

## **Immigration and social cohesion in the UK**

### **The rhythms and realities of everyday life**

*Mary Hickman, Helen Crowley and Nick Mai*

**This study is about understanding the relationship between recent immigration and social cohesion in the context of other social and economic transformations that affect everyday life for everyone living in the UK.**

Current public debates often associate increasing ethnic diversity resulting from immigration with the erosion of social cohesion. This research suggests that issues of deprivation, disadvantage and long-term marginalisation, unrelated to immigration, must also be considered – as well as how people relate to each other – to ensure social cohesion.

The report considers the impact of the following factors on social cohesion:

- families and social transformations;
- education and youth;
- work and economic integration;
- housing;
- deprivation;
- place and belonging;
- politics of belonging.



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**Mary Hickman, Helen Crowley and Nick Mai**

**With Umut Erel, The Open University, and the Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast**



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Downham Youth Centre, London

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Nevertheless, all responsibility for the contents rests with the authors.

# Executive summary

## The study

This research set out to improve our understanding of the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion by exploring the rhythms and realities of everyday life of both the long-term settled and new arrival residents.

The research is based on the premise that everyday realities in the UK are under pressure from the forces of individualisation, globalisation and post-industrialism, which structure the lives of the long-term settled and new immigrants alike. We aimed to investigate the strategies people deployed, in a time of far-reaching changes, to meet their perceived priorities and needs.

In current public debates, there is an association made between increasing ethnic and religious diversity and the erosion of social cohesion. However, recent research has shown that age, class and where we live are far more important in shaping life chances than are ethnicity or religion and that the arrival of new migrant groups did not coincide with an increase in crime.

We explored the relations between and within long-term resident and new arrival groups and the impact of social and economic transformations in six sites across the UK:

- England: Leicester;
- England: London, Downham;
- England: London, Kilburn;
- England: Peterborough and Thetford;
- Northern Ireland: Dungannon;
- Scotland: Glasgow.

We divided our sample into three categories: long-term settled majority ethnic, long-term settled minority ethnic and new immigrants. The sites were chosen for their specific and different compositions of these groups. Between February 2006 and May 2007, in each area, we conducted:



- 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews with local key respondents;
- 40 biographical, life narrative interviews with local residents in each site (20 in Glasgow, the remaining 20 substituted by diary keeping and discussion groups);
- Ethnographic observation of the local rhythms and patterns of everyday life.

## **Findings**

Our overall finding is that to ensure the cohesion of the social fabric of society it is necessary to address both relational and structural issues. We need to consider how people relate to each other as well as addressing fundamental issues of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination. Discussing how people get on together without dealing with inequalities will not work. We concluded that the focus on shared norms and values that characterises current policies of social cohesion should complement, rather than substitute the established multicultural valuing of cultural diversity. It is important to enable and support both expressions of *unity* and *difference* for the social cohesion of local communities.

## **Relational issues**

We found that a majority of the long-term settled, in all places, understood social cohesion to be about a willingness and ability to be able to negotiate a difficult line between commonality and separation. The fact that many of the long-term settled shared similar understandings of social cohesion did not mean, however, that they agreed on how it was to be achieved. There were differences about who was responsible for social cohesion.

These differences are rooted in the narratives of history, immigration and belongings that characterise a particular place. The dominant narratives and practices in local areas are key to understanding how new immigrants will be perceived and addressed.

Two narratives of place:

- ‘From here’ – one narrative that views the locality as comprising settled people who are ‘the same’ or ‘like us’ until new immigrants appear. If this narrative is dominant then it heightens the likelihood of a negative reaction to new

immigration and generates expectations amongst the long-term settled (both majority ethnic and minority ethnic) that the onus for achieving social cohesion lies with the newcomers.

- ‘From here and elsewhere’ – second narrative that views the locality as being where no one ethnic group is in the ascendancy either numerically, culturally or politically and acknowledges the history of immigration to the area. If this narrative is dominant then the likelihood of an accepting response towards new immigrants is heightened. The long-term settled (both majority ethnic and minority ethnic) in these places tend to have a more minimal expectation of commonalities, accept cultural pluralism and the necessity to adapt to the social changes introduced by the arrival of new immigrants.

Downham, Braunstone (Leicester) and (initially) Dungannon, Glasgow and Peterborough are places where the local self-representation was in terms of homogeneity and ‘settledness’. We identified the phenomenon of ‘settled backlash’ in these places. Kilburn and Leicester (except Braunstone) are places characterised by an acknowledgement of histories of immigration, the existence of many transnational families and a self-representation as heterogeneous.

This is a snapshot in time and we had already detected some changes by the end of the research period. For example, in certain areas where the long-term settled felt themselves to be the only ones entitled to feel ‘from here’ there has been a shift that has allowed some acceptance and valuing of heterogeneity.

Change can occur for a variety of reasons. Successful social interventions by local agencies, often in conjunction with community organisations, were useful in heightening mutual understandings between long-term settled residents and new immigrants especially in areas with a dominant narrative of being ‘from here’. In places where the benefits of any new investment accrued to both the long-term settled and new arrivals there was evidence of improved relations.

## Structural issues

The transformations emerging from structural processes such as individualisation, post-industrialism, and globalisation impact locally, nationally and transnationally and shape the everyday life experiences of both the long-term settled and new arrivals. Many of these structural processes generate demand for immigrant labour and challenge social cohesion, particularly in areas of poverty and multiple inequalities.

Flowing from these social transformations we identified the following issues as key when considering social cohesion:

- **Family** – the conflicting demands of family and work, the increasing pace of life and the pressures of consumerism were of concern to many interviewees as they impact on family life, and limit the possibilities for wider social relationships and associations. Concern was generally expressed about a resulting weakening in parental authority and many new arrivals worried that their own families might be influenced in this way. These altering dynamics of family and work life are changing the connections and associations between people.
- **Education** – is a key context for the interaction between long-term residents and new immigrants and the latter do not create entirely new tensions. Schools and colleges are often the site for both expressing and resolving conflicts that originate in the wider locality. The arrival of new immigrants is both a challenge and an opportunity for these educational settings. The ‘settled backlash’ that we identified in some places resulted from the disturbing of social hierarchies around the right and ability to obtain both educational achievement and upward social mobility. Local authority policies for tackling social antagonisms were often critical for the resolution or not of any local tensions. The arrival of new immigrant children and young people could put a strain on resources but also revitalise educational institutions in the longer term. There is evidence that the new City Academies reinforce, rather than challenge, existing inequalities and that this has a very mixed impact on social cohesion.
- **Work** – can be an obstacle to social cohesion and not, as is often assumed, an agent of integration. For example, the effective segregation of new immigrant workers in agriculture and food processing plants – through low wages, long hours, shift work, tied accommodation – can circumscribe their participation both at work and beyond. Arrangements between agencies and employers often reinforce this isolation. UK economic buoyancy is based to some extent on work conditions and circumstances for new immigrants that undermine social cohesion. Bullying and discrimination towards new immigrants working in the nursing and care professions was experienced as diminishing and isolating. Insecurity about leave to remain entitlement, as it legally shifted from four to five years of uninterrupted working, undermined social cohesion as the establishment of new lives was threatened.
- **Housing** – there is no set pattern of the influence of housing on social cohesion in different localities with similar housing provision. Rather, where resources and agencies of mediation follow new immigrants into an area and improved

facilities are made available also to the long-term settled, neighbourly relations can be improved. In areas characterised by poor resources, negligible agency involvement and overcrowding in sub-standard accommodation, little space exists for good relations and the tendency to stigmatise all new arrivals as asylum seekers is increased. There was a lack of consensus on and knowledge about which members of the long-term settled and new arrivals have the right to access subsidised housing in Britain. This coincides with the proliferation of local hierarchies of entitlement and with different views being held in different places by local authorities, the long-term settled and new arrivals.

- Deprivation – the likelihood of good community relations in areas of poverty and multiple inequalities is reduced by poor resources and also by lives diminished by sustained poverty. However, deprivation alone does not cause hostility towards new immigrants. New arrivals in different places highlighted both the continuing resilience that exists within deprived communities as well as the existence of profound disconnections between people, groups and institutions. Where there is an antagonistic response towards new arrivals, sustained investment in infrastructure and in social interventions that are redistributive and available to the long-term settled and new immigrants alike is important. Regeneration programmes set up to tackle deprivation have had a mixed impact on social cohesion in these six places.

From our analysis of the necessity of addressing structural issues and their impact on social cohesion there are three policy implications we would single out:

- Projects addressing the needs of new arrivals can become a new and visible opportunity for enhanced support for long-term residents, so that the arrival of new groups is seen as bringing to rather than taking from local communities.
- Tackling the long-seated problems, inequalities and discriminations ‘in place’, is essential for social cohesion for all; the ways in which different strategies of intervention across a range of policy areas – unemployment, lack of public and leisure facilities, low educational achievement, family breakdown – interrelate, needs to be reassessed.
- Initiatives of social intervention, including regeneration, need to be long-term and enable local people to establish meaningful interpersonal relations with the spaces and staff delivering support.

## **Britishness and social cohesion**

Most interviewees understand social cohesion to be about the negotiation of the right balance between separateness and unity, rather than about having total consensus on shared values and priorities. Many majority and minority ethnic long-term settled welcome the opportunity to meet people in their area at public social events, such as festivals and cultural celebrations, and to form friendships and acquaintances selectively. This research suggests that social cohesion exists where all people are able to live in close proximity, accept differences, and mix with those with whom they wish, and have local agreed and effective means for resolving disagreements and problems.

Majority ethnic long-term residents' belonging to Britain is complex and changes in relation to different UK settings. There was little interest in Scotland and Northern Ireland in discussing the meaning of belonging to Britain. People were more concerned about either the local jurisdiction or sometimes moving beyond national attachments.

In England multiculturalism and contemporary government concerns with immigration and asylum were experienced by some long-term settled majority ethnic people as neglectful of their specific needs and identity. Despite considerable criticism of the government from this group, especially about the welfare state and the war in Iraq, Britain was for them a taken for granted home. Minority ethnic long-term settled residents and new arrivals are more explicit than majority ethnic long-term settled residents in their appreciation of Britain and in their expression of multiple belongings to Britain and other significant places (of origin).

The dominant 'consensualist' sensibility informing current policies of social cohesion, with its implied argument that immigration threatens a shared national identity and its emphasis on identifying processes that can foster commonalities, is out of step with our findings. It also overlooks the deep-seated social divisions and transformations shaping the everyday life experiences of both the long-term settled and new arrivals and their impact on social cohesion.



# 1 Introduction

## Summary of the research aims and methods

This six-site, cross-UK study is wide-ranging and complex, and our findings and conclusions bear directly on current political debates and policy issues about social cohesion.

Our aims were to:

- capture the voices of long-term settled residents and new immigrants;
- outline the contours of belonging and marginalisation in the UK today;
- understand ‘what works’ – that is, how people are trying to make their lives work, negotiating the flows and contradictions of everyday life, in a time of rapid social transformations;
- mobilise memories of migration and settlement to illustrate how complex patterns of inward and outward migration make up the history of the UK;
- assess the role of social interventions in achieving social cohesion;
- give examples of successful strategies of social cohesion;
- suggest policy areas that need to be re-examined in the light of our findings.

In order to ground the research in the lived experiences of long-term residents and new migrants, and to analyse the interface between people, communities and structures, we decided to explore and record these experiences and interrelationships in six sites across the UK:

- England: Leicester;
- England: London, Downham;
- England: London, Kilburn;
- England: Peterborough and Thetford;

- Northern Ireland: Dungannon;
- Scotland: Glasgow.

The sites were chosen for their specific and different compositions of long-term residents and new migrant populations and, between them, illustrate the heterogeneous contexts of social cohesion in the UK.

The selection of methods for the research was determined by our aim to explore the relationship between social cohesion and new migration by focusing on the way this is embedded in the rhythms and realities of everyday life. Thus each site (with the partial exception of Glasgow) involved the following methods:

- 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with local key respondents;
- 40 biographical, life-narrative interviews with local residents in each site (20 in Glasgow);
- ethnographic observation of the local rhythms and patterns of everyday life.

In Glasgow, we had the opportunity of working with the Overseas Nurses Network. Discussion groups with, the keeping of diaries by, the nurses substituted for 20 biographical interviews. Apart from this variation, the methods used in Glasgow were the same as in the other sites.

In collecting our sample for the biographical interviews our aim was to ensure that important variations in the local profile were represented in the overall sample for the area, rather than to produce statistical representativeness. Specific attention was given as appropriate to: ensuring equal numbers of men and women; appropriate age and ethnic profiles; and reflecting the distribution of people in work and not in paid employment.

In the rest of this chapter, we present: further details of our aims, definitions and methods; an account of the background and context of the research; and an outline of how the findings and conclusions have been organised in this report.



## Aims and definitions of the research

There have been a number of recent calls for more and better qualitative studies of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2006), and for the need to shift the preoccupation with social cohesion towards an understanding of the nature of the connections between people and of the importance of contestation in raising and rectifying inequalities (Hope Cheong *et al.*, 2007). The research proposal we put together in 2005 anticipated this research agenda in that it is a qualitative study predicated on the following three interconnected points.

- The complexity of everyday realities in the UK is under pressure from the forces of individualisation, globalisation and post-industrialism.
- These transformations simultaneously structure the lives of long-term settled residents and new migrants; and influence the social space of agency.
- Social cohesion emerges from understanding and managing social transformations as they are experienced collectively and individually at the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race, class, faith, age and sexuality.

The definition of a new immigrant that we have used includes (documented and undocumented) labour migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived in the past decade. This is broadly in line with most common usages of the term 'new immigrant', as it is during this period that there has been an upward curve in demand for migrant labour. For brevity, we frequently use the term 'A8' to describe migrants who arrived from the eight countries in East and Central Europe that joined the European Union in 2004. The corollary of this definition of new immigrant is that the definition of long-term settled is anyone who has been settled in Britain since before 1997. The study does not, however, focus on new immigrants per se as it involves an equal if not sometimes greater focus on long-term residents. This results from our view that, in order to understand social cohesion and new immigration, research about new arrivals has to be integrated with understandings about the long-term settled population.

The usefulness of the term 'long-term settled', rather than 'indigenous population' or 'host community', is that it encompasses all those not categorised as new immigrants and directs attention to the history and influence of different phases of immigration to the United Kingdom and the inherent heterogeneity of the 'British people'. The expression 'long-term settled' positions those who consider themselves 'the host' (but may of course be resident in the UK because of long-forgotten immigrations) equally with minority ethnic communities, who in the very use of that

term or another widely used term, black and minority ethnic, are usually positioned in a subordinate role in the nation. The term 'long-term settled', therefore, attempts to give equal consideration to the different stakes and concerns within a national population characterised by a range of social divisions. Consequently, throughout the report, we use the term 'long-term settled majority ethnic' to refer to people who in other accounts might be referred to as 'the white community' or again as 'the host community'. So, for example, by 'long-term settled majority ethnic' in England we mean people who the category 'White British' in the 2001 Census of England and Wales was meant to capture. We specifically do not include in this term people who might be classified as either 'White Irish' or 'White Other' in the 2001 Census. Only by conflating ethnicity and colour can these two groups be classified as part of the majority ethnic category. We use the term 'long-term settled minority ethnic' to refer to all of the people who the other categories in the ethnic question in the 2001 Census, apart from 'White British', were meant to capture. Many of these people are either those who immigrated as part of the large post-second world war movements from the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Ireland or are their children and grandchildren.

In Scotland, we use the term 'long-term settled majority ethnic' to refer to people who perceive themselves as part of the 'indigenous' population or a foundational immigration from Ireland in the nineteenth century. The term 'long-term settled minority ethnic' is used to refer to all the long-term settled residents in Scotland who do not see themselves as part of these two groups. In Northern Ireland we were cognisant of the need to ensure that the term 'long-term settled' should encompass the Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist populations and others who would not ascribe to any of these labels. In reporting the findings on Dungannon, we sometimes refer to 'long-term settled' meaning the person is not a new immigrant; sometimes we have specified the ethno-religious background of the person when it is relevant, for example, to the data about belonging in the UK. We have made all these distinctions in our usage of the term 'long-term settled' to signal the deep-rootedness of the heterogeneity of the UK's contemporary population.

In the study, our principal focus on new immigrants has been on labour migrants, not only because they are the majority in recent immigration but also because the asylum issue is likely to recede as a key factor in immigration, whereas global and EU labour mobility will remain as the focus of 'managed migration' and cohesion policies (Zetter *et al.*, 2006). However, this research is driven by place rather than economic sector or political category. This is because, even in these work-driven, time-poor times, place shapes our lives and fortunes. Recent research on the UK has made the case that age, class and where we live are more key to limiting or assisting our life chances than either ethnicity or religion (Thomas and Dorling, 2007). Place

affects our access to jobs and public services (especially education), our access to shopping and culture, our level of personal security, and the availability of medical services (Dreier *et al.*, 2004). Economic segregation, age and place may be far more threatening to social cohesion than any 'ethnic clusters'.

For this research, place is conceptualised, following Massey (1994, p. 154), as constituted by 'networks of social relations' that are perceived to be both local and distant by residents. More specifically, we focus on the interplay between local networks of social relations and definitions of what constitutes 'the local' in relation to 'the distant' that shapes the experience of belonging to a place. These definitions of locality as opposed to or indeed linked to 'the distant' emerge at the intersection of race, class and ethnicity, whose specific role in defining local structures of belonging is grounded in the history of each place. We use the term 'intersection' to refer to the theory of intersectionality, alluding to the way in which different social and cultural categories and dimensions – like race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, sexuality – overlap and interact within social relations and processes to legitimise specific social hierarchies and inequalities (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 192). For a complex understanding of people's identities, sense of belongings and relations with others, it is necessary to try and illuminate how a constellation of experiences and identifications may be in play.

As a result of these decisions, the research aimed to draw out the specific and comparable realities of people living in contemporary, multilayered communities in varied, geographically spread neighbourhoods encompassing relations of deprivation and affluence, harmony and tension.

## **The six sites of the research**

The six sites were chosen for their specific and different compositions of long-term residents and new migrant populations, and between them they illustrate the heterogeneous contexts of social cohesion in the UK. Each offers a privileged focus on a spatially (urban/rural), socioculturally (multi-ethnic/homogeneous) or economically defined (agriculture/industry/services) experience of the relationship between social cohesion and new immigration. The two sites in London focus on symmetrically different experiences of the relation between urban long-term residents and new migrant groups. Glasgow enabled us to engage with the interconnection between gender, work and social cohesion through a study of health and care practitioners in the public and private sectors. Leicester and one of the two London sites problematised dynamics perceived as 'positive' and 'successful'

in the interplay between migration and social cohesion. Dungannon, Peterborough and Thetford also enabled a focus on work (the food-processing sector) as a factor shaping the conditions and experiences of social cohesion in two rural/small city contexts marked by the recent arrival of new migrant groups.

### **Leicester (Belgrave, Braunstone and Highfields areas)**

Leicester has a population of 318,000 and is one of the East Midlands' three major economic, social and cultural centres. It is a major site of commercial and manufacturing industry, and known more for the diversity of its trade than for its dependence on a single industry. The city of Leicester was selected because of its (perceived) successful performance in relation to issues of social cohesion and multiculturalism, and because of the centrality of family migration within the migratory patterns of its new and old migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee groups. After over 50 years of settlement of black and Asian people from former British colonies, the Caribbean and India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and East Africa, Leicester has now the largest (proportionally) minority ethnic population in England and Wales, while its Indian community is the largest in the country outside London. In the last ten years, these established minority ethnic groups witnessed the arrival of significant numbers of Polish and Romanian migrants, and of Albanian and Somali asylum seekers and refugees.

### **Downham**

Downham is a local authority ward located in the southern part of the London Borough of Lewisham. One characteristic of the area is a series of post-first world war social housing estates that were built to rehouse people from Deptford and Bermondsey, both areas of acute housing shortage. The area has been in gradual economic decline since the 1960s, with the closure of many community facilities. There are a higher number of economically inactive people than the national or Lewisham averages, a poor educational record – especially in secondary schools, an older than average population and a high percentage of people renting from the council (41 per cent). Downham was selected because it is characterised by a perception of self-containment and majority ethnic sociocultural homogeneity. The arrival of (mostly Albanian and Tamil) refugees, asylum seekers and East European migrants has been concurrent with a significant increase in racialised social antagonism. This was particularly acute within and around the underachieving local secondary school, Malory, whose surplus places were filled by pupils from new

migrant groups and established minority ethnic communities. As a response to the upsurge in racially aggravated crimes, in the last three years, the area has been targeted by a range of social intervention initiatives implemented by public and non-governmental organisations.

### **Kilburn**

Kilburn, centrally located in London's north west, is divided by Kilburn High Road, which separates it into its respective local authority jurisdictions of Brent and Camden. Kilburn has high unemployment (less than half of the adult population are in full-time work), high levels of overcrowding and housing need, low levels of home-ownership, high levels of teenage pregnancy and very high levels of crime. In both Kilburn wards, the majority ethnic population is under 50 per cent; 17 per cent of the overall Kilburn population is Irish-born (accurate figures on the second generation are not available), the African-Caribbean population is 13 per cent of the Brent ward and 3 per cent in the Camden ward. Another very significant group are the black African community, of whom the Somali population form the largest proportion. Kilburn is therefore part of London's celebrated cosmopolitan core and is defined by historically multi-layered and intersecting migratory flows, notably of a Jewish population, migrants from the Caribbean and a large Irish settlement from the 1950s onwards. New migrant groups from Eastern Europe (Albanian, Polish, Romanian), Africa (Morocco, Somalia), South-East Asia (Philippines) and Latin America (Colombia, Peru) in the past ten years seemingly have been able to merge into hybridised patterns of everyday life. The research aimed to engage with Downham and Kilburn comparatively by exploring the way in which the historical experience of migrancy and hybridity (or its lack) can be a factor sustaining (or hindering) social cohesion.

### **Peterborough (and Thetford)**

Peterborough is an ancient cathedral town of 163,000 people. From being a transport hub and centre of the brick-making industry, it became a centre of engineering industries in the early twentieth century, but much of this had declined by the 1960s. A major change was heralded by the designation of Peterborough as a new town and, between 1970 and 1988, the population doubled to 136,000. During this period, it developed a greater range of employment opportunities, especially in the service sector. Since the late 1990s, the arrival in Peterborough of migrant workers, at first from Portugal and more recently from Eastern Europe, to work predominantly in

nearby agriculture and the food-processing industries has had a significant impact on the town's population, and has created new challenges for the local delivery of accommodation, health provision and social services. There is evidence of exploitative practices, which have targeted the undocumented migrant population. The long-term resident population's response to the arrival of this new group of workers has not been uniformly positive and indeed there were reports of physical attacks on migrant workers. However, the city has been the site of significant social interventions in response to the situation and this is one of the main reasons it was selected for inclusion in the study.

### **Dungannon**

Dungannon is a rural town of 11,000 people located 40 miles west of Belfast. In recent years, it has experienced the arrival of large numbers of migrants (first Portuguese, then Polish, Lithuanian and other East European nationals, also some migrants from Brazil), who were recruited to work in the local food-processing factories. Some animosities between long-term residents and new arrivals had been reported. A range of statutory and voluntary organisations and initiatives was set up, providing needed support and information services. This case study would explore in some depth the way these organisations and initiatives were able to respond to a context of rapidly changing socio-economic and linguistic demographics. We were interested to see if the issues about new immigration and social cohesion were similar in Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK or very different, in that migrants could potentially be subject to a process of polarised integration into antagonistic local communities.

### **Glasgow**

Glasgow is a city in the south west of Scotland that has a population of 577,000. The city was hit hard by the economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s when many of its traditional industries declined or disappeared. Since then, it has successfully regenerated itself through investment and development of the service sector, and a wide-ranging cultural programme of restoring Glasgow's considerable wealth in museums, galleries and architectural monuments. Prior to the twentieth century the largest immigration to Scotland was that of the Irish and much of it was concentrated in south-west Scotland. Twentieth-century migrants to Scotland continued to come from Ireland but also from Italy, China and Pakistan. The research specifically investigated the experiences of overseas nurses working in the NHSS and the

private health sector. The nurses came mainly from the Philippines, India and Africa. We decided to focus on work and its relationship to social cohesion in Scotland because the Government in Edinburgh is targeting increased immigration to offset a declining work-age population. Our partner organisation, the Overseas Nurses Network (ONN), provides, through the workplace and supported by UNISON (public sector trade union), a network for new migrant nurses and does not require union membership. It includes 600 nurses from all over Scotland (predominantly women, but some men) and the nurses are from India, the Philippines, South Africa, West Africa and China. In Glasgow, we also paid particular attention to issues in relation to the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers, as there had been initial problems with their dispersal to the city.

## **Methods used in the research**

The research was conducted between autumn 2005 and autumn 2007. The methodological approaches used responded to JRF's wish to explore the relation between social cohesion and new migration by focusing on the way this is embedded into the rhythms and realities of everyday life, and on the strategies people deploy to meet their perceived priorities and needs. Therefore, although the research design is customised to meet the specificities of each neighbourhood, at core, each site incorporated the following methods:

- ethnographic observation of the rhythms and patterns of everyday life in the contexts under examination;
- 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key respondents of local structures and institutions;
- 40 biographical interviews with local residents in each site (20 in Glasgow).

