The Research Newsletter of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Issue 3 | Summer 2016



Insight

Welcome

"This edition of Insight underlines the vibrancy, breadth and relevance of our research."



Welcome to the latest edition of our research newsletter. 2015-16 has been a year of continued growth and development in research activity for the Department. Over the last year we have set a new departmental record for externally funded research by winning over £1m of competitive grants. Funded grants are important because they give staff the time and resources to undertake ambitious and challenging research with increased potential to make a difference in the world.

The portfolio of new grants is based on a solid base of innovative proposals for UK Research Council funding aligned to our core research interests. We have gained major awards from the Economic and Social Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council.

Our research also benefits considerably from winning government, industry and third sector contracts that put us at the forefront of influencing policy and practice in planning, housing and social policy. We are currently working on projects commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Housing Federation, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the French government and many others.

Professor Malcolm Tait is set to take over from Professor John Flint as our Head of Department in August 2016. John has guided us through our successful 2014 Research Excellent Framework (REF) submission and has been instrumental in providing a framework which has enabled our research to flourish. I am sure that the momentum will continue under Malcolm's leadership.

Meanwhile we look forward to new appointments that will further bolster our research capacity, with Ryan Powell, Melanie Lombard and Tom Moore joining us over the summer. These appointments build on our established strengths in urban social analysis and housing research, further extending the global reach of our research expertise.

This edition of Insight underlines the vibrancy, breadth and relevance of our research. We hope you will follow up by looking through the wide range of information on past and current projects available through our research webpages.

www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/research DR AIDAN WHILE, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



Professor Malcolm Tait is named as new Head of Department

We are thrilled to announce the appointment of Professor Malcom Tait as new Head of Department. Malcolm will take over from Professor John Flint in August 2016.

Under the leadership of John Flint, the Department has remained the top RTPI accredited Planning School in the UK with overall student satisfaction at 93% for 2015 (National Student Survey) and research income for 2015 – 2016 at $\pounds1$ million. John also led the Department during our 50th Anniversary celebrations and our recent change of name.

Professor Flint commented; "It's been a privilege to be Head of Urban Studies and Planning - working with such a fantastic team of colleagues. We've continued to respond to a challenging and ever-revolving landscape, epitomised by the new name for our Department. We've made excellent appointments of new staff, further diversifying our interdisciplinary areas of strength, recruiting a growing number of high quality students from all over the world."

"We have expanded our portfolio of funded projects and secured our reputation for excellence in teaching, research and ensuring that we have impact on a wide range of stakeholders. I know that Malcolm will be an excellent new leader of USP and that we'll continue to thrive in the years ahead." No stranger to the Department, Malcolm Tait completed his PhD in Town and Regional Planning at The University of Sheffield in 2000. He was appointed to a Lecturer post in 2001, was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2009, and Professor of Planning in January 2016.

Malcolm said; "I'm delighted and privileged to be taking over as Head of Department. I first arrived here as a student in 1995, and have benefited enormously from the welcoming, supportive, and above all stimulating environment of the Department."

"Under John Flint's leadership, we've gone from strength to strength, cementing our position as the foremost place to study and research planning and urban issues. The Department is in an excellent position in which to grow and move forward – we're pursuing fascinating and important research, making a difference to communities, leading policy debates, and teaching excellent, engaging courses to committed students. Above all, we have a great group of people working here in Urban Studies and Planning."

"Although we're living in uncertain times, this reinforces the need for our continued commitment to critical, engaged scholarship and teaching to help address the problems that we face in our cities and rural areas both in the UK and internationally."

"I know that the Department will play a strong and growing role in addressing these challenges, both through our research and by teaching the next generation of planning and built environment professionals. I look forward to working with my colleagues and our wider partners in the next four years as Head of Department."

