Institution: University of Warwick

Unit of Assessment: C 21 Sociology

Title of case study: Challenging the 'hostile environment' through civic engagement

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013 - 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:**
Hannah Jones	Associate Professor	2013 - Present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2019

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The Mapping Immigration Controversy research project (MIC), with Jones as PI, challenged the UK's 'hostile environment' policy which makes life increasingly hard for marginalised groups, by collecting, analysing, and sharing sociological research through a socially engaged, co-productive approach. Working with civil society organisations, MIC demonstrably **changed how local authorities, schools and other agencies engage with migration, discrimination, and shifting borders**. MIC findings were **used to build community networks and solidarity**, while research-based interventions, from public meetings to artistic production, **supported empowerment to change prejudiced attitudes**. MIC's research has **informed school curriculums** and been **used as evidence for recommendations by a UN Rapporteur.**

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Mapping Immigration Controversy (MIC)'s inception was as a response to a pressing national controversy where research evidence was sorely lacking. The Home Office's 'hostile environment' on immigration turned a corner in the summer of 2013, by taking actions designed to publicise the increasing checks on immigration status such as the infamous 'Go Home van' - an advertising hoarding driven around ethnically diverse areas of London asking 'In the UK illegally? Go Home or Face Arrest'. While Ministers claimed not to recognise the salience of 'Go Home' as a racially-loaded phrase, its implications of blurring further the line between immigration control and racial profiling was obvious to many, inciting widespread press coverage which often linked this initiative to government attempts to challenge UKIP's rising popularity.

Recognising the urgency of this moment, Jones was instrumental in gathering a group of anti-racist feminist researchers committed to using their social research skills to further social justice, broaden and deepen the debate, and influence policy. Forming an alliance between 8 researchers at 6 universities, and with 13 civil society organisations, Jones as PI led a successful bid to the ESRC's Urgent Grants competition (see Section 3), demonstrating UKRI's recognition of the urgent need for research into the broader effects of these government campaigns.

The resulting MIC research used focus groups, interviews, public feedback sessions, and a national survey (commissioned from Ipsos-MORI) to identify and analyse the ongoing effects of government publicity campaigns on immigration. Designed and carried out in concert with local and national migrant support and anti-racist organisations, impact was built into MIC from the start. Outputs were produced from early in the project ranging from multiple engagement events and ongoing sociological blogs (www.mappingimmigrationcontroversy.com, see below for reach), interim reports designed for policy audiences, and more formal peer-reviewed outputs, including a co-authored monograph from Manchester University Press, for which Jones was lead author (3.1).

Key findings from the research (see 3.1, 3.2, 3,3) which led to the impacts detailed here were:

2.1) Government communications on immigration control are not evidence-based

2.2) Government campaigns on immigration provoked or increased anger and fear, including among people opposed to immigration

2.3) Government campaigns on immigration seemed to provoke new pro-migrant activism, but there was not always solidarity between those targeted by anti-immigration campaigns

2.4) Those with insecure immigration status often found it hard to participate in political debate because of real or perceived threats to their residency

2.5) Many people experienced harassment for being 'illegal immigrants' when they had settled status, or were British citizens, and associated this with the hostile environment.

In short, government communications on migration were found to increase division and hostility and insecurity, for both migrants and British citizens.

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

3.1 Jones, H, Gunaratnam, Y, Bhattacharyya, G, Davies, W, Dhaliwal, S, Forkert, K, Jackson, E and Saltus, R (2017) *Go Home? The politics of immigration controversies,* Manchester: Manchester University Press. [available in paperback and as a free ebook at http://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=625583] *Peer reviewed monograph with university press. Open access version downloaded 1,197 times from at least 45 countries from the main OAPEN platform alone, between April 2017 and August 2018*.

3.2 Forkert, K, Jackson, E and Jones, H (2016) 'Whose feelings count? Performance politics, emotion and government immigration control' in Jupp, E, Pykett, J and Smith, F (eds) *Emotional States: Sites and spaces of affective governance,* London: Routledge.

