

Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science		
Unit of Assessment: 20 – Social Work and Social Policy		
Title of case study: Improving the lives of disadvantaged people through better measurement of poverty and inequality		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Tania Burchardt	Associate Professor	1995 to present
John Hills	Professor	1986 to 2020
Abigail McKnight	Associate Professorial Research Fellow	1999 to present
Kitty Stewart	Associate Professor	2001 to present
Polly Vizard	Associate Professorial Research Fellow	2001-2003 and 2007 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research in the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) on poverty and inequalities has influenced how critical social problems are measured and understood by UK and local governments, by statutory and professional bodies (e.g. both the Irish and the British Equality and Human Rights Commissions and the German development agency GIZ), and by national and international NGOs (e.g. Age UK, Oxfam). This work has developed conceptual and operational measurement tools for multidimensional inequality, whilst also evidencing the central role that poverty plays as a driver of inequality. It has highlighted previously hidden or neglected disparities and inequalities, and, in so doing, given visibility and voice to marginalised groups. Specifically, it has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Provided the framework for statutory monitoring of multidimensional inequalities. (2) Influenced the operational practice guidelines of public service providers, including local authorities and NHS England. (3) Addressed the accountability of central government, including through providing evidence for legal challenges, and evidence used in Parliament. (4) Contributed significantly to the policy, campaigning, and advocacy work of international NGOs and development organisations, such as Oxfam. 		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Over 20 years, CASE research has made substantial and influential contributions to how poverty and multidimensional inequalities are understood and measured - and consequently tackled. Innovative analytical tools and applications have revealed new dimensions and types of inequalities and built up evidence on groups previously hidden from view. CASE research has also established the centrality of material resources as a driver of life chances and capability.</p> <p>The research has its foundations in Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's capability approach, combined with international human rights theory [1]. It brings together the perspective of focusing on capabilities (what people are actually able to be and to do in their lives) with the principles of human rights (for example, non-discrimination and being treated with dignity and respect), which were previously regarded as separate, even competing, paradigms. By developing systematic and comprehensive monitoring frameworks, the research rebuts the challenge that the capability approach is inoperable. It also highlights the phenomenon of "data exclusion" and brings visibility to neglected groups and groups with overlapping disadvantages. Further methodological innovations include capturing ("horizontal") inequalities between disadvantaged groups in otherwise similar positions as well as the ("vertical") range of inequality between the top and the bottom of a distribution in the same domain, and associated drivers.</p> <p>The frameworks - the Equality Measurement Framework (EMF), Children's Measurement Framework (CMF), and Human Rights Measurement Framework (HRMF) for the UK [2]; and the Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF) for international use [3] - provide a unified approach to issues that have hitherto had disparate treatment. They are multidimensional, including up to ten critical domains of life such as standard of living, health, education, and physical security. They</p>		

apply systematic disaggregation by statutory protected characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and disability status. The MIF also provides a theoretically-underpinned approach to the identification of drivers of inequality that operate across time and across domains, both horizontally and vertically, highlighting the cross-cutting importance of income, wealth, and educational inequalities.

On these foundations CASE has researched particular groups at risk, including older hospital inpatients [4]. One million older people reported poor or inconsistent standards of support with eating when in hospital in England; this provided evidence of the need to embed equality and human rights standards into the monitoring, inspection, and regulation of healthcare. Findings highlighted that disabled women aged 80+ in hospital were more than 1.5 times as likely as an average older inpatient to have their need for support with nutrition neglected.

Some vulnerable children are missing from, or not visible in, standard monitoring exercises [5] and are consequently overlooked in policies to address childhood disadvantage. CASE research tackled this “data exclusion” by making innovative use of administrative and matched survey data to generate new estimates, including the number of children living in households where there is domestic violence and/or substance abuse. This brought visibility to marginalised groups.

Finally, CASE analysis has also highlighted how “money matters” in shaping children’s life chances [6]. A systematic review examining the relationship between poverty and children’s educational, behavioural, and health outcomes identified strong evidence of a causal link between low income and poor outcomes. This supports the retention of low income as a key marker of poverty and disadvantage, which became a major policy issue in 2016.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] Vizard, P. (2006) *Poverty and Human Rights: Sen’s Capability Perspective Explored*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199273874.

[2] Burchardt, T. and Vizard, P. (2011). Operationalizing the Capability Approach as a Basis for Equality and Human Rights Monitoring in Twenty-first-century Britain. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 12(1), pp. 91-119. DOI: 10.1080/19452829.2011.541790.