These methods were selected because of their complementary nature and manageability, their appropriateness for exploring the impact of macro-level trends in people's lives and their suitability for including the voices of marginalised groups. Life-narrative accounts enable us to describe and understand the realities of life through the textures and weaves of: new migration flows; contemporary social transformations; local experiences of social cohesion and civic association; and across the social divisions of ethnicity, gender, class and social status. The interviews took place between February 2006 and May 2007.

Glasgow was a partial exception to these methods because of the study of the ONN. Focus groups were conducted within the meetings of the Network to explore the personal, institutional and cultural experiences of the nurses. A small group was invited to keep diaries committing to a minimum of twice-weekly entries over a six-month period or weekly entries over twelve months. The discussion groups and diaries substituted for 20 biographical interviews, otherwise the methods used were the same as in the other sites. In Dungannon, our research partner, the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR), Belfast, conducted the research on our behalf. There were meetings between the London-based research team and ICR, the Director of ICR was on the Steering Group of the project and ten of the 55 interviews in Dungannon were undertaken by a member of the London team to ensure full familiarity with the local area.

We used a non-random, stratified, quota-sampling method drawing on the statistical profile of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of each site, and the majorities and minorities within it. Specific attention was given to ensuring equal numbers of men and women, and an appropriate age profile and distribution of people in work and not employed. The aim was to ensure that important variations in the local profile were represented in the overall sample, rather than to produce statistical representativeness. Our two core categories of interviewees were long-term settled residents and new arrivals, paying attention to country of origin in the latter case. Accordingly, across all sites, a sample profile was created by mapping the key demographic and socio-economic dimensions in terms of the issues we were focusing on in each area. For example, in Downham, the main issues we aimed to investigate were: the (self-)perception of the area in terms of majority ethnic homogeneity, claims of 'unruly' youth behaviour and inter-ethnic conflicts in the context of education. In order to address the main ethnic and social dimensions of these key issues in this particular place, we decided to interview 30 long-term residents, of whom 18 were white British and 12 minority ethnic, of whom four were of Irish background, four Asian and four black Caribbean. The remaining ten biographical interviewees were new arrivals selected in order to be able to examine the migration experiences of the three main groups of new arrivals, Tamil and Albanian refugees (six and two, respectively) and Eastern European A8 migrants (two). An appropriate age and gender balance was aimed at in each area. But, for example, the fact that youth and education were issues to be investigated in Downham meant that the age distribution of the sample here was purposely skewed to a relative over-representation of young people.

In each place, the sample profile was discussed and refined with our partner organisations. They suggested people who would fit the required profiles or indicated appropriate associations and contacts when they were unable to do so directly.



In all sites, we only allowed ourselves to rely on a particular 'entry point' to obtain a maximum of 20 per cent of our sample. In this way, the samples of the local population for the biographical interviews were identified through a combination of the snowball technique, starting from existing contacts within key local structures and institutions, random calls and other methods, including contacts resulting from our ethnographic fieldwork. We are grateful to our partner organisations in each place for the ways in which they helped us to access divergent networks and spaces in each of the localities.

## **Background and context of the research**

In line with most high-income countries in the world, the United Kingdom (UK) now has net immigration, having formerly, even in times of high immigration, been a country of net outward migration. Population growth stems primarily from this transformation. Since 1989, a majority of European countries have become simultaneously sites of sending, receiving and transient populations. By the beginning of the 21st century, Europe had 56.1 million migrants and North America had 40.8 million; this was the equivalent respectively of three migrants per 1,000 inhabitants and 3.1 migrants per 1,000 inhabitants (Boswell, 2005). It is not, however, solely this increase in the numbers of international migrants that characterises much of the media and political spotlight on rising inward migration but also the enlarged global spread of the source countries.

The proportion of inflows to the UK stemming from returning British people from the 'Old' and 'New' Commonwealth has declined, while the proportions coming from the European Union (EU) have risen, but the largest rise is in the proportion of 'third country nationals', to use an EU term. To grasp the increasing range of country origins of new migrants it is worth examining the position of London, which, as immigration has increased, has received an increasing share of the inflows. In 1986, 76 per cent of the 1.17 million foreign-born population of London came from former British territories and just six countries contributed the majority of these people: Ireland, India, Kenya, Jamaica, Cyprus and Bangladesh. By 2006, of the 2.23 million foreign-born population of London, the proportion of those from former British territories had dropped to 59 per cent and to the original six countries it would be necessary to add nine others to account for the majority of the immigrants: Nigeria, Poland, Sri Lanka, Ghana, South Africa, Pakistan, Somalia, United States of America (USA) and Turkey (Gordon *et al.*, 2007, p. 13). This demonstrates that, whereas historically migration mapped the connective routes of colonialism and implicated specific sites of emigration, now postcolonial flows involve many different developing countries in servicing the UK.

There is, therefore, no question that international migration has increased substantially and that immigration to the UK is from across the globe. What debate centres on is the impact of these new immigrations. Despite some voices stating that the twenty-first century UK does not fall into the category of requiring additional workers 'in order to develop the economy properly' (Dench *et al.*, 2006), or arguing that there are pools of latent labour that could substitute for migrants (Rowthorn, 2003), or that, at best, the economic impact of immigration has been neutral (Green, 2007), many studies are agreed that recent immigration has boosted economic output. According, for example, to a Home Office report (2007), the economy has been boosted by £6 billion per annum, immigration has also assisted the process of creating more jobs and is assessed by employers, in a number of sectors, as providing workers who are more reliable and harder working than British workers. The major downside is that there is evidence that the real wages of those working in the worst paid jobs have been lowered by immigration (Gordon *et al.*, 2007; Home Office, 2007).

Immigration remains a key strand of government economic strategy, notwithstanding all references to border controls being reinforced, points systems being introduced and measures to exclude those 'without a right to stay' being given a high profile. Broadly speaking, then, the economic benefits of immigration are depicted as a positive balance sheet. This is even true of influential sections of the press (see editorial, *The Times*, 17 October 2007). Yet public opinion, especially in England, remains deeply ambivalent about acknowledging the significance of migration and divided on how to manage the social adjustments required to integrate immigrants. The main debate lies in two areas: the impact of immigration on social cohesion because of what is perceived as the disruptive effects of increased ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity; and the pressure of immigration on public service provision and housing.

Following the disturbances in some cities in northern England in 2001, community cohesion became the new framework for 'race relations' policy under New Labour, and rapidly became absorbed within local government and related organisations to replace previous policies of multiculturalism (Worley, 2005). Originally proffered by Robert Putnam (2000), the idea of social cohesion was developed to explain declining political participation in the USA. According to Putnam, the golden era of social cohesion predated mass television viewing and women's re-entry into the labour force – that is, the 1950s, the last moments of industrialism sustained by the crest of post-war reconstruction. The growing strength of individualism, he argued, corroded community cohesion, generating appetites for 'bowling alone', separate from the responsibilities and concerns of community association. In Putnam's conception, voluntary communal association is consensual and, to further cohesion

across diversity, a more capacious 'we' must be developed. It is here that there was lift-off with social policy in the UK.

Putnam's ideas have been taken up by policy-makers, and others, with an emphasis on the need for bridging rather than bonding social capital (see Home Office, 2004; Buonfino and Hilder, 2006). In other words, any policy instrument or initiative that is seen as making links between people is emblematic of the new emphasis on social cohesion, while bonding social capital, although not denigrated, is viewed as likely to reinforce ethnic or faith 'enclaves'. Hence the change in policy direction in recent years 'away from culturally specific provision for different ethnic communities towards more culturally mixed ("integrated") provision' (Hudson *et al.*, 2007, p. 112). In his latest research, which was discussed in the popular press and other mass media as few academic papers are, Putnam (2007) states that the greater the diversity in a community the fewer people vote, the less they volunteer and the less they trust their neighbours. Overall he paints a bleak picture of civic desolation, although not of heightened tension, in diverse communities. How applicable is this USA-generated thesis for the UK?

A recent JRF concept paper argues that social cohesion policy in the UK, reflecting a wider European agenda, marks a significant shift away from the long-standing goal of promoting multiculturalism and is characterised 'by three factors: the adoption of an assimilationist stance on migrant incorporation; the relative diminution of policies on material welfare for migrant communities; and the shift in institutional responsibility' (Zetter *et al.*, 2006, p. 3). The authors comment that it is the new trends in migration that are taken as challenging ideas of a cohesive 'national identity' and as threatening the commonly held norms and values by which Britain identifies itself. The outcome is seen as the undermining of social solidarity, identities and the shared histories by which citizenship and belonging are conferred. Promoting social cohesion, therefore, as articulated in various Home Office documents, tilts policies 'firmly in the direction of inclusivity and assimilation as the instruments of social cohesion for new (and indeed settled) migrant communities' (Zetter *et al.*, 2006, p. 4) and consequently the thrust of government initiatives is towards reforming the governance of community relations as much as in directly improving service provision.

Underpinning these assumptions and fears ostensibly prompted by recent immigration are notions that it is the diversity, even the 'superdiversity', of communities that is problematic. The concept of diversity is used here as a signifier of difference, of immigrants, of minority ethnic groups, in other words of a national community that includes 'others'. In other words, 'diversity' is always already speaking of a 'host' or core constituency that is being subjected to diversification

and (re)constructs itself by identifying that difference (Crowley and Hickman, 2008, forthcoming). The underlying assumption is that formal political equality presupposes a national cultural identity and hence cultural sameness becomes the essential prerequisite for access to citizenship rights (Stolcke, 1995). In the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of multiculturalism was pivotal in national political debates/discourses. Even in the relatively constrained form in which it was actualised, multiculturalism is, post 11 September 2001 and 7 July 2005, identified as part of the problem. Multi-ethnic societies can only function now, it is argued, on the basis of some minimal convictions shared by all their members.

In Britain, this has led to a renewed emphasis on the role of Britishness in achieving a workably diverse society. Government policy emphasises the need for individuals to commit as Britons. Tony Blair, in the final months of his premiership, articulated New Labour's stance that integration was not about culture or lifestyle but about values. In this way the Government argues that its policy does not represent assimilation because it is tolerant of different cultural traditions. The emphasis on values is justified because the prime task for the State is integrating citizens not people and thus the issue becomes – does everyone share British values? Core British values, Blair argued, consist of tolerance, solidarity and equality. Citizens have the right to differ from each other but have to express these differences in a manner that respects shared values and practices. Citizens have duties – such as obedience to the law and to live by democratic principles – and these duties take precedence over any culture or faith. Being British could be summed up, he concluded, as: 'the right to be different, the duty to be integrated' (Blair, 2006). This position is broadly that also of Trevor Phillips (2005), Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, and of the current Prime Minister, Gordon Brown (2006). Implicit in these formulations is a linking of the agenda on social cohesion and integration with that of combating terrorism. We question whether the real concern with social cohesion should lie elsewhere.

The other aspect of the debate about recent immigration and social cohesion concerns pressure on public services. Interestingly, what is now highlighted is not competition for work between migrants and long-term settled residents but rather competition between communities for access to welfare support and public services, including education and housing. Racialised hostility and community divisions are seen as at least in part related to questions about perceptions of fairness and entitlements in the allocation of scarce resources within the welfare state (Goodhart, 2004; Dench *et al.*, 2006). Among service providers, recent surveys (Ford, 2007; Pillai *et al.*, 2007) showed that difficulties were rated highest in the provision of affordable housing, in schools (the turnover of children and the difficulties in teaching those with different languages and cultures were cited) and in health (because of increases in GP caseloads and in the expanded traffic through many A&E

departments of hospitals). It is, of course, the reformation and expansion of provision of these services under New Labour that has been one of the processes that has driven heightened requirements for migrant labour. The demands for migrant labour in contemporary Britain are therefore various and complex, and this sits uneasily with constructions of the 'outsider' as problematic and threatening.

There have been critiques of this dominant perspective that deems recent immigration to be undermining social cohesion. One argument is that the breakdown of social cohesion is more a result of the failure to institute appropriate policies and programmes to facilitate ethnic and racial diversity than of any intrinsic differences of language, religion or ethnicity (Hugo, 2005). Another argument is that community tensions are not inevitable because the impact of new immigration on local neighbourhoods varies depending on: the local socio-economic context, history of previous settlement and ethnic profile, actual and perceived ethnicity and identity of new immigrants, local media portrayals of immigration and asylum, the legal status of new immigrants and the success of local agencies in mediating between established and incoming populations (Robinson and Reeve, 2006). A further argument is that the language of assimilation and monoculturalism that characterises discussion of social cohesion focuses attention away from economic inequalities onto the values and mores of the minorities (Hope Cheong *et al.*, 2007).

Critical commentary on the social cohesion debate also often centres, quite justifiably, on the absence of definition of what social cohesion entails (Vertovec, 1997); hence, no doubt, the reliance on Putnam's evocations of the USA in the 1950s. Part of the problem is that it is often easier to say what social cohesion is not. This is because our broad governance and policy framework is one of 'fire-fighting' and reacting to problems as they arise. Other contributors to the debate about social cohesion point out that it is not clear, on the one hand, what migrants might be cohering to and, on the other hand, who is, or should be, doing the cohering. The persistence of these and other dilemmas and contradictions demonstrates the challenge of developing and implementing social cohesion policy (Zetter *et al.*, 2006).

There are valuable points in all of these critiques, and aspects of them were integral to our study. Our own approach to the issues, however, stems from a more macro-perspective. For the past 150 years, national myths have shaped understandings of 'community' at a society-wide level (Anderson, 1991). In contemporary times, these nationally imagined structures came under pressure both from the fluidity of global connections and from the resurgence of the claims of the local (Held *et al.*, 1999; Brah, 2002). The decline and restructuring of manufacture and the old heavy industries, the switch from a predominantly male, full-time, blue-collar workforce to a feminised, flexible, service sector workforce ushered in some of the most significant changes in the twentieth century (Ferree *et al.*, 1999; Hutton and Giddens, 2000).

Simultaneously, privatisation policies substantially eroded the old post-war welfare state (Ginsberg, 2001). Finally, the reproduction on a global scale of the push-pull factors of capitalism created new migratory flows shaped by the competition for skilled and unskilled labour (Anderson, 2000; Kofman *et al.*, 2000). These macroscopic social changes have impacted heavily on the rhythms and realities of the everyday lives of everyone, and have made great demands on the fabric of social cohesion.

The demands of the neo-liberal, post-industrial order became apparent during the 1980s and 1990s, and include: flexible and mobile workforces, longer working weeks, dual-income households, reduced welfare spending and curtailed community expenditure, and the normalisation of structural worklessness. These demands in and of themselves potentially render the relations of collective belonging fraught, competitive and hostile. The social and economic transformations of post-industrialism and globalisation are therefore challenging both at the level of lived relations and at the level of policy intervention and strategies of governance. In the neo-liberal context of social markets and individualisation so undermining of social cohesion in itself, it is perhaps unsurprising that, at the conceptual level, multiculturalism should be targeted and social cohesion should transpose itself into community cohesion. Community cohesion is the current term for what used to be referred to as 'race relations' or 'community relations' and is reductive of rather than synonymous with social cohesion. This targeting of multiculturalism as the enemy of community cohesion lays much of the costs and penalties of the transitions of post-industrialism at the feet of new arrivals and even settled minority ethnic communities.

The difficulties of this period of transition and the threat to social cohesion that it may entail are the property neither of new migrants nor of settled communities. They represent a shared reality driven by gendered and racialised inequalities inherited from the previous industrial regime and by contemporary social changes (Morrow, 2001). It is these altering, contradictory and imbalanced elements of work, family and non-working life that mark out the terrain of the social that social cohesion both addresses and is meant to measure. But, as the discussion of social cohesion is frequently reduced to issues of new immigration or to the 'terror threat', this leads to consequent slippage in the use of the terms 'social cohesion' and 'integration'. Fortunately, the recent report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) makes a careful and useful distinction between the two processes:

... cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another. (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, p. 38)

In this definition, the Commission is recognising that cohesion is not just about race, ethnicity and faith, and that integration is not about assimilation. Rather, it recognises that virtually all places and neighbourhoods are now challenged by demographic and social changes, and different inflows and outflows of people. The multiple proximities that these processes produce cannot be reduced simplistically to issues of new immigration. However, whereas the Commission suggests that cohesion is principally about the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together, we ask, in contrast: do people have to get on well together? Or do they have to be able to live in close proximity, accept differences and feel able to resolve conflicts through agreed means that have common legitimacy? Hence we set out to establish what are the rhythms and realities of everyday life, and how can we, in this context, improve our understanding of the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion?

## **Organisation of the report**

Flowing from our perspective on social cohesion, we have organised the presentation of our findings so as to:

- highlight the wider issues, structures and policy areas that should be addressed when concerned with social cohesion;
- report the differing and congruent views of our three categories of interviewees: long-term majority ethnic residents, long-term minority ethnic residents and new arrivals;
- explain the specificity of the relationship between histories, places and social cohesion.

In Chapter 2, we consider how the competing needs of family and work limit the possibilities for wider social relationships and associations, and how as a consequence the capacities and relations of social cohesion are diminished. The next chapter examines education as a key context for the interaction between long-term residents and new immigrants, and relates how the arrival of new groups is both an opportunity and a challenge for educational settings. Chapter 4 explores how work impacts on social cohesion by generating many of the economic and social terms on which people form associations with one another both in and beyond the workplace. Following this, Chapter 5 considers the impact that there is on neighbourhood relations if housing is poorly provided or in short supply and explains how we found no set pattern in localities with similar housing provision, reinforcing the complexity

of the influence of housing on social cohesion. In Chapter 6, we examine how, in areas characterised by endemic deprivation and poverty, there may be limited capacities and spaces for social participation and collective engagements, and how this framed the prospects of new arrivals and long-term residents alike. Chapter 7 details the ways in which local experiences of living and belonging in a specific place are influenced by, and in turn influence, long-term residents' reactions to the arrival of new groups of immigrants. The final chapter to present our findings, Chapter 8, discusses the key discourses and dynamics that characterise how the interviewees expressed their sense of belonging to Britain/the UK, and their understandings of social cohesion in the context of the transformation of social relations as new groups arrive. Chapter 9 draws the threads of the analysis together in overall conclusions.



## 2 Families, social transformations and social cohesion

The changing circumstances of family life, particularly the necessity for mothers to work and the increasingly competitive and flexible nature of work, have created new work–life balances and different time regimes for both family and community life. The global economic and political forces structuring these changes bring about shifts in both the cohesiveness and fragmentation of social life (Sassen, 2003). Women, in spite of their enhanced economic role, remain primary carers within the family. In these transformed conditions, it is hardly surprising that Putnam (2000) identified women’s move into the labour force as one of the key drivers of the failures of social cohesion. Our data suggests, however, that to locate the problems of social cohesion in the failures of civic and social engagement is to misconceive the changed circumstances of family life.

We sought people’s views about changes that have taken place in the family. We asked people to evaluate their own families and family histories, and the ambitions and expectations they held for the future. We explored how work and worklessness influenced social involvement and family dynamics. We asked people about the impact of spatial differences that linked families across countries and continents, how transnational family life shaped living in the UK and how family life in Britain shaped people’s desire to leave or stay. Whether the interviewees’ families were rooted transnationally, locally, or both, we asked them about the care deficit and how childhood and children fared across cultures of both mass consumption and impoverishment. How people allocated family time in the context of competing demands on their time and the growing economic responsibilities of families gave us an insight into the pressures of contemporary family life, and the ways in which these pressures influenced the myriad connections of families and the constellations of communities of which they form a part, and with which they interact.

The first part of this chapter analyses cross-site data on people’s views of social change, family transformations and the perceived consequences. This is followed by a case study of the integration of Somali immigrant families whose complex migration histories position them as both long-term settled and recent arrivals in many of the sites we investigated. The different strategies of community engagement that these families developed map many of the possibilities for, and obstacles to, social cohesion. The next section focuses on transnational families; their specific conditions of belonging are considered in terms of the impact that family separation has on ways of engaging with the local community. In the final section, an analysis of settled

local families affected by marginalisation and poverty looks at the consequences of these family environments for social cohesion.

### Changing family fortunes

Time for family life and social activities is constrained by the increasing demands of work for both women and men, and the 'work' of family maintenance, often referred to as the 'double shift' for women, absorbs much leisure time and limits available time for parental involvement in schools and other family-related community activities. This is what we are referring to as changing time regimes. The spaces and rhythms of everyday life are negotiations of these competing time regimes in which the demands of work and family are often in conflict with one another. The competing needs of family and work can limit the possibilities for wider social relationships and associations. This is true for new arrivals and settled populations. Much of family life happens in the spaces and relations of community life – in nurseries, schools, playgrounds, clubs, churches and a variety of group activities around specific interests. Insofar as these activities are restricted and inhibited by the work responsibilities of parents (and often grandparents), the capacities and relations of social cohesion are diminished.

When both women and men work – whether locally or transnationally – and have the responsibility of caring for children, and often for ageing parents as well, with limited time to meet these and other responsibilities, the 'care deficit' that many families experience has consequences within and beyond the family (Perrons *et al.*, 2006). The care deficit arises from the competing demands of the care of vulnerable family members, childcare and the care of ageing parents that many families juggle and feel they fall short of adequately meeting. At root, the care deficit arises from the fact that primary carers – the majority of whom are women – cannot be in two places at once. They cannot be at home and at work simultaneously, and, the more demanding work is, the greater the care deficit. Britain has one of the longest working weeks in Europe. In the context of expanding work demands, the familial spaces and places where people get along are structurally reduced, and the connections and associations that link families through both kinship and community networks are inevitably weakened in this new time economy.

Family life was considered by a broad spectrum of our interviewees to be under pressure from the demands of work, the pace of life and the altering terms of parental authority in an increasingly consumerist society in which children are targeted as active consumers. The changing demands on families were seen as

impacting on both community and family life insofar as children and communities are deprived of adults who have adequate available time to support them:

In terms of parents or parenting now, you know, when I was a kid my mother was at home, my father was at work. Now you couldn't afford to do that. Mother is out as well. And I think that breaks down the family community as well. You know, there is no interaction, or there is not as much interaction. You know, our kids are picked up at half past three by a childminder ... So you are really taking away all that relationship building if you like. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Peterborough)

I think that ... family cohesion or community cohesion of family relationships [*in the past*] were a great buffer against some of the social or economic pressures, the instabilities in life, unpredictable things like declining health, changes in physical and mental health and stuff like that ... And, for all that those social community links needed to change, the fact that, in some instances, they're broken altogether would make me want ... I think that people who face the consequence of that are maybe, they're the vulnerable in society ... who kind of need to rely on the goodness of other people either as individuals or collectively. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Glasgow)

In the first quote, the care deficit is seen as a direct outcome of people having less time to spend with their children because of the demands of work – a time poverty that impacts on the depth of relationships between parents and children, and the community context in which their children live. The privatised care of the childminder is not seen as compensating for this limiting of connection within and between families or as necessarily enhancing the associations between parents and schools. In the second quote, the family is seen as having lost its cohesive capacities because it is no longer able to respond to people's day-to-day vulnerabilities and requirements. Although this is seen as having unfairly been the responsibility of women in the past, the limited scope for either women or men to protect families in communities because of the demands of work, is seen as diminishing both family and community life.

Others commented on the fluidity of families and on the complex ways this could alter family dynamics: remarriage altered the balance of expectations around care and responsibilities; the formation of inter-ethnic families alters the cultural contours of the immediate and extended family; and family reformation can introduce new economies of care. A young professional woman in Kilburn whose father delivered and collected her son from school commented that, when his remarriage meant he

could no longer do this, she lost an important connection to the community both because of her father's local understandings and because he maintained a family/school connection. Without this she felt her own, and her son's, involvement with the locality was diminished, as were her possibilities of association with the school and other families in the neighbourhood. Another young, professional, long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, familiar with the realities of being a working mother and whose young family was supported by grandparents, still felt the demands of the contemporary work–life balance to be onerous:

I just don't think people in the past have been this busy. I mean when I compare my mother, for instance, at my age ... I've obviously got a pressurised job. I'll take work home sometimes ... and then I've got the kids and I'm trying to make sure we're doing things with them ... so I think about things like that, you know, and making sure they do their homework, then I'm doing my Master's as well ... my husband, he goes to work all day and we're both tired at the end of the day and there's tea to get on the table. Going back to my mother, I think for her, you know, she'd go to work, come home and yeah she'd get the tea on, maybe do some housework. But, for her, other than saying 'go do your homework', it wasn't a case of sitting down and doing the homework with you, you know, it wasn't about bringing work home and it might be just because of my positioning with the authority with my job. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

In this instance, career enhancement, the demands of children's education and cultural support for the family left space for few other concerns or activities.