3.3 Gunaratnam, Y and Jones, H (2020) 'Same difference? Researching racism and immigration' in Solomos, J (ed) *Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Racisms,* London: Routledge.

ESRC Urgency Grant: "Go Home": Mapping the unfolding controversy of Home Office immigration campaigns, £200,000 FEC, Dec 2013-July 2015. Award no. ES/L008971/1. PI: Hannah Jones.

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

'The anti-immigrant push is like a juggernaut!'

These are the words of Pragna Patel, Director of Southall Black Sisters (SBS), which seeks to empower Black and South Asian women (5.1). In this 'anti-immigrant' context, MIC has made changes in grassroots understanding and institutional practices relating to resisting the hostile environment, including supporting the UN's attempt to influence UK border enforcement (5.2, 5.3). Patel describes changes made by MIC on herself, the women she works with, her organisation, and the sector, specifically in relation to: **organisational practice**; **community networks and solidarity** in the face of the hostile environment; and **individual prejudice and empowerment**:

> '*The research was timely… this is a deprived area and it is easy for people to blame each other. The research was one way of doing sustained community work, of flagging those divisions and challenging them'* (5.1).

The interest in MIC has been widespread and significant (5.6, 5.9). Impact reached national and international levels to **inform and shape international policy debates and national school curriculums** (5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5).

Changing Organisational Practice to Challenge the Hostile Environment
Rita Chadha, as Chief Executive of RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and

London) referred local authorities and community safety partners to MIC findings (2.1-2.5) and *'noted a shift in the views of public agencies who have become more receptive to discussions as a result'* (5.8). She added:

> *I think that the research did challenge local agencies, by providing official and credible verification of community concerns.* (5.8)

Chadha observed this having followed changes to local and regional agencies' operation after MIC researchers (Jones and Gunaratnam) attended her local Community Safety Partnership to present their research findings and discuss their implications, and her own use of MIC findings in negotiations towards local agencies using less hostile communications about migrants.

Through *Immigration Otherwise* (a sub-project arising from MIC), theatre group *ActREAL* devised a script with pupils at two schools, based on MIC findings, particularly 2.2 and 2.5 above. Over ten weekly workshops at Westwood Academy, Coventry and Cheney School, Oxford, 25 students aged 13-15 and their teachers learned about and questioned migration controversies, interacting with verbatim transcripts from the research and with the researchers and *ActReal*. The young people performed their devised plays to teachers, families and peers, dealing with questions of hostility, discrimination, suspicion, empathy, solidarity and resistance in response to research findings 2.1-2.5. After the performance, the young actors, their audience and MIC researchers discussed the issues raised. An independent evaluator found this led to changes in school practice:

> *'inspired the teachers to use more academic research in their planning and teaching to explore socially engaged or "taboo" topics in the curriculum with other year groups.'* (5.7)

Building Networks and Solidarity to Channel Civic Engagement

MIC's co-produced character enabled third sector organisations to develop networks, solidarity and practice in response to MIC findings about fractures in pro-migrant activism provoked by government anti-immigration campaigns (2.3) and the limitations on civic activity experienced by migrants feeling under threat (2.4). At least 18 third sector organisations worked directly with the project on the research and its application, and more than forty organisations participated in events and workshops on the research. Pragna Patel (SBS) reflected that:

> *We can say for sure that being part of this … helped us to develop our own thinking … the events embedded our group in community structures and processes… as a follow-up… we organised a debate [for local people in Southall] on the elections and political parties and we did a lot of work on building understanding and empathy towards all migrants.* (5.1)

Attending the performance and discussion of *Immigration Otherwise* increased the inclination of family, friends and peers of participants to solidarity with challenging the hostile environment, reflected in comments such as:

> *'It definitely taught me something - I didn't have an opinion about this but the way people are being treated I definitely do have an opinion now.'* (5.7)

Challenging Prejudice and Supporting Empowerment

MIC empowered members of the public to challenge the hostile environment in everyday life, boosting the confidence and evidence used even by those already engaged in migrant support, such as this former Chair of the Scottish Refugee Council:

