for Department for Communities and Local Government, Social Exclusion Task Force, UK Cabinet Office, [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/publications/multidimensional.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/publications/multidimensional.aspx). 177 citations.

#### Grants

- [7] Levitas, RA.1996-97. £39,000. ESRC. Discourses of Social Exclusion and Integration in Emergent Labour Party Policy.
- [8] Levitas, RA. 1998. £1,000 consultancy to 'Perceptions of Poverty and Social Exclusion', a JRF-funded pilot to repeat an extended version of the 'Breadline Britain' survey. The research team included J Bradshaw (York), S Middleton (Loughborough), P Townsend, D Gordon, S Payne and C Pantazis (all School for Policy Studies - SPS -, Bristol).
- [9] Levitas, RA. (CI) 1998-2000. Consultancy to £200,000+ grant from JRF to conduct major national survey on 'Perceptions of Poverty and Social Exclusion' (PSE 1999). PI: J Bradshaw (York). CIs: S Middleton (Loughborough), P Townsend, D Gordon, S Payne and C Pantazis (all SPS, Bristol).
- [10] Levitas, RA (PI) 2006. £39,000. A Review of the Multidimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion, Social Exclusion Unit, UK Cabinet Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

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CIs: C Pantazis, E Fahmy, D Gordon, D Patsios, E Lloyd (all SPS, Bristol).

[11] Levitas, RA (CI) 2007-08. £55,876. Understanding Social Exclusion Across the Life Course: Working Age Adults without Dependent Children, Social Exclusion Task Force, UK Cabinet Office. E Fahmy (PI). D Gordon (CI) (both SPS, Bristol).

[12] Levitas, RA (CI). 2010-14. ESRC £4.3 million. Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK. PI: D Gordon (SPS, Bristol). CIs: C Pantazis, D Patsios, E Fahmy, P Heslop, S Pemberton, S Payne, (SPS, Bristol), E Dermott (Sociology, Bristol), J Bradshaw (York), J Mack (Open), N Bailey, M Tomlinson, M Daly, P Hillyard (Queen's Belfast), G Bramley (Heriot-Watt), N Bailey (Glasgow).

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

Levitas's early theoretical work on social exclusion published in 1996 [1], partly funded by the ESRC [7], has had a huge interdisciplinary impact and has continued to be a key reference point (106 citations since 2008). The concept of social exclusion had an increasingly high profile in New Labour discourse from 1997 with the setting up of the Social Exclusion Unit. In the years after 2001, the terminology became more central to EU discourse and social policy, with member states required to produce National Inclusion Plans. International attention to the potential (and potentially different) meanings of inclusion was consequently high at this time. Levitas's impact was reflected in the very high number of citations for *The Inclusive Society?* (641 since 2008) [2]; in academic invitations (including to Harvard in 2001); in invitations to speak to non-academic groups, notably people working in local government; and in invited contributions to professional journals, such as: 'Calculated Poverty', *The Stakeholder*, 5(6) (2002), pp. 12-13. Levitas was also invited to give an opening plenary address at the 2003 Social Inclusion Research Conference, Canadian Council on Social Development, Ottawa ([www.ccsd.ca/events/inclusion/papers](http://www.ccsd.ca/events/inclusion/papers)) which was aimed at local and central government and practitioners rather than academics. Subsequently, in 2005, Levitas was an invited participant in Ottawa on the Expert Round Table on Social Inclusion of the Canadian Department of Social Development.

The impact of the 1999 PSE, together with that of the PSE 2002-03 Northern Ireland Survey, has also been ongoing since 2000, including from 2008 onwards. The PSE questionnaire was placed in the public domain, and widely adapted for use elsewhere (including in Japan in a study published in 2010) [e]. The public perception of necessities, key to the consensual approach, varies between countries and the method has been introduced in many countries across the world to apply nationally appropriate criteria. The United Nations Expert Group on Poverty Measurement (Rio Group) endorsed the PSE deprivation index construction methodology in 2006 as 'best practice' to guide national policy makers. In 2011 the European Union recommended it as the academic 'gold standard' (*7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EU-SILC Task-Force on Material Deprivation*, 19 March 2011, p. 7). Its continuing influence is evident in poverty policy and surveys in more than 50 countries worldwide today. It has changed the way that information about poverty is collected, measured and understood by governments, academics and NGOs in most OECD countries, including all 27 European Union member states, Australia, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Taiwan and Turkey. Hence the PSE has had global impact. Levitas' collaborative research [4] is cited in the European Commission's Eurostat Reports <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> from 2007 through to the present day [d] funded by the European Commission as part of its Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity. The PSE approach is also being promoted globally by the UN Dept of Economic and Social Affairs: e.g. 2010 report [f].