The heightened pressures on families to achieve were matched by a perceived pressure for families to consume, and the greater disposable income of families was seen as another way in which work was having a negative impact on family dynamics and generational relations:

I think that, when I was little, sometimes we'd get a nice pair of shoes that we really, really wanted for our birthday. Whereas my kids – you know, I am not with their dad – but he's got a big family. I've got a big family and they'll ask for Gameboy, this and that. And they get huge amounts of things. If they got what I got when I was younger, they totally wouldn't be thankful for it. I think it's a very expensive world now as opposed to then. You were happy with very little then. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Downham)

Yes, I think families are under pressure now because of everything around them. It's all money, money, money. I mean we didn't have any money, my parents didn't have much money. But now everything is money, money, money. I mean, youngsters want, you know, £100 on an i-Pod and, you know, I think there is a fantastic amount of pressure. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)

Consumer goods, particularly electronic gadgetry, were thought to limit children's friendships and associations, not least when they located play at a playstation rather than in a playground. While many felt that families were locked into work because of the demands of a consumerist society, those families without work equally felt the pressures of consumerism and these often led to illegal working or the even greater pressures of debt:

You can't blame like poor people, people from a poor background who have a poor education from taking advantage of [*the system*] and just getting their giro and just living from day to day and doing stuff on the side. Because that's the nature of the system, it's not a family-friendly system. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Leicester)

They [*the money lenders*] only come around before Christmas when they know these young single mums they want – because it's silly, they've got this really weird mentality. They think that, by dressing their children in Adidas and Reebok and giving them what they want, the latest toys, they think that's being a good mum ... They are just thinking about the here and now, they are just thinking about getting it and they are not thinking about paying it back later. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

If you allow the media to force-feed your kids with images and scenarios, then things can get out of control. Like, for instance, the scenario with the kids pressuring the parents into buying them stuff for Christmas and the parents getting into all kinds of crazy debts just to buy these particular gifts for the children. I think it's just a general decline in, it's a general decline in the mentality of the country, the moral standards of the country. I think it just seems to be going downhill, those things that were classed as wholesome before are now classed as old-fashioned. I feel like an old man now – 'much better in the old days' – but I can see looking back it wasn't that bad in some cases in the old days. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

These understandings of transformations in and pressures on the family stem from a view of families as commercially targeted as sites of consumption, and this in turn is perceived as undermining parental authority and producing particular kinds of childhoods.

This area of concern of the long-term settled resonated with the views of many new arrivals. They worried that the realities of the work–life balance, of family fluidity and consumerist pressures in Britain presented a less than cohesive environment for their own family settlement. There were equally shared notions of increased risks of family breakdown, particularly in terms of waning parental authority and the waywardness of young people:

There is no moral code of conduct in British families. This is first. This is the first thing I notice. The second thing is that parents look after their children when they are young but when children are 18 they leave the home more or less, or 20, 25, doesn't matter. And they don't care about their parents, what they do, where they live. And most of the parents have a miserable elderly life. Either they will be living in their own home alone without anybody visiting them or they will be living in an elderly care home without anybody visiting them. So I think both parents and children are having very miserable life. They may call it independence but, er, what sort of independence I just wonder. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

This view of British family life was somewhat anxiously held by new arrivals, many of whom feared for the well-being of their own families coming under the influence of these trends.

Some new arrivals even found the family protection of young children as wanting. A Ghanaian nurse and father of two spoke of his despair at encountering a 12-year-old Glaswegian boy who had collapsed in the gutter paralytically drunk. The man's despair came not just from the state of the boy but also from his insistence that everything was alright:

The other day I saw a boy about 12 who was totally drunk lying in the street, in the road, and people were just gathering around and even I thought he was dead, I thought he has just been knocked down by a car, but he was drunk. When he was helped to stand up he said, 'Phh come on' and off he went. But I ask you, when young boys see this as an acceptable part of the culture, I say to myself probably I don't want to stay, it's not good enough. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Glasgow)

The perception by new arrivals of British families besieged by forces that undermine parental authority and family discipline was one that focused on issues of respect, with many taking the view that mutual respect between parents and children was corrupted by wider social forces and moreover that these problems were not properly addressed by society. Although excessive drinking by young people is acknowledged as 'a problem', it is not necessarily seen as a problem of social cohesion. For this recent arrival, the public display of failure of both family life and community values that he witnessed suggested a lack of cohesiveness. When swept along by these processes of change, families of new arrivals were themselves uncertain how to engage with them, particularly when they were divergent from communal patterns of family relations that many of them had left behind.

In summary, therefore, family life was generally considered to be under considerable pressure from the demands of work, the increased tempo of contemporary life and the weakening of parental authority as children are targeted as a prime site of consumerism. New arrivals expressed concerns that these rhythms and realities of everyday life in Britain might impact adversely on their own family life. The greater demands on families to sustain themselves in the face of encroaching work demands impact on social cohesion by altering the balance between work and community, which families mediate. They reduce the possibilities for the connections and associations that link kinship and community networks. In this new calibration, how people get along becomes a question of how people can get along in the limited time and space that they have to be together.

## **Somali families in Britain and generational cohesion**

The communities of Somali families throughout the UK are the outcome of different migrations, starting with the early twentieth century migrations of seamen from the British Protectorate of Somaliland, continuing with student migrations in the 1960s and 1970s, into the present with asylum seekers fleeing to the UK to escape the protracted civil war that has been ongoing since the 1980s. More recently still, Somalis from Holland, Finland and Sweden, with EU citizenship, have migrated to Britain to join their families from whom they were separated as refugees. The wider Somali community in Britain comprises labour migrants, family migrants, refugees, students and EU migrants, and is made up of both long-term settled populations and recent arrivals. Recent research has noted that Somali communities integrated less than other minority ethnic groups (Hudson *et al.*, 2007). In our study, however, we found strategies of social cohesion were in fact driven by the commitment of parents to ensuring that their children acquired English language skills and to establishing

connective relations of belonging within their own communities. While the parents often had poor or minimal English, they were concerned that their children should be both literate and able to do well educationally.

In this section, we first examine Somali community organisation in Kilburn and in particular how new arrivals, most of whom have fled war, adjust to living in the area. Their strategies of advancement for their families and of connecting with the long-term settled Somali community are sometimes perceived by local residents as weakening community relations. The next section takes up more directly the issue of ethnic clustering and explores how this could enable newly arrived Somali families, most of whom had come from elsewhere in the EU, to settle well in the Highfields area of Leicester but had negative effects in the Braunstone area.

### **Somali community organisation in Kilburn**

In Kilburn, recent arrivals and the long-term settled Somali population constituted a very sizeable minority ethnic group in the area. Many of the new arrivals were in the group of migrants who arrived here having fled war in Somalia. The experience of war and refugee camps shaped their conditions of flight, and frequently involved separating women and children who fled to the refugee camps, from husbands and fathers, who remained. Thus many of the families who came to the UK had a woman/mother as their head of household. Many of these women had little education and were often illiterate, and those who were educated had qualifications that were not recognised in the UK. Once they had settled here, welfare provisions geared to supporting mothers sustained these female-headed families and, when family reunification did occur, men were often unable, economically, to resume their traditional role of providing for the family. Moreover, many of the women did not wish a return to the power dynamics of male-dominated households. Divorce increased in Somali communities and, according to one study, many Somali women were happy to access their rights as mothers, while men were less keen to adopt secular family values and entitlements that gave these women a degree of autonomy (Harris, 2004).

In Kilburn there is a thriving Somali community association that was established in the early 1990s. It includes a successful supplementary school, which is well attended by recent arrivals and is financially supported, particularly by the mothers, who collectively pay the teachers' salaries, often from benefit incomes. Originally set up to provide Somali language classes and cultural teaching, the supplementary school was reoriented to the teaching of English, maths and science in light of the poor educational achievements of Somali children in the local schools. The community association and supplementary school coexist with other groups in a



vibrant local community centre, which is open to the public and well supported by the local community.

Even within the benign spaces of this local community centre, however, some misapprehensions potentially undermine its multicultural values. One older woman, who had long been actively involved in the centre, singled out Somalis for their lack of conviviality:

The only people I don't like are the Somalians. They don't want to mix with you. We've got two lots of Somalians, they don't even mix with each other. And they would like to have the centre to themselves for Saturday morning teaching. But they tend to want everything without giving anything. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

The different histories of migration and settlement of the Somali long-term settled and the new arrivals, and the lack of spoken English of some of the women was perceived as unfriendliness and this was compounded by the woman's view of the supplementary school:

... that is to help teach their children their language, their things, it's like their school, their culture and everything. It's nothing to do with English. They learn that at schools but this is all for their own culture. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

That many of the mothers did not speak English but were making considerable efforts to ensure their children's proficiency was not always appreciated. This interviewee, an activist for pensioners' rights, was concerned that older Somali people would be left to fend for themselves if young families moved out of the area:

But what I am saying is it's not only that. I mean, you might have, if you come over here you are in your 50s, you all join together, now some of these people might move out of the area and eventually perhaps one woman, her and her husband and her children, they have always been in this group and they are isolated. Now that elderly woman is on her own, she doesn't understand English, her children have perhaps gone their own way, her husband has died, she is isolated. It's so important for you to know that woman is there. That woman might be there starving. Doesn't know how to ask for food. I mean, somebody might know she is there. But there are around this area quite a lot of good neighbours who will go in. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

The assumption here is that older Somali parents will be positioned much like other older people and would be reliant therefore on community support structures. Wanting to reach out to this group with whom she was strongly identifying, this interviewee saw the withdrawnness of the Somalis as the obstacle to community protection of their vulnerable older people. A greater familiarity with Somali culture and their care for older people may have suggested a different approach to involving older Somalis in the activities of the pensioner group, in much the same way as Somali familiarity with community resources beyond their own provisions could allow for different experiences of the dominant culture.

A majority ethnic community support worker, more familiar with the Somali community and exposed to the more extensive and attentive family values it upholds, thought that his own family relations had been positively enhanced by being exposed to families that cared for ageing parents. It had allowed him to recognise that he needed to care for his own ageing parents and, indeed, he now very much enjoyed doing this and felt his life to be enhanced as a consequence. His view was that the competing family ethics of individualism on the one hand and collective extended family responsibility on the other, gave rise to different tensions and difficulties within families. The community would be strengthened he felt, if these different values, the conflicts they gave rise to, and their respective strengths and weaknesses, were mutually understood and became the shared composite values of the wider community.

In Kilburn the impact of change arising from settlement which shaped some Somali families was noted by a young second-generation British Somali woman teacher at the supplementary school. She commented on the speed of changes in local families but also on the ways in which Somali families adapted to these changes.

Yeah, there's problems. Ten years ago a lot of the women were married. Now – and my mum was one of the only divorcees here – now the divorcees are the majority. It's rare for someone to be married. I get shocked when someone says they are married and they have been married for more than five, ten years. Now, when the lady told me she's been married for 15 years, I was shocked because it's so rare now in our community ... Luckily this type of community, the Somalis that are there, they are very into families. Some of the men are still around. Some people are shocked that they are divorced the people. Because they still help with the kids' school, does the shopping, but yeah. I don't know, I can't put my finger on why there is such a – especially last five, yes, last few years, there has been such a breakdown of families. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic young woman, Kilburn)

The anxiety being expressed about the pace of family breakdown was tempered by seeing how some of the families continued to sustain support structures after family break-up. The growing affinity of these Somali families with a particular kind of family formation in the UK suggests that Somali women, far from being inward looking, appreciate the different possibilities of family life in the UK and like many settled women, they elect to become single parent families when this possibility is made available to them.

The stories of Somali youth experiencing family breakdown in south Kilburn echoed those of many of their contemporaries for the settled community. One young Somali man who was determined to succeed in his goal of doing a degree in art had decided to sever connections with his family and indeed his Somali cultural heritage. His separated parents did not support him. His father, who took khat – a soporific drug legal in the UK – and his mother who spoke little English had no interest in his educational ambitions and his main support and encouragement came from his teachers at school. Two other Somali youth of the same age living in the same area told a different story. Following his parents' separation one had sustained a relationship with his father but had been unsuccessful at school and had dropped out. He became involved with the local gang who used to hang out outside his mother's house. He got into drug taking and crime and was eventually sent to prison. Now out of prison, he expressed a desire to go to college but he could neither read nor write and was unsure how to resolve this problem. The second Somali youth was also without educational qualifications and had similarly become involved in gang membership. The trajectory of crime, imprisonment and worklessness was one shared with many of the long-term settled youths on the estate which had a troubled history of disruptive groups, poverty and high unemployment. The different routes taken by these three Somali young people illustrate the complex relations shaping families and place and the complicated routes of 'cohesive' integration connecting families, school and work. The culture of educational achievement fostered by the supplementary school clearly did not support all Somali children any more than did the wider culture of educational achievement support all children of the settled population.

The patterns of Somali family life in Kilburn illustrate the commitment of some recently arrived Somalis in the area to ensuring that their children are competent English speakers and able to belong in Britain in ways that their parents find more difficult. The dominant youth culture of parts of Kilburn, however, was marked by violence and drug taking among the young people. This culture offered few positive incentives for young people in deprived areas to successfully make the transition from school to work. This wider culture could also impact on Somali young people, particularly those who had found school difficult. For families where the parents did

not always speak English, access to community centres and contact with organised Somali groups were important for them both to be able to support their younger children and to help them avoid the pitfalls of the youth culture in the area.

### Leicester

In Leicester, the recent arrival of Somali families from the EU, particularly the Netherlands and Sweden, now make up 2 per cent of the city's population and the Somali Development Centre represents the successful skilled entrepreneurial profile of the group. In Leicester, recent Somali arrivals are viewed as settling in well. Many are in the traditional reception area of Highfields. However, some have been allocated housing in the predominantly majority ethnic area of Braunstone. Here they have been targeted as unwelcome outsiders:

There is a lot of racial incidents in terms of – well, just a few weeks ago a Somali family were attacked in different times. They are living now almost seven years but the seven years they are describing now as it is living like in hell. Really. Because they have been targeted, if their children go to school they have been targeted, if they leave their house they have been targeted. And like, for example, throwing when they come out, throwing eggs. Sometimes they see people urinating in their garden and they can't even say 'Why are you doing that?' If they say 'Why are you doing this? This is wrong', they have been attacked. (Key informant, Leicester)

Somalis, this interviewee noted, were attracted to Leicester because of its multicultural identity. However multiculturalism worked less well in a poor, relatively homogeneous, majority ethnic community in which the new families were perceived, not only as outsiders and non-white, but also as wealthier and more economically successful:

And now what is coming is that many people do not want to live in such areas as Braunstone or New Park because of the experiences they've had, you know, racial incidents or discrimination, all those kind of stuff. So many people are reluctant now to go and live in a white population area. Which sometimes you think oh, well, not all white population are racists but, because of other families' experience, they think 'I am not going, oh, that is a white population, no, I am not going to live there' because of the fear. (Key informant, Leicester)

Being able to participate in Leicester, because of its prevailing norms of multiculturalism, clearly allowed many families to get along in their neighbourhoods. However, for those living in Braunstone, the limits of cohesive relations were revealed, embedded as they were in racialised, local hierarchies of belonging.

One of the ways in which social cohesion works in Leicester is that the long-term settled residents communicate values and local 'know-how' to new arrivals of their own ethnic community. The ethnic clustering that may facilitate this, and which is critiqued, is in fact part of the fabric of cohesion in Leicester. However, when these implicit norms are flouted by placing Somali families in housing in Braunstone, the end result is one that challenges Leicester's reputation for multicultural harmony.

In Kilburn, many female-headed families adapted to the provisions for welfare support for mothers and encouraged educational attainment in their children, despite their lack of English limiting their own associations with other people. In Leicester, the largest number of a relatively affluent group of Somali families adapted themselves according to the city's conventions of multiculturalism, thereby avoiding the tensions produced by violating those conventions (although see discussion in the next chapter of tensions between Somalis and African-Caribbean youths in Highfields). The relationships between social cohesion and recent immigration in each of these areas suggest complex intersections between the economic and cultural strengths and vulnerabilities of families of arrival with the dominant cultural values and practices of the communities in which they settled. Moulded by the cultures of place, these vulnerabilities and strengths are enhanced or undermined.

## **Transnational families**

Transnational family dynamics are transformed through different modes of integration and belonging. For example, the dynamics between new arrivals and settled families could involve conflicting values between new arrivals and the diasporic settled community. In the following excerpt, a woman headteacher comments on the gulf that could emerge between newly arrived parents and their children who are being shaped by their schooling in Britain. She, as a member of a long-term settled minority ethnic group, was in the position of articulating the expectations of the institution, which she shared:

And that's why I am saying they are operating at different levels in the communities. And, looking at the more vulnerable members of the community, where people have married someone and brought them

from India or Pakistan or Bangladesh, a totally illiterate person here, yes, they are supported and so on, but their children know that their mother or father doesn't understand a thing about what they are experiencing. I used to call some parents in and say your child has done something wrong. And they'd say 'Pray for him'. That's all they said to me. 'Mrs H, pray for him'. I said 'No, I've called you because your child has done something wrong'. It was copying coursework off the internet and so on but the parents don't even understand that I am saying that this child would be disqualified from the GCSE entrance because they have cheated. 'Pray for him!' (Long-term settled, Asian minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

Reflecting on second- and third-generation Pakistani families in London, a key informant outlined patterns of generational integration that spanned families who started out with few resources, including negligible English and long working hours with limited time for their children. Nonetheless, each generation achieved a better standard of living and now grandparents were able to see their professional children providing a degree of support for their grandchildren that had been unimagined at the time of their arrival. One key informant interviewee considered these Pakistani families as successful because they meshed the values of individualism with those of extended family responsibility to the benefit of both the families and the community. This degree of achievement reflects the effort invested in settlement and cohesion by a prior migration of Pakistani families and was not contradicted by the maintenance of transnational extended family ties.

Other new arrivals and settled minority ethnic families stressed the importance of the freedoms represented by family life in Britain. Children were able to enjoy the cultural diversity of their peers and develop through the individualism that encouraged effort, creativity and tolerance. One young Kilburn interviewee, for example, had been brought up by his grandfather in the Philippines when his mother went abroad to work as a nurse in Kuwait. He then lived with his brother in Hong Kong where they completed their education. His mother married an Englishman who adopted the children and they moved to the UK to live with their new family in the West of England. In Kilburn, as a student, he was living with a group of young Filipino male nurses who were working in London. Family life for him was both fluid and transnational, and he embraced the values of freedom and independence he could enjoy in London as well as family responsibilities and community networks. His family, like many transnational Filipino families in Britain, had been shaped by serial migration histories built on living in and understanding different cultures. Filipino families, like other transnational families, aim to utilise this knowledge effectively in the process of reunification. They assess the cohesive dynamics of different societies

by understanding how relations of trust, security and respect operate as they choose to reunify in Britain or elsewhere.

Transnational family patterns also characterised new arrivals from Poland who had settled and worked in Peterborough. Numbering over 10,000, the majority of these new arrivals were married men who supported their families in Poland with the expectation of either returning to them or bringing them over to settle in the UK. Overseas nurses working in Scotland similarly supported their families transnationally, although this group was predominantly made up of women. For both groups, the commitment to their families who were left behind defined their working lives and the loss of the day-to-day experience of family life was heartfelt. Being transnationally separated from their families often meant longer hours of work because family care was not part of their daily lives. Commitment to sending money home for their families also constrained their social life.

Overseas nurses often spoke of their disillusion regarding their expectations of inclusion into the labour market and their experience of social isolation in their non-working lives. In fact, their experience of migration is characterised by:

- the inability to achieve economic security and legal status as foreseen by the recruitment policies, deskilling and exploitation in the labour market (both within the NHS and the private care sectors) as a consequence of shifts in policy after their recruitment;
- isolation because of unsocial working hours and the high cost of accommodation when this was arranged by their employers;
- marginalisation, for some at least and particularly African nurses, within and around their working lives as they are associated with stigmatised and racialised groups such as 'asylum seekers' in their everyday life interactions.

The following quotation from a key informant working for the Overseas Nurses Network, which was our partner in the research, underlines the resonance of isolation in many overseas nurses' everyday lives:

Because we are human beings, we are not meant to be in isolation. And that is the difficulty, when you leave home you leave everybody. You know, for us, for people who come with their family – that makes a difference. But, for people who don't bring their family, it's that absolute social isolation. It takes years and years. The majority will come on their own first. (Key informant, Glasgow)

The experience of one nurse, who faced discrimination and mistreatment at work and was suspended pending a review, is particularly revealing of the level of injustice, loneliness and lack of support that some overseas nurses are confronting in their everyday lives, and shows the importance of family when negotiating difficulties:

Here I am now, jobless, stressed, unsure of the future. I just sometimes sit in a corner and burst out crying. I feel such a loser, a wimp, a weakling. It's easy to say 'get up and fight. You know you haven't done anything wrong, so get up and give them a dose of their own medicine', but, when you realise you're not 'home', mom and dad are not there to protect you, you feel lost. Yes, it's easier said than done. I hope and I pray that this will be over soon. That I can finally phone my mom again and say 'it's over'. I shouldn't have told my mom but who else can I turn to? My husband is very supportive, but I still need my mom. Wish my Dad's still here. (Diary entry from Filipino diary group participant)

Although both A8 migrants and overseas nurses experience deskilling in the UK labour market, are engaged in transnational family ties and consume much of their earning power through sending remittances back to their country, unlike A8 migrants, overseas nurses are very disappointed with their experience of migration to the UK. In fact, the experience of these overseas nurses is different from that of most A8 migrants, as the nurses usually have to leave their families and friends behind, and are not able to visit them frequently because of the long distance from the country of origin. As the following quotation shows, A8 migrants' separation from their families is much more temporary and relative, as many were able to migrate with part of their families and/or with their partners, and the relatively cheap transportation from/to the country of origin combined with the geographical proximity makes it very easy for them to negotiate transnational family processes:

I came here because of money. Plus I wanted to learn English, so I decided, like, England will be the best place ... my brother came before me. There is an agency in Poland and in Brandon ... So he came three months before me about two years ago ... I didn't have money for university, I had enough of taking money from my parents, so I decided like to go to England for a while, save some money, and just came here, by myself, but I am living with my brother, he was waiting for me in Thetford. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

Although many ultimately wished to return home with their immediate and extended family, family reunification in the UK invariably provided bridges into daily life that, in conjunction with children's own integration, consolidated patterns of belonging and



embedded settlement. Family reunification was not taken lightly, not only because it was a departure from home, but also because it affected flows of remittances to the extended family. Certainly, among the overseas nurses in Scotland, the expectation of financially supporting the extended family back home was not imposed on the younger generation.

Transnational families enhance and facilitate social cohesion by providing inductions into living in Britain that would not otherwise be available to new arrivals. New arrivals joining family members already settled in Britain are introduced to the cultures of belonging adopted by settled minority ethnic groups. Extended families also provide this entry point and family reunification can equally entail intimate integration into the politics of cohesion and thus support more comprehensive ways of belonging in the UK. However, transnational families can, in other circumstances, emphasise the isolation of those who work in the UK in order to support families elsewhere. Without the support of their own families and because of the economic commitment they have to family members 'back home' or elsewhere, the possibilities for belonging in Britain can be very circumscribed both because of poverty or because, without families, there are fewer organic mechanisms of integration.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding the relationship between recent immigration and social cohesion through the prism of the family has illuminated the impact of several processes of social transformation on family life and their consequences for social cohesion. These changes in family life – working mothers, limited connections between family and community, and increased pressures on families through consumerism and the cost of families – are the context that new arrivals encounter when coming to Britain and while their own family lives are also undergoing transformations. Our research showed these conditions that troubled and preoccupied many long-term settled families equally troubled new arrivals, particularly the perception of a breakdown in respect between parents and older children. Although there was considerable agreement among both settled residents and new arrivals about how pressurised family life had become, there were also positive commitments to family life and support for the broad non-judgemental values of love and support being at the core of family life, regardless of the type of family or its cultural background.

Our case study of the circumstances of place and entry that Somali families encountered revealed particular patterns of engagement with family life in Britain. British families' values were both positive and negative for these new arrivals. In

Kilburn, the values of extending social support for single-parent families allowed women to support their families and participate in community relations. It also enabled them to access community support as they tried to ensure their children became proficient English speakers and did well at school. In Leicester, the experience of recently arrived families who were housed in a predominantly majority ethnic area illustrated problems of social cohesion. These occurred in an area of the city that was itself marginalised and was sometimes perceived as a failed community, unable to integrate in multicultural Leicester. The experience of Somali families in Braunstone was a measure of the defensive threads of social cohesion that the arrival of new immigrants can highlight in a particular locality (see further discussion of this issue in Chapters 6 and 7).

Transnational families also impact in complex ways on the dynamics of social cohesion. Many new arrivals who come to work in the UK with the aim of supporting their families transnationally experience acute social isolation and reduced resilience when having to confront discrimination. However, in the case of family reunification, the role of the family can be positive when new arrivals are reunited with families who have adapted family values to those of the settled immigrant population. Moreover, family reunification often happens in a context where new arrivals already have positive evaluations of existing cohesive relations in the settled community and thus the family becomes a positive resource that supports the complicated processes of belonging in a different country, which face new arrivals.

The cohesiveness generated by family life has always been dynamic, even in the supposed golden era of the male breadwinner family supported by the non-working wife dedicated to matters of family and community. The sustained transformations of family life brought about by globalisation and post-industrialism that characterise the contemporary families of both newly arrived and settled populations have had their own impact on social cohesion, an impact that demands to be addressed in the context of discussions about and policies for social cohesion. Our exploration of families, social transformations and social cohesion has highlighted the extent to which the demands of work and family are often in conflict, and the relations of community life are consequently diminished.

### **Key points**

- Transformed economic conditions have impacted on family relations and put families under pressure.
- The new time regimes of family life have consequences for the spaces and relations of community life, and capacities for social cohesion are diminished.
- New arrivals are implicated in these changes, which often conflict with their own family's values, particularly around respectful relations between parents and children.
- New-arrival families often engage positively with community relations in order to support their children, even when language issues prevent parents from more immediate involvement.
- New-arrival families can encounter both positive and negative conditions of family life in the UK.
- Transnational families are not a threat to social cohesion.

