

<b>Institution:</b> University of Brighton		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C20 Social Work and Social Policy		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Applying crowd psychology to influence policy and practice for public emergencies and crowd safety		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2011 – present		
<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>
Chris Cocking	Senior Lecturer (2011 – 2018), Principal Lecturer (2018 – to date)	2011 – to date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Research on the psychology of crowd behaviour at the University of Brighton (UoB) has led to recognition of the role of 'zero-responders' at emergencies and mass casualty events within UK government policy and by emergency 1<sup>st</sup> responders. At the Emergency Planning Society (EPS), the body that determines national standards and training on major incident planning, the research has created a 'revolutionary' shift in the philosophy of the organisation that affects how it works with all emergency services. [text removed for publication].</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Early research (2004 – 07) into the psychology of crowd behaviour by Dr Chris Cocking and Professor John Drury at the University of Sussex developed the Social Identity Model of Collective Resilience (SIMCR). The model is based upon research showing that collective resilience often emerges from people's shared experience of adversity (<i>'we're all in this together'</i>), which encourages co-operative, rather than selfish, behaviour. The research argues that the notion of 'mass panic' is largely a myth and that social psychological influences on crowd behaviour should be considered alongside the physical properties of crowds (such as flow and density). The research has led to calls for crowd management strategies to come from a public safety rather than a public order perspective.</p> <p>Since joining the UoB in 2011, Cocking's research has taken a distinctive approach to developing both the theory and the practical applications of the SIMCR model to improve understanding of crowd behaviours and to advance crowd safety measures across a range of contexts and sectors. In part, this has focused on the role of language in planning and policy, with ongoing calls to cease using the term 'panic' when describing emergencies in favour of more resilient responses. Cocking's research utilised context-specific analyses of behavioural responses to disasters or major events to extend the evidence and promote an alternative view of established behaviours.</p> <p>Findings from context specific-research studies led by Cocking include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An interview study of participants' experiences of crowd flight during riots showing how the description of crowd behaviour as a 'stampede' helped perpetuate more coercive methods of public order policing that then escalated disorder further [reference 3.1].</li> <li>• A study into the role of bystander intervention during the 7/7/2005 London bombings identifying how uninjured bystanders in emergencies can act as "zero-responders", being at the incident before the arrival of emergency 1<sup>st</sup> responders and may become a useful resource, which can be utilised by the emergency services in mass emergencies [3.2].</li> <li>• A Critical Discourse Analysis study of the language used by survivors of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster illustrating how the term 'panic' used to describe crowd behaviour was a misrepresentation that itself could ultimately have contributed to the tragedy [3.3].</li> </ul>		

Collectively, Cocking's studies have contributed new in-depth insights into how shared social identities and collective resilience emerge during disasters. This results in increased co-operation among survivors and bystanders (zero responders) as they identify with and help others in need, ultimately acting as support for official 1<sup>st</sup> responders. The research fed into a comprehensive collaborative publication that contains a set of practical recommendations for both emergency managers and members of the public to encourage and nurture greater crowd resilience in emergency planning and response [3.4]. The twelve recommendations cover the three phases of emergency planning (preparedness phase, response phase and recovery phase) and include recommendations to 'develop evidence based, pre-tested communication strategies', to 'plan to work with, not against, group norms in emergencies' to 'prioritize informative and actionable risk and crisis communication' and to 'accommodate the public urge to help'. This publication draws on and embeds Cocking's evidence on how shared identities and collective resilience can emerge during disasters, resulting in increased co-operation among survivors (zero-responders) where encouraging co-operative norms can enhance overall safety in crowds.

### 3. References to the research

[3.1] Cocking, C., (2013). Crowd flight in response to police dispersal techniques: a momentary lapse of reason? *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*. 10(2), 219-36. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1389> [Quality validation: peer-reviewed in a leading journal].

[3.2] Cocking, C., (2013). The role of "zero-responders" during 7/7: implications for the emergency services. *International Journal of the Emergency Services*, 2(2), 79-93. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJES-08-2012-0035> [Quality validation: peer-reviewed in a leading journal/research funded by ESRC project that was finalist in outstanding impact in public policy award].

[3.3] Cocking, C., and Drury, J., (2014). Talking about Hillsborough: "Panic" as discourse in survivors' accounts of the 1989 football stadium disaster. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 24(2): 86-99. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2153> [Quality validation: peer-reviewed in a leading journal].

[3.4] Drury, J., Carter, H., Cocking, C., Ntontis, E., Tekin Guven, S., and Amlôt, R., (2019). Facilitating collective psychosocial resilience in the public in emergencies: twelve recommendations based on the social identity approach. *Frontiers in Public Health* 7(141), 1-21. <https://doi:10.3389/fpubh.2019.00141> [Quality validation: peer-reviewed in a leading journal].

