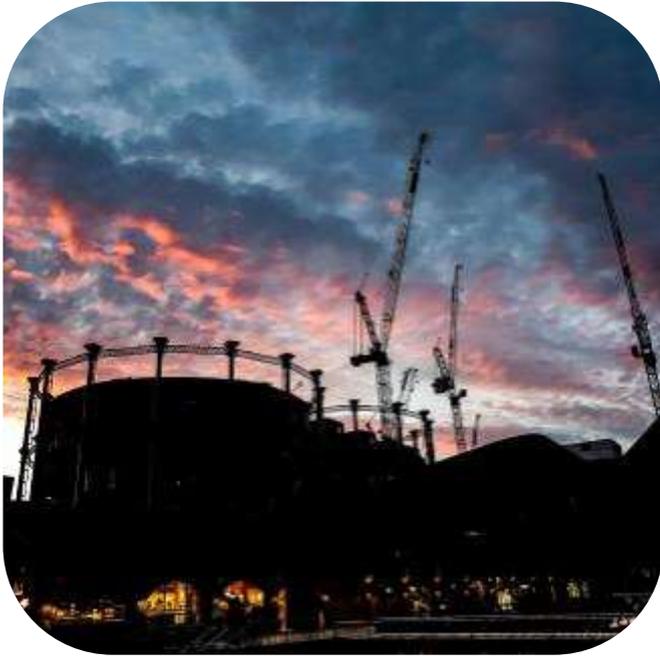


Understanding household movements between deprived areas to better target regeneration



Geographical research into deprivation has shaped the government's Regeneration Framework, and is now being used widely by local authorities to target spending more efficiently on financial assistance for poorer areas

Challenge

The Government's regeneration strategies have been targeted at the most deprived neighbourhoods. Regeneration has been defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government as "reversing economic, social, and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without support from government" ([DCLG 2008](#)).

In the past the most deprived areas have been identified according to 'headline' demographic and economic data – for example, local rates of unemployment or income data on.

However, this approach can assume that the problems faced by deprived neighbourhoods will respond uniformly to housing market policy interventions and regeneration strategies

Solution

Professor Brian Robson (University of Manchester) developed a new method for classifying deprived neighbourhoods with respect to how households move in the housing market.

Focusing on the most deprived quintile of areas, [the research suggested](#) four categories of neighbourhood - 'transit', 'escalator', 'isolate', and 'improver' areas.

Each descriptor is shorthand for a pattern of movement between areas, related to whether the households moving into or out of an area are moving 'upmarket' or not:

- In 'escalator' areas, residents move away when their circumstances improve;
- in 'gentrifier' areas, more affluent households move into the neighbourhood;
- in 'transit' areas, where households move to and from less deprived areas;
- and in 'isolation' areas households move to and from areas with similar or worse levels of deprivation.

Areas where residents are becoming more 'upmarket' were identified as requiring less attention and support, allowing local authorities to focus spending on the most deprived areas.

A key finding was that deprived neighbourhoods differ in how they function within the housing market – and that "isolated" areas are in particular need of regeneration.

Benefits

Policy insight

At a national level, the research helped refine the Government's original deprivation index, particularly by the Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government).

Work by Robson and colleagues has informed iterations of government indices since 1995, and the DCLG noted that the research "significantly improved the understanding of officials and Ministers about how best to target regeneration spending", including £1.5bn of Working Neighbourhoods funding.

The classification scheme has also been used by local authorities to make the most of scarce resources by identifying more accurately which particular areas are in greatest need of financial assistance or different types of intervention.

For example, the Royal Borough of Greenwich used the typology to identify and target "isolated" areas with projects tackling worklessness, and to develop major local plans on skills and employment including a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

In Greater Manchester, the typology was used in the independent review that underpinned the argument for a combined authority/city region. It was again used to identify those "isolate" neighbourhoods as the focal areas for policy intervention.

The IPPR has [used the typology](#) (p31; p55) to contextualise its own research into deprivation in the north of England.

Robson's work was also used to underpin the former DCLG's definition and understanding of population churn in [its report](#) on socio-economic changes in Olympic host boroughs

Further reading

[Robson, Lympelopoulou & Rae \(2008\)](#) on functional neighbourhoods