

New and Emerging Communities Initial Findings

Aim

The aim of the research project was to engage with diverse cultures in the hope of achieving a healthier understanding in respect to the lived experiences of 'new' and 'emerging' communities. This was achieved through an interpretivist framework, principally using qualitative focus groups and one-to-one interviews to seek perceptions and viewpoints of a selection of ethnic minority communities with reference to integration, connectedness, criminal victimisation, perceptions of and access to public services and cohesion.

Rapid Assessment Literature Review (see draft report, End of April – Sample included here below)

Nottinghamshire background

The population of Nottingham is made up of a superdiversity of communities who have migrated here at various times in the past 60 years. The Census conducted in 2011 showed that 35% of the population are from BME groups; an increase from 19% in 2001 (Nottingham Insight, 2019). The bulk of the immigration has been from Commonwealth countries, and more recently from the European Union (EU) member states. The largest EU expansion took place in 2004 when ten additional countries were admitted and then in 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania joined. Migration histories can vary, with some arriving as asylum seekers, refugees, students, or through family already residing in the UK whilst others have been due to extreme poverty or political oppression. However, most have chosen to come to the UK to work, to study, to make money or to stay permanently (Long et al, 2014). This research includes 2 focus groups with long established migrants and 8 focus groups with new and emerging communities.

Most migrants have access to information and friends who equip them with knowledge, laws and procedures, rules of socialisation etc. prior to arriving in the UK. However, for others who travelled alone and knew no one upon their arrival, universities played a key role in introducing them to an established community (Back et al 2012). This was found to be the case in this research project, especially in respect to the African, Hungarian and Romanian groups although other respondents were refugees/asylum seekers who did not come in this way.

Whilst migration obviously impacts on the overall population, in more recent years it has also been impacting upon demand for local service provision (Gedalof, 2007). An aspect of this is that local public service providers including the police need to adapt to changes in the environment, which can include economic and social factors affecting communities. As such, there is now a need to gain a clearer understanding of the integration of new and emerging communities. An integrated and cohesive community is one where those from different backgrounds are provided with similar opportunities and access to services and treatment. Also, there is a strong acknowledgement of the provisions made for both those from existing settled migrants and those who have newly arrived and how they can aid in implementing successful community cohesion in workplaces, schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods. The government and local authorities have implemented several initiatives in the hope of raising awareness of the significance of promoting social cohesion (Cantle, 2001). For example, The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, established in 2006 published *Our Shared Future*, which makes proposals for developing integration and cohesion at a local level.

Best practice¹ currently involves Nottinghamshire police working closely with local authority specialist community relations team, within a collaborative framework, through a partnership approach with various organisations at a grassroots level. The aim is to successfully promote inclusion and break down any social or cultural barriers by bringing together and supporting groups to engage in respect to better understand the risks and vulnerabilities within local communities. Best practice examples include; supporting new community groups who face cohesive challenges, developing opportunities for groups to

¹ Best practice is a working method or a set of working methods that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular organisation, usually described formally and in detail (Cambridge Dictionary, 2015)

work together and working with asylum seekers and refugees to help them settle into Nottingham and access the services they need, for example, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme (VPRS) who are currently working with the Syrian Community to support families to settle within the Nottinghamshire area (currently 10 in Newark) (Nottingham City Council, 2019). However, some of these initiatives have been established for only a short period of time, or the communities are not being invited along to the events, which was highlighted in one of the one-to-one interviews in this research project. This is problematic since sustainable practice is required for effective cohesion to continue.

Community cohesion (CC) is considered fundamental to what makes a safe, strong and prosperous community. The concept of CC is relatively contemporary with the notion becoming promoted in policy debates by several reports (Burnley Task Force, 2001; Cattle Review, 2001; Denham Report, 2001), following the North of England riots in 2001, and again in response to 9/11 and the 7/7 terrorist attacks (Bowling et al, 2003). The recent breakdown in communities re-surfaced sharply in response to the 2011 riots (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, 2014).

The above events identified that a targeted approach was needed to build cohesive communities (Communities and Local Government, 2008) as it was highlighted that certain communities were living 'parallel lives', causing a process of segregation to begin. However, the segregation of communities that the CC agenda view as problematic can represent a sense of ontological security for new and emerging communities (Cattle, 2008). This was supported by the research as some of the groups interviewed expressed they did not wish to trade their cultural identity for an unclear notion of citizenship, particularly with the uncertainty around Brexit (Gehring, 2019). This falls in line with Long et al (2014: 2) who highlight that 'new migrants are faced with the dilemma of whether they should demonstrate their Britishness, retain a distinct heritage or forge some hybrid identity'. Yet, a positive for the groups that were interviewed was that their individual communities offered the feeling of connectedness as they provided practical resources in respect of culturally sensitive services, religious worship facilities, ESOL classes, interpreters and access to cultural cuisine that they felt was needed, as most of the communities suggested a central focus for bringing communities together involved food (Robinson, 2005).