### 4. Details of the impact

For over a decade, Cocking has utilised his research evidence to become a key public commentator on crowd behaviour, particularly in emergencies and mass casualty events, across a wide range of contexts and in response to social and political issues or events that have national or global relevance. Cocking's role as a public academic has seen his research-led views on the nature of crowd behaviour become part of a body of social and policy discourse that challenges dominant beliefs about collective behaviour. This has led to impact on policy and practice relating to crowd management and emergencies with much greater attention being placed on how the collective resilience of crowds can be built upon to enhance safety. Cocking's routes to impact through extensive media and public engagement, his contributions to the training and continuing professional development of emergency planners and practitioners, and his development of recommendations that have directly impacted policy and practice, have led to three main areas of impact:

#### 4.1 Increased recognition of the role of 'zero-responders' in policy and practice responses to emergency situations

Cocking's research has contributed to a strategic policy shift whereby official 1<sup>st</sup> responders now increasingly consider the role of possible bystander and survivor involvement ('zero responders') in mass casualty incidents. In 2018, the Kerslake Report into the Manchester Arena bombing cited this research:

*'Cocking (2013) discussed the role of "zero-responders" in relation to the 7/7 London Underground bombings and identified the public as a potential asset to the emergency services during major incidents' [Source 5.1].*

The Kerslake Report authors went on to state that they had seen evidence that supports Cocking's proposition and consider that members of the public undoubtedly acted as such a 'force multiplier' during the initial response in the Manchester Arena foyer. As a result, the Kerslake Report recommended that: *'all planning assumptions and training in respect of preparing for and responding to terrorist attacks in public places should include realistic contingencies for public involvement in casualty care, treatment and evacuation within all incident zones' [5.1].* This recommendation was embedded into the Greater Manchester Combined Authority follow up report into Kerslake (2019) where recognition of the public's involvement as zero responders in the immediate response to an incident has been incorporated in Greater Manchester Resilience Forum's plans to test these arrangements in future exercises [5.2].

Cocking's research is contributing to a broad policy shift to democratise emergency planning response by encouraging greater public involvement and community resilience in emergencies. In Cocking's collaborative research on how to facilitate collective psychosocial resilience, one of the 12 recommendations concerning the public in emergencies, is 'accommodate the public urge to help'. This recommendation is reflected in two recent Cabinet Office papers on this topic which refer to 'collective resilience' and 'communities of circumstance' and both papers draw from the SIMCR notion of emergent resilience [5.3, 5.4]. With an estimated 7,000 major public events in the UK each year, increasing recognition of the role of the public at major incidents is having a widespread impact on policy and practice.

#### **4.2 Informing communication and emergency planning strategies**

Cocking has presented evidence from his research at a range of events designed to attract and influence leaders in emergency planning services. The Gatwick Diamond seminar (2015) attracted 19 emergency planning, events strategy and fire safety managers and representatives from Gatwick Airport, the London Ambulance Service and other NHS departments, Fire and Rescue Services, Aviation, Local Authority and Railway providers to explore Cocking's facilitative management approach to public safety. Participants heard how studies of mass emergencies have consistently found that dominant assumptions about crowd responses to emergencies, stressing mass panic and stampedes, are rarely supported by detailed evidence of what actually happens and how holding such views can hinder effective emergency planning and response. Evaluation by participants was very positive, with comments including: *'This has been a very refreshing view around crowd dynamics. It has been a view that I have been working to get across to key people (flight and cabin crew) for many years'; 'Opened my eyes to things I hadn't considered'*. 89% of attendees said this had changed their view on managing crowd behaviour, 95% of attendees said that they will change their procedures or behaviour when dealing with a situation of mass emergency as a result of this seminar and 100% of attendees said that they found the seminar was useful to their role [5.5].

In May 2019, Cocking delivered a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for 31 emergency practitioners from local government, NGOs and the private sector, as part of an event hosted by the South East Division of the Emergency Planning Society (EPS), an international network of emergency planners and resilience professionals, to provide strategic advice and training to all emergency services on psychological behaviour in emergencies with special reference to the fear at the time of a 'No Deal' Brexit. Since then, Cocking has delivered further sessions to emergency practitioners. He presented his research on crowd behaviour to ~50 attendees at the International Disaster Reduction Expo at Olympia, London in December 2019. In August and November 2020, Cocking gave 2 'Behaviour Science Briefings' on public behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic, organised by the EPS and Kent Resilience Forum (KRF). These reached over 240 people from KRF partner agencies including Local Authorities, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Health and Environment Agency. Following Cocking's first briefing, the KRF confirmed that its EU Exit Behavioural Cell (which works within the wider countywide response to the End of the EU Transition Period) has reviewed its communications impact work [5.6]. Cocking has also submitted evidence to UK Parliamentary

Select Committee investigations into the pandemic and his current research on the role of spontaneous volunteers and mutual community support groups was recently cited in a House of Lords report on lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic for public services [5.7].