2015-2016 in Numbers

RESEARCH AWARDS GRANTED TO THE DEPARTMENT

OUR FUNDERS

- Arts and Humanities Research Council
- British Academy
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- European Commission Horizon 2020
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- National Housing Federation
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (France)
- Sheffield City Council
- RICS Education Trust

OUR RESEARCH PARTNERS/COLLABORATORS

- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Heriot-Watt University
- Istanbul Technical University (Turkey)
- Leeds City Council
- N8 Research Partnership
- Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
- Sheffield Hallam University
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- University of Glasgow
- University of Leeds
- University of Liège (Belgium)
- University of Manchester
- University of York
- Witwatersrand University (South Africa)

OUR PHD STUDENTS COME FROM

China Malaysia Germany Mexico Ghana Nigeria Iceland Saudi Arabia India Syria Indonesia Taiwan Iraq Turkey Ireland UK Korea Vietnam Kosovo

900% OF ACADEMIC STAFF WORKING ON FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

SEMINARS/CONFERENCES HELD

(5)

PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR

RESEARCH SEMINARS







Online edition available at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/research/insight



Professor Rowland Atkinson reflects on his research on London's super-rich

Wealth has become a focal point in social life today as never before. The changes we see in London, residential skyscrapers, billionaire boy racers, homes bought and left empty, are indicators of profound changes that attest to the arrival of big money, much of it from international sources. The power of the wealthy lies not only in their personal privileges but also, in combination, their command of city life today. Plutocrats occupy the consciousness of politicians as they seek to encourage wealth to the city to help bolster the fortunes of the city economy. A media obsession has presented the public with insights into billionaire lifestyles and bling-related productions that offer a glimpse into this gilded world.

The furore over offshore tax avoidance, much of it by our politicians and other affluent people, revealed something of the ways in which money is always looking for a way to make more. Avoidance also says something about how the rich are able to control and expand their fortunes while neglecting duties to conform to local tax laws. These revelations of protected and affluent lifestyles come at a time when much of British society is wracked by cuts to public services, local authorities and core social services. The research confirms what we already appear to know - the rich have got richer while many of us live constrained/damaged lives. In what we called the alpha territories of London the cuts, job losses and hardships are not so much ignored as invisible to the lives of the very rich. So it goes on – an investment and playground for the super-wealthy is constructed in the name of building an economy that does little to benefit the excluded of society.

When we started the alpha territory project many issues were just beginning to gain traction. Stories of 'ghost' neighbourhoods were emerging and questions about the many thousands of planned basement extensions to the homes of the already wealthy. For even those with significant wealth the character of 'their' city was being compromised by what many saw as an invasion of new money that was damaging the city they and often their parents knew before them. The problem is that the breakdown in social cohesion and togetherness revealed through assessment of social inequality today mean that few tears will be shed for the rich worrying about an incursion of the super-rich. This is a shame to the extent that for the absolute majority of Londoners housing is a scant and valued resource that few can purchase. Housing has become a grudge issue – with only a few able to afford what they need and alongside the destruction of public housing and homelessness divisions between the have-nots and have-lots (and lots) is increasingly stark.

We still live in a world dominated by the needs of the wealthy while it is not hard to see how London politicians feel the need to look after the city given its centrality to finance as the cornerstone of our national economy. As some have said, the rich are a tax on us all – in the search for a creative and financeled economy the rest of the country and indeed much of London feels like it stands in the shadow of the many skyscrapers built for monied international investors.



Planning for an ageing population

Dr Friederike Ziegler and Professor Malcolm Tait reflect on the DWELL project

'Designing for Wellbeing in Environments for Later Life' (DWELL) is an interdisciplinary research project, involving architects, urban studies and health researchers, which has examined and explored built environment solutions for older people across Sheffield. The project team has been working to support local planners and policy makers to explore issues and develop site-specific solutions which will enable residents to remain active and independent as they grow older. One of the aims of the DWELL project has been to challenge some of the obstacles and barriers to producing high quality housing for older people.

The challenges in planning housing for an ageing population are numerous. Conversations with many stakeholders - residents, community groups, service providers, planners and developers - have revealed a complex set of views and requirements that need to be taken into account. The needs of the most vulnerable older people are of course a priority for local councils and associated service providers, particularly in a period of financial constraint. However, alongside this there is an increasing focus on the importance of older people remaining active and independent into later life, emphasising the benefits of being engaged in local community groups and having access to informal support networks. New housing provision can support this by providing communal spaces to foster social interaction amongst residents.