### **3 Education, youth and social cohesion**

In the context of the research, education was addressed as one of the key moments in people's life histories and as a specific setting for the interaction between long-term residents and new arrivals. Although personal accounts and analyses of the realities of education were gathered in each of the six sites, it played a particular role in the unfolding of the rhythms and realities of the relations between new arrivals and long-term residents in Downham, Leicester and Dungannon. In each of these three sites, education settings were spaces where both social tensions at work in the surrounding areas and responses to address and defuse them were played out.

The material presented in this chapter will show that, as was the case with all the other main dimensions of inclusion/exclusion (housing, work, belonging, etc.) addressed by the research, new arrivals did not create entirely new tensions. On the contrary, they were often caught in the deficiencies and the structural tensions that were already in place among long-term residents, within which they were often repositioned as convenient 'scapegoats'. Informed by the findings of the research, we have not limited the focus to these social processes taking place within the perimeter of educational settings. Instead, the analysis will address educational settings as a privileged vantage point for the observation and resolution of conflicts originating from the surrounding social context. This chapter will analyse, therefore, the ways in which different educational settings were able to respond to different challenges emerging from the relations between long-term residents and new arrivals in the local area. It will do so by drawing parallels between the way in which social antagonism between different groups emerged around or within the context of education and the way in which it was addressed by local initiatives of social intervention in each setting.

The first two sections of the chapter will deal with social processes unfolding in Leicester and Downham respectively that underline the importance of social hierarchies in the emergence of social tension in educational settings. The third section will focus on the arrival of new groups of migrants from Eastern European accession countries (A8) and their impact on educational resources in Dungannon, Northern Ireland and in Leicester. The following section focuses on the relationship between social interventions in educational settings and their immediate neighbourhoods, and the improvement of relations between different groups. The final section will present our conclusions.

## **Leicester and Downham: hierarchies of entitlement to support and achievement in the context of education**

The interview and ethnographic material gathered in Leicester (except in Braunstone) and Downham (Lewisham) shows that these two sites are characterised by the predominance of different self-representations regarding their social and cultural heterogeneity, and the role of migration in the historical formation of local society. More specifically, whereas Downham is characterised by a prevailing self-perception of settledness (being 'from here') and (majority ethnic) homogeneity, Leicester is characterised by a prevailing self-perception of ethnic heterogeneity and migrancy (being from other places as well as 'from here') – for further discussion, see Chapter 7. However, in both sites, the arrival of new groups coincided with an upsurge in social antagonism between different groups of majority ethnic (Downham) and minority ethnic (Leicester) long-term resident young people, who felt that their marginalised positioning within local society was jeopardised in different ways.

Before outlining the events constituting these two first case studies, it is important to consider the concept of 'white backlash' (Hewitt, 2005). This term refers to a reaction, common in the USA, Australia and UK since the 1960s, 'against the possibility of whites having to compete with blacks on legal, occupational, educational and/or residential grounds where white advantage would be diminished if not nullified' (Hewitt, 2005, p. 5). However, the complexity of the social processes of antagonism and cohesion addressed in this research leads us to argue they transcend the specifically racial aspect of these dynamics. These complex processes can be better analysed if we introduce the more comprehensive concept of 'settled backlash'. This refers to the way discourses of 'locality' (being 'from here') become the main vehicle to reinforce or challenge social hierarchies within any given space and it also accounts for people not thinking of themselves as racist when advancing discourses of locality. By underlining the 'settled' character of this backlash, we do not want to underestimate the enduring role of race within social relations. Rather, we want to underline that race is one of a number of social divisions, together with ethnicity, class, religion, gender, age and sexuality, shaping the emergence of social hierarchies, identities and spaces. Moreover, by underlining the 'settled' nature of the backlash, we want to acknowledge what other scholars called the 'cultural-diversity skeptical turn' (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2005, quoted in Grillo, 2007) or simply 'backlash' (Grillo, 2003, quoted in Grillo, 2007). What both these latter terms have in common is the attempt to underline how current public debates 'about the rights and wrongs of different ways of living and the governance of diversity' (Grillo, 2007) are characterised by:

- a sceptical stance towards the possibility of managing contemporary societies, which are seen as ‘too diverse’;
- a return to assimilation, a process whereby one social group adopts the cultural characteristics of another, as the main paradigm for inter-ethnic social relations in the present and in the future.

Throughout the chapter, we analyse the way in which different groups in different places participate in the ‘settled backlash’ phenomenon, by deploying discourses and ideologies of ‘locality’ (being ‘from here’) to maintain existing social hierarchies and to reinforce (often threatened) feelings of privileged belonging to place and entitlement to social support. In particular, in the next two subsections, we show how different groups of young minority ethnic and majority ethnic long-term residents resist the arrival of new social groups on the basis of existing hierarchies ‘in place’. These resistances occur within and around educational sites.

### **Leicester: social antagonism between long-term minority ethnic residents and new arrivals in educational settings**

The first case study refers to the conflicts that emerged between Somali newly arrived and African-Caribbean long-term resident young people after the settlement in Leicester of a large group of Somali people (approximately 15,000) since the early 2000s. Most Somali families and individuals arriving in Leicester have either settled directly in Highfields, a large multicultural inner-city area, or subsequently relocated there after experiences of racial attacks and harassment in more traditionally majority ethnic, working-class areas such as Braunstone. As a consequence, in Highfields, Somali people are a very visible presence and have opened a range of shops to cater for their community.

Recent research on Somali young people’s educational achievement emphasises their poor performance because of the combination of insufficient language and mentoring support in the UK and of the high level of disruption of the educational system in Somalia (Harris, 2004, pp. 43–8). However, the story in Leicester is different, as the city received a large number of Somali migrant students from Sweden and Holland, where they had settled in the early 1990s with their families, many of whom belonged originally to Somalia’s cultural and social ‘elites’. Their position is, therefore, relatively privileged because they possess European papers and, as part of an educated elite, have skills. Consequently they have done well since arriving here.

The visibility of these Somali young people in shared public spaces in Highfields and their history of relative success in educational and other social settings gave rise to competition and antagonism with long-term resident African-Caribbean young people. The following quote is from the interview with a member of Soft Touch, our partner organisation in Leicester, which was involved in cultural mediation projects between African-Caribbean and Somali young people. In the quote, the respondent explains how the arrival of students who were better achieving than long-term resident African-Caribbean students displaced the existing hierarchies of entitlement to receiving educational support, which until then had focused on disadvantaged African-Caribbean young people:

Somali students are the largest number for a start in new arrivals, in just a few years, they have easily outnumbered the African-Caribbean students and citizens. Then, you can't totally generalise but certainly what we were told by some Somali young people we were working with is that their parents who had left Somalia were educated quite well in Somalia so I don't think they arrived here with nothing in terms of money and prospects and everything else. They arrived with their education and their aspirations and those aspirations were definitely passed on to their kids. Yeah, just never ceases to amaze me how quickly so many have learned to speak English perfectly, fluently. And, you know, a lot of them are very ambitious in terms of what they want to do with their lives and stuff. While African-Caribbean young men have been underachieving ... and I think in the last few years there was so much focus on other groups of young people in terms of providing services and extra support that they became aware of that and resentful. You know. 'They get everything, we get nothing.' You know, we've heard that. Totally untrue but that's the perception. 'These people they have just come to our city and they get given this and they get given that.' (Key informant, Leicester)

The African-Caribbean–Somali youth confrontation in the context of education is an example of how such social antagonism can be the expression of the troubling of established imaginary and lived hierarchies taking place in the wider social arena of Highfields/Leicester. The arrival of the Somali community displaced the hierarchies of entitlement to educational achievement and support at work in Leicester across different neighbourhoods (and council estates) and in relation to different key areas (education and housing in particular). In this regard, long-term resident, African-Caribbean young people felt deprived of their socially marginalised positioning and feared that their needs would be further overlooked for a range of reasons, including:

- the size of the Somali youth population and their visibility in Highfields;

- the relative success of Somali young people in education and in other aspects of youth social mobility (access to strategic gadgets, peer competition);
- the level of support their arrival mobilised.

Moreover, because the groups lacked information about each other, stereotypical myths were fabricated by each group constructing 'the other' in stigmatising terms. In the following excerpt, a key informant from Leicester Council summarises the main dimensions and myths shaping the development of the 'crisis', with particular reference to the emergence of stigmatising as a strategy to establish a hierarchy of local belonging and entitlement to resources:

Anyway, the Somali arrived very quickly. Ten thousand just between the year 2000 and 2002. And they arrived as European Union citizens even though they have a refugee profile. They seem to look like refugees and feel like refugees but they have the rights of citizens because they have been in Holland for ten years. And, erm, there has been some tension between them and African Caribbeans ... because they were situated in the same area. Highfields and St Matthews as well. And then there was a territorial war if you like between the young men, Somali men and African-Caribbean men, about who rules this area. About territory, space. Some Somali men had a perception that African-Caribbean people had low morals, they were pimps, prostitutes, drinking alcohol ... while there was a perception the other way that Somalis were a proud African tribe who looked down on every other tribe in Africa. And think they are inferior. And they had arrived here and they were getting all this money from the council, which we never had. Again, this misperception of the privileged and the underprivileged. (Key informant, Leicester)

As this last quote partially shows, the animosity between African-Caribbean long-term residents and Somali newly arriving students was played out in schools but emerged within different social settings, in the form of street fighting around issues of spatial distribution (who hangs around where) and gender (who dates whom, cyberbullying). In the process, narratives of 'othering' emerge in relation to prevailing perceptions of who has the right to have privileged access to scarce resources such as education, income and housing (money from the council).

The conflict between Somali new arrivals and African-Caribbean long-term residents also exposes the enduring role of race and ethnicity in the production of local 'settled' ideologies of belonging, based on the being 'from here' discourse. In the process, hierarchies of belonging to local areas in Leicester emerge in relation to the right to



receive social support and overlap with hierarchies of 'Africanness' and 'blackness', as the following quote from a key informant in a Somali organisation in Leicester shows:

Yes. Another example is ... there was a man who parked in front of my house, he blocked the corner of the parking. He just say 'Wait' and he left, entering one of the houses. And I say 'You can't, this is a public parking space and you cannot block, everyone has right to access it'. And he says 'Who you are telling me, you know, I live, I am born and bred here in Highfields and you came yesterday and you are telling me what to do'. And I said, you know, 'Look, even if you are born and bred in Highfields it doesn't give you the right to block the road, firstly. That is number one. And secondly, if I came yesterday, I have every right to live in Highfields. And thirdly you are a black man and I am a black lady, you should have some respect for your black ladies.' And he said 'No, we have respect for that, no, no, no'. And I said 'In our culture men has great respect for ladies. They don't swear to ladies and they don't shout to ladies.' *[Laughs]* And they were like that, you know. And they said 'No, no, no' and they started cooling off and they said they were sorry and after all that we were friends. ... I think, you know, because they think those people have taken our resources, they are acquiring our places, you know, and all this and some of colleagues, friends, will talk to you and say 'Oh, Somalis they develop themselves where we African Caribbeans have failed to do so'. (Key informant, Leicester)

This last quote shows how local structures of belonging emerge at the encounter between ethnicity, race and locality. In this respect, 'blackness' or 'Africanness' become common grounds to establish new criteria for both coexistence and competition, as the Somalis were seen by some African-Caribbean long-term residents as doing better than they, as another black minority ethnic group, could or should have done. This next quote from an interview with an African-Caribbean long-term resident makes this link more evident, as it draws a parallel between the experiences of stigmatisation endured by the first migrants arriving from the Caribbean and those faced by the Somali community today:

What they are going through now the West Indian community went through 30 or more years ago. They were the newest community in the area and they faced the same problems. The same things my parents tell me that white people used to say about them when they first came here – you just couldn't get houses and get money – the same thing black kids now are saying about Somali kids and Asian kids are saying

about Somali kids, you know, blah blah blah, they are getting all these resources. It was the general, the general scenario really because there wasn't as many black people in their community so it was more visible, it was more apparent. Now they have been kind of integrated into the general fabric of society ... I think if you try and bring in people into a community that is already, erm, what's the word I am looking for? That is already underdeveloped and people are coming in and they seem a more proportion, a disproportionate level of resources that they are seen to be getting in the eyes of people who are already there so that causes resentment. Yes, it's like they are saying, money is the root of all evil, a case of why have they got and we haven't? (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

By comparing the experience of the first African-Caribbean migrants in the 1960s with current experiences of animosity between African-Caribbean long-term settled and new groups of newcomers, this interviewee reflects on both continuities and changes. On the one hand, now and then social antagonism is fuelled by feelings of resentment emerging in relation to scarce resources such as housing, educational achievement and income support. On the other hand, in different periods and social conditions, different social groups engage in antagonism according to different ideologies of belonging. African-Caribbean new arrivals' efforts to improve their lives and settle in the 1960s were contested more explicitly by long-term residents according to racialised black/white categories. In contemporary 'settled backlash' times in Leicester, new arrivals' right to have access to social support is contested by minority ethnic long-term residents according to deracialised narratives of belonging, structured around the concept of being 'from here'. In the next subsection, we will analyse how similar dynamics took place in Downham, a place that can be seen as reproducing in contemporary settled backlash times the racialised backlash reactions directed towards new arrivals from the Caribbean in the 1960s.

### **Downham: social antagonism between majority ethnic and minority ethnic long-term residents/new arrivals in educational settings**

Similar hierarchies of perceived privileged and underprivileged entitlement to educational achievement and social support were informing the dynamics of social antagonism that took place in Downham, an area characterised by a symmetrically different self-perception in terms of isolation, majority ethnic homogeneity and settledness. Unlike Leicester (except in predominantly majority ethnic and deprived working-class areas such as Braunstone), Downham is characterised by a self-perception in terms of majority ethnic homogeneity and by a higher percentage

of white people (82 per cent, this includes all subsections of the white category in the 2001 Census) than the 66 per cent average in Lewisham borough. In the last ten years, the arrival of Albanian and Tamil refugees into the area, with the Tamil community purchasing ex-local authority housing within the Downham estate and running local shops, coincided with an escalation of inter-ethnic social antagonism, which was fuelled and amplified by the local media. Until 2005, one of the main areas around which social antagonism emerged was the secondary school serving Downham – Malory School. This school did not secure good examination results at GCSE and was not popular as a first-choice school. Consequently there were surplus places available, which were filled by new migrants. In the meanwhile, parents in Downham resorted to sending their children to different schools in neighbouring Bromley, which were perceived as having the potential to provide their children with better educational standards.

As well as Albanian and Tamil children from Downham, the minority ethnic students in Malory school also comprised long-term settled pupils from the north of Lewisham and from other London boroughs with a shortage of school places. As a result, over 45 per cent of Malory's pupils were from minority ethnic communities (both new arrival and long-term settled), which account for only 18 per cent of Downham's population. The convergence of the arrival of new groups, the long-term deprivation endured by some sectors of the local majority ethnic working-class population, the campaigning of the British National Party (BNP) and their use of inflammatory language, and the poor performance of the school were the background for considerable inter-ethnic tension. These tensions emerged within and around the school, and involved young people both from the school and from the wider neighbourhood, with local majority ethnic young people attacking pupils in the playground, while they were exiting the school gates and on their way to Grove Park Station. The following account from an interview with an Albanian former Malory student shows some of these dynamics at work:

You used to see like a lot of people calling names. And a lot of people spreading out, like black people together and the whites together. But now you see black and white people together. But back in 1999 or whatever in Grove Park, in Downham you only used to see white people. I came here to get my education and to plan what I do with my life. But a lot of people don't think, well, back in them days they think that I am here to take the money or, I don't know what they are thinking, I came here for a new life. Really, that's because the Malory school took a lot of – a lot of Albanian went there and basically the English people started bullying us when we're a young age, trying to mug us, take our money and everything. And we had the black people, erm, helping us. So then people started, oh,

why are you getting involved, blah blah, it's not good to do it. Everything started really. And every day I used to be afraid to go to school, I just run back before someone comes and beats you up or whatever. There was a lot of danger because a lot of people got stabbed there in the school. But, because of the police, we used to have police in the school as well then after, then everything started changing. And a lot of guys that abused and stabbed people were getting locked up and getting kicked out of the school and everything was fixing up. So the younger people, the English people, the white people was thinking, hold on, if I am going to be like him then I am going to be in prison or I am going to end up being charged or whatever, I am not going to see my family, so them people now you see them they are just hanging out with black people, whatever race it is now. Racism is gone really. (New arrival, young Albanian man, Downham)

The excerpt shows the complexity of the relation between race, ethnicity and local ideologies of belonging, allowing for the emergence of strategic alliances between groups who perceive themselves to share the same lower 'minority' status in relation to established hierarchies. Although the poor achievement record of Malory school was further compromised by the high transit ratio of the new-arrival student population (also because of the dispersal and deportation initiatives promoted by the Home Office), it clearly emerges, from the accounts of long-term residents in Downham, how the school had been perceived as 'rough', unruly and underachieving long before the arrival of new social groups in the early 2000s:

Malory had a very bad reputation, there was always fights going on up there. Academically there wasn't a lot of results got out of there. Erm, it just had one big bad reputation so that Downham kids then stopped going there. All those places at Malory, which if there is places and you've got kids that have been excluded from other schools they then go to the school where there is vacancies. So you then got kids travelling from all over the place to go to Malory. But a lot of those kids had had problems in other schools. I think it was mainly a problem of failing education. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Downham)

To be quite honest it was me parents' decision. They – at the time there was bad reputation at Malory so, erm, a lot of people didn't go to Malory ... So, erm, I think years back when I was picking my schools to, Malory was one of the bottom ones. Like you had Bonus Pastor, Sedgehill and Malory really round here. And if you couldn't get in Sedgehill or Bonus Pastor then Malory was sort of your next choice, do you know what I mean? So that's why I didn't go Malory. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic young man, Downham)

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds, both long-term residents and new arrivals, report having experienced isolation, bullying and racist attacks, usually in relation to their visible and successful investment in educational achievement.

Educational achievement and discipline became a site of struggle between different groups and their life trajectories and stances towards an educational ethos. On the one hand, the majority of local pupils seemed to have embraced a sub-culture of 'commonness', which was based on educational underachievement, as a way to resist 'middle-class' values of achievement and discipline (Evans, 2007, pp. 10–12). On the other hand, migrants coming from contexts where attending school was a privilege reserved to the few who could afford it saw free education as a unique opportunity for self-advancement. The contrast between different priorities and approaches is what generated situations of antagonism in Malory school, as the following quote shows:

At Malory the kids didn't really want to go to school. Erm, I mean, that was the feeling. Because my parents always brought me up, we worked really hard to come to England, back in India you've got to pay for an education, here you get a free education, you've got to make the most of it. Erm, you got to get your exams, you got to work hard, you know, all the sort of socialising and playing comes later. You have to get a degree. Because once you've got a degree you are going to get a good job. So that was always emphasised by our parents. And it was the complete opposite at Mallory. It was uncool to do your homework. And I would say there was racism the whole way through. Every day ways. Our first headteacher was very strict. And I think her main objective there was that the kids stayed in the school and didn't cause any trouble ... but it wasn't working because she was always having to take action, she was always having to call the guard dogs out. She had Alsatians at the school. I don't know how long they were there for. They might have been there for a day. But they were there to keep the kids in the school because they kept leaving. So we had to have teachers all round the school at all the gates. Groups of teachers sometimes, trying to keep the kids in school. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Downham)

The interviewees' comments highlight what was a feature of a number of accounts of former Malory pupils and teachers that the school had difficulty exercising and teaching discipline. According to accounts we gathered, the school appeared unable to guarantee that pupils would either stay within its precinct or, if on the premises, stay within their classrooms.

The situation in Downham was one in which the arrival of new groups of asylum seekers, migrants and minority ethnic long-term residents from other areas destabilised local self-perceptions of the local area as homogeneous and local hierarchies of (entitlement to) educational achievement and upward social mobility. It is also a clear example of the way tensions arising from the environment surrounding educational settings infiltrate and permeate social relations between pupils and staff, as the following excerpt shows:

The majority of refugee kids have their own issues, in terms of language and everything else but they are basically okay kids, you get some that are traumatised, they are going to be bad, but you are going to get as you get with all the other people, you know, a certain percentage of challenging for whatever reason. So I think the truth lies somewhere in the middle. It was partly locals didn't like, locals don't like new people coming in and specifically new people from different ethnic backgrounds. You know, the BNP stuff. I am talking about older siblings, etc. And people trying to come in and causing trouble in the school. I think there is not one answer to that and it was a mess. And Malory has been going downhill for a long time. Now it's going uphill but it was going downhill for a long time. (Key informant, Lewisham Council)

What happened in Downham is of interest beyond the immediate locality because it shows the link between structural deprivation, community relations and poor educational achievement. One of the recurring issues that interviewees referred to while analysing the status of social relations in Downham was the presence of widespread deprivation, especially within the majority ethnic, working-class community. Most key informants had a complex understanding of deprivation, encompassing low educational achievement, lack of self-confidence, unemployment, intergenerational reliance on subsidised housing and income support, family breakdown, isolation and lack of aspirations. For example:

One of the reasons that that area is considered deprived is not because of money, it is because you have several generations of people who haven't progressed in the educational sense. Where you've got generation after generation after generation of people who are coming out of school with no GCSEs, no qualifications. It's more the aspirational thing. And I think one of the reasons that there is resentment there – people are still trying to work out how to get around it – is migrant communities tend to be aspirational and to work very hard to improve in life ... And I think that's where the resentment comes. Because you've got families who don't know how to do that. And they think other people doing

it – they see migrant people doing it and they think, how come they've only been here five minutes and they have been able to buy a house? They don't get it. And also don't get that a lot of them who are coming in they are coming in with education. They might be coming in with no English but actually coming in with education, with aspirations. So I think it's that – that is the issue. And also my neighbour who is – lives across the road from me. She is from Downham, born and bred, grew up there. And she said she has difficulty going back there because she knows people who she went to school there who almost see her as selling out.  
(Key informant, parent education support group)

The interplay between lack of confidence, skills, aspirations and actual employment and self-improvement possibilities that emerges from this quotation is a very important factor fuelling resentment against people who are able and willing to 'move on'. Both in Leicester and in Downham, antagonism emerged out of the troubling of social hierarchies constituted around the right and ability to obtain both educational achievement and upward social mobility. In turn, this right was argued through localised narratives of belonging (I have more rights to support because I am 'from here'). This showed that the dominant perceptions of who and what represented 'the local' were formed at the intersection of experiences of class, race and ethnicity. As both white English majority ethnic (in Downham) and African-Caribbean minority ethnic (in Leicester) long-term residents' experiences of education and social mobility were characterised by lack of resources and marginalisation, the arrival of aspirational new students triggered long-seated feelings of disappointment and resentment, which were projected onto new arrivals. However, in both contexts, the situation has improved considerably in the last four years because of the increase in the minority ethnic population (in Downham) and the organisation of a series of initiatives of social interventions, as discussed later in this chapter. Before moving to consider these initiatives we examine the specific impact that new arrivals from the old (Portugal) and the new (Eastern Europe) EU accession countries had in educational settings in Dungannon.

### **New arrivals from old and new EU countries: predicaments and opportunities for relations between different groups in Dungannon**

In Dungannon (Northern Ireland), the arrival of large numbers of Portuguese and Eastern European (Lithuanian and Polish in particular) migrants in the early 2000s, and the corresponding increase in enrolments within schools of children from migrant

worker families, put pressure on available English language support and therefore increased the demands on schools' and colleges' financial resources. This ultimately led to a reluctance within some schools to enrol children from migrant worker families, as they were not willing to face a financial deficit. One interviewee involved in the management of a school highlighted that this placed pressure on finances:

I have no money for these kids as I am funded a year in retrospect. I had a massive influx this year but I don't get the money for another year so I am living in a deficit budget. (Key informant, Dungannon)

The impact of the arrival of new migrant groups on educational settings in Dungannon is not limited to primary education, as many adults recounted that they attended the local further and higher education college for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. For many new arrivals, and particularly for young people from A8 countries, the motivation to migrate centred on the desire to learn English and improve their educational opportunities. In some cases, there was a realisation that, for them to succeed in their own countries, being able to communicate in English would benefit their future employment opportunities. These tended to be younger migrant workers who were taking a year or two away from their studies in an attempt to improve their English language skills. They intended to stay in Dungannon for only a short period, possibly two years. One Polish young man who was studying in his homeland felt that his studies would benefit if he spent time in the United Kingdom:

I decided to come here because it is better to learn English in the United Kingdom than at school, it is much easier. (New arrival, young Polish man)

I wanted to learn the English language, that's why I come to the UK. (New arrival, young Slovakian man)

Furthermore, discussions with a Slovakian migrant worker revealed that he was unconcerned about improving his standard of employment, as, for him, success would be measured by an improvement in speaking and writing in English per se.

As a consequence of these dynamics, primary and secondary schools were under considerable strain and had to resort to voluntary schemes to cope with the demand for language classes and school places. Within the tertiary education sector, East Tyrone College of Further and Higher Education saw a steep increase in the numbers enrolling for ESOL classes, which again placed pressure on the service. The college had to put in place measures to deal with this to ensure needs were



being met. Extra classes were provided and partnerships established with local churches that were informally offering the service, with the college encouraging them to become accredited courses.