[3] McKnight, A. et al. (2019). *Multidimensional Inequality Framework*. CASE/International Inequalities Institute. Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/inequality/the-framework/media/mif-framework.pdf>. Based in part on: Burchardt, T. and Hick, R. (2018). Inequality, advantage and the capability approach. *Journal of Human Development and Capability*, 19(1), pp. 38-52, DOI: 10.1080/19452829.2017.1395396.

[4] Vizard, P. and Burchardt, T. (2015). *Older people’s experiences of dignity and nutrition during hospital stays: Secondary data analysis using the Adult Inpatient Survey* (CASE report 91/ CASE Brief 34). Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/86439/>. Article version accepted for publication in *Ageing and Society*, 2021.

[5] Vizard, P., Burchardt, T., Obolenskaya, P., Battaglini, M. and Shutes, I. (2018). *Child poverty and multidimensional disadvantage: Tackling “data exclusion” and extending the evidence base on “missing” and “invisible” children. Overview report* (CASE report 114). Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion. Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/casereport114.pdf>

[6] Cooper, K. and Stewart, K. (2020). Does household income affect children’s outcomes? A systematic review of the evidence. *Child Indicators Research*. DOI:10.1007/s12187-020-09782-0.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

CASE research provided the framework for improved government social welfare, equality, and social inclusion monitoring in the UK, Republic of Ireland, within the EU, and the German international development agency. It has engaged with national and international NGOs and civil society groups to contribute to campaigns for social and legal changes. The work has also influenced the operational practice guidelines of public service providers, including local authorities and the NHS.

(1) Developed the policy framework for statutory monitoring of multidimensional inequalities

CASE research on measurement frameworks [1] [2] [3] has become embedded in governmental and institutional approaches to the definition and statutory reporting of inequalities, including to the UN, to the benefit of marginalised groups through enhanced recognition and policy attention.

a. In 2015, the British **Equalities and Human Rights Commission** (EHRC) reported to Parliament stating it was “*simultaneously, on equality and human rights, making pragmatic use of the four measurement frameworks*”. Three of those four frameworks were developed by CASE: the equalities measurement (EMF), human rights (HRMF), and children’s measurement (CMF). The contribution of CASE to the frameworks and their use was acknowledged in the technical and methodological annexes to this 2015 EHRC report. The 2017 EHRC report on the new single measurement framework reiterates CASE’s contribution and notes that “*CASE at the London School of Economics and Political Science assessed the purpose and impact of equality and human rights monitoring and developed the theoretical framework*”. The 2018 report noted: “*We also use the framework, and specifically the domains and sections [...] to inform and **structure our strategy work**, as well as to **monitor the UK’s compliance with the seven United Nations human rights treaties** it has signed and ratified*”. These citations attest not only to the extensive CASE theoretical contribution to social policy through the frameworks, but also to the data analysis that CASE conducted to actually populate them [A].

Separately, the Child Poverty Action Group used and cited CASE evidence [6] in its submissions to the UN Special Rapporteur (Extreme Poverty) and to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child examination.

b. CASE research influenced the **Cabinet Office Race Disparity Audit** (2017): “*[i]n developing the statistical principles, approach to data interpretation and commentary...for the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Audit’s (RDA) Ethnicity Facts and Figures website, we engaged in regular discussions with CASE...The data domains on our website homepage are adapted from the EHRC Equality Measurement Framework that Tania Burchardt and Polly Vizard helped to develop, and on the work of the National Equality Panel chaired by John Hills*” (Deputy Director, Strategy and Insight, Race Disparity Audit) [B]. CASE continues to have close links with the RDA and on 25 September 2019 provided a learning event for them on measuring multidimensional disadvantage of Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller children. RDA evidence is being used as the basis to require government departments and agencies to “explain or change” differences in outcomes for ethnic groups [B].

c. Impact on addressing children’s multidimensional disadvantage [5] has been seen through CASE’s influence on the **Children’s Commissioner’s Office**, filling evidence gaps on vulnerable children. CASE estimates of numbers of children exposed to domestic violence and abuse fed into the **Children’s Commissioner for England** headline estimates of vulnerable children [C] and the Children’s Commissioner report has now become an annual publication monitoring trends.

d. CASE frameworks have also been influential internationally, for example in the **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission** (IHREC): “*The development of the SERMF [Socio-Economic Rights Monitoring Framework] has drawn significantly on Burchardt and Vizard (et al.) work on equality and human rights monitoring both in the conceptual development of the overall monitoring framework, and the preparation of two initial reports on decent work, and on housing. [...] Dr Burchardt has been a consistent, valued expert advisor for the development of this work in Ireland and in our contributions to the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (Ennhri) and the European Network of National Equality Bodies (Equinet)*” (IHREC Director of Policy and Research) [D].