As the 'Baby Boomer' generation now approach retirement age, a new generation of savvy consumers will be looking for housing in later life, whilst also seeking to maintain an active lifestyle. Some may even want to continue working. This presents a challenge for developers and planners to deliver housing for older people that is attractive, affordable and flexible to changing needs. As one developer noted:

"New generations of older people, their aspirations and expectations are completely different to the existing generation. Their attitude is now - 'I've worked hard all my life and I want to make sure that I end up with something. And, if it isn't there I'll stay where I am."

Downsizing is a particular concern of many people. There is an assumption that downsizing or moving to supported living arrangements will inevitably involve compromising on quality and space. Architects and developers are beginning to respond to this challenge with creative solutions to housing schemes and smallscale adaptations to existing dwellings - but more is needed.

Over the next decades the number of people aged 65+ is expected to increase in Sheffield and surrounding areas, with an increasing demand for good quality housing to enable people to live independently as they age. The DWELL project has underlined the importance of finding design solutions to meet this demand. The stereotyping of older people tends to lead to an underestimation of their capabilities and powers as consumers. As one interviewee observes - "That's the other great myth of older people, that they somehow become stupid. But they don't. They are much smarter than most of their children."



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World leading Social Scientist visits Sheffield

In June 2016 the University of Sheffield jointly hosted the 'Rethinking Urban Inequality' conference, with Professor Loïc Wacquant delivering the keynote address. Here Dr Ryan Powell tells us about Wacquant's work and the conference.

"Personally I've found Wacquant's framework useful in understanding the stigmatisation and marginalisation of Gypsy-Travellers in the UK and Roma across Europe. Years ago he got in touch to draw some new literature to my attention and engaged in a dialogue about the unique positioning of Roma in terms of a trend towards increasing segregation that ran counter to the trajectory of other ethnic minority groups within Europe."

Given the growing resonance of Wacquant's work and the critical mass of Sheffield-based urban scholars utilising it, Dr Powell invited him to Sheffield for an exchange of ideas. "After a little persuasion and having significantly reduced international speaking commitments he agreed to a visit in June."

The visit involved collaboration between the two Sheffield Universities and was supported by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University, and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the Urban Institute at the University of Sheffield.

"The broad purpose of the visit was to explore how Wacquant's work can aid the empirical understanding of today's complex urban inequalities and to assess and determine how empirical research, new perspectives and theoretical synthesis can aid the refinement and development of Wacquant's framework. We wanted an exchange between interdisciplinary scholars, and to bring Wacquant's body of work to the attention of a much wider audience. We also wanted to assess its value as a theoretical springboard for rethinking urban inequalities across Europe. In short, it spoke to Wacquant's approach which can be characterised as empirical, theoretical, and historical (dynamic), comparative and reflexive - all key habits of good sociology."

The project grew in size and scope from a one-day international conference to two days of events. As well as the conference there was a public lecture at the Cutlers' Hall, a Q&A session and a Doctoral seminar.

"The international conference was perhaps the main vehicle for the facilitation of the dialogue around urban inequalities. We were lucky to secure nine scholars who each offered their own take on the issues. The conference had 3 different streams: class, ethnicity and state and space. Wacquant responded to each of the themes during the day and also delivered a public lecture which was a preview to his forthcoming book, *The Two Faces of the Ghetto*." Ryan goes into further detail about how this was set up. "It seemed rather strange to organise these events around an international scholar that we've never met! I had seen him speak so knew how engaging he was. The development of the programme was fairly straightforward and benefited greatly from the fact that it was built around common goals and shared interests, which are of continuing importance and relevance for those of us researching cities."

"The success of the visit also owed a great deal to the efforts of those behind the scenes. We are extremely grateful to Emma Smith and Sarah Ward (Sheffield Hallam University); and Sarah Boswell and Philip Strafford (University of Sheffield)."



Left to Right, Professor Flint, Professor Waquant, Dr Powell.