In Dungannon, education became one of the main spaces of social interaction for new migrant groups, who found there the motivation and the opportunity to participate in local society. For instance, as far as young pupils and their parents are concerned, from the interview and ethnographic material we gathered, it emerges that many new arrivals see education as a privileged setting for the social participation of their children. Moreover, children's involvement in education often acts as a positive catalyst encouraging parents' own participation in the wider society. In particular, new arrivals who came and brought their family, especially young children, felt a greater need to integrate and start to belong to the community as their children were adopting local culture. For instance, one recent migrant felt that, because her daughter was attending school in Dungannon from a very young age, this was enabling her to also integrate into the local community:

My daughter she has friends here. We don't have anything where we came from. She doesn't remember and she is already like a local. She is speaking the same language. (New arrival, Portuguese woman, Dungannon)

As far as young adults and secondary education are concerned, ESOL classes became key moments of interaction between new migrant groups and local long-term residents. Although classes specially designed for new arrivals meant limited interaction with local students, some migrants had gone on to pursue other courses and were now mixing with the local students. Some younger interviewees were attending the college on a full-time basis and seemed to be interacting well with their fellow students, something the college itself was endeavouring to encourage by making sure that new arrivals would be able to attend most courses.

In Dungannon, the arrival of large numbers of young pupils and adult students in educational settings put an initial strain on but also revitalised local schools, thanks to organisation of voluntary schemes to cope with the demand for language classes and school places. These are now very important spaces for the establishment of non-work-related forms of social participation, involving both long-term resident and new arrival parents and children. Although the case of Dungannon is a positive one, it also highlights the lack of adequate resources and instruments to address the issue of new arrivals into the education system, as a timely response was only possible because of voluntary interventions. The availability of adequate funds to organise ESOL classes and the possibility to mobilise these funds fast enough for

schools to avoid bearing their financial burden in the short term emerge as key factors in the promotion of harmonious social relations in the context of education.

Finally, a specific issue related to the arrival of A8 migrants, which was brought to our attention in Leicester. It refers to the fact that, in a few cases, young pupils from Eastern Europe were seen as displaying a racist attitude towards black and Asian long-term settled people. This was usually attributed, by our key informants, to the new arrivals' lack of experience and ignorance of racial and ethnic diversity. The lack of experience with racial and ethnic difference, if left unchallenged, could pose a serious challenge to existing community relations, as the following excerpt from an interview with a former director of a secondary school in Highfields shows:

Most people from Eastern Europe had never come across black people or Africans or Asians in their countries and one of the girls said 'I don't want to sit next to a nigger'. But, instead of criticising, it is better to teach children about what is right, what is acceptable and what is wrong and what gives offence, through social and personal education. It's not about, you know, blaming someone for doing something wrong. You don't sort of blame and start labelling them as racist because the reason for that is that they have not encountered that. And maybe from where those children have come from that is a word that is still being used. You know, we talk about anti-racist strategies and race equality, it might not be the case in some Eastern European countries. (Key informant, Leicester)

The excerpt also shows the key role played by schools in allowing pupils to 'unlearn racism' (hooks, 1986) by providing them with information and knowledge, and by not 'blaming' them for what they don't understand. Here, again, we see how tensions and problems emerging in the wider social environment were also mirrored in the context of education, and how education settings can act as strategic catalysts through which these can be both expressed and successfully addressed. This positive role will be the main topic of the next subsection, which will deal with the way educational settings can contribute positively to the improvement of the social relations unfolding in the wider social contexts encompassing them.

## Local improvements, social transformations and social interventions in Leicester and Downham

Both in Leicester and in Downham, the tensions between different groups of long-term residents and new arrivals are much less significant now, as they were addressed by initiatives of social intervention and because of the transformation of local settings, particularly in Downham.

In Leicester, in response to the chain of misperceptions fuelling the tensions between Somali and African-Caribbean young people, initiatives of mediation in public areas and information campaigns in schools and other settings were put in place. These had the aim of preventing the conflict from escalating further and of providing young people with the information they needed to challenge prejudices and myths. The following excerpt from an interview with a member of the cultural strategy department of Leicester Council describes just one of these activities, the organisation of joint workshops with participants from both new-arrival and long-term resident groups:

We have done quite some work with the Somali community, quite some bits of work that have been sort of targeted. So our libraries now work together on a big textiles project in St Matthews, which is an area of new communities. And involve people from the indigenous [*sic*] population as well as Somali predominantly women working over a period of about a year looking at textiles and some different traditions and then producing a big wall hanging and then showing it in the museum. (Key informant, Leicester Council)

Other initiatives included the undertaking of short documentary films about Somali young people's experiences of living in Leicester, to be viewed in educational settings and to serve as information material to stimulate debates.

Besides intercultural intervention, which took place mainly in educational settings, the violent confrontation between groups of young people was dealt with by the use of public force. Unlike many other places in the UK, because of the city council's long-term acknowledgement of Leicester's ethnic diversity and its policies of active recruitment of minority ethnic staff within public services and institutions, the police were able to mobilise the right figures of mediation, in terms of their neutral position regarding faith and race. The police dealing with the tensions between the two groups were Sikh. This meant that they were not perceived as being 'on side' with either 'Muslim' Somali or with 'black' African-Caribbean young people. The excerpt from the interview with one of the founding figures of the Leicester model of multiculturalism, who has recently died, explained how the crisis was resolved:

There were a number of incidents in which girls argued and they used their mobiles to get 60 West Indians, 60 Somalis to a college and there was a huge fight with knives and stuff. So people could have been killed but nobody was killed because the police intervened and we set up a mediation service between Somali elders and social workers for African Caribbeans. So it calmed it all down. And the police involved were Sikhs, which was very useful. Because they are not Muslims and they are not Christians. So they are black but they are not black. (Key informant, Leicester)

As this last quote shows, the successful management of inter-ethnic relations in Leicester is the result of a series of combined and synchronised actions involving different communities separately and jointly in relation to their different and mutual positionings in terms of race, age, ethnicity, class, faith, and locality. In other words, in order to be able to manage inter-ethnic relations, one needs to be able to read the internal complexity of each group and the way this impacts on relations with other groups, in order to identify and implement the appropriate measure of social intervention.

The main kind of reasoning at work in the tackling of social antagonism in Leicester is the 'deracialisation/de-ethnicisation' of the issues at stake and their reframing in terms of problem-solving and service provision. This usually involves the setting up of appropriate initiatives of mutual information and myth dispelling involving both contending parties. This strategy of defusing potentially antagonistic issues is consistent with three different kinds of strategic resources. The first refers to the widespread awareness of the economic and social consequences of conflict, and of the destructive impact that the racialisation or ethnicisation of antagonism could have. This leads to a prompt response at both an institutional and an individual level. These observations are corroborated by the excerpt that follows, in which an African-Caribbean long-term resident expresses the necessity to not even consider the possibility of not 'coming together and put differences aside' (his shorthand for social cohesion), as the only other alternative is conflict:

I think it will work, cos if it don't work we're gonna have a civil war. So we gotta face reality and work hard to make sure it works because if it don't, with the nature of race and religion and people who are coming into Britain at the moment, if we can't work together and the people are still living here, it will be a war. I don't mean a riot, I mean war, because as it stands that's what gonna happen. So we might as well be realistic and try and put our differences aside and work with each other discussing things with each other and come together. Because the different people who are

coming into Britain at the moment are here to stay. And if they themselves are not staying, the youngsters will. So we might as well face reality and get on with it. (Long-term resident, African-Caribbean man, Leicester)

Second, the long-term policies of employing minority ethnic people within and around statutory or public structures and the long-term investment in a very articulate network of 'ethnic' and other 'social' associations mean that, in case of need, as the case of the Sikh policemen showed, the right instruments and figures of mediation are available.

Third, in Leicester, any topic that can be seen as potentially igniting dynamics of social antagonism, whether in educational or in other social settings, is discussed in transversal bodies such as the Multicultural Advisory Group, also promoted by the council, where the best way to present it to the general public is agreed by representatives of the local media, ethnic communities and key institutions. As the following quote from the interview with a Somali member of the Multicultural Advisory Group shows, key information is presented in a de-ethnicised and deracialised way, in order for the problem (violence in schools) and its solution (information campaigns and intercultural training) to be emphasised over potentially divisive racialised and/or ethnicised accounts:

I think most of the media in Leicester was very positive, in my experience. I think they are very respectful of different cultural sensitivities. For example, there is one forum, which I am a member of it, which is called Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group. So BBC Radio Leicester is a member of it, *Leicester Mercury* is a member of it, erm, and Asian Network is a member of it, Leicester Council is a member of it. Different kind of community groups like myself, businesses is member of it. And what we do is to share our cultural sensitivities within our city. And look, for example, if there are incidents like this the *Leicester Mercury* and BBC Radio Leicester, they always take sensitive approach. Not promoting in terms of negativity. But looking at ways of telling the news but also being sensitive about it. What happens is that they will not mention, for example, that Somali and African-Caribbean students are fighting each other. But if they want to tell, for example, they will say that there was incidents between different students in a college and they will have also, for example, talked to the teacher, talked to the parents so that they will have a complete picture and each of the contribution will be put in the picture. But other things also promoting, for example, different activities, for example, different things that happen in different communities so that in the media you have a voice. (Key informant, Leicester)

The following quotation from an interview with the editor of the Leicester Mercury is another interesting testimony to the way potentially contentious issues are dealt with in Leicester:

What goes into the *Mercury* is decided by the *Mercury*, by me and my senior staff. The Multicultural Advisory Board is extremely useful because it allows different people from different aspects of life in the city to talk frankly and confidentially about what they see as the issues and what they see as the challenges. That allows the media to report in a more informed way ... We had another case of some Somali lads and some African-Caribbean lads at one of the local colleges who somebody insulted – I forget which way round it was – somebody insulted somebody's sister, somebody pulled a knife and then later in the afternoon the other group came back with machetes. And there was a fight. And people ended up in hospital. So that has to be reported. What we didn't say was that it was Somalis versus African Caribbeans. Because why was that important, it was basically two groups of lads having a fight. The minute you start putting a cultural background in you are making a judgement about part of the reasons. If there is a fight in Braunstone, which is a predominantly white estate, you don't describe who's involved unless it has a significance. You wouldn't say a group of youths who were thought to be Catholic had had a fight with a group of youths who are Protestant. (Key informant, Leicester)

Harmonious relations between social groups are the result of a careful and skilled process of monitoring and co-ordination between strategic actors. In fact, the way the Somali–African-Caribbean youth tensions and the lack of experience with racial difference of Eastern European new arrivals were handled and successfully resolved in 'superdiverse' Leicester is an expression of a situation where the arrival of different groups has for a long time been, and continues to be, carefully promoted by the City Council as a vital asset for the wider community.

In Downham, according to many long-term residents and new arrivals, the inter-ethnic tensions mentioned earlier in this chapter are now less acute than four or five years ago because younger generations seem to show a different attitude to ethnic difference. Many interviewees indicated that the situation has improved in the last few years as people have 'got used' to dealing with a more diverse population, as the following quotation shows:

Interviewer: Is this the neighbourhood you grew up in?

Yeah, I grew up here. I love it to pieces. I couldn't move out of here. It's where you know everyone, it's just social, it's been alright around here.

Interviewer: And who lives here, what kind of people live here?

Different people, different cultures, all different age groups, there is a lot of different age groups around here. It's just like a community around here. You've got parts that are far away but everyone still comes together. It's really good.  
(Long-term resident, majority ethnic young woman)

The following testimony from a black young man from Downham, however, gives a much bleaker picture of the relative improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the area, which he sees as more the outcome of the redrafting and negotiation than the abolition of racialised boundaries:

No, I can't go there. It's not wise. It's not wise. Where I've had, like when I was young and the blood is like, I was about like 14 and I would have like the Tavern and the Baring like youths like all try and fight me and fight my boys and stuff like. And we'd be like 14 and they were they 18, 19 but they used to chase us out in vans, like frightening people, pretty hectic like. That was back in the day when black folk and white folk, like now, there is white folk on the blacks like that. Like my home boys are white folk, black folk, mixed race folk. Like up in the Tavern now there is black folk. But like they are black folk that are sort of like act white if you get what I am saying. They've got the white boy accent and they drink with the white boys and act white. And that's only because of people like myself and showing the other man that we have to like jump up on that and pull off or down just so we had to, we had to walk over that land for them to come to us, for us to not have it from them, just so that these people can walk over there safely. Do you know what I am saying? This is just about Downham. Downham is just for white folk really. And they want to just hold on to that. If you know it's Lewisham, you've got black folk in there. Deptford you've got black folk, New Cross, Peckham, Sydenham, Forest Hill, you all got black folk everywhere. Downham was known, okay Bromley is for white folk. Downham is classed as Bromley, they want to keep their white folk. But where so many people get moved into Downham they are not getting happy. So the easiest thing for them to do is make peace with them because someone will get hurt. (Long-term resident, young, minority ethnic man)

The redrafting of racialised boundaries along more flexible lines as well as the relative acceptance of interracial and inter-ethnic relations that this young man's comments suggest were not the only improvement in Downham's recent history. In September 2005, Malory school became the Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy, in accordance with the current Government's policies to involve private education institutions in the restructuring of the public education sector as a means to improve education services. Although Malory can be seen as a classic case of a 'failing school', in the last years before its transformation into a school academy it also became an interesting laboratory for the management of ethnic difference and was able to achieve a good performance with non-English-speaking children and children with different educational needs:

By the time Malory was closing it had actually established a really – it was a wonderful school in terms of providing support for lots of non-English-speaking children or children who had different educational needs. And the expertise and the facilities that they had for those young people, erm, I think, were really good. And the statistics just before they closed actually seemed to be indicating that those kids, those young people were really doing well there. So suddenly you go from having a facility where lower-achieving children or young people are getting really good support and then that closes. So presumably those other young people, those young people or the new young people that would have been coming into Malory will now be dispersed into lots of other secondary schools who probably haven't got the same level of expertise. (Key informant, Downham)

Moreover, the school had developed a successful method of dealing with antagonism between different groups and bullying, based on civic education and the use of theatre:

And the school really tried to embrace, you know. The school had lots of problems as a school. It was not a massively achieving academic school. But they really worked at integrating. And drama and the arts was seen as a key tool there. So things like the festival every year, the cultural festival. Things like groups performing. And it was very powerful. You know, and their peers were learning about what it must have felt like and learning to understand the feelings of people and how difficult it is to integrate. You know, and all those sort of things. So you know, a lot of very good work was done, I mean, it was improving. (Key informant, Downham)



Nevertheless, the transformation of the 'failing' Malory school into the 'high-achievement' Haberdashers' Aske's Academy went ahead. This coincided with the introduction of a change in the selection procedures. Those now in place at Haberdashers' Aske's are seen as excluding the less achieving local pupils in favour of 'brighter' pupils from outside, with fewer special needs. These local observations are corroborated by existing research, underlining how city academies in general (Gorard, 2005, p. 276) and Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy in Downham more specifically (Powell Davies, 2008, p. 68) improved their results by changing the nature of their intake and claiming the improvement of overall results was an outcome only of improved teaching or management. The following two quotes from interviews with the representatives of a local education trust and of a theatre group with a long experience of working within Malory school show how the transformation of Malory into a city academy was experienced by people who were directly involved in it:

Haberdashers' Aske's do a, erm, entrance exam which they say is, erm, is comprehensive intake [*laughs*], which they say is a comprehensive intake, well, they have this 50 per cent random selection they call it. But a lot of the random selections are apparently, seem to be in the top 20 per cent or 25 per cent achievement. And great. The other 50 per cent come in on distance. So there is already a bit of social engineering going on there ... They have very high expectations of parents at that school. They make a lot of assumptions like that you've got a computer at home, their child does their homework. They gave every child a memory stick, they make a lot of assumptions. Certain bits of homework has to be – for instance, they have to do for art, for art they have to look up stuff and do a PowerPoint presentation on a particular artist. A PowerPoint presentation! (Key informant, Downham)

Two years ago Malory was closed down and it became a Knights Academy, which is one of these new governmental academies. And they, the new management team went in, and half the school, the buildings have been knocked down, they are building new buildings but they were absolutely clear to us they didn't want us there. They said, we said, well, what about the new arrivals? 'There will be no more new arrivals here.' The transformation was overnight. And basically it was made absolutely clear that the ESOL department was closed down. So the staff left. Erm, and there is no support in language learning there. And the school very clearly said we will not be taking new arrivals any longer. Yeah. Yeah. That's the – these academies can, they are quite autonomous. And it was under the management of Haberdashers' Aske's. So yeah, absolutely they can do that. (Key informant, Downham)

As a consequence, although local people are increasingly trying to enrol their children at the new academy, only a few local pupils manage to get in, while the others, those less likely to meet the high academic achievement standard prescribed by government city academy policy, need to refer to surrounding schools with already fragile academic performances and at very high risk of falling into a Malory scenario.

The delivery of key and expensive infrastructures such as the £40 million state-sponsored Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy, the most expensive city academy according to the latest National Audit Offices report (quoted in Powell-Davies, 2008, p. 61), will certainly not be able to overturn alone decades of neglect and deprivation, and their impact on educational achievement. At the same time, addressing the long-seated problems of schools' catchment areas is not, on its own, going to improve their performance. According to recently published research (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007), only 14 per cent of the incidence of low achievement is attributable to (secondary) school performance and low achievement is strongly associated with eligibility for free school meals, neighbourhood unemployment rate and the proportion of parents with low educational qualifications – measured in the area where the pupil lives.

In this respect, the comparison between Highfields and Downham is very useful, as both areas can be seen as having deep-seated issues of deprivation. However, in Highfields, the relative advantage (in terms of the education achievement ethos and the learning skills available within the family) that some new arrivals had compared with some of the long-term residents became an asset both for the educational institution and for the pupil. Rather than becoming a 'problem' for education, the diversity of the student population is transformed into an asset, by 'mainstreaming' community languages within the system of GCSE accreditation, as the following quote from the interview with the former director of a secondary school in Highfields shows:

To celebrate their cultural background, we entered children who came from Holland for Dutch GCSEs. The children that came from Denmark for Danish GCSEs. The children that are newly arrived for Gujarati GCSEs and so on. So the community languages were given accreditation and currency in the mainstream. (Key informant, Leicester)

In Downham, while students with special linguistic or educational needs were well catered for, minority ethnic long-term resident and new-arrival students aspiring to 'do well' at school also disturbed local hierarchies of entitlement to educational achievement and to upward social mobility. As a consequence, pupils who wanted to achieve became a scapegoat for a social and educational system that failed to

improve the lives of local citizens. The difference, we argue, was that only a minority of students were subscribing to a culture of academic achievement in Downham, because of the prevalence of anti-academic attitudes in the majority of local students. Most of these saw resistance to academic achievement and discipline in the context of education as an integral part of their majority ethnic localised identity.

The most acute phase of social antagonism seems to be over in Downham, because of the greater number of minority ethnic people living in the area and of the coming of age of the groups of young people who were involved in violent confrontations. At the same time, the inauguration of state-of-the-art facilities such as Knights Academy, although representing signs of a new season of investment in the rhythms and realities of everyday life in Downham, appears still to exclude those at the bottom of the hierarchy of educational need.

## **Conclusion**

Although educational structures and practices play a key role in the fostering of harmonious or antagonistic social relations, they cannot do that alone. The social and cultural dynamics taking place in the social settings surrounding schools often determine the symbolic meanings and localised identities associated with educational achievement. It is in relation to these meanings and identities that the arrival of new pupils can be perceived as either destabilising or reinforcing local hierarchies of educational and other social forms of achievement. Thus, according to MacDonald and Marsh (2005, p. 66, quoting Ball *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b), subscribing to an ethos of educational achievement means engaging with local 'learner identities', which emerge at the encounter of a number of factors, including personal perceptions of the value of learning and educational qualifications, the local experience of formal schooling, as well as the ideological and political backgrounds of families and the political economy of relevant neighbourhoods. These findings are in line with holistic approaches to inter-ethnic conflict in the context of education, emphasising how tensions are more likely to emerge as a result of the interplay of a number of factors at a local level, including: unemployment, lack in housing provision, stigmatisation of new arrivals in local media and, more specifically, failure of schools to address violent behaviour between pupils (Rutter, 2006, pp. 96–7).

The comparison between Highfields and Downham shows that, as (secondary) school performance can be seen as only partially responsible for the improvement of educational achievement, the real challenge is to make sure that the remaining factors (related mostly to enduring social, economic and cultural deprivation, but also

to specific self-representations in terms of homogeneity and isolation) are addressed in a comprehensive fashion. To this end, individual academic achievement should not be separated from overall social responsibility for combating disadvantage in the local area when assessing school performance. On the contrary, the quality and performance of school provision for local pupils from deprived families, with learning difficulties, and with special needs and support (including migrant children with poor English language skills) should form an integral part of the criteria for the assessment of school performances. Local authorities should be able to allocate funding in proportion to the level of deprivation they tackle and the needs of their student population (as suggested in Cassen and Kingdon, 2007).

Moreover, as we have seen, the awareness of the constitutive role of migration in the formation of local societies, as well as their self-representation in terms of homogeneity or heterogeneity, plays a key role in the emergence of inter-ethnic tensions in education as well as in other social settings. In this respect, it would be fundamental to rewrite and reteach national and local histories starting, in line with Eric Wolf (1982), from the acknowledgement of migration, trade and cultural exchange as the propellers of the formation of 'settled' societies, cultures and nations, rather than assuming that these emerged separately. This means starting from the comparison of the experiences of new arrivals and established minority ethnic groups (Reed, 2005) to open up the settledness and homogeneity of all local societies, with particular references to those that are immobilised by ideologies of homogeneity and anti-educational ideologies of 'commonness'. It also means accepting and investing in the positive role played by migration in fostering the prosperity of local societies.

In Dungannon, the arrival of new migrant groups exerted pressure on local educational settings, but also contributed to the revitalisation of depopulated local schools. Most importantly, after initial difficulties and resistances because of the lack of funding for English language classes, educational settings became a catalyst fostering the social participation of migrant parents and children, as well as an important meeting point for (young) long-term residents and new arrivals. In this respect, it is difficult to see how proposed cuts to funding for ESOL classes are going to improve the possibility for local societies to capitalise on the arrival of new migrant groups and vice versa. Finally, the possibility to mobilise funds for ESOL classes promptly enough to match ongoing demographic transformations is key for the promotion of harmonious social relations in the context of education.

It is only by acknowledging and valorising the complex relation between schools and the transforming social contexts they work within that 'cohesive' policies and actions can be identified and promoted. By allocating funding to private–public joint ventures,

which only guarantee a high achievement rate by ‘preaching to the converted’ – that is, by selecting the relatively most advantaged children – the structural inequalities and dynamics underpinning social antagonism are reproduced and exacerbated elsewhere. The findings of the present research show that social relations between new arrivals and long-term residents in the context of education were heavily influenced by local ‘learning identities’, which are rooted in the individual and collective trajectories and histories of new arrivals and long-term residents, as well as in the political economies of the areas they both live in. These factors have to be considered jointly in the formulation of new comprehensive approaches to education, prioritising the long-term sustainability of social relations over short-term and short-sighted academic results-oriented goals.

### **Key points**

- The arrival of new groups was both an opportunity and a challenge for educational settings.
- As many new arrivals could only access underperforming schools, these were put under further strain.
- The prompt availability of appropriate funding for ESOL classes following demographic changes in society is one of the keys to the development of harmonious social relations in the context of education.
- Tensions can emerge in educational settings as a result of the presence of new immigrant children – because of their numbers and the extra strain on resources this can entail, and because their achievement ethos may go against the dominant ethos of their school peers.
- New arrivals can revitalise relatively depopulated schools.
- City academies’ mandate to improve academic achievement marginalises underachieving individuals and groups, who are displaced into local less achieving schools because of the academies’ selection processes.
- In order for schools to contribute positively to the development of harmonious social relations, social intervention needs to target the deep-seated social needs of their catchment areas, as well as investing specifically in the educational settings.
- Migration and heterogeneity should be taught within the curriculum as integral aspects of most ‘local’ places in the UK.

*(Continued)*

- For social intervention in the field of education to be successful, it needs to be tailored to local 'learning identities', which are rooted in the individual and collective trajectories and histories of new arrivals and long-term residents, as well as in the political economies of the areas they both live in.

## 4 Work, economic integration and social cohesion

As in previous eras, the expanding demand for labour has been the primary driver of recent immigration to the UK. In the 'new economy', restructuring and rationalisation, along with information and communication technologies, have enhanced and consolidated economic output and reoriented the economy to global as well as local markets. This has generated a skills-based information economy and an expanded service sector requiring an increasingly educated workforce. The growing labour force participation of women, responding in part to these new labour markets, has in turn expanded demand in the care industry and domestic services as well as the food industry. These latter sectors are dominated by traditionally low-waged, unskilled work, much of which is identified as women's work. Expanding demand in these sectors has been met largely by migrant workers, both women and men. In the globalised labour market, migrant workers can 'compete' in these low-waged sectors because they represent an improvement on the conditions they left behind.

To report on our findings on relations between the working lives of new immigrants and social cohesion, we begin by comparing data from Peterborough and Dungannon, as both sites have local economies with significant agricultural and industrial food sectors that rely on migrant workers. Issues of social cohesion have been prominent in each site and the similarity of migration flows demonstrates the impact of place on migration settlement, an issue increasingly recognised in the debate on social cohesion (Singh, 2007). The next section reviews data from Kilburn and Glasgow, and the inflows of both skilled and unskilled workers into the domestic and care sectors respectively. These sites provide evidence of the feminisation of migration flows and the impact of gendered networks on social cohesion (Kofman *et al.*, 2000; Lewis, 2006). In all these sites the lives of new arrivals are overdetermined by the work they have come here to undertake. Work structures and defines their relations and connections in the UK through the relations of trust or discrimination that are a feature of economic integration, and through the kinds of associations and connections that it enables in their day-to-day lives beyond the workplace.