Previous research by Long et al (2014:15) supports this by highlighting that ‘migrants often seek relaxation among people with whom they share more of their cultural capital and who can provide support’. New communities value leisure activities that bring them together with family and friends, with integration often occurring through leisure practices, such as attending church and community events which involve the sharing of food. Economic practices are valued by new communities, especially when considering new migrants typically lack money because they have no or poorly paid employment. This is supported by Back et al (2012) who state that new migrants, particularly from Bulgaria and Romania, are subject to limitations on employment and welfare brought into force by the Labour Party. Consequently, as suggested by Putnam (2007) social capital can compensate for lack of economic capital within new and emerging communities. Leisure time is also especially important for those who do manage to find employment as they are often working long hours and volunteering their support to new members through their established network. This was supported in this research by the Romanian community who are working or studying long hours while also volunteering their time to support new community members with their transition needs.

Positive social behaviour is more likely to occur when individuals are acquainted and trust one another, but trust is obtained over a period of time (Bertotti et al, 2012). This was certainly evidenced in this piece of research where some of the community organisations suggested that in order to build trust and relationships, organisations need to; act promptly with their communications, attend more community events and signpost information on services available. These established organisations could then help disseminate this information to smaller new and emerging groups.

In the 21st century, there are still difficulties in capturing data on new and emerging communities’ locality and this could be correlated with the legitimacy of services being questioned. New communities have often had negative experiences with organisations in their home countries and this can be a key barrier to accessing services. For example, many new communities view the police as one of the most corrupt groups in society and this is due to new communities that reside in the UK having suffered corruption and brutality at the hands of the police in their home country. This was supported within this research when

the African, Chinese, Hungarian and Romanian communities interviewed said they are cautious about contacting the police in the UK due to the hard-line approach experienced in their home countries. This is supported by Bowling et al (2003) who state that victims from minority ethnic groups will be reluctant to report being the victims of crime, due to the fears of those in authority. This lack of reporting to the police or alternative services can be detrimental, especially when considering that new migrants often encounter incidences of racism/hate crimes, which was one of the key findings that emerged from the interviews.

Data Collection - Focus groups and individual interviews undertaken with:

Groups already included:

Global Sistaz United

Romanian Society East Midlands

Hungarian East Midlands Society

Broxtowe African Caribbean Elders

Nottingham Chinese Welfare Association

Mojatu Foundation

Later Additions

Syrian group

Lithuanian Society

Polish groups in county

Key Themes identified

What brought them migrants/refugees to the UK

- Many of the communities already had family or friends in the UK upon arrival, especially the Chinese, Broxtowe African elders and the Hungarian communities and for these respondents it was the family connections that brought them here
- Some of the respondents came because of marriage, usually wives, where husbands had brought them to the UK
- For some respondents once they were settled their family joined them later
- For some respondents it wasn't the first time in the UK, they had been on holiday and then wanted to come back
- Some had come as students and had then remained

How had they got to the UK

- Most travelled alone on the plane journey to the UK but some had come via other means including bus/boat

Reasons for coming to the UK

- We found that all the communities interviewed came to the UK for work or education opportunities – although some were seeking safety/peace of mind leaving states that were in disarray, political threats/corruption/violence

Knowledge on the UK

- The communities interviewed expressed they did have some prior knowledge of the UK and that this was obtained either through education and prospectus in their own country or through the internet, movies and newspapers.
- However, all the communities interviewed stated that upon arrival in the UK their initial information source was provided by their own communities via friends and family, this was particularly relevant for the Hungarian community.
- For others they had previously been to the UK.
- Some individuals arrived through an agency. The agency gave them a lot of information. They researched all the information that would be relevant to them and through the government website. AKA and CAB. These individuals were sometimes better prepared
- For those who travelled to study, the university played a key role in providing links to other students who could help them
- Some individuals that did not have family/friends in the UK were more isolated i.e. Syrian refugees and had little or no knowledge upon arrival

Incorrect/Misleading information

- For those with friends and family sometimes they were given the wrong or misleading information

Expectations of the UK

- Most of the participants had high expectations of a better life in the UK, where they could feel safe and free and have more support and a better standard of living

Employment

- Others expected to gain better employment opportunities, however, many are working zero-hour contracts for agencies and this has had an impact on their expectations.
- A number are working in the service industry
- Some of the longer established migrants (Chinese) came to work following deteriorating economic conditions in Hong Kong and following the demand for ethnic cuisine in the UK (setting up a pattern of family migration)

Barriers to employment and settlement

- Expectations of gaining work were disappointing with barriers identified, in respect to work permits, National Insurance numbers & a lack of experience especially in respect to the Romanian community