THE 50-YEAR WATER CHALLENGE

Dr Liz Sharp is involved in a new research initative which aims to address the water challenges of the next 50 years.

The 'Twenty65' project is being carried out by a consortium of academic institutions led by the University of Sheffield. The project is backed by $\pounds 3.9M$ in funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). We spoke to Liz Sharp about her involvement.

"In the past people tended to look for one universal answer to water management; but each technique works in some places but might not work in others. We're trying to recognise this and say; there's probably going to be many multiple solutions that are suitable for different places and different communities. If people implement this approach it's going to be a real change in the way that water is managed."

Liz outlines how the project focuses on a series of new interventions and technologies which are trying to make change happen, such as under the sink treatments, sustainable drainage, or getting the public involved. But, she explains, "looking at these specific new interventions is not the only thing we are doing."

"We've got 70 industrial partners, water companies, water consultants, water pipe makers etc. We've got all these fantastic people involved to run workshops and talk about water innovation. The idea is that together we will put in further bids to action what is discussed. So although the existing funding from the EPRSC has some projects in it, we don't see that as the total stock of innovation, there's going to be much more!"

Liz believes water research in the UK has been fragmented and there needs to be a clearer set of shared ideas about future priorities, "we're trying to make it more logical", she explained further;

"It's increasingly recognised that good projects are designed with future users; you start off working with people on what are their problems. Of course there's a risk in that too, industry people tend to think very short term, they're concerned about they're immediate problems."



One of the sets of partners Liz would like to work with further is the water regulators. "It's important as the regulators have the responsibility for the environmental interest and public interest, e.g., OFWAT (the economic regulator

of the water sector in England and Wales) and the Drinking Water Inspectorate." Liz adds on an excited note..."we're currently in discussions."

Liz's part of the project is looking at how water companies work to mobilize the public to help take action. For example, saving water, not putting fat down the sink or reporting pollution to name but a few.

"My main interest in this is the public and the politics. My role is about keeping a critical social science perspective on things, which means focusing on social justice. I think companies tend not to think of how the public could help address issues. I want them to think about it more, some companies aren't even doing it at all. I'd like a more systematic consideration of working with the public. The water companies consider technical intervention – which they measure – systemically, so why don't they do that for human-based things? They need to treat it both as an investment and as learning: the same way they do with their technical interventions."

Liz would like to work towards a more holistic consideration of the social means of taking action on water. An overarching aim is to bring water management back into something that people think about on a daily basis – "I want people to think about water as part of a responsibility to our environment, in the way we are interacting with the water system - we just think it's up to the water company, we just turn on the taps. If we all start to take responsibility then actually we could save, as a society, a lot of money and a lot of environmental damage."

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REGION'S BUS NETWORKS EXAMINED IN NEW RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr Ed Ferrari, Dr Andrew Phillips and Dr Paul Brindley have recently completed a £50,000 project with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE), cofunded by the University of Sheffield through the ESRC Impact Accelerator Account.

SYPTE knew there was more potential from the real time information generated by bus operators about their buses' movement on the road network. More efficient use of the data would allow SYPTE to undertake better strategic analysis of the performance of the transport network. In response, USP and SYPTE teams have worked closely together to develop a software product to enable the interrogation and visualisation of 'big data' on bus movements. This will help SYPTE to understand precisely where and when problems on the bus network occur and, as a consequence, work with bus operators to improve timetables and routes. This will have economic benefits for SYPTE, but above all will also contribute to delivering a better passenger experience. Dr Ed Ferrari said; "For many years, real time information has been providing valuable information to improve the bus journeys of millions. The tools we have developed with SYPTE will allow them to now use this data to analyse the performance of the bus network over time. By connecting the real time tracking data from bus companies' vehicles to a Geographic Information System, the calculation of new types of indicators is possible, capable of highlighting corridors and areas of the city where congestion and bus performance can be improved. This allows the local transport authority and its partners to make better investments in improving the network."

