

<b>Institution:</b> University of Edinburgh		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19 (Politics and International Studies)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Empowering Communities in Public Service Reform in Scotland		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2006 – 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor James Mitchell	Professor of Public Policy	2013 – present
Dr Oliver Escobar	Senior Lecturer in Public Policy	2014 – present
Professor Andy Thompson	Professor of Public Policy and Citizenship	1997-2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Mitchell, Escobar and Thompson have contributed to the development and implementation of Public Service Reform (PSR) in Scotland, with a particular focus on its community empowerment pillar. Working with the Scottish Government, local authorities and a range of public bodies and third sector practitioners engaged in service delivery, they: (i) informed policy development and implementation of community empowerment legislation; (ii) supported skills' development in deliberation and capacity-building to nurture confidence among public service providers to involve communities and service users in decision-making; (iii) were instrumental to the introduction and mainstreaming of participatory budgeting; and (iv) framed discussions and policy proposals that have shaped the review and reform of local governance.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Escobar, Mitchell and Thompson each brought their rich understanding of devolution, public services and community engagement to debates on how to engage communities and service users in the process of public service reform and service delivery. Much of the underpinning research was completed under What Works Scotland (WWS), a GBP3.5million (Edinburgh share GBP1.02million) investment by the ESRC and Scottish Government to progress the conclusions of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (the 'Christie Commission', of which Mitchell was a member). Mitchell was Co-Director of WWS, a role later assumed by Escobar. WWS informed and assisted transformative change through critical action-oriented research.</p> <p>Recognised as the foremost expert on the governance of Scotland, much of Mitchell's applied research since his appointment to the University of Edinburgh has focused on exploring prospects and barriers to implementing Public Service Reform (PSR) across its four 'pillars': community empowerment; collaboration and integration of services; prevention; efficiency. His ESRC Fellowship, secured in 2014, allowed him to place emerging debates on PSR and institutional design within an historical, constitutional and institutional framework. His acclaimed book, <i>The Scottish Question</i> (OUP), demonstrated how the historical focus on securing fiscal transfers from the Treasury, and recent emphasis on devolved policy divergence, had overshadowed the need for more radical policy prescriptions (3.1). His work on Scottish local governance, based on archival research, interviews, documentary analysis and focus groups, identified sources of centralisation in the relationship between local and central government, concluding that complex and inter-connected disempowerment (community, fiscal and functional) were key features that reforms to local governance should address (3.2).</p>		

Escobar has earned an international reputation for his body of work on democratic innovation and community empowerment. His extensive research on processes of citizen participation and community empowerment at grassroots level identified capacity gaps and training needs. His review of 58 participatory budgeting cases across Scotland identified key gaps regarding social justice, deliberative quality and digital infrastructure (3.3). His research on deliberative processes found that citizens, when provided with the right space, time and resources, can deliberate productively and reach well-informed decisions on complex issues. These findings, often published first in the applied research reports of WWS, were set out in his co-edited *Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance* (3.4). It brought 60 leading international scholars together in 38 chapters, quickly becoming the state-of-the-art account allowing for the cross-fertilisation of ideas and understandings of public participation in policy making and governance.

Thompson built a rich body of work, developing quantitative and qualitative methods to identify how communities and patients engage with health care services and how their role as co-producers of their own health care can be enhanced. Healthcare accounts for 40% of the Scottish Government's budget, and has been a focus of debates on empowering service users. Thompson's research identified opportunities for co-governance and engagement tools that can help to overcome the socio-economic barriers that inhibit community voice in health policy and service delivery (3.5). He identified the distinct nature of health policy making in Scotland, reinforced by devolution, in contradistinction to many other developed Western nations, noting its focus on partnership working, co-governance, and the willingness to utilise deliberative tools to empower communities toward building a more inclusive society (3.6).

Together, these contributions have instigated and shaped discussions on ways to reform public services and foster community participation in debates and decision making over how these services should be run.

### 3. References to the research

- 3.1 Mitchell, J (2014), *The Scottish Question*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Submitted in REF2). DOI: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199688654.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199688654.001.0001)
- 3.2 Mitchell, J (2019), 'Local Government and Devolution: Mutual Respect and Parity of Esteem?', *Edinburgh Law Review*, 23, 428-434. DOI: [10.3366/elr.2019.0581](https://doi.org/10.3366/elr.2019.0581)
- 3.3 Escobar, O, F Garven, C Harkins, K Glazik, S Cameron & A Stoddart (2018), 'Participatory Budgeting in Scotland: The Interplay of Public Service Reform, Community Empowerment and Social Justice'. In: Dias N (Ed), *Hope for Democracy: 30 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, Faro, Portugal; Oficina, pp. 311-336. (Can be supplied by HEI on request)
- 3.4 Elstub, S and O Escobar (eds) (2019), *The Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance*, Cheltenham; Edward Elgar (Can be supplied by HEI on request). DOI: [10.4337/9781786433862](https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786433862)
- 3.5 Thompson, A (2007), 'The Meaning of Patient Involvement and Participation in Health Care Consultations: a Taxonomy', *Social Science and Medicine*, 64 (6), 1297–1310. DOI: [10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.11.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.11.002)
- 3.6 Norris, R, A Thompson and D Steel (2018), 'Deliberative Engagement: Giving Citizen Involvement Meaning and Impact'. In: Braithwaite J, Mannion R, Matsuyama Y, Shekelle P, Whittaker S, Al-Adawi A (eds), *Healthcare Systems: Future Predictions for Global Care, Development and Improvement*, Boca Raton, Florida, USA; CRC Press. (Can be supplied by HEI on request)