(2) Improved the accountability of central government

CASE has worked with MPs and national civil society pressure groups to influence legal and policy change on poverty, to the benefit of socially excluded groups.

a. CASE research was highly influential during the course of the **Welfare Reform and Work Bill** (Spring 2016), which proposed abandoning internationally accepted measures of poverty. This would have undermined accountability on child poverty. Stewart used an FOI request to reveal the strength of opposition to the change from the government’s own consultation and, drawing on evidence from [6], published blogs, briefed members of the House of Lords, held meetings with cross-party parliamentary representatives, and organised a letter from 175 academics, published in *The Times*, making the case for the centrality of income to the concept and measurement of

poverty. CASE work was cited in debates in both Houses of Parliament: “[CASE at the LSE] reviewed 34 studies of whether family incomes affected children’s outcomes throughout the OECD, and found that family income mattered. What is the point of having some of the world’s finest researchers if we do not listen to them?...[M]oney matters, alongside a good education and a healthy life, to outcomes. So if we do not act on money, we embed disadvantage in our country” (Alison McGovern MP) [E]. This ultimately contributed to securing an amendment to the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, committing the government to continue to publish the income-based child poverty measures.

b. [6] was also cited and used by influential national pressure groups Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and Shelter to strengthen their **legal challenges to the UK Government’s revised benefit cap**. Cooper and Stewart’s research: “formed a key piece of evidence in the case against the benefit cap - enabling us to argue that income, not working parents, is what matters for children” [F]. The High Court initially found in favour of the claim; this was overturned by the supreme court, and CPAG are now considering taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Throughout this litigation CASE evidence has been cited and was extensively quoted in an expert witness statement submitted to the courts [F].

(3) Influenced the operational practice guidelines of public service providers

CASE has worked with service providers to improve outcomes for marginalised groups.

a. CASE research on dignity and nutrition among older patients in hospitals [4] has been influential in developing the agenda on nutrition and hydration within **NHS England** and was cited in a debate on older people’s human rights in care in the House of Lords: “A report by the London School of Economics found that one million older people reported poor or inconsistent standards of dignity and respect when in hospital, and even not getting enough help to eat. [...] So there is a huge amount that needs to be done” (Baroness Greengross) [G]. It also featured on BBC One Breakfast TV, BBC News, BBC national radio, and over 30 local radio stations, and in over 100 national broadsheet, tabloid, local, and online news outlets. It is one of five key reports cited by NHS England in “Guidance: Commissioning Excellent Nutrition and Hydration 2015-2018” [G]. CASE organised a practitioner-orientated roundtable in June 2015 with high-level involvement of NHS England. In 2016, two practitioner-orientated interactive workshops were held for professionals working on healthcare wards, again with high-level involvement of NHS England (Head of Patient Experience Acute Services) and Age UK (Head of Health Influencing).

b. This work has also informed and impacted the campaigning and advocacy work of **Age UK and the Malnutrition Task Force**. CASE researchers met frequently with the Health Influencing Team and Age UK to discuss findings and the policy and practitioner implications, and co-produced a practitioner-oriented video. The research was directly used by Age UK in these and other campaigning and advocacy activities, raising awareness of the problems of dignity and nutrition for older inpatients among key stakeholders as well as the wider public [G].

c. [6] underpinned and was cited in CPAG’s toolkit to help London schools tackle poverty, in a booklet distributed to all schools by Edinburgh City Council in 2018, and most recently in the [Cost of the School Day toolkit \(Scotland\)](#). CPAG report that the toolkit “has driven huge amounts of school level action in Scotland, helping school communities to understand and take action on poverty” [H].