SYPTE Executive Director, Stephen Edwards, added: "The cutting-edge technology produced as a result of this project is transforming the way we are able to monitor and analyse public transport pinch points and traffic flow trends across South Yorkshire. For the first time, we can achieve a strategic understanding of the network and together with our bus operator and local authority partners, identify and inform potential highway investments and bus timetable adjustments that will improve reliability and journey times for our passengers. The bespoke software is also benefitting SYPTE business needs by reducing resource required to achieve analytics of this type, and in turn improving SYPTE spend and organisational efficiency."





My research is focused on how tourism-led local economic development planning initiatives are governed in Ghana. Specifically, I examine the case of the Elmina Cultural Heritage Management Programme out of which the Elmina 2015 Strategy was developed as a strategic policy and planning document under the auspices of the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipal Assembly of the Central Region of Ghana.

The major planning goal of the Elmina 2015 Strategy was to use heritage tourism as a catalyst for local socio-economic development and poverty reduction in the city of Elmina. This goal was centred on the main heritage tourism attractions in the city including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Elmina (St. George's) Castle. Attractions were rehabilitated to attract more tourists and it was envisioned that tourism's potential as a tool for development and poverty reduction would be realised and the city of Elmina would be flourishing.

My analysis identifies three significant factors that explain how governance processes shaped the planning outcomes stakeholder governance capacity, institutional thickness and political cycles. Unfortunately the outcomes of the Elmina project have been below expectations. Many of the planned objectives have only been partially achieved. To explain this I have explored the ways in which the politics of local development planning and governance in Ghana has shaped the outcomes of this regeneration process.

The KEEA municipality did not have adequate governance capacity in terms of staff and policy tools. A number of policy tools needed for effective implementation were in the hands of other stakeholders like the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB). In addition, institutions like the Elmina Tourism Office were not embedded into the existing planning and governance structures. This affected the long term sustainability of the project. Once the initial funding for the project dried up the KEEA was unable to effectively take over the running of the newly formed institution.

Tourism and Planning in Ghana

Emmanuel Adu-Ampong tells us about his PhD research in Ghana

"My research shows the crucial role of governance structures and mechanisms in achieving planning goals."

A further issue was the failure of institution-building and networking across the various stakeholders. Communcation, collaboration and coordination across institutions was limited, which inevitably constrained actions on the ground. On top of this, the KEEA suffered from a high turnover of staff as a consequence of the political cycles of national and local elections. Staff who were trainined to implement the Elmina Strategy were transferred out of the KEEA when new political leaders came into office. This resulted in the loss of institutional memory and capacity - and impacted on project continuity.

In policy terms, my research shows the crucial role of governance structures and mechanisms in achieving planning goals. To be successful, tourism-led local economic development planning initiatives need to be integrated within local planning and governance structures. Legislation needs to make clear the roles and responsibilities of state and non-state agencies. This will help to improve the communication, collaboration and coordination between stakeholders. Finally, there is need to build up and maintain the governance capacity of institutions through staff retention and the provision of the required policy tools for effective implementation.

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Welfare Conditionality

We chat to Emily Ball about her PhD Research in the Department

"My research is part of a large Economic and Social Research Council funded project 'Welfare Conditionality: sanctions, support and behaviour change.' The project is exploring the ethicalities and experiences of welfare benefit claimants who are subject to 'conditionality' mechanisms of sanctioning and support. Groups that have been identified as being most vulnerable to the impacts of the welfare state include the homeless, migrants, single parent families, the disabled and those subject to the criminal justice system."

"My PhD focuses on families that are referred to Intensive Interventions due to anti-social behaviour, and/or concerns about their social housing tenancy management or parenting. Projects are based on a 'key worker model' where the individual project worker will work intensively with all members of the family and join up support for emotional, practical and financial aspects to combat and challenge their problematic behaviour."

The context of Emily's research is situated in the increase of family support projects that first occurred during New Labour and continued during the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition and the current Conservative government under the Troubled Families Policy. She continues;

"The policy aims to reduce costs to the taxpayer by addressing the root cause of social problems such as worklessness, anti-social behaviour and criminality. After enforcement-led approaches (such as ASBO's) were deemed ineffective, a more holistic approach that grips the whole family and their problems is preferred, and seen as a method of turning families round through a coordinated package of support. Although reports have highlighted positive outcomes from families and practitioners that are involved in projects, interventions have caused debate due to claims projects are coercive support that criminalise marginality and extreme deprivation and target certain working class populations only."