Language Barriers

- Others also identified language barriers and the lack of interpreters offered by organisations which can impact on access to jobs and service agencies such as GPs, Schools, Housing, DVLA etc. This is also particularly important for the Roma community who are often illiterate
- Volunteers from their own communities often provided interpreters and support
- Many people that settled and who were religious and began attending a church/mosque might find help from another person who could advise and act as interpreter/provider of advice and information
- Whilst these volunteers were often from the migrant's own ethnic background and religion, some religious organisations did reach out to support other faith communities and they had found help this way
- Conversation cafes were run by some volunteers (Syrians city) and also the Newark Evangelical church and these were very helpful particularly to those migrants/refugees who were very isolated

Recommendations offered to reduce Language barriers were

- A poster, or anything I could understand in my own language
- So, people who can't understand English can read it in Chinese. It's easier for everyone
- Increasing the provision of interpreters

Those that managed without help

- There were however other respondents who suggested the language barrier had not been an issue for them and they had managed to teach themselves basic English by learning to read, subtitles and gaining work

Other barriers identified

Culture and age

- Culture is often a huge barrier. For example, a young boy at the age 14 back home is from certain parts of the Roma community and they would not be expected to be at school (see also Lit Review on Government Policies)
- The Chinese community and the Broxtowe African elders suggested the internet is a barrier for them

Services – Significant Barriers

- Migrants were often very unaware of what services were available and found it extremely difficult to find out about them
- This was partly to do with the language and culture barriers but also because they found them to involve Silos, all having different systems, and often described huge difficulties in trying to find information and or get a response to a letter/email/phone call
- It was acknowledged to be a good thing that organisations are reaching out to include and engage with new and emerging communities, but these communities need to know where to gain this information
- Organisations need to attend local community events more often, particularly smaller communities including the police
- Larger Organisations need to include smaller communities when conducting research, holding discussions

Own or known Community Groups

- For the reasons mentioned above, all the participants consider their community groups essential for making connections and supporting each other and their cultural needs while living in the UK. There was a lot of positivity for the community groups and they all meet at least once a week for activities, legal & benefit advice and ESOL classes etc. For those without their own 'community' – sometimes other groups have included them (see also Lit Review on contacting groups with no religious connections)
- All the communities highlighted that religious organisations play a key role of being part of a community, with some of the communities having bought churches in Nottingham. For example, The Romanian Community are hoping to buy their church in Arnold.

Police

- While all the respondents were aware of how to contact the police in an Emergency,
- The Roma community didn't know about 101 and often just ring the 999 number and say help, help due to their limited English.

Barriers to accessing Police

- A significant factor is that many new and emerging communities do not trust the police in their own countries where the police are often viewed as corrupt or abusive

Disappointment in the UK police

- Some respondents felt that the police had not made much effort to deal with their issue when they had rung the police in the UK and they were disappointed
- Other respondents felt that they had been discriminated against

Racism/Hate Crime

- Most respondents had been a victim of crime at some point, and some of these had been racist hate crime incidents, of these those of European descent were worried about Brexit and other respondents were concerned about potential rises in hate crime as a result also

The Impact of Brexit

- The views on Brexit were mainly mixed with some of the communities expressing that public attitudes hadn't really changed towards them, they felt that because they work hard, therefore they were okay, and they would continue to have work.
- However, others were very worried about the implications of Brexit and whether it would mean they would need to go home. Some felt that hate crimes had risen and others that they had been discriminated and mistreated in the workplace 'I've heard people in the community complaining about being mistreated and discriminated at work since this process started with Brexit' The Romanian/Roma community highlighted that their community had decreased since Brexit as they were hearing stories that they would be deported.

Recommendations

- Larger organisations to work alongside agencies such as Euwork to promote services and information
- Larger organisations & more police to attend community events to signpost information on services available and to build trust and relationships with these communities, these communities can then help disseminate this information to smaller new and emerging groups
- In our study, a conversation cafe was being held by some volunteers acting as interpreters and another example of this was Newark Evangelical church. When the council are struggling to locate and access new and emerging communities these volunteers may be a significant source of support in helping to translate and disseminate information on available services in the city and the county
- Reaching out to these individuals/organisations is recommended for service providers to gain access to marginalised migrant groups and to understand the barriers they face in integrating into life in the UK including access to services thereby improving both sets of problems
- Larger organisations & police to engage with new and emerging community newsletter, magazines & leaflets to signpost services available to them

- Communication from the police to be prompter and on a regular basis, in order and build and establish a trusting relationship with smaller community organisations – need to ensure that smaller communities are reached (see above volunteer/community interpreters/volunteers)
- Consideration to be given to reaching those that are not engaged with a religious/community hub site i.e. through Internet sites/libraries/social networks/facebook, particularly to reach younger communities and in their own language (see younger Polish migrants/literature review)
- Larger organisations to work in partnership with the local universities to engage with the various community events (i.e. welcome days etc), to interact with the communities and to provide information on their services.
- Organisations to work with universities to signpost new students to the communities established that they can attend upon arrival to the UK
- Organisations to employ a format that the various communities will understand to overcome the language barriers that are experienced by various communities

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