

Editorial

Division and Unity Special Section

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Division and Unity

The past decade has seen a deepening of the inequalities and divisions that can characterise communities across the UK. Within this challenging context, there is a vital role for studies that shine a light on narratives of unity and hope. Academics, practitioners, and activists all have a role to play, whether it is in pursuing inclusive growth, where economic benefits are shared equitably, reinvigorating grassroots mobilisation, or supporting civic action in relation to energy and environmental issues. We also note the divisions caused by the UK's current housing crisis; the impacts of welfare reform on homelessness; competing visions for the future role of civil society; and the contribution of voluntary and community organisations to public policy goals. As we move into 2023, this topic continues to be highly pertinent as we see the damaging impact of the current cost of living crisis and the current war in Ukraine.

This important agenda formed the basis for the theme of the 2021 People, Place and Policy (PPP) Annual Conference: *Division and Unity*. The 2021 conference was held online for the first time in July 2021, following postponement in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference is hosted annually by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) in Sheffield, UK. It brings together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to showcase emerging research related to contemporary debates within all aspects of social policy. This includes a focus on a wide range of social concerns, including economic development and labour markets, poverty, the welfare state, the voluntary and community sector, social exclusion, housing, sustainability, transport, health and social care, energy and environment.

The three papers included in this special section were presented at the 2021 PPP Conference and all speak, in different ways, to the theme of Division and Unity.

The first paper in this section, *Journeyscapes: the regional scale of women's domestic violence journeys* by Janet Bowstead, presents evidence highlighting gendered and spatial inequalities resulting from inadequate local and national government support for women and children escaping domestic violence. This paper highlights issues in the ways in which funding for domestic abuse services is allocated to local authorities, potentially disincentivising the provision of services and resulting in a lack of clarity and insufficient services for victims and survivors. The author argues for policy and practice changes to enable victims and survivors of domestic violence to access support based on their needs and rights (including whether they stay put, remain local or cross administrative borders).

Social mixing or mixophobia in regenerating East London? 'Affordable housing', gentrification, stigmatisation and the post-Olympics East by Piero Corcillo and Paul Watt examines socio-spatial inequalities through the case of the post-Olympics East Village. Nearly a decade since the Olympics were held in London, the former Athletes' Village has been transformed into an area offering mixed-tenure housing in Stratford, East London. Corcillo and Watt test claims around affordable housing provision and social mixing. Through survey and interview data, the authors highlight how divisions have emerged in the form of "territorial stigmatisation" in relation to the borough of Stratford where the post-Olympics development is located, and "housing tenure stigmatisation" directed towards East Village social renters. The authors conclude that "the aims of social mixing and affordable housing are far from being realised within the East Village regeneration scheme".

Our final paper is *Policy Choices for Glasgow Traditional Tenements Retrofitting for Sustainable and Affordable Carbon Reduction*, by Ken Gibb. Gibb's paper concerns a key challenge facing older housing stock in Scotland (but a challenge that echoes throughout other older post-industrial cities too), namely the need to retrofit such buildings to help deliver on carbon reduction targets. With energy use in residential buildings accounting for 11 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions (Richie, 2020), the imperative is clear that the need to retrofit buildings to reduce their emissions is acute. At the same time, Glasgow – where this paper is situated - is restricted by a "need to quickly solve the institutional and market failures that too often inhibit progress with tenement quality and sustainability more generally". Whilst Gibb's focus on Glasgow is - as the author acknowledges - "very context and location specific" the challenges highlighted a broader and demonstrate the need for research that explores the "pattern of winners and losers that will emerge for the shift to a new economy focused on carbon reduction and retrofit".

The papers in this special section (alongside the [more than 20 presentations at the 2021 PPP Conference](#)) demonstrate that despite the deepening inequalities we continue to observe, there is a motivation to transform our individual and shared experiences of division into a narrative of unity and hope.

Also in this issue

Community food projects, social innovation, and the past

Read about Community Food Projects (CFP) and their role in correcting market failures and supporting community cohesion. This paper, by Nigel Curry, draws on empirical evidence from three research projects to understand how the actions and activities of CFPs are informed by the past.

Book review: Global Youth Unemployment: History, Governance and Policy

Oluwaferanmi Adeyemo provides a must-read review of the recent book *Global Youth Unemployment: History, Governance and Policy* by Ross Fergusson and Nicola Yeates.

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References

Richie, H. (2020) *Sector by sector: where do global greenhouse gas emissions come from?* Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/ghg-emissions-by-sector> [Accessed: 17/01/2023]