Emily's research aims to explore how sanctioning and support is translated in practice and to understand how behaviour change is achieved and how this is interpreted from the perspective of families.



"The research took place in a northern city over a 7 month period during 2015. Using a qualitative approach, I was able to work with ten families referred from a range of voluntary and statutory projects across the city and interviewed families a number of times in order to track progress and behaviour change. I also attended a parenting course, parenting training and interviewed participants. Finally, I interviewed practitioners working with families from a range of agencies including a health visitor, school nurse, key workers, housing officers, project managers, a drugs and alcohol worker, and parenting practitioners."

"I am in the process of writing up my PhD. My analysis includes three main themes that problematize the concept of behaviour 'change', the relationship between key workers and family's and the effectiveness and implications of parenting support. My research is underpinned by Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality and I unpack and challenge a range of debates surrounding the manifestations of power in neoliberalist society, including assumptions of the totalising power of the state and the notion that key workers can effectively 'grip' families. I hope to offer a more nuanced discussion of Intensive Interventions and the relationship between practitioners and families in a context of austerity, exploring the shifting vulnerable identities of families and the different ways families resist state intervention. The outcomes will be useful for policy makers to judge what level of conditionality is ethical in increasing the opportunities and improving the circumstances of vulnerable families."

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LIVING THE URBAN PERIPHERY

New £500,000 Project on Urban Peripheries in Africa

Led by Dr Paula Meth and Dr Tom Goodfellow, and delivered in collaboration with partners at the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa), the 'Living the Urban Periphery' project will explore issues relating to economic development and urban governance in Africa.

While prominent global cities receive the majority of investment and attention, the majority of urban population growth in the Global South is taking place on the edges of towns and cities. Focused on the 'lived experiences' of residents, this project seeks to explore the impact of new infrastructural investment and urban governance strategies in cities in South Africa and Ethiopia.

The project will examine cases within three African city-regions Gauteng, eThekwini and Addis Ababa. These choices will facilitate comparative analysis spanning both low and middleincome countries in Africa, as well as primary and secondary cities. All three city-regions display rapid urbanisation, changing patterns of segregation and integration, and governance restructuring and investment.

We spoke to Paula Meth about the project: "I am looking forward to taking my own research expertise which historically has focused primarily on the small-scale 'lived experience' lens and combining this with a more macro-scale understanding of the processes and changes occuring across cities and particular neighbourhoods."

"For me the mix of these two quite different scales of examination is exciting and likely to produce research which can be used in different ways (for academic outputs, policy guidance, giving local people a voice etc). I'm excited also about testing and using the diary method (which I've developed in my own research) 'at scale' and combining this with other planned methods."

Tom Goodfellow also commented: "Too often, research on South Africa tends to stand apart from research on the rest of the continent. This project presents a really exciting opportunity to explore urban change in very different African contexts, and to share learning between countries about how to make sure that transformations of urban infrastructure and housing actually benefit people living on the periphery. I'm also especially excited to learn from Paula's experience of innovative methodologies in urban settlements."

Paula Meth continued; "I'm excited also about the comparative aspect of the the project. Again, my work usually focusses on single cases, sometimes two, but this project will compare seven case studies allowing us to really get to grips with how different urban processes shape the lives of individuals in very different spaces and how we can learn from the different cases, when we view them comparatively. The work in Ethiopia will be new for me, and brilliant for all of us who usually focus on South Africa to obtain useful insights into the workings of a very different African city, but one which shares many aspects of peripheral living too."

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Publications



Journal Articles

Simoes Aelbrecht P (2016) 'Fourth places': the contemporary public settings for informal social interaction among strangers, *Journal of Urban Design*, 21 (1), 124-152

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Crook T, **Bibby** P, **Ferrari** E, Monk S, Tang C, and Whitehead C (2016) New housing association development and its potential to reduce concentrations of deprivation: an English case study, *Urban Studies* (online first)

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