## **Work, labour agencies and place: Peterborough and Dungannon**

The food industry had been restructured by the increasing intensification of agricultural production and industrial food processing and packaging. The increasing participation of women in the workforce has produced a demand for processed and prepared food, and this has expanded industrial food production and changed the production and delivery of food more generally. The consolidation and concentration of supermarket chains has paralleled the changing economies of food and contributed to the restructuring process in the sector resulting from the dominant control over retail outlets of the 'big five' supermarkets. They increasingly dictate both the agricultural and industrial output, and place exacting demands on labour costs (Anderson *et al.*, 2006). Nationally, the sector registers one of the highest employment rates of recent arrivals and the terms and conditions of work encountered by these workers have considerable significance for social cohesion. Although Peterborough and Dungannon have distinctive histories, they currently share very similar patterns of recent migrations servicing the sector.

### **Employment agencies and social cohesion in Peterborough**

The relatively prosperous city of Peterborough has, in recent years, witnessed a growth in employment agencies and gangmasters, both of whom have come to play a significant role in delivering workers to the food industry in the area. Many of our key informants and recently arrived workers listed a range of bad practices implicating many (but not all) of these agencies in unsatisfactory labour and interagency relations. Economic competitiveness in the sector around labour costs involved agencies in strategies to secure cheap labour. Their own competitiveness relied on the charges to their respective clients buying and selling labour. In setting these charges for workers, recruitment agencies often relied on the naivety of clients. Migrants could be made fearful of being forced to return more easily if they did not understand work regulations and conventions, and this vulnerability because of their ignorance of pay, conditions and entitlement could expose them to abuse. This interface between agencies and new arrivals could undermine social cohesion when these practices restricted the possibility of new arrivals experiencing the values of fairness and tolerance, and this, combined with low wages and remittances, limited the terms of their social life in their new city.

The practices of some unscrupulous agencies included systematic failure to produce transparent pay slips, delivering pay packets that did not match the net pay



registered on the packet, outright failure to pay by gangmasters, threatening workers with the sack for querying pay or working conditions, charging extortionate fees for simple administrative procedures, charging very high rent for accommodation that was tied into the job, demanding that new arrivals did not speak to local people or discuss relations with the agency, and creating climates of fear. A particularly reprehensible practice was not to issue workers with P45s and to deduct emergency tax and national insurance and, after a certain period, dissolve the company (only to subsequently establish another) and take the deductions. When workers claimed tax rebate, the Inland Revenue would have no record of the company. These practices were reliant on migrant workers not knowing their rights and not having access to sources of information such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) or trade unions. They also relied on new arrivals not having networks of friends in the settled population who could identify the unacceptable and exploitative nature of these practices. As one trade union officer commented:

... the agencies have got control over these people and individuals, and they've got control over their rights because they don't understand or know what their legal right is. And the intimidation factor is if you don't comply, if you don't do what we say, we'll send you home. As if they've got that ownership of you; what they don't realise is when you come to this country and you get an EEC1 form, and you say you want to work in this country, and it's granted, it becomes your property. If they leave the company, they have to buy that form back. £200–300, that's ridiculous you know, that's exploitation. (Key informant, Peterborough)

The way the climate of fear entered into the conditions accepted by new arrivals was commented on by another key informant advice worker who suggested that the climate of fear was also held in place by new migrants' perception that complaining did not deliver improvements:

Because if they complain it doesn't go too far. I had Russian and Lithuanian clients going crazy because of their line of work. I'm talking about women. I had Brazilian clients that were abused and they wouldn't say anything. We're talking about really, really gruelling things. People don't imagine, people sitting at home, English people, they sit at home, they don't know what's going on. You don't just work 14 hours a day from your own free will. But the thing is, even if you just do £3 or £4 an hour, it's so much more money than back in the Philippines, if you're paying for your son's studies, or your, your daughter's studies, or you're supporting your mum and dad, then what is the alternative? (Key informant, Peterborough)

The vulnerability of recent arrivals is incorporated in the calculation of the cost of their labour using a range of strategies to guarantee the profitability of the agencies and the competitive nature of the labour they can offer employers:

... they get them to sign on as self-employed. Now I don't know a lot about everything but I know self-employed, for one brief moment when you get paid, you think you've got a lot of money because you have all your tax and all your national insurance and then it's up to you to pay that out. They're being taken on as self-employed workers and yet having their tax and national insurance taken off them before they get their wages. And also deductions that make no sense. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

In some instances, the agencies are able to work through existing regulations to manipulate the conditions of new arrivals.

Polish students coming from Poland to work here, and they were getting less than the minimum wage, and it was legal because it was part of the deal, the agreement, Concordia pact, as part of the deal, and they were working 12 hours and living in trailers ... After three months, after three months they are entitled to get the regular minimum wage, but then again their visa is only for three months, after three months they have to go back to their countries. (Key informant, Peterborough)

Workers' fear that they will lose their jobs combined with their vulnerability or lack of information or understanding about work relations intersects with the harassment of mismanaged payroll systems and work schedules that combine to limit the scope of workers' lives. Agencies deliver flexibility to the sector and the lives of migrant workers are constrained by this:

Sometimes people [*working for an agency*] have to phone every day and ask if there is work. So still they do not know they are working at 7 o'clock or even 6 o'clock, yeah. And sometimes they are working for 15 hours, yeah. That's – yeah, I mean, they started about 6 o'clock in the morning and finished in the 9pm. And that's all the time – And there are, they have been told that if they do not agree they would go back. And the most about the contracts, yeah, because we are still in the temporary and the agencies sometimes do not change the temporary contracts to permanent and they should because, if somebody is working a whole year as a temporary, it should be changed to the permanent, yeah. ... That is also frustrating for people. And that makes them feeling that they are not respected. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

By concentrating migrant workers who share pay and conditions, this segregation ensures they are not able to learn about their rights from other workers. By recruiting in the country of origin, agencies are able to further contain the relations of association that migrant workers find themselves in:

*[Agencies recruit] from Poland or Portugal, because that's the way they get round this, you don't come into contact with the community you're going to and very rarely do you, once you get over there, except if you're in the workplace next to somebody who says to you 'what do you earn in an hour?' and they say '£5.80 the minimum wage' and they 'oh I'm on £7 an hour, £8 an hour'. The difference is so blatantly obvious then and – but not always illegal because you can employ people on different rates. (Key informant, Peterborough)*

These practices extended to undocumented workers and, as one key informant who provided support for migrant workers commented, they produced outcomes that were part of the fabric of daily life in the UK:

*I had payslips with zero, after all the deductions, they've had zero on it. We've proved this ... the agency and we caught ... the owner of the agency, with a Portuguese-speaking labour co-ordinator ... They also charge something they call *agenciamento*, which is an amount of money. 'I know you're illegal, if you want to work for me, I have work for you but you have to pay to see ... and the average is £150'. So these people don't have a contract, don't have nothing, and they pay to work, and they're ripped off after work ... They [*the agency*] are still operating in [*name of place*]. But, you know, where does this lead us? They're obviously important for the economy, regional economy, and for overall British economy. You go to Asda you have things cheap, you go to Tesco's, you know, they're doing quite well. (Key informant, Peterborough)*

The values of fairness and tolerance were little in evidence to those migrant workers subjected to exploitative working conditions. They were exposed instead to profiteering, although, in Peterborough, many support agencies intervened to aid migrant workers and ameliorate these conditions. Nonetheless, new arrivals encountered conditions in the UK that were counterproductive for the achievement of social cohesion. We have sought to illustrate how, in the view of both key informants and new arrivals, these were conditions they encountered and had to cope with, rather than conditions they produced.

### Agencies and the operation of hierarchies of workers

New arrivals in Peterborough were made up of Kurdish, Iraqi and Middle Eastern refugees who settled after gaining asylum status. Portuguese and East Timorese workers who worked as seasonal agricultural workers were also part of the new arrivals' labour market and they were joined after 2004 by a growing number of accession state migrants, predominantly, but not exclusively, from Poland and Lithuania. Agencies recruited directly in Portugal and Poland, and this selective targeting linked to a classification of workers in which both Portuguese and Polish workers were identified as 'good workers' who maintained a higher standard of work ethic than local workers. Some key informants reported that, with the arrival of Portuguese workers, the more settled Kurdish and Iraqi workers were displaced:

We did have an issue where migrant communities were fighting with asylum-seeker communities because the asylum seekers were taking the work in the factories illegally, some failed asylum seekers were. Then the migrant communities started coming, which meant that they – because they had the paperwork ... the agencies started just using the migrant workers. I think also possibly paying a lower rate initially so the failed asylum seekers who were doing that work became unhappy and particularly the Kurdish workers, part of the Kurdish community and there was some – there was a bit of backlash over that. (Key informant, Peterborough)

Preference for Portuguese workers, however, was in turn marginalised by the arrival of Polish workers, particularly as Portuguese workers were seen as becoming better versed in their rights as workers and identified by agencies as acquiring the work ethic of their British colleagues. This supports other research findings about how employers identify their preferences for workers from particular nationalities in terms of their work ethic (Anderson *et al.*, 2006).

These constructions of ethnic hierarchies linked the idea of 'good workers' with other desired characteristics such as relative isolation from settled workers, naivety about terms and conditions, and willingness to work for low wages. These strategies from within the labour market positively dissuaded workers from participating in the cultures of settled workers and many union officials and CAB workers complained that the effectiveness of these strategies was evident in the unwillingness of new arrivals to challenge either the agencies or their employers for fear of losing their jobs.

These agency constructions of what was the desired migrant worker profile also kept alive the divisive argument that new arrivals threatened settled workers. The confrontational claim that new migrants take British jobs effectively silences the alternative perspective that much of the industry is built on jobs that would not be undertaken by British workers because the jobs violated so many of the employment rights they enjoyed, rights they would undoubtedly lay claim to if confronted with these conditions.

The idea of the good Polish worker also incorporated ideas of the unskilled worker. While many Portuguese workers worked in similar jobs in Portugal, this was not so for many Polish workers. Their ambitions to get employment more appropriate to their skills had to first overcome the stereotype of the good Polish workers as unskilled. One qualified Polish worker was told he could not access a particular employment agency because it did not deal with industrial jobs. The assumption that, as a Polish man, he could not possibly be a white-collar worker testifies to the power of the stereotype of Polish men as cheap, therefore unskilled, workers.

Well, the thing is an English person they is easy for them to get a better job. It's much more easy. Because they are treated a little bit different ... Polish person is cheap person because they have to work hard, they have to work hard to survive, they have to work to pay for rent, for everything, for food, so they will work hard to not lose a job. And we are like people see us as cheap workers, cheap hard workers most of all. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

However, the skills of Polish workers were often called upon in spite of the grade at which they were employed:

I've had a payroll, one of my payroll team, a young lady who's got an MA in English. And is just, you know, she is so articulate. If I have a complex sentence or you know there is a word I can't spell I call her. Because her English is just so fantastic and so precise, it's just amazing. And she's on my payroll team. And she's also acting as a translator as well. I have to say, if I need anything translated, I use her skills. But that's not why I recruited her. (Key informant, Peterborough)

The impact of this for social cohesion is that it makes apparent that some workers, because they are recent arrivals, do not have the same opportunities to access the labour market as settled workers. Relations of fairness in the workplace are compromised by this and, in the quote above, both the Polish worker and her colleagues are implicated in and by this divisive situation. The interviewee went on

to say it 'broke her heart' to see someone so talented denied the opportunity to work with her skills but she felt unable to do anything about it.

The commitment of agencies to contain recent arrivals within particular sectors of the labour market was based on other assumptions about who the new workers were. They were defined as coming to the UK to make money in order to return ultimately to their own country. This pragmatic relation was deemed to require little in the way of social involvement with the wider community and effectively presumed the social marginalisation of these workers. In fact many Polish workers hoped their families would join them and settle permanently in the area:

So the sort of – the bigger group is men because I have met a lot of men that their wives are in Poland still. For example, my wife is still in Poland, yeah. And we are trying to run our business still. And – but it's going to be, I think, that many of these wives would come here even and children ... the social politics is better than in Poland, yeah, so people are trying to use it. It could be – I just think it could be in future, but I think that could be that way. That people would come here, not only men or just women but all the families are to come here too. That will be the future, I think, becoming more and more. For example, I live with a man that he is just asked the wife, his wife to come here with children. So it's becoming more. Yeah. And you can notice it when, in the nurseries ... (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

The isolation of working within poorly integrated work communities is broken down by union strategies to support migrant workers and by workers becoming familiar with other avenues of support and information. When successful, however, this support highlights the contradictions that migrant workers face where employment is based on the absence of rights. Once new immigrants have achieved rights, their competitiveness is diminished. Faced with this situation, some agencies fired workers in order to replace them with new recruits unaware of their entitlements:

... as long as you stay in a country, you learn, you go to the Citizens' Advice, you inform yourself about your rights and things like that. And life in the factories becomes more difficult for employers to control the employees. So the solution is bring them from another country, that's what they do ... They come from another country, they are completely blind in terms of employment laws and rights and everything, and it will take some time until they open their eyes and start fighting back. (Key informant, Peterborough)

In Peterborough, relations between new arrivals and the long-term settled residents are shaped by agency practices of effectively segregating new arrivals and preventing them from sharing in the collective values of the workplace. This in turn limits their integration into the community when low wages and long hours, often living in overcrowded housing, circumscribe how new arrivals are able to participate. Work in these circumstances is an obstacle to social cohesion, not, as is more usually the case, a key element in both workplace and more diverse social relationships.

### **New arrivals and past divisions in Dungannon**

In Dungannon, similar flows of migrant workers were part of the working community of the area but, unlike Peterborough, these demographic changes represented a more dramatic shift in the social make-up of the community. In 2001, Portuguese and East Timorese workers were recruited by agencies in response to an acute labour shortage prompted by outward migration. These new arrivals effectively restored the economic prospects of the area, as the sector made increasing use of agencies to supply the food-processing sector:

If you look at food processing, if it wasn't for inward migration ... the factories would have closed. Everyone in them would have lost their jobs, most of the farmers on which the rural economy depends would also have lost their jobs ... which eventually will have a knock-on effect in terms of public services ... So the economic impact of inward migration has effectively been to save the rural economy and so safeguard it. (Key informant, Dungannon)

From 2004, many Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian workers joined the workforce, and the ethnic composition of Dungannon was further diversified. The changes happened relatively quickly in what had been a homogeneous but divided community, in which sectarianism constrained and limited conviviality, and divided schools, shops and other amenities:

... where we lived was a very split community. One day I went to the butcher's, there were two and I didn't know which one I was supposed to go into ... I went in and asked for sausages and the man just stood and looked at me ... A woman came over and served me and told me that I should use the other butcher's from now on ... because I had an English accent. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Dungannon)

You got up one morning and there seemed to be a significant group of people who had just arrived in the community and initially they were mistaken for tourists, people who might be passing through. (Long-term settled, key informant, man, Dungannon)

In spite of these differences between Peterborough and Dungannon, similar processes of rationalisation operated through the employment of immigrant labour, which limited the social connections that arose from the workplace. One long-standing local worker commented:

Then I think two years later came all the Portuguese, a lot of Portuguese, East Timorese, and I left after three years with arthritis, I couldn't do it any more, I didn't like it any more.

Interviewer: Why?

Because it got worse in the place.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

The pressure was worse, they wanted more work out of you, the pay wasn't really good. I had a good friend in there, he left, so I worked with people, you couldn't talk to them any more. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Dungannon)

For him, work had become untenable because of the increased pace and because language issues had reduced the conviviality of the workplace. The growing marginalisation of English in the workplace affected other workers rather differently:

It's not good. In my factory there are no Irish people, lots from Poland, Portugal, very few people from Ireland. So, I can't speak English where I work. (New arrival, minority ethnic woman, Dungannon)

Here, the reality of working with only other new arrivals meant that the chances for this worker to improve her English were limited. In this sense, work impacted negatively on her ability to form friendships with local people and participate in the social life in Dungannon.



Dungannon also produced accounts of systematic bad practices around rates of pay, forms of payment and failure of payment. The circumstances that recent immigrants had left behind framed the conditions they encountered in Dungannon:

This constant lack of money and my sons ... And accountancy, looking after strangers' money all the time ... same estimates, same ... I can't say that I did not enjoy it. I liked it. My salary was 800 Lt [*approximately £180*] before tax. And to compare, in winter, we had to pay almost 200 Lt just for heating. And on the top of that two growing children. So I am here because of money. (New arrival, Lithuanian man, Dungannon)

The way I already told you. My life in Portugal is doesn't work ... The bills going up and the wages going down, and I have to look some other place to have a better life. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Dungannon)

This backdrop of economic hardship, however, also meant that new arrivals felt compelled to take what was on offer, particularly having experienced some of the volatility of working life in Dungannon. One recent arrival had not been paid for his work and felt an even greater imperative to get other work, even if it was work that others were unwilling to do:

It was a good job, only if it was for day shifts. But they have a lot of people for day shifts, and they needed workers for night shifts, but there were few people willing to work these shifts ... But I had to take what was available. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Dungannon)

There was also evidence of agencies tying expensive accommodation to work contracts and rationalising shift patterns in ways that reduced the conditions of life of these workers to those of people who worked and slept, and had little expectation of life outside these confines. Some workers elected to do work in this way but, for others, it was a structural part of the terms and conditions established by the agencies:

I was working seven days a week, ten hours per day or so. (New arrival, Polish man, Dungannon)

The recruiting agent ran the shifts and 'owned' the workers ... family houses being used for multiple occupancy without any safeguards, they used to be three- and four-bedroom family houses in which there would be maybe three or four people in a room in bunk beds or whatever. In the worst, not all, but the worst cases they were worked on the shift pattern

that there were eight people sleeping in the bed for four, you know, 'When I get out, you get in'. (Key informant, Dungannon)

Among Polish workers, this practice by agencies was eventually subverted, as people increasingly came to Dungannon via friendship networks and family connections. This liberated them from this particular housing provision and, by acquiring skills through greater involvement with life in Northern Ireland, they would potentially have an impact on the profit margins of the agencies. Some agencies were also under pressure because migrant support agencies investigated the recruitment agencies, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Well, one of the things that has been interesting is that the use of the recruiting agencies has gone down. A lot of the companies who rushed in behind Moy Park have pulled back again because now there is also a body of migrant population here who will work directly for low wages. Some people learnt lessons. [*Named recruitment agency*] were seen off the premises, but their ability to manipulate the workforce was closed down. The Housing Executive and the council worked together to examine every one of their properties for abuse of HMOs [*high multi-occupancy*] ... They were a big international company who didn't need it and went away ... So, you kind of win and you lose, so some lessons have been learnt. There are a number of good recruitment agencies, quite a bit of the contract work now has gone to local established recruiting bodies, like Grafton, etc., who run quality businesses to an extent, that's their trade, recruitment agencies. But, they are not these fly by night companies. (Key informant, Dungannon)

Tied housing for single workers meant that groups of workers would spend their leisure time in the pubs. Pubs became the site of inter-ethnic conflict, particularly around the consensus operating between some new arrivals and local people that Lithuanians were 'aggressive and menacing'. Conflicts in gender relations also surfaced when Lithuanian men engaged with Irish women in ways deemed unacceptable. Many interviewees viewed Lithuanians as troublesome and had a view of them that included ideas about the Lithuanian mafia, that Lithuanian men were particularly big and militarily trained, and that they were offensive in their approach to local women.

There was one particular local pub that tried to ban an entire nationality because allegedly some people from that country had been involved in a fight ... that seems quite a specific stereotype of the Lithuanian population. (Key informant, Dungannon)

The intersecting of workplace divisions and long-standing sectarian practices of exclusion highlights the complexities of social cohesion in a place undergoing structural, political and cultural transformations. Tensions were also evident in the way several young interviewees recounted second- or third-hand stories of the sexual harassment of Lithuanian men. Others reported first-hand encounters with Lithuanians in the local clubs, in which the Lithuanian men had engaged with local women in ways that they found unacceptable and that led, on one occasion, to a fight outside the club.

However, while inter-ethnic tensions existed among some groups of new arrivals, new arrivals were themselves impervious to the deep history of sectarianism in their new place of settlement. This was seen as a positive contribution to social cohesion:

Now, you move that scenario to people that have started to make friends with Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese guys and suddenly their culture is beginning to expand. All of a sudden, it's much more important to have your friends than whether they are Catholic or Protestant. (Key informant, Dungannon)

While many interviewees commented on the gains to the community of diversification, others recognised that, for social cohesion to be embedded in this new context, the economy of the region had to remain buoyant:

My sense is that our social cohesion is quite fragile. There are good examples of strong social cohesion as well as examples of bad practice and racism and poor practice. But, even where we have got good examples of social cohesion, I sense that in quite a number of cases that could be quite fragile, and a change in the economy, how robust would that cohesion be in a changing economic environment? It's an interesting question and hopefully one we are not going to have to find the answer to. (Key informant, Dungannon)

While it is something of a truism to say economic downturn exacerbates existing divisions and hierarchies, and produces conflict, the point being made here is that current economic buoyancy – here, as in Peterborough – is predicated, in part at least, on bad practices that produce poor social cohesion. The low pay and unsecured rights of migrant workers in the agricultural and food industry are contributing factors to the sector's productivity and profitability, but these economic strategies, in their impact on people's lives both at work and in the communities in which they live, obstruct social cohesion. Although, as in Peterborough, Dungannon provided a number of effective mediating agencies that supported migrant workers

and social cohesion, it was still the case that the economic buoyancy was predicated to some extent on work conditions that produced poor social cohesion.

### **Migration histories, work and social cohesion: Glasgow and Kilburn**

In Glasgow and Kilburn, the history of earlier migrations of the now settled populations intersected with the lives of new arrivals in the workplace. In both cities, our research found encounters between both these populations that had positive consequences for social cohesion.

#### **Glasgow: overseas nurses**

In Glasgow, like the rest of the UK, a shortage of nurses and health care workers in the public and private health sectors was solved by recruiting nurses and carers from overseas. The Overseas Nurses Network was set up in Glasgow in response to the difficult circumstances many overseas nurses encountered trying to settle and work in Scotland. The vulnerabilities that new arrivals were exposed to were captured in the plight of an overseas nurse whose arrival coincided with the formation of the network.

Arriving at her new position, the nurse had her passport confiscated by the care home manager. She was told that, on a nurse's salary, she was to be in charge of a 100-bed home. Faced with this unreasonable demand, the woman ran away and hitched a ride to Glasgow where she contacted the police who, via UNISON (public sector trade union) sent her to the network. The network arranged for union and police support to retrieve her confiscated passport, and one of the organisers put her up for the night. She had no money and the next day they put her on a bus to London and one of the network organisers gave her £20 of her own money. A year later the nurse sent the money back with her heartfelt thanks for their support:

But I mean, those were extreme cases. But at a slightly lower level than those extreme cases there were just a plethora of people coming to us saying they were mucked about. It was like people taking an instant dislike to them for some reason and they get all the – well, it's bullying, it was getting all the rotten shifts, you know, the rotten shift pattens, all the dirty nasty jobs, all that sort of things. And being picked on for the least wee thing. Low-level, a lot of low-level stuff that can build up as

in any bullying situation. And also the whole thing about, just a lack of knowledge about their rights. I mean, this withholding of passports and also being told that, if you leave this job, you have to go back home, which is nonsense. All that sort of stuff. (Key informant, Glasgow)

In the focus groups we conducted with the nurses and health workers in the network, a constant complaint, particularly from those working in the private sector, was that they were treated with a 'lack of respect' by their fellow workers. Sometimes this was identified as particular to Scotland, as several of the nurses had long professional histories of working in other countries.

### *Racism and bullying: experiences in Glasgow*

Respect for colleagues, co-workers and patients was identified as an important value in their work ethic of the overseas nurses and health workers. Many were surprised not to find similar values represented in their new work environments. They reported that the work environment, particularly in the private sector, was often hostile and in some cases practices were adopted in care homes that the nurses considered as insensitive at best and, at worst, dangerous to patients. Many overseas nurses found this extremely upsetting and, when in one focus group it became apparent that these were shared experiences, it prompted another discussion about more acute anxieties. As many were going through the process of adaptation, they felt obliged to conform to expectations of them, but this produced enormous conflict about some of the treatments and practices common in the care of older people. The issues were rather cautiously debated, with the term 'euthanasia' mentioned, but only fleetingly. There was, however, consensus that some practices undertaken were, in the view of the overseas nurses, not in the best interest of the patient.