The impact of Cocking's research on emergency planning is further evidenced by the response of the EPS. The EPS has confirmed that Cocking's evidence has generated a major shift in organisational thinking, opening up a major opportunity for a change of approach to incident planning and response, with the role of zero responders key to this learning. As a result, the organisation has moved from a traditional view that sees public involvement as problematic to an approach that now seeks to harness the positive resources of the publics and communities involved. Discussions have been instigated with the membership groups that make up the EPS, including local authorities, the police, the private sector, fire and rescue, and the ambulance service, over the direction of new planning protocols which, in turn, is influencing practice on the ground in terms of their planning and approach. The scale of this shift means that the EPS are currently in the problem-solving stage of this change in organisational strategy. The next steps are to enact this change into policy and practice. Options under consideration to enable this change include a Government White Paper, approaches to different governments in terms of legislation, consideration of the Civil Contingencies Act, a reconsideration of planning, policies and training, integrating major incident planning in schools and education, and changes to first aid provision. Thus, whilst this shift is currently at the planning stage, the scale of the planned changes has been described as nothing short of 'revolutionary' affecting 'all aspects of our work and how we work with other services' [5.8].

#### 4.3 Improving crowd safety management in [text removed for publication] football

Since 2016, Cocking has used his research to advise the SGSA on the use of research findings on collaborative emergency response to improve crowd safety at the 92 Premier League and English Football League clubs. This involved presenting the research at the SGSA conference (2016), advising, as a registered expert, on the phenomenon of persistent standing at football matches, and providing ongoing advice on crowd behaviour and stadium safety as a member of an academic advisory panel (since Sept 2019). Cocking's research was cited in the 2019 SGSA report on *The Changing Nature of Spectator Behaviour*. Its Executive Summary states: '*in common discourse, there seems to be a sense of moral panic over the actions of individuals within crowds, as it is perceived they act irrationally when grouped together. However, the concept of mass panic has been largely rejected by academic research, as there is little evidence it ever occurs. As such, there needs to be a reconsideration of the popular view of crowds as negative*' [5.9].

[text removed for publication].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] The Kerslake Report: An independent review into the preparedness for, and emergency response to, the Manchester Arena attack on 22nd May 2017. (2018)

[https://www.kerslakearenareview.co.uk/media/1022/kerslake\\_arena\\_review\\_printed\\_final.pdf](https://www.kerslakearenareview.co.uk/media/1022/kerslake_arena_review_printed_final.pdf) [Accessed on 18th January 2021]. Research cited on pgs 154, 156.

[5.2] Burnam, A., Progress update on the Kerslake Report. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019) <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2031/kerslake-progress-report-1.pdf> [Accessed on 18th January 2021]. Research cited on pg 41.

[5.3] HM Government. Cabinet Office (2019) Community Resilience Development Framework: A reference tool for the delivery of strategic approaches to community resilience development, at the Local Resilience Forum level in collaboration with non-statutory partners.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/828813/20190902-Community\\_Resilience\\_Development\\_Framework\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828813/20190902-Community_Resilience_Development_Framework_Final.pdf) [Accessed 18th January 2021]. Research cited on pgs 5-6 & 11.

[5.4] HM Government. Cabinet Office (2019) Planning the coordination of spontaneous volunteers in emergencies.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/828813/20190902-Community\\_Resilience\\_Development\\_Framework\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828813/20190902-Community_Resilience_Development_Framework_Final.pdf)

[e/828201/20190722-Planning-the-coordination-of-spontaneous-volunteers-in-emergencies\\_Final.pdf](#) [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021]. Communities and responders discussed on pg 10.

[5.5] Evaluation report including participant feedback available as PDF.

[5.6] A testimonial from the Kent Resilience Forum confirming the influence on the KRF operating model and guidance.

[5.7] Cocking, C., Public services: lessons from coronavirus. The role of spontaneous volunteers and mutual community support groups. House of Lords. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/7978/html/> [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021].

[5.8] A testimonial from the Director for Professional Standards & Learning, the Emergency Planning Society, confirming the influence of the research on the philosophy of the organisation.

[5.9] Sports Grounds Safety Authority. Changing Nature of Spectator Behaviour. [The changing nature of spectator behaviour research paper \(sgsa.org.uk\)](#) [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021]. The research is cited on p 7.

[text removed for publication]