The impact of the B-SEM, originally published in 2007 [6], is also widespread, ongoing and global: a search produces 20,400 Google hits. The Cabinet Office's Social Exclusion Task Force commissioned four pieces of work based on the B-SEM framework and addressing different stages of the life-course. Three were written by scholars at institutions other than Bristol: these were published in 2009 [a] [b] [c]. The Bristol team, this time with Fahmy as PI and Levitas and Gordon as CIs, carried out the fourth study: *Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion Across the Life-Course: Working Age Adults without Dependent Children*, Social Exclusion Task Force, Cabinet Office, 2009. The approach taken in the B-SEM was used extensively by the think-tank Demos in its attempt to derive a broader, more multi-dimensional measure of poverty: see their *3D Poverty* (2010) [http://www.demos.co.uk/files/3-D\\_Poverty\\_-\\_web.pdf](http://www.demos.co.uk/files/3-D_Poverty_-_web.pdf). This continues to be influential, such as in the joint work in 2013 of the Family Strategic Partnership and Family and Parenting Institute

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which explicitly frames its analysis in terms of the B-SEM and its adoption by Demos ([http://www.familystrategicpartner.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Polycymakinglife\\_chances.pdf](http://www.familystrategicpartner.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Polycymakinglife_chances.pdf)). The B-SEM features at the global, regional, national and local levels and in diverse contexts. To illustrate, it can be found at the global level in the work of the World Health Organisation in 2008 [j]; at the regional level in a 2012 EU report whose methodology follows 'the seminal study of Levitas et al. (2007)' [i]; at the national level in the work of the Australian government in 2008 [h]; and at the local level by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in 2011 (<http://www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk>). It is used in diverse contexts: in commercial care home management in the UK in 2013 by Croner-i (<http://cronersolutions.co.uk>); in tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries in 2009 ([http://www.seapn.org.uk/site\\_content\\_files/files/newsletter\\_ns\\_99.pdf](http://www.seapn.org.uk/site_content_files/files/newsletter_ns_99.pdf)); and in the UK Equip online tool, developed for the JRF and currently in use, to help housing providers assess the impact of their existing or potential new policies (<http://www.equip.org.uk/policy-elements/>).

The various impacts are cumulating and coming through in the response to the first results of the most recent survey, PSEUK 2012. A prime time ITV documentary based on the initial results was broadcast at 7.30 pm on 28 March 2013 and was watched by an estimated 3.3 million viewers. It stimulated widespread debates about cuts in welfare spending. An e-mail from the ITV Tonight programme producer on 3 April 2013 stated: 'everyone is delighted with the response we had to Breadline Britain, the ratings were great 3.3 million and 17% but more than that the emails we've had in from viewers expressing their concern for our contributors has been incredible' [g].

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

- [a] Oroyemi, P, Damioli, G, Barnes, M and Crosier, T (2009), *Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion across the Life-Course: Families with Children*, Social Exclusion Task Force, Cabinet Office, UK. [http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/SEU\\_Risks\\_Families\\_and\\_Childr\\_en.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/SEU_Risks_Families_and_Childr_en.pdf). Corroborates impact in the EU.
- [b] Cusworth, L, Bradshaw, J, Coles, B, Keung, A and Chzhen, Y (2009), *Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion Across the Life-Course: Youth and Young Adulthood*, Social Exclusion Task Force, UK Cabinet Office. <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/riskSocialExclusion.pdf>. Corroborates impact regarding youth and young adults.
- [c] Becker, E and Boreham, R (2009), *Understanding the Risks of Social Exclusion Across the Life-Course: Older Age*, Social Exclusion Task Force, Cabinet Office, UK. [http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/SEU\\_Risks\\_Older\\_People.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/SEU_Risks_Older_People.pdf). Corroborates impact regarding older age.
- [d] Eurostat (2009) *What Can Be Learned From Deprivation Indicators in Europe?* European Commission [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-RA-09-007/EN/KS-RA-09-007-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-09-007/EN/KS-RA-09-007-EN.PDF). Corroborates impact across Europe.
- [e] Abe, AK (2010), 'Social Exclusion and Earlier Disadvantages: An Empirical Study of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 13 (1), pp. 5-30, doi:10.1093/ssjj/jyp042/. Corroborates impact in Japan.
- [f] UN Dept of Economic and Social Affairs (2010), *Analysing and Measuring Social Inclusion in a Global Context* <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/measuring-social-inclusion.pdf>.
- [g] E-mail from the ITV Tonight programme producer 3 April 2013. Corroborate impact on public.
- [h] Hayes, A, Gray, M and Edwards, B (2008) *Social Inclusion*, Social Inclusion Unit, Australia <http://homelessness.energetica.com.au/dmdocuments/aifssocialinclusionreportoct2009.pdf>. Corroborates impact in Australia.
- [i] Czirfusz, M, Kovacs, K and Tagai, G (2012) Annex 6: *Progress Report on Social Exclusion Indicators*, EU Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe, [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/tipse.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/tipse.html). Corroborates EU impact.
- [j] Popay, J, Escorel, S, Hernandez, M, Johnston, Mathieson, J and Rispel, L (2008), *Understanding and Tackling Social Exclusion*, Final Report of the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network to the World Health Organisation Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/knowledge\\_networks/final\\_reports/sekn\\_final%20report\\_042008.pdf](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/knowledge_networks/final_reports/sekn_final%20report_042008.pdf)