Some nurses reported what they viewed as racist privileging of Scottish workers over new arrivals, even to the extent of care assistants being put in charge of experienced staff nurses from overseas. Nurses in the network felt their experience was either not recognised or, if it was, it produced insecurity in their fellow workers, particularly when they were unqualified and claiming superior status by virtue of being Scottish. The management of staff and shift systems was constantly reported as being used as a tool in strategies of discrimination against overseas nurses. In the focus groups, these infringements were viewed through the lens of the trouble that the nurses would bring on themselves if they objected to the injustices delivered through these practices:

Well, according to a friend of mine in the hospital, she said, well, Scotland was not a multicultural place. Not like in England, they are multicultural ahead of us and it's only two years ago that, you know, foreigners are starting to come over in Scotland, that's why you cannot blame all this people. They don't know how to deal with foreigners. And sometimes they are very, they get insecure if they see that you are higher up in education. For instance, in our country, Bachelor of Science of Nursing is four years, and sometimes it's even five years for those who have the new curriculum, so then, when they start to know you are knowledgeable more than them, that's where the tricks come, they try to – they are being intimidated ... Because they will always say, oh, I know you are a nurse, we are only a carer, but blah blah this is our country, we know where we are, we know where we stand. (ONN focus group, Filipino woman, Glasgow)

While Scottishness was a status that could be deployed against the overseas nurses, the intimate hierarchies of the profession entailed privileges that the overseas nurses could also access:

I know that's the thing. Some of them are not even, did not even go to primary school. And they just work as a carer. That's why they don't have any respect. They don't know, you know, even the way they speak, you know, they don't have the – they are very, very vulgar. And they just swear and swear. Very rude and they shout to you, residents. And then of course you have to correct them there and then because if you leave it for a couple of days or so they could always deny it. While, if you hear them saying something wrong, you just have to correct them immediately. So. (ONN focus group participant, Glasgow)

Racism and lack of multicultural experience were viewed as obstructing the proper professional practices that were built on intersecting hierarchies of class and status. These hierarchies were undermined when racism consistently subverted them and produced intolerable strains in the working environment:

Like, for example, the manager will choose their [*the carer's*] side. That's the thing, that's the different thing, there is some managers which is very true. They always depend on the Scottish people. Yeah. They believe them. But if you are a different colour they will say oh no to you. And if you are a foreigner they do something immediately. A letter going out – disciplinary action and things. (ONN focus group participant, Glasgow)

The net effect of racism and bullying in the workplace was viewed as professionally and personally diminishing:

So it's really a sorry state. Do you get what I mean? It's a really sorry state that, even if you try to put yourself as a nurse and have all the professionalism, they still make sure that you lose your confidence, make sure you lose your self-esteem, you lose your standard and so on. (ONN focus group, Ghanaian woman, Glasgow)

These practices in the workplace were reported particularly in the private sector and especially during the period of adaptation when overseas nurses were gaining their accreditation to work as staff nurses in the UK.

Although the workplace was felt to undermine their professional identity, it did not deny it. Beyond work, however, many felt their professional identity was invisible. Not only was their integrity as workers denied but also they were identified as asylum seekers who, in their view (and more importantly in the view of others), did not work but received the benefits of work through welfare support. This particularly impacted on overseas nurses from African countries:

What I have seen is that the general public don't understand the basics of the immigration system in this country. So, when they see a foreign person, sometimes they think you are an asylum seeker [*female agrees*] or an illegal immigrant ... Because you are foreign, people don't really know all these immigration groups like work permit and all that. I may get indefinite leave to remain, I might be citizen at some point but it seems that people don't know all that. Or there is nobody to blame for it, I don't know. But the general thing is that at the end of the day you don't feel the same way you feel like if people knew that you are a professional in this country. You've got a job, you are here for a purpose. You are someone who knows what they are doing. You are not seeking asylum. You won't feel the same if people look at you and see you in a different way. So that's how I see it. I don't know what other people. (ONN focus group, Ghanaian man, Glasgow)

This argument seeks to challenge one hierarchy – that which racialises asylum seekers – through the affirmation of other hierarchies of professionalism and immigration status. The point that migration statuses are poorly understood generally, and that this impacts badly on social cohesion, fails to recognise that the speaker himself misunderstands the status of asylum seekers. While he objects to being considered an asylum seeker because he is black, he also positions himself as a

professional here to do a job compared with 'workless' asylum seekers. Others in the focus groups shared this view:

Yeah. And if you, if you look at it, the main reason, I think we all said why we came here is we were looking for a career, a job, good salary. We never mentioned benefits. We didn't come here for benefits. [*Several agree, all talk at the same time.*] Benefits mean nothing to me. I couldn't live on benefits, I'd die. We are all here for a purpose. So people think immigration into the UK is all about people seek asylum because they want benefits. [*Several agree.*] But that's not the case. (ONN focus group, Zimbabwean man, Glasgow)

Work is seen as providing a positive status and affording for these overseas nurses a certain lifestyle that allows them to participate alongside and with other Scottish professionals. However, in their lives away from work, because of the racialisation of new immigrants as 'asylum seekers', the black nurses were not treated as respected professionals. Other participants were not so troubled by these issues because, as one Filipino woman commented 'they like the colour of our skin', which prompted a further consensus among the Filipino participants that they were also liked because they were Catholic. Here, another set of associations, which were based on colour and religion, were being invoked and this made some Filipino participants feel more accepted in their non-professional lives.

### *Changing immigration status of health professionals*

What caused profound distress among the overseas nurses was a development in 2006 in which the Home Office altered the regulations around their own immigration status. The leave to remain requirements were altered from four to five years of uninterrupted work being required. The nurses, and especially those who had worked for four years, found this shocking and felt their professional standing counted for little:

But now we have lots of things, we have lots of tensions now. Because we are supposed to have a residency they said in four years but now five years and now no more. So now that we are still having the chance to go to another place. So we plan like this. But we don't know. If not we have to go back to Philippines. That is the plan. Because it's very hard. We will be living here the whole and we cannot settle. It's hard, you know. So we plan to other places, we are planning to go to Australia. (ONN focus group, Filipino woman, Glasgow)



The experienced transnational workers felt compelled to move immediately, because their age meant their working lives were limited and they were also vulnerable to ageism. Their very immediate and practical response to their new predicament was such that this group of workers did not attend further network meetings and their friends reported they were progressing their plan to work in another country.

The nurses planning to remain were concerned that the new regulations would both place them unfairly in the labour market and produce new hierarchies. They feared that they were going to be disadvantaged because non-European foreign nurses would be the most difficult to appoint because they required visas:

When they apply for a job first of all, they get people from the UK and see but, if there is nobody who can get a job, then go to the other European countries and see there is nobody, then they will get to the abroad nurses or abroad people. (ONN focus group, Ghanaian man, Glasgow)

You don't get 10,000 new nurses in and stop work permits for another 10,000 to leave the country. It's not a fair way to do it. They should look at cutting down the applications from outside the country. (ONN focus group, Zimbabwean man, Glasgow)

There was also a real sadness and distress in the focus groups as nurses recognised that their work skills were disposable and no longer in demand, and that the ways in which they could live and work in Glasgow were comprehensively under threat:

If you remember a few years ago the political issue, the political problem was the nursing shortage. Now it's gone, they want to go into the immigration problems and forgetting that the nurses who covered the problems of the shortage are the very nurses who came from abroad, you see. So they've kind of – now, I am not needed here. I left my home, I came with all my family here. (ONN focus group, newly arrived Ghanaian woman, Glasgow)

It's more political than everything else ... Because, politically, they want to correct the figures and to come up with this very fantastic graphical whatever views of the immigration into the UK. But I think because of all that they have kind of forgotten that there is people who are here to work and they've got work permits. We've been kind of put together as a political group that they need to deal with. We are not being treated as we were being dealt with initially when this was ... (ONN focus group, newly arrived Zimbabwean man, Glasgow)

At the outset of the research, the demand for nurses was globally competitive and overseas nurses were faced with a range of possible destinations. In the beginning, many felt welcomed to Britain and that their work experience was valued, even though the realities of adapting to work and to living here often brought this into question. However, the instability these new rules introduced into the lives of the nurses was profoundly felt and gave rise to deep reflections on the personal, emotional, psychic and social cost of migration that they had sustained up until that point. The nurses felt they had been poorly treated by the Government. The new regulations discriminated against all overseas nurses who, they felt, would now be marginalised by white Europeans who would fill the gaps in the health sector labour market. This palpable failure of social cohesion in the UK unsurprisingly prompted many of them to think of migrating again. Nurses felt that the lives they had built up in Scotland for themselves and their children had been severely undermined, and to carry on trying to settle and belong was a threatened enterprise when the regulations governing their lives could be changed at any moment.

### **Work experiences of new arrivals in Kilburn**

Recent arrivals often come with social capital of their own, which allows a degree of integration even before they tap into the shared values, connections and associations arising from their working life in the UK. Access to social networks is particularly important for those who work in isolated jobs such as domestic and care work in private homes. Demand for workers has expanded in this sector with both demographic changes and changes in the family households. Waged work in this sector has therefore become increasingly important in maintaining the domestic conditions that allow the UK workforce to participate in the new information economy. In Kilburn, networks established by earlier migrations greatly facilitated the relations and associations available to some new arrivals working in domestic services.

The parishioners at Quex Road Catholic church in Kilburn reflected much, but of course not all, of the ethnic mix of the area. The Catholic church played an important role for the Filipino community and many of the activities of this group had been established by earlier migrants. Within this community, several women who had initially been recruited as nurses in the 1970s were redeployed by their agencies to work as residential domestics in private homes. Residential domestics have limited freedom and mobility, and these jobs are the least favoured by domestic workers because of the excessive demands that can be placed on them and the lack of freedom entailed in having only limited time off work (Anderson, 2000). Recounting the realities of her work as a residential domestic, an interviewee recalled how, as a then new arrival, she found a solution to the limitations of the job. On her days off she

would meet in the park with other nurses from the Philippines who were also working as domestics:

Yeah. And what happens is sometimes we buy one portion like and we have half for my friend and for me. If it's fish and chips, half fish and half the chips. That's all we eat because we only got little money. But what I did is I said why are we here, you know, sitting in the park and it's so cold, we sitting in Golders Green, they chuck us out because they said we cannot sit there, you know, the waiting room is only for the people going to the coach. So they usually chuck us out, so we go to the park. And to the park there is nowhere to stay, you know. So I said one day why don't we find a flat, you know, in order for us to have somewhere to stay, you know. So it's six of us, friends. So we went around and we found a flat in Finchley Road, 601 Finchley Road, under that is a post office. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Filipino woman, Kilburn)

The nurses shared the cost of the flat and spent their days off together in the flat 'cooking and singing' and enjoying each other's company. If anyone was sacked or experienced difficulties with their employers (a not infrequent occurrence), they had somewhere else to live and the others contributed their portion of the rent until they got another job. This practice of sharing a flat survived from the 1970s and continues within this community of workers to the present day. Recent arrivals can access the flat that the Filipino group attached to Quex Road continues to rent. The flat is also used for women who are subjected to domestic violence and generally provides a sanctuary against an inhospitable world.

Providing support for new arrivals through these networks was embedded in the experiences of many residential domestic workers. The interviewee who had prompted the establishment of the original flat had subsequently got a job servicing a luxury apartment block used for short-term lets. Her residential accommodation was in the large basement in the block. Witnessing the treatment of many of the domestics of families living in the block she gave sanctuary to them in her basement:

What happen is everybody that comes in from Middle East, you know, because I am looking after this house, the Arab people they treat the Filipinos so bad. Gosh. This guy that took one girl, Filipino girl, just they let them sleep in the hallway, right. And one blanket and just one pillow in the hallway. And it's so cold. So cold ... So what happen I said to them, get your passport, right, and every time you go down put something downstairs, put it in a bag, I will take it outside in my room. And they said, are you sure it's alright? It's alright, just leave them, they are horrible.

Because what happens, whatever being the leftover is the only thing she eats. And she's becoming so thin. And she's so cold, I give her extra blankets and everything. But the extra blanket the employer doesn't want it, they have to take it out and she always – I gave her one and then the employer they took it. So I said to her, go, just go. So she left that. And they don't – the employer doesn't even know she is in the basement *[laughs]*. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Filipino woman, Kilburn)

This exceptional woman had supported 15 Filipino women in this way, sometimes four at a time. She negotiated new jobs for them, as many spoke Arabic not English, and borrowed money to help them keep up their remittance payments home.

Like the other older Filipino and other settled migrant women at Quex Road, her working life underwent many transformations, in the course of which she became a postal worker and then a manager in the post office. She bought two houses and left work to do an honours degree in engineering with management at King's College (her lifetime ambition). In her new working life as a graduate, she had a tragic accident at work, which left her paralysed and housebound. In the course of the interview she apologised for her English because the friends who came to visit her were mostly Filipinos. The long-established Filipino community continued to provide care and support – as did her other friends in the community – sustaining a tradition of close links and associations across personal and institutional networks.

The lives of other women in the group also included long and successful working careers, and they all remained active in supporting recent arrivals from the Philippines as well as others who experienced vulnerability and needed support. One woman worked as a catering manager in a big London hospital and it was clear that she continued to provide support for other new arrivals working alongside her in the hospital kitchens.

A recent arrival who worked as a care practitioner (who had the support of the church but, as she was from Mexico, did not have access to a similar network to the Filipino workers) nonetheless found the multicultural nature of Kilburn something that supported her in her workplace:

I did part-time care work and then I was studying at the same time. It was really lovely to work as a carer because I had so much fun and learning from old people. I improved English as well and I learned so many things. And I learn how, even when you are old, you can integrate being from such a different background. Because the home that I once help there were people from all over the world. There were Greek people, black

people, Jewish people, Christians, English people. Never Latin American that I looked after. But – you know, Hungarians, people from all over the world. And then you learn about their country, you know. And then the other person is from the Caribbean, you know, Jamaica. They would tell you about their culture, the food they eat. (New arrival, minority ethnic, Mexican woman, Kilburn)

The multicultural nature of Kilburn attracted her to stay and her educational qualifications enabled her to get permanent leave to remain. What had started as a quest to improve her English ended in settlement, because she found the multicultural character of her work so positive. Although the university degree that she was completing would allow her to get a more skilled job, she was happy to remain in caring because of its richness and diversity. Her friendships networks were similarly diverse:

I like the diversity. This is why I am here. Because is, you know, very interesting, even people with the same mother tongue, they are not even your own culture because, funny enough, I am from Mexico but I don't have a lot of Mexican friends. All my friends they are Latino Americans and they are from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru. Erm, Brazil. And they are not, I have only few Mexican friends. But all my friends they speak Spanish, they come from all over Latin America. Something that I could not have done in Mexico. I would only have Mexican friends. But here I have so many friends that speak my language and they are from so many different countries. It's amazing. And also from different countries as well. Like I have friends from Philippines, Portugal, English as well, Irish, I have Scottish friends, Turkish friends, Arabic, Asian. You know, everything. Somalian. Everything. (New arrival, minority ethnic, Mexican woman, Kilburn)

Expanding labour requirements in the care sector and the domestic sector have underwritten recent immigration to fill low-skilled and low-paid jobs that notoriously have little by way of career development potential and are generally considered dead-end jobs. However social networks in migrant communities can provide buffers against the difficulties of working in these sectors, even to the point that some new arrivals experience a greater degree of social cohesion precisely because of their immigrant status.

This sector is also traditionally associated with women workers, but this gendered stereotyping is changing and some new arrivals have been able to work productively with these shifts. A young professionally qualified Hungarian man, who was unable

because of an injury to continue working in a bar to support himself while learning English, obtained instead an au pair job working with a young, single, professional woman who needed someone to transport her son to and from school. His income was supplemented by a second job working as a dog walker. Coming from Hungary, where gender segregation is both less pronounced and differently calibrated, he avoided the dysfunctional gender segregation and this meant he could support himself adequately.

Recent arrivals in Kilburn have benefited from the culture of previous migrations in a community where rubbing along together is a shared value. Relations between groups that have stood the test of time provide a positive environment in which new arrivals can settle. Even in a sector of the labour market with little promise for possibilities of meeting other people and, because of low pay, limited chances of building a viable life, recent arrivals have established themselves in and through social networks of migration and belonging. The relations of trust and support built within and between groups of new arrivals and settled migrants show how social cohesion can be enhanced and strengthened by the networks and skills of new arrivals establishing themselves in the UK.

## Conclusion

While knowledge economy workers are thought to pose little threat to social cohesion in Britain, those undertaking unskilled and medium-skilled jobs are viewed as more problematic. They are seen as too competitive ('they take our jobs') and responsible for unsustainable pressure on social resources such as health welfare and housing. Whereas business applauds the contribution that immigrant workers make to sustained productivity, others are concerned by changes in workplace and community relations generated by this refigured population, often identifying new arrivals as the source of many of its problems. Our data suggests, however, that the workplace and work relations are structured by economic rationalisations shaping both productivity and profit margins, and that new arrivals are often positioned more harshly by these shifts than their fellow workers and, so positioned, contribute to the competitiveness of the sectors.

Work is an important and complex site of social integration and influences social cohesion in myriad ways: it embodies hierarchical relations between employer and employee and differently aligned hierarchical relations between employees; it registers the values of rights and responsibilities through either their implementation or their absence; it classifies jobs through intersecting criteria of gender, race, class and skill; and values workers as core or peripheral to the economy. In all these ways,

work impacts on social cohesion by generating many of the economic and social terms on which people form associations with one another both in and beyond the workplace.

Migrant workers are perceived as interlopers in this process even though migration continues to be a key mechanism in delivering the labour forces required by the changing demands of the economy (Castles, 2003; Sassen, 2003). In both Peterborough and Dungannon, recent immigration has contributed to the ongoing economic prosperity of the regions. However, the sectoral dynamics of a low-paid, seasonal, part-time and casualised labour force have been exacerbated as the rationalisation of industrial and agricultural food production puts further pressures on labour costs. We found evidence of recent arrivals being subjected to a variety of strategies, by agencies in particular, which reduced labour costs by obstructing, manipulating or refusing workers' rights. Inter-ethnic relations between recent arrivals were influenced by agencies exercising preference for less integrated workers, which effectively operated a disincentive for more integrated and cohesive relations.

In Glasgow, overseas nurses initially enjoyed the benefits of a competitive labour market, although the conditions of their accredited integration created fertile ground for discriminatory and racist practices, particularly in the private sector. Unforeseen changes in immigration regulations dramatically undermined the relations of belonging that many nurses had established. The uncertainty that surrounded their chances of getting permanent leave to remain made many feel that their hard work had been summarily rejected by Britain and that no concession had been made to their contributions to the health sector. In Kilburn, the lesser regulated care and domestic sector allowed interviewees to navigate individual and collective strategies of belonging, which enable some at least to both socially integrate and economically thrive through support structures and education.

The development of relations of cohesion arising out of labour migration are thus dependent on the extent to which labour laws and labour regulations are not violated by employers of new arrivals, or the extent to which new migrants are not positioned as a means to secure profit margins because of their lower wage expectations and lack of incorporation into the work cultures of Britain. Relations of social cohesion are also badly damaged by peremptory changes in immigration legislation, which threaten the work of belonging in which recent arrivals have heavily invested. And finally, in Kilburn, we found evidence that, in areas of multicultural tolerance that contain the cohesive capacities of past migrations, work, even in unpromising sectors such as residential domestic service and care, can be a productive platform for social cohesion.

### Key points

- Recent arrivals can be targeted by employment agencies and employers as lower-waged workers because they are unfamiliar with the baseline terms and conditions of work in the UK.
- Rationalisation of sectors such as agricultural and industrial food production can lead to practices that expose new arrivals to systemic vulnerabilities, and reduce their capacities to engage with and develop strategies for social cohesion.
- Economic buoyancy is predicted to some extent on work conditions that produce poor social cohesion, as seen in both Peterborough and Dungannon.
- In Dungannon, the intersection of workplace divisions and sectarian practices of exclusion highlights the complexity of social cohesion in a place undergoing specific structural, political and cultural transformations.
- The history and experience of previous migrations contributed to cohesiveness in supporting the conditions of belonging for new arrivals, as seen among care workers in Kilburn.
- Many labour migrants bring social capital to their workplace, as well as networks and skills in settling in a new country.
- Institutions such as churches facilitate lines of communication and association that powerfully influence the quality of social cohesion.



## 5 Housing and social cohesion

The accessibility and quality of housing significantly underpins social cohesion. Adequate, affordable housing promotes well-being and a sense of security, and allows people to integrate and establish themselves in a community. The quality of housing impacts on health, education and employment, as well as the life cycle of families and the possibilities of social mobilities (Phillips, 2006). When housing is poorly provided or in short supply, the consequences for neighbourhood relations are limiting. The capacity of the housing stock is determined by the changing needs of local populations, which alter with changing family size and household compositions. This affects both whether supply is adequate and whether the appropriate provision is available. Changes currently affecting the housing market include the rapid growth in single-person households, changes in the patterns of family formation, diversity of family size, the particular requirements of the growing population of older people and the housing needs of commuters, as well as those of homeworkers. In addition, changes in migration flows have had an impact on housing provision and the combined weight of the changes has generated a degree of insecurity around housing in the UK.

In our research, we asked people about their accommodation and whether it was suitable for their needs. We also asked about neighbourhoods, how they had changed and whether people liked living in them. Housing frames people's access to community and places them in a very immediate relationship to their neighbourhood. This was particularly relevant when people had no choice about where they lived. We wanted to see how housing affected people's lives and to what extent it influenced their relations in their immediate locality, as well as in the wider community

In the cross-flow of changing trends in housing demand, older problems of housing provision persist and continue to put pressure on the housing market and neighbourhood relations. These include the need for upgrading and refurbishing of existing stock, the cumulative problems of deprived housing estates, homelessness and overcrowding, the restricted terms of entitlement for social housing and the impact on social housing stock of the right to buy. Other developments in housing provision include the burgeoning buy-to-let market, house price inflation, a prohibitively expensive first-time buyers' market and a major government programme in house building, which promises enhanced housing capacity in the future but offers little for the housing shortages of the present (Phillips, 2006; Gordon *et al.*, 2007).

Across the six sites in our study, the different routes that recent arrivals took into the housing market positioned them in the communities of settlement in specific

ways and often without the element of choice. The housing profiles of the long-term settled communities also created different contexts for new arrivals. The ways in which housing issues influenced how people got along were complex and did not follow any set pattern in localities with similar housing provision. In our study, we found that housing supply, altering housing demand, changing entitlements and recent immigration all impinged on relations between new arrivals and the settled populations, and have produced new etiquettes of neighbourliness and different issues around getting along together.

In this chapter, we look at the impact on social cohesion of new arrivals being housed in both the private rental sector and social housing. In the first section, we focus on Glasgow, Peterborough, and Dungannon, where the housing of new arrivals had different impacts according to the degree of social support that communities received in adjusting to neighbourhoods altered by new arrivals. In the following section, we review the impact of new arrivals on the ongoing problems of overcrowding and entitlement to housing in Leicester, Downham and Kilburn. These are central issues in housing provision and recent immigration has given them greater prominence in their consequences for social cohesion.

### **Housing sectors and support for new arrivals**

Across the six sites in our study, the routes into housing provision were complex. They included the temporary social housing available to asylum seekers, the transitional provisions available to homeless people, social housing allocated on the basis of need, the private rental market and homeownership. These routes combined differently across the sites and distributed new arrivals into a variety of different neighbourhoods. The support available to new arrivals through the different types of tenancies varied both within and between sites.

### **Social housing provision for asylum seekers in Glasgow**

In Glasgow, recent immigrations have come through the dispersal programme of asylum seekers, as well as through inflows of economic migrants from the accession countries. The sizeable community of asylum seekers – one of the largest in the UK – is now matched by growing numbers of new arrivals from Poland and other A8 countries. Asylum seekers were housed in empty social housing owned by the council and the new arrivals from Eastern Europe went into the private rented sector. The areas of under-occupied, high-rise social housing, mainly in the north of the city,

and the cheap private rental sector on the Southside are both associated with high rates of poverty and multiple deprivation, but, whereas the estates housing asylum seekers are predominantly majority ethnic, the area of cheap private rentals is predominantly minority ethnic.

The initial management of housing asylum seekers in Glasgow was described by one key informant as 'atrocious' and many of those involved acknowledged that mistakes were made in the beginning of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) programme. To accommodate the new arrivals, council flats in high-rise estates that had been derelict for a decade were refurbished to a standard not experienced by other tenants. Residents on the estates were not officially told about the new arrivals and asylum seekers were bused in under cover of darkness. The hostilities and tensions that this management generated ended in the murder of an asylum seeker and the demand from residents for a public debate on the predicament of the estates. These events prompted a review of the City Council's management strategies. In a radically revised approach, the involvement of a range of local agencies supporting the new arrivals eventually changed relations on the estates. Existing tenants came to benefit from the resources that followed the asylum seekers, including that of coming to the attention of, and receiving renewed consideration from, the council. New resources, such as a community festival and one-stop-shop provisions on the estates, improved conditions generally, as did the strong local support that grew up in defence of those families threatened with deportation:

But there are some really strong community activists in Sighthill. Some of the strongest I have ever met have been in Sighthill who, erm, who have a real history of working in trade unions, who grew up in the 30s and who experienced really bad times and would have no difficulty in accepting people into their community but the problem was that that wasn't shared with the community. You know, it suddenly happened and there was no work done with the community to ensure that, you know, that the situation, they just – one day there was no one there and the next day there was a lot of people from another community, so I think a lot of that could have been avoided. That was an experience in lack of knowledge.  
(Key informant, Glasgow)

Many asylum seekers endeavoured to remain on the estates once they had received their status. The involvement of the community and of agencies, from the police, the City Council, Citizens Advice Bureaux to NGOs, allowed different relations of neighbourliness to emerge in the shared social spaces that the new resource base had made possible.

### ***Refugees and economic migrants in the Glasgow private rental sector***

Unlike asylum seekers, A8 migrants and refugees seek housing in the private rented sector. The cheapest provision is found in the Southside of Glasgow where many temporary, often itinerant residents and undocumented workers live alongside the poor settled population of Irish, Indian and Pakistani residents. Here, much of the accommodation is sub-standard and often unregistered and, whereas the adjacent, predominantly Asian areas have strong community links and reasonable resources, the surrounding areas are impoverished and under-resourced. In these areas, the tensions within the neighbourhood around poverty and survival strategies are such that newcomers are viewed as unwanted because they are presumed to bring further problems. The new arrivals entering these neighbourhoods were predominantly from Poland, Lithuania, Iraq and Somalia, but also included people from Ghana and Nigeria. The groups comprised different statuses and relationships to the labour market, and were shaped by different histories of cultural diversity and homogeneity in their countries of origin.

