

# **Migration Flows in Deprived Neighbourhoods: Stability, Connection and Area Change**

**Nick Bailey**

University of Glasgow  
Department of Urban Studies  
25 Bute Gardens  
Glasgow  
G12 8RS

Tel: +44 (0)141 330 3154  
Email: n.bailey@lbss.gla.ac.uk

Co-Author: Mark Livingston (University of Glasgow)

## **ABSTRACT**

Within neighbourhood policy in Britain, the migration flows for deprived neighbourhoods tend to be described in ways which emphasise the difference or distinctiveness of these areas. Deprived neighbourhoods are portrayed as unstable, as disconnected from the wider housing system, and as suffering from a net loss of human capital through migration exchanges – the idea that “those who get on, get out” (SEU, 2001; PMSU/ODPM, 2005; SEU, 2006). This paper is based on an analysis of 2001 Census data on migration for England and Scotland. It examines stability (gross turnover or residential mobility), connection (the geography of flows) and area change (the social composition of net migrations flows). The findings challenge several common perceptions. First, deprived areas are not markedly less stable than non-deprived. Residential mobility for all neighbourhoods is driven by social composition, rather than contextual effects – by demographics, not deprivation. Second, deprived areas do not appear disconnected from their wider housing markets; they are not isolated in this sense. Third, deprived areas suffer only modest losses of human capital through net migration flows. In- and out-flows for deprived areas are very similar in composition. While they do act to increase the concentration of less qualified individuals into more deprived neighbourhoods, the scale of these effects is modest. In conclusion, the paper challenges the portrayal of deprived neighbourhoods in terms which over-emphasise their differences. At the same time, the paper provides support for some current policy prescriptions including the use of area-based initiatives.

**Key Words:** neighbourhoods, area deprivation, migration