### 4. Details of the impact

The team's research has been critical in advancing public service reform (PSR) in Scotland by supporting change and innovation that improved processes and outcomes for communities of place, practice and interest across levels of governance.

#### **Supporting Community Empowerment**

Escobar's research in WWS was critical to the implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015). This legislation gave community bodies new rights to participate in decisions about public services and placed new duties on public authorities to strengthen the

participation of communities in local governance. Escobar engaged with the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Team for over three years, providing advice and shared evidence on best practices in participatory and deliberative democracy (5.1). As a member of the Community Empowerment Advisory Group for Audit Scotland (2018-2019), he helped prepare new guidance to monitor the implementation of the Act across all public bodies in Scotland (5.2). He delivered training for third and public sector workers to aid them in implementing the duties introduced by the Act. He co-hosted research and practice sessions of the Community Planning Managers Network and provided the research base that underpinned the revised National Standards for Community Engagement, developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre on the government's behalf (5.3). He developed a sustained partnership with Glasgow City Council, Scotland's largest local authority serving a population of over 600,000. He helped build its capacity and influenced change of policy and practice, making deliberative processes "*standard practice in our delivery of decision making*", a shift confirmed by Glasgow's Community Engagement Officer as being "*a direct result of Oliver's research and guidance*". She added that the collaboration with Escobar and WWS helped transform Glasgow City Council "*from a representative to a participatory democracy*" (5.4).

### **Pioneering Participatory Budgeting**

Applying insights from his research on deliberative democracy, Escobar helped drive the growing use of participatory budgeting (PB) to allocate public funds across Scotland, giving citizens a direct role in deciding budget priorities. From 2014-2019 Escobar served as the academic member of the Scottish Government's Participatory Budgeting Working Group (PBWG), involving 15 workshops and meetings, and ongoing collaboration with the senior policy officials in the Community Empowerment Team. The PBWG was instrumental in the roll-out of PB across the country, from 4 cases in 2010 to 60 by 2016 and over 250 by 2020. As noted by the Team Leader, Escobar provided "*invaluable*" evidence, advice and guidance that "*helped inform national PB policy and practice over the last six years*" (5.1). This provided the foundations for the Scottish Government/COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) agreement to mainstream PB, which saw all local authorities commit to allocate at least 1% of their budgets (roughly GBP120m) via participatory budgeting by 2021. The Director of the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) confirmed that Escobar was "*critical in 'making the case' for PB*" and, as it was mainstreamed, he "*consistently offered support and constructive challenge, helping the development of PB in Scotland to embed the underlying principles of participatory democracy and public participation*". The SCDC has drawn on Escobar's research to inform their work, "*enabling our organisation to bring global learning to our own practice and that of the PB Scotland Network*", and "*to inform our own guidance for practitioners and communities*". This included the development of Scotland's PB Charter (5.3).

Escobar also played a key role in promoting local PB, especially in Glasgow. He provided training to 50 public and third sector representatives of Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (CCP), helped set up a PB Evaluation Group, and developed a co-produced *Participatory Budgeting Evaluation Toolkit* (5.4; 5.5). He worked with the teams in Glasgow and Fife Council (serving 372,000 inhabitants) to develop skills and insight from WWS research and organized a study trip to Paris to learn from a European leader in PB. In Glasgow, this led directly to the Council scaling up its PB process from a small pilot of GBP200,000 per annum to a GBP1,000,000 annual process (5.4). Escobar's Evaluation Toolkit also informed the development of Fife Council's PB policy (5.6a) and was adopted by Scottish Borders Council to underpin its 'Localities Bid Fund' (5.6b). Meanwhile, Stirling Council minuted that its approach to PB is '*based on*' a WWS 2015 publication on PB, co-authored by Escobar (5.6c).