(4) Contributed significantly to the policy, campaigning, and advocacy work of international NGOs and development organisations

CASE research has shaped NGOs’ approaches to measuring and addressing multidimensional inequality, including to improve social inclusion for marginal groups in developing countries.

a. As **Oxfam** broadened their agenda to include inequality, they identified that their country teams were experiencing challenges in measuring and analysing inequalities in a coherent, comprehensive, and systematic way. CASE’s development and implementation of the Multidimensional Inequality Framework (MIF) [3], in collaboration with Oxfam, sought to address this gap. Oxfam have already piloted the MIF in Spain and Guatemala and are applying it in Burkina Faso and in Vietnam. CASE developed a dedicated website which promotes the MIF as a means of identifying, measuring, analysing, and tackling inequalities, with advice on how it can be tailored to different country contexts [I].

b. CASE was commissioned to develop an inequality policy toolkit based on the MIF for the **German development agency**, GIZ (which operates in 120 countries). The toolkit was presented to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and GIZ are now digitising it. It has already been applied for GIZ to Namibia and South Africa. The MIF was endorsed by UNICEF's social policy officer in Nigeria as a method of tackling the problem of inequality in Nigeria, one that "would allow Nigeria to mobilise data, develop policy recommendations and map out advocacy priorities that could become defining moments in the reduction of poverty and socio-economic inequalities" [J]. The MIF has also been taken up by international NGOs: Agence Française de Développement have been working with Oxfam with funding from the EU to apply the MIF in West Africa, and in Vietnam. Its application within the EU is also being explored; CASE joined a European Commission expert group in the Joint Research Centre for a pilot project on monitoring inequalities in the EU, which recommended an approach reflecting many of the key tenets of the MIF [J].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] EHRC (2015), "Is Britain Fairer?" - [Methodology paper](#) (cites CASE pp. 3, 8-10, 21-22); [Technical paper](#) (cites CASE pp. 3, 6-7, 11) | EHRC (2017) "[Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights](#)" (cites CASE pp. 3, 20-21, 23, 40-44). See also EHRC (2018), "[Is Britain Fairer?](#)".

[B] Email from Deputy Director of Race Disparity Unit, 17 November 2017. "Explain or change" commitment by government as on-going response to Race Disparity Audit. | UK Parliament, [Race Disparity Audit debate](#), House of Commons, 10 October 2017, Vol. 629, Col. 182.

[C] Children's Commissioner for England: Alma Economics (2018), "Measuring aggregate vulnerability in childhood: Vulnerability [Technical Report 1](#)", pp. 21 and 24.

[D] Email from Director of Policy and Research at the Irish Human Rights and Equalities Commission, 29 July 2020.

[E] (a) UK Parliament, [Welfare Reform and Work Bill debate](#), House of Lords, 29 February 2016, Vol. 769, Col. 588. Baroness Lister of Burtersett: "[T]here was a letter to *The Times* last week from nearly 180 academics, including those at the forefront of child poverty measurement [...]: income and material deprivation should be at the heart of child poverty measurement, because such indicators are vital to our ability to track the impact of economic and policy change. I thank Dr Kitty Stewart of the LSE, who organised that letter". See also, col. 591, Baroness Sherlock: "The particularly important thing about these data coming out is that there is very strong evidence of the scarring effects of living for a period of time on low income in childhood and what that does to children's life chances. Therefore I hope that the Government publishes the data, because the data will then be available to them, and they will also influence policymaking." | (b) UK Parliament, [Welfare Reform and Work Bill debate](#), House of Commons, 23 February 2016, Vol. 606, Col. 221-222.

[F] Email to Kitty Stewart from former Head of Policy and Research, CPAG, 15 October 2018. | R (DS and Others) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2019] UKSC 21. Expert witness statement for Claim No. CO/379/2017 High Court R (DA and Others) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Shelter (Intervenor) filed 25 April 2017: see paragraphs 11-14.

[G] (a) UK Parliament, [Older Persons: Human Rights and Care debate](#), House of Lords, 16 November 2017, Vol. 785, Col. 2195-2196. | (b) NHS England (2015), *Guidance: Commissioning Excellent Nutrition and Hydration 2015-2018*, (p. 6 cites CASE work on dignity and nutrition among older inpatients). | (c) Age UK and LSE co-produced video on [dignity and nutrition](#).

[H] Email to Kitty Stewart from CPAG Director of Policy, Rights, and Advocacy, 17 November 2020. | CPAG toolkits (2020): [The Cost of the School Day](#); [New Toolkit to Help London Schools Tackle Poverty](#); [Tackling Child Poverty: A Guide for Schools](#).

[I] [Multidimensional Inequality Framework](#), CASE; [About the MIF and the Oxfam Toolkit](#), Oxfam.

[J] "[A new framework for measuring inequality sheds light on poverty eradication in Nigeria](#)", *Africa at LSE*, 4 November 2020. | [Multidimensional inequalities study in Vietnam](#) and [Analysis of Multidimensional Inequalities in West Africa and a Strategy for Inequality Reduction](#), Agence Française de Développement. | [Multidimensional Perspectives on Inequality: Conceptual and Empirical Challenges](#), European Commission.