> *Your research made me more likely to challenge misinformation and misunderstandings. I was on a train shortly after reading the results and my fellow passenger was reading a Daily Mail feature about immigration. I shared some of the findings from your research with her.* (5.8)

Others told us that MIC had empowered them to create tangible outputs, as in this testimony from an End of Project Conference participant, in a follow-up survey four years on:

> *Because of this exposure, I now give thought to how I treat others who are experiencing immigration issues, not making assumptions. I feel a greater sense of confidence when discussing these subject matters, and I am happy to speak up for others and myself when facing immigration challenges. For example, I developed a podcast addressing some of the inaccuracies portrayed in the media regarding the Syrian refugee crisis.* (5.8)

Young people involved in *Immigration Otherwise* shifted their thoughts from before the project when they were unaware or unengaged in migrant justice issues (e.g. *'Refugees are something to do with the army'*; *'Is an asylum seeker someone who is mentally ill?'*; *'I don't think we have responsibilities yet but we should still think about it. I think we are too young'*) (5.7)

After taking part, their comments indicated they had re-evaluated personal agency and citizenship duties and developed their thinking about the intersections of immigration and social inequality, with comments such as:

> *'I feel like now I can put myself in their shoes.'*

> *'We don't have the power to change things but we do have the power to spread awareness, to talk to people.'* (5.7)

Teachers at both schools described short, medium and long term sustained effects of the project, for example:

> *'Students became more aware of immigration issues, more perceptive, offering well thought out comments in discussions. We can see a huge impact in the students' confidence after taking part in this project.'* (5.7)

Shaping School Curriculum and Policy Debates
MIC reached beyond those directly participating in events through journalistic coverage on major news platforms, including the *Financial Times* and Radio 4, and invited contributions to mainstream media, including a *London Review of Books* cover feature (5.10). The MIC Twitter account has over 1,500 followers, including most of the major migration campaigning organisations and activists in the UK and many key international organisations, and the project website has had over 34,000 views from over 19,800 visitors from 150 countries between 2014 and 2020.

Significant impacts resulted from this extensive reach:

Jones was invited to contribute a page on MIC to *Our Migration Story*, a secondary school curriculum resource designed to fit with the National Curriculum in History and the prioritisation of Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development across Key Stages. The entry on 'responses to migration in Britain today' focuses exclusively on MIC findings and provides the most contemporary history within the resource. *Our Migration Story* has won multiple prestigious awards for impact and public engagement (5.5).

The **United Nations Special Rapporteur on Racism** visited the UK in April and May 2018. The official report on this visit used MIC evidence to highlight the connections between racism and migration control within the UK (5.2, point 54). The racialised effects of the hostile environment beyond irregular migrants which the Rapporteur drew from MIC evidence was highlighted in national press coverage of her report, informing public debate (5.4). Recommendations to the UN included that the UK Government should *'Assess and eliminate the racially disparate impact of immigration laws and policies.'* (5.2, point 74(m)). This directly relates to the MIC evidence, particularly finding 2.5.

Despite the 'juggernaut' of 'the anti-immigrant push', MIC's co-produced research approach changed minds and lives by developing and sharing robust evidence of the effects of government anti-immigration campaigns on everyday experiences, and co-creating spaces in which organisations, groups and individuals were able to challenge the hostile environment through building networks of understanding and solidarity.

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

5.1 Interview with Pragna Patel, published as 'Living Research One: Why are we doing this? Public sociology and public life' in Jones, H et al. (2017) *Go Home? The politics of immigration controversies,* Manchester: MUP, pp. 29-36.
5.2 United Nations (2019) *Visit to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.* (point 54).
5.3 United Nations (2018) *End Of Mission Statement of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance at The Conclusion of her Mission to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,* https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Racism/SR/EndofMission_UK_2018.docx (point 35).
5.4 Media coverage of UN Rapporteur's report
5.5 Statement from Runnymede Trust on the impact of MIC entry in *Our Migration Story*
5.6 Details of participation events related to MIC, including reach
5.7 Pujara, S (2019) *Immigration Otherwise Evaluation Report*
5.8 2019 follow-up survey results
5.9 Examples of media coverage