### **Empowering Service Users in the NHS**

Healthcare is the biggest devolved public service, accounting for 40% of the Scottish Government's budget. Thompson's research informed the development of new ways to empower the public as co-producers of their own healthcare. In 2014-2015, he was adviser to the Scottish Government's working group on *Strengthening Public Voice*, providing advice to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Well-being on public engagement and service user empowerment. From 2016-2019, he was a member of the 'Our Voice' Programme Board, a

partnership between government, the Scottish Health Council (SHC), Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Health and Social Care Alliance. Thomson's research and insight led to the establishment of a national citizens' panel on health and social care in 2016. Its c.1200 members have since considered over 20 topics, most lately on mobilisation and renewal of health and social care services due to the pandemic (5.7). Thompson then collaborated with the Chief Medical Officer's Realistic Medicine initiative, designed to empower patients and their families to discuss and determine their treatment with healthcare professionals. He was instrumental in bringing that initiative together with 'Our Voice' to establish a Citizens' Jury on Shared Decision Making (5.7). The first Scottish Government-sponsored citizens' jury, it brought 24 citizens together to address the question: 'what should shared decision-making look like and what needs to be done for this to happen?'. The Chair of the Citizens' Jury Oversight Group testified that as the only academic member, Thompson provided guidance on the Jury's demographic representation, jury/expert selection, and facilitation techniques to support equality of voice (5.8). The Jury produced 13 recommendations, leading to new practices, including Question prompts for use by health care professionals, an educational module on shared decision-making, and awareness-raising among patients of their co-decision rights (5.7). The Chair of the Oversight Group described Thompson's research expertise as "*invaluable*" to the work she led "*and the voice of people across Scotland are now heard more effectively by NHS policy makers within the Scottish Government with thanks to his input*" (5.8).

### **Reforming Local Governance**

The reform of local governance is now the main focus of public service reform in Scotland, and Mitchell has been influential in shaping the reform agenda, in partnership with COSLA, the representative body of all local authorities in Scotland. He advised COSLA and its members in their approach to the Local Governance Review it had launched jointly with Scottish Government in 2017 (5.9). The review aims to ensure that local communities have greater access and control over decisions affecting them. COSLA's Chief Executive noted that Mitchell's "*research and ideas, particularly on empowerment, have informed our understanding and critique of the strengths and weaknesses in our system of local governance and made a vital contribution to COSLA's policy development from inception through to implementation*". Underlining the significance of his impact, she noted that he has "*provoked an ambition and sense of purpose which, if realised, will be impactful for generations to come*" (5.9)

Mitchell was a member of the joint Enabling Group that oversaw the 'Democracy Matters' first phase of the review. In this capacity he:

- facilitated, collated and led several discussions on COSLA's engagement with the Local Governance Review;
- led a discussion with all 32 Local Authority Leaders in Scotland – helping to achieve cross party consensus based on his research and advice;
- identified main themes, undertook evidence gathering and analysis, and captured the findings with key COSLA staff;
- served on the Special Interest Group (chaired by COSLA President with representatives of all parties represented in Scottish local government and senior COSLA officers) and offered impartial challenge and advice; and
- drafted a final report which became COSLA's submission to the review (5.9; 5.10).

The report's central theme identified disempowerment as the key weakness in existing arrangements. Three inter-connected forms of empowerment were proposed to remedy this weakness: community empowerment, functional empowerment, and fiscal empowerment. The Scottish Government accepted this framework and, with COSLA, jointly invited public bodies to make proposals for transformative change, to be considered (following an interruption due to Covid-19) in the coming months (5.9). COSLA's Chief Executive testified that Mitchell's research, ideas and advice offered "*robust challenge and support which has led to the adoption of potentially transformative approaches to governance and the realisation of outcomes across the country*" (5.9). Mitchell's contribution generated the framework and set of criteria upon which the next stage of the Local Governance Review is predicated (5.9).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- 5.1 Testimonial:** Community Empowerment Team Leader, Scottish Government.
- 5.2 Audit Scotland (2019) *Principles for Community Empowerment*.** Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200715201046/https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/principles-for-community-empowerment>
- 5.3 Testimonial:** Director, Scottish Community Development Centre, November 2020.
- 5.4 Testimonial:** Community Engagement Officer, Glasgow City Council
- 5.5 What Works Scotland, 2017, *Glasgow's Participatory Budget Evaluation Toolkit*.** <https://web.archive.org/web/20201130173357/http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/glasgows-participatory-budgeting-evaluation-toolkit/>
- 5.6 Participatory Budgeting Impact citations:**
- (a) Fife Council, *Participatory Budgeting in Fife*, June 2017, p16-17
  - (b) Scottish Borders Council, Service Director Customer and Communities, *Localities Bid Fund 2017-2018: Process for determining funding applications and voting*, 28 Sept 2017, pr 5.7
  - (c) Stirling Council, Agenda for the meeting of the Stirling Council, 28 June 2018, p.313
- 5.7 Testimonial:** Social Researcher, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Community Engagement, 11 December 2020
- 5.8 Testimonial:** Chair of Oversight Group of the Citizens' Jury, 4 January 2021.
- 5.9 Testimonial:** Chief Executive, COSLA, 30 November 2020.
- 5.10 COSLA, *Review of Local Governance: COSLA submission*.**