Refugees who have to settle in cheap rental accommodation once they have been given leave to remain face difficult problems (Robinson *et al.*, 2007). Having been detained, often for many years, without work, awaiting their decision, it is difficult to deal with the consequences of enforced long-term unemployment, and to find both employment and new accommodation. These social problems incorporated into poor neighbourhoods produce very challenging conditions for people to get along with each other:

You know, it's the same kind of thing as the long-term unemployed. Except maybe worse because they've got other difficulties. And then you've got all the problems that came beforehand, you know. Because you have given people, you are subjecting people to such negative and such poor experiences, and to then turn round and say, right, you are homeless now, sort it out and get a job, you know, you are not helping people. If the process for people who are refugees and asylum seekers, if the process for seeking asylum was much fairer, was more humane, with people allowed to work, then ... they would be much better. (Key informant, Glasgow)

Refugees seeking cheap accommodation also confront another difficulty with housing, in that what is available is often unsuitable for the needs of their larger families. These composite problems, when encountered without any support, set up further tensions in communities that already feel themselves dispossessed and ignored. In identifying these groups as asylum seekers, the local communities are

registering both a lack of understanding of the situation and the presumption that new arrivals have nothing to offer the community.

For other people it's a difficult thing, you know, they come with baggage and they struggle. And also, you know, there is a large Asian community in Govan Hill as well who are settled who, erm, who have whatever problems they've got and they don't want additional issues, and these are seen as additional issues, and that does cause tensions with people and that, you know. It's, you know, there are tensions, I think. But it's people living in poverty, to be honest. People are living in poverty and they can't access benefits, who have no skills, you know. If they are working, they are not registered, so they are working for very little money, so life is hard for them. (Key informant, Glasgow)

A8 migrants coming into this area are also positioned by the locals as 'asylum seekers', and are therefore inhospitably received because they are seen as unwanted outsiders adding to the burden of deprivation. This is in spite of the fact that there is a high employment rate among A8 migrants in Glasgow and that, like many legitimate asylum seekers, their educational and skills profile is higher than that of the local population (Blake Stevenson, 2007). This stereotyping of new arrivals as asylum seekers bringing more problems to the area closes down the possibility of properly identifying new arrivals and establishing good relations. However, the work commitment of some A8 migrants also limits the possibility for communal relations:

The A8 nationals, they have no issues, they just get on, they find work and they get on. You never see them, they get on and find employment, they have links. (Key informant, Glasgow)

Some A8 newcomers, however, also contribute to overcrowding in the area through multi-occupancy, so their position in the community is not entirely neutral. In this diverse and deprived neighbourhood, few support agencies existed to mediate relations between new arrivals and settled people, and one of the few that did, the Integration Neighbourhood Office, was being closed down in anticipation of different forums being put in place by a new community planning initiative. As a consequence of new arrivals, this area was left with groups in the community who did not understand each other, shared conditions of poor housing and a new variant of racism in which all newcomers were identified through the derogatory and negative category of asylum seeker.

The transformation of the two neighbourhoods varied between local residents feeling that new arrivals simply added to the reduced circumstances of the neighbourhood

that had little or no social support, and residents enjoying increasing social support as a consequence of the new arrivals coming to live in the estates. After a difficult start to the dispersal programme in Glasgow, local circumstances eventually led to the emergence of good relations. Glasgow's declining population and the desire to retain the refugee population provided a degree of additional support for areas housing asylum seekers. The existence of a housing surplus avoided the problems of overcrowding, and engagement between asylum seekers and estate residents led to the revival of long-dormant activists' traditions and campaigns of support for asylum seekers threatened with deportation:

But what's happened there is a real transformation. Because you did have a community that was up in arms because that was a poor community and they saw people from, you know, seeking asylum coming in and being given these furnished houses with, you know, how come they've got the fridge-freezer, how come they've got the washing machine, how come they got all these things and we don't get it? Well, they were never entitled to that. You know, it's not the way the system works. And what has happened now is that that very community who was up in arms against the asylum seekers is now, you know, they are now working together and community integration up there is fantastic. (Key informant, Glasgow)

Where resources and agencies of mediation follow new arrivals, even in places of acute deprivation, neighbourly relations could be improved. Where poor resources, negligible agency involvement and overcrowding in sub-standard housing defined the neighbourhood, little space existed for good relations between neighbours and new arrivals were blamed for the problems of the area.

### **The impact of housing support for new arrivals in Peterborough**

In Peterborough, new arrivals were similarly composed of asylum seekers, undocumented workers and economic migrants from the accession countries, and their housing in different parts of Peterborough was seen to cause a variety of problems. The arrival of asylum seekers and their housing, often in geographically isolated, mainly majority ethnic deprived areas, exposed asylum seekers and refugees to racist abuse and attacks. The asylum seekers felt they were easily identifiable and, because there was no sizeable minority ethnic population in the area, they were seen as easy targets for racist attacks on their homes. One young Kurdish man recounted recurrent abusive and violent attacks that he experienced in his neighbourhood:

One is people in [*the neighbourhood*] they know we are refugees. At night, last year every night, every night they came into my house, striking my door ... Every night this. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

Tensions between Kurdish asylum seekers living in the area and local Pakistani young people led to a major disturbance and, with the help of Home Office funding, the New Link Centre was established in November 2004 to assist all new arrivals to the city (asylum seekers as well as migrants) to settle and to access services. The centre offers advice and help with translations, and has built close links with other statutory and voluntary services, which have regular surgeries on the New Link premises to facilitate access. Many of the issues that emerged around housing were mediated by New Link and produced a number of interventions aimed at improving neighbourly relations.

In Peterborough, comparatively high rents relative to low wages also produced overcrowding in the accommodation of new arrivals. Many new arrivals either found themselves in expensive accommodation tied to their employment or in the buy-to-let sector, which also set high rents. Some resentment already existed among the settled majority ethnic population towards landlords – particularly Asian landlords – because, on the one hand, the buy-to-let market boosted house prices and disadvantaged first-time buyers and, on the other hand, the high rents they demanded produced overcrowding and this brought down the value of adjacent properties:

That is also causing a little bit of friction amongst the local people as well, because they are the houses that young couples would have probably been able to afford to buy. You can't buy much in this town under £100,000 but those houses would probably be late 80s, which young couples are buying. So they are skewing the housing market for them. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

If you can buy a house, if you buy on a mortgage and you can get five people in there, £350 a week coming in, thank you very much, that's a nice little earner isn't it. (Key informant, Peterborough)

Erm, we've got a lot of erm, Lithuanians and things going into the rented houses because there is a lot of people now buying, erm, you know, the new houses on the new housing estates, which is other side of Thetford and then they are renting them out. You know, they are doing this

hot-bedding where one gets out and one gets in type of thing. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Thetford)

Interviewer: They rent them to new immigrants?

Yeah. And they are getting huge amounts of money, you know. Because, as one gets out – one will do night work and one will do day work and there is quite a few people complaining about that, you know, that they've bought a nice house and then there is 30 people in this one house, you know. They are all doing this constant, yeah, changeover, yeah, so there has been sort of some complaints about that. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Peterborough)

Overcrowding was thought to diminish community relations because significant increases in residents who were unfamiliar with neighbourhood conventions generated difficulties. In addition, some thought the combination of overcrowding and language difficulties reduced the resilience of the neighbourhood:

Not knowing who your neighbours are is an important problem, you don't feel safe if you don't know that. Also, if people speak different languages, it is impossible to ask them for a neighbourly favour. In addition, because the houses are overcrowded, some problems arise from that. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

... they tend to move next door to somebody who's been there for 40 years and one case I had, a lady that's been in her house for two years and daren't go out because she's got two either side of her full of she doesn't know who, but she daren't go out. And I think that's ridiculous but she doesn't feel safe in going out. And certainly Peterborough's face is changing. (Key informant, Peterborough)

Added to this was the issue of conventions of communal behaviour in maintaining standards of upkeep and presentation. While many long-term settled, majority ethnic residents blamed the problems of the housing market on the Asian landlords, particularly the problem of overcrowding, they held the new arrivals themselves responsible for not understanding how things were done in Peterborough. New arrivals were seen as impolite and unfriendly, as not tending their front gardens and using the street to repair their cars, which took up excessive parking spaces because of over-occupancy, and as not understanding how to manage the recycling bins and



thus creating unhygienic and untidy conditions in the neighbourhood. This catalogue of complaint was dealt with in different ways by New Link and received considerable support from the council:

Because our cohesion problems in the town, since the riots we had two to three years ago, have been more around what do you put in this dustbin? And we have printed what you put, we've got a three-bin system. And we printed them in ten different languages, 15 different languages, because one of the things we found that the indigenous population do not like is basically the different lifestyles. If you put the wrong thing in the wrong bin, it stays outside, stays on the street, just builds up around it, makes their whole area look a mess. And we're working, we've got this thing called New Look, working with New Link to try and get round the residents' associations and organisations that the indigenous population are in to give advice and assurance. And then, from that, we do home visits to new arrivals to try and say, look, this is what you put in the bin, please put some curtains up, please cut the grass, please don't drive that car without a licence. All the things that I'm sure you know are at ... (Key informant, Peterborough)

These mediating agencies, while delivering support for both new arrivals and the settled population, were also unambiguous about the nature of the dynamic between neighbourly relations. New arrivals were expected to learn the conventions of household and neighbourhood ways, and how to behave as proper members of the community. While this offered chances to enhance relations between settled people and new arrivals, it gave greater weight to the conformity of new arrivals than to their contributions. This amounted to another job that new arrivals were expected to undertake – the job of social cohesion.

### **Housing sectors and neighbourly relations**

In Dungannon, the pattern of migrations did not include the dispersal of asylum seekers, but a rapid process of outward migration from the area substituted by an equally rapid process of inward migration. The ethnic composition of new arrivals broadly matched that of Peterborough, commencing with the Portuguese and people from the Portuguese colonies, followed by A8 migrants predominantly from Lithuania and Poland. Neighbourly relations between the settled community and recent arrivals were shaped by the rather precipitous arrival of new migrants, the housing provision made available to them and the residues of sectarian politics:

People do say hi to them, but I am aware of the fact that, when they are not there, that the conversations, people are not very keen on them being there. I think the reason they are not so keen on them being here is like, it's alright if you have one or two, but all of a sudden you have literally thousands and it's been a huge change. It hasn't been gradual change, it has been almost instantaneous, and that's very hard on both communities. (Long-term settled woman, Dungannon)

Well, up until about four years ago you might have seen Chinese, that's about the height of it ... Then, and you are not allowed to use the word 'influx' any more, the migrant workers starting coming up to two or three years ago. It was serious there for a while, the landlords came in and bought the properties up and started renting them out. (Long-term settled woman, Dungannon)

Relations between new arrivals and the settled population gravitated around housing and locality, and many interviewees reported having very amicable relations with their new neighbours with whom they formed friendships, but also difficult relationships with other neighbours. This common tale of different experiences of new arrivals as neighbours came about with the high turnover in tenancies, which reflected patterns of migrations in which one family member migrated first to be joined later by the others. One older long-term settled woman, who lived with her son and was generally very welcoming of new arrivals, nevertheless had had such a difficult time with extremely disruptive Portuguese neighbours that she could no longer shop at Tesco because it was frequented by so many members of the Portuguese community:

Men, women and children at all hours of the day and the music was shocking, barbecues, put their fingers up to you or put their tongue out. Only for my neighbour I don't know what I would have done. I rang the police, a policeman and woman came down ... but then when they left they turned the music right up and that went to 2 o'clock in the morning. I even had to get my phone changed, I don't know how they got my number, it rang every half hour day and night. No matter who I complained to, nobody did anything. One night they broke windows, the back door and things. My son has his garage at the back and I went out to get the car out and he said, the back door is broke. I don't know what they were doing but you daren't walk out. The man that owns that house just comes on a Friday to put the kettle on and that's it. I said to him one day about the Portuguese and the trouble we had, he never bothered. He's never done anything to that house. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Dungannon)

This household had caused such distress that another older local man, who was recovering from an illness, had left the area altogether. The couple who eventually replaced the disruptive tenants were also Portuguese but were ideal neighbours who were polite, friendly and attended the local Catholic church.

Other interviewees recounted similar stories of very good and very bad neighbours from the population of new arrivals:

No. We have had a few problems like the people, they actually moved out last Friday, when they first moved in they decided it would be much quicker to walk across our garden to get to their front door than their own. It drove the dog mad. We asked them to stop, which they did eventually after several requests. There were also heavy smokers and we find this a lot, the foreigners do seem to be very heavy smokers, they smoke outside, so they started throwing their cigarettes into our garden all the time, and we don't smoke, so we didn't like it. We asked them to stop and they didn't. So one day I went out and swept it all up and left it on their doorstep and they stopped. Really from me it was the wrong thing to do, but we had asked them several times to stop and they wouldn't. (Long-term settled English woman, Dungannon)

This interviewee and her husband had formed friendships with the previous tenants – four Lithuanian men who had moved from the area when their families had joined them – whom they continued to see socially. She also worked as a teacher with new arrivals and found their presence in Dungannon very positive, but nonetheless said the experience of unpleasant neighbours had changed her attitudes somewhat. This shows the power of neighbourhood relations to either consolidate or undermine people's sense of well-being and the way in which these changes can influence their views of social cohesion. When the proximity that exists between neighbours is disrupted by bad relations it can affect a person's sense of safety and the extent to which their home is a haven from the world. The experience of having 'bad neighbours' is, therefore, potentially profound, as it causes insecurity. In this case, although the couple are open to new arrivals, their experience of poor relations with one set of new immigrants as neighbours means that, if it is repeated in the future, the fragility of neighbourly relations might tip into a more hostile response and thus resonate with debates that hold that new immigrants are responsible for disruptions to social cohesion.

In Dungannon, as in Peterborough, many of the settled population held landlords responsible for the overcrowded conditions in which many new arrivals lived. In Dungannon, the private rental sector also included agency housing that was

attached to jobs. This housing was particularly lucrative for the agencies because they controlled the shift patterns and could therefore double-tier its occupancy to fit with the shift regimes. In Dungannon, hot-bedding featured as did multi-occupancy rental arrangements – both practices producing conditions of unacceptable overcrowding and placing considerable strain on neighbourly relations.

The buy-to-let market restricted the availability of rental properties for local people because landlords bought up all the available properties and were unwilling to let to local people because they did not want to forego the high return that overcrowded rentals produced:

... one neighbour of mine now owns 20 houses entirely filled with migrant workers, so that has had a positive and a negative effect. Obviously, if you are a family with young children looking to get onto the property ladder, housing isn't available because everything is being snapped up and it's driving the prices up. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Dungannon)

Interviewer: Do you think there are any tensions between locals and the migrants?

Oh, I hear it regularly, you know. 'Oh, my son or daughter can't get a house because they are all rented out to Portuguese or Lithuanians and, if they weren't here, there would be more.' Again, your usual kind of subtle racism, in that the 'foreigners' are blamed, and I am putting 'foreigners' in inverted commas because it is not the word I would use, but is a word I have heard bandied about. So, 'foreigners' are to blame because there are no houses, when really at the end of the day it's the landlords and the fact that social housing isn't being provided for everybody. (Key informant, Dungannon)

However, if landlords and new arrivals were held responsible for the shortage of available housing for the long-term settled communities, in many neighbourhoods it was the long-term settled of both the Protestant and Catholic communities that were responsible for poor relations between the two groups. Several interviews mentioned that, in some Protestant estates, sectarian hostilities to outsiders were easily converted into racism against all new arrivals:

Well, people will tell me secretly or privately, and what people will admit to in public is completely different, but there is quite a bit of antagonism towards migrant workers. Housing is one of the issues ... there have been a lot of cars burnt, paint thrown at houses, people put out of various communities. A community leader in one of the Protestant communities told me privately that they had a community meeting and that any migrant workers who came into their community would be put out, and they have been.

Interviewer: So sectarianism has been replaced by racism?

Yes, and they have been put out. There is also another very large Protestant enclave in Dungannon where no migrant workers can go. (Key informant, Dungannon)

Another incident of violent attacks on migrant houses involved seven houses having bricks thrown through their windows in an attempt to 'put out' recent arrivals on an estate that had a paramilitary presence:

Well, in terms of orchestrated attacks, yes, the attacks are orchestrated and the loyalist paramilitary infrastructure may well have a role in them. Clearly, it may not be all loyalist groups, but I haven't seen any evidence of republican paramilitary involvement in racist attacks at all, that's not something we have seen any evidence of. (Key informant, Dungannon)

Other interviewees experienced attacks on new arrivals in terms more of hostility to migrants or of the acts of gangs who made trouble for everyone living near them. A Polish woman married to an Irish man living in a predominantly Protestant estate where there was an incident in which some Polish people were made to feel unwelcome concluded that it was to do with resentment towards migrant workers. In this particular incident, both the community committee and the landlord had formally apologised for the behaviour directed at the Polish residents. The attack, she thought, was not provoked by sectarianism:

I heard that Irish people were tired with [*recent migration*], and think maybe at one point there will be no jobs for them because there are that many workers coming here ... They were small-minded, I don't think they bothered to find out if they were Protestant, Catholic or Muslim, just migrants. (New arrival minority ethnic woman, Dungannon)

Another violent incident in which a gang of youths on an estate had attacked a Lithuanian family and thrown them onto the street provided further evidence of hostilities sustained by migrant families:

But we got trouble in the estate. There was migrant workers, Lithuanians I think, and the hoods [*literally means thugs, usually young thugs*] put them out in the middle of the night. The local hoods, they take drugs and drink.

Interviewer: What did they do?

They just put them out in the middle of the night. Not only is it migrant workers but it's also that I have been threatened on a number of occasions with my life ... I don't know why they done it, but this gang just threw them out of the houses, and it was an awful sight to see, you know, women running with their small children, and we felt helpless. (Long-term settled English woman, Dungannon)

This woman had lived on the estate for 15 years and had been involved in community projects and associations. In her view, the estate, which had been predominantly republican, had fallen into lawlessness after the war had ended. The IRA had insisted the police were kept out of the estate:

And then the drugs got in. Ninety per cent of the people in the area are good people, but they have got a fear of the hoods. They intimidate people, they would be into crime, drugs, intimidation ... Then, maybe it was the drugs, I don't know, but they have just destroyed the estate. (Long-term settled English woman, Dungannon)

In this instance, the conflict between new arrivals and settled residents was merely a continuation of very poor and even traumatised community relations in which gangs were diminishing life on the estate. The community had felt 'helpless' to protect the new arrivals and themselves from the gangs, and the etiquettes of neighbourliness in this community had few standards to which they could expect new arrivals to conform.

Neighbourly relations in Dungannon were structured by housing provision and availability, and relations between neighbours were often supported by agencies and community groups intent on securing good relations between new arrivals and local people. Dungannon's history was described by one key informant as having been

the story of one of 'most divided place in Northern Ireland'. The consequences of this were complex and were evident in the persistence of some specific Protestant paramilitary attacks on new arrivals in the strategies to put people out of the estates. Other predominantly Protestant areas, however, were very supportive of new arrivals:

But it's not; the factor isn't religion, or community. Some of the best work being done, the people into the Old Warren estate in Lisburn, which is a very, very strong loyalist community, but again it has a good community infrastructure, that grouping in there is doing very much the same work that we are doing here, and creating a whole positive environment, which is actually helping their own community to move forward. If you go out here in town, Cumberland and the Cunningham's resident group out at Belmont are the most active and organised local community group working to integrate and negotiate and manage the difficulties, and that's a Protestant community and organisation working in the realities of their existence and therefore working closely with existing organisations like the Boys' Brigade, to incorporate young lads into sports and things that are happening. The local soccer clubs like the local GAA clubs are very active in encouraging the young men, now not necessarily all altruistic, they play better football, so gain the wee parochial place like this, to get a couple of players that maybe played for a half-decent team somewhere.  
(Key informant, Dungannon)

However, another consequence of Dungannon's history was that some estates suffered from the behaviour of local gangs, which had grown up as a consequence of deprivation but also because the estate had not been policed effectively in the past. While the gangs targeted new arrivals, settled residents were also subjected to their attacks. In these circumstances, feeling vulnerable was an experience shared by the long-term settled residents and new arrivals alike. As in Glasgow and Peterborough, in Dungannon the presence of agency support played a positive role in securing good relations between new neighbours. Nevertheless, the combination of Dungannon's history of segregated neighbourhoods and the deprivation that some communities continued to experience could produce poor communal relations in some places.

## **Systemic housing problems and social cohesion and new arrivals**

The problems of housing and their impact on local relations were registered in all the sites in our research. Private rental provision and the exclusions operating in the inflated homeownership market were evidenced in all of the sites. What gave greatest cause for concern, however, were the frustrations arising out of the administration and availability of social housing, especially in Downham, Leicester and Kilburn. Complaints ranged across issues of overcrowding, racism, entitlement, corruption and allocation, and were made by new arrivals and long-term settled residents alike. These were issues that deeply influenced people's relations with their neighbourhoods, and their abilities and willingness to participate in and get along with people in their communities. One interviewee captured how psychologically and personally diminishing poor overcrowded housing can be and illustrated its impact on wider social relations:

... when you are in a cramped space, I think you become disadvantaged, you become a nothing. When you are in a cramped space and you have children shouting and screaming at you, the authority shouting and screaming, yourself shouting and screaming at you, you become nothing, you become further disadvantaged. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

This interviewee was expressing the view that overcrowded housing, in undermining someone's ability to manage emotionally, made that person further disadvantaged in their ability to cope with the world. This affects social cohesion by casting personal and communal relations in negative terms.

### **Overcrowding and new immigration**

In sites where housing was a scarce resource, the real, remembered and imagined difficulties with housing often combined, in the biographical interviews, to provoke comments about 'being crammed in and living on top of each other':

I think the country has reached a point where we can't handle any more people and yet we seem to freely open our gates to anyone who feels the need to come here and I think, I think the country's full and we need to start to do something about it. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)



We can all say where we would like to live but whether it ever happens or not. You know, it's not going to happen, it's so overcrowded and so many people can't get accommodation in this country. You know, I've got a friend who is living in a hostel with her daughter and I was told yesterday she could be there up to three years. And she's just recovered from cancer. Because there is no properties to give her. So you. It's a bit ...  
(Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Downham)

Reference was often made to Britain being 'a small island', which meant that only a certain number of people could be accommodated. The point of referring to the size of the country, however, was to stress that the natural limits of Britain's capacity have been reached, resulting in overcrowding and 'something needing to be done' about immigration.

Although this was a common view of the problem across our six sites, personal experiences of overcrowding took more local forms. Some interviewees found themselves living in overcrowded conditions because their adult children were still living at home as they were either saving to buy their own home or waiting on impossibly long council housing lists. For the older generation who had experienced overcrowding in the past, the new circumstances were felt to be particularly unfair.

Well, the thing was for the first 22 years I had four children living in two, well four rooms it was, one of them was a kitchen and then the other two were bedrooms. And I had four children in one room and we were in the other. And we struggled and struggled. By the time we were given a place they were all grown up. At the moment I've got my daughter and her boyfriend living here. And, erm, they live downstairs more or less and we live upstairs. But, if they regulate it so that they are not all the time grab, grab, grabbing. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

The 'grabbing' of housing, which was viewed as producing overcrowding was seen by this interviewee as the product of bad housing policies that had been introduced since Margaret Thatcher was in government. These had cut spending on social housing and privatised much of the existing social housing provision:

And we were lucky there were a lot of people – there was people living upstairs in two rooms and they had six children. And there is going to be people living like that again if they keep getting people into this country. There is not enough housing stock. And some of them are going to be overcrowded. And overcrowding leads to disease. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

The problem of housing availability and overcrowding was also identified as a health hazard in Leicester where the extended family traditions of some minority ethnic groups further exacerbated problems of housing scarcity:

I think because people have been prepared to tolerate obviously gross overcrowding as we would call it in this part of the world certainly. I do suspect from bits of experience I've had as well that there is a subculture of people helping each other in terms of particularly Somalis. There certainly was a network of Somalis, of people who would help not just Somalis but people from other African countries coming in from Tanzania and Uganda and different places. Where there does seem to be a support system at work within that. Certainly at the level where they would provide some perhaps material need, not perhaps a lot but some material assistance, some advice and guidance and they've learned some wisdom along the way, so they are often quite shrewd as to how they guide people along. (Key informant, Leicester)

In both these cases, the problems of overcrowding are viewed as, in the first instance, problems of housing provision relative to demand. Recent arrivals are seen as adding to the problems but not as causing them and, at the neighbourhood level, this made housing problems shared problems. In Kilburn in particular, the historical experience of overcrowding translated into more empathetic views of contemporary difficulties in housing. One long-term settled, minority ethnic Kilburn woman's life had been made intolerable by the overcrowding in the one-bedroom flat above hers. She thought the flat had been sub-let to undocumented workers, some of whom remained in the small flat all day and night. The 'tenant' came weekly to collect the rent. Her complaint was against not the new arrivals but the council and the housing association, which systematically ignored or mismanaged her complaints and failed to address her predicament:

Because there is a couple there, a young couple, they don't go to work at all. They are frightened to come out. And there's an older lady. When these two – so now four people were living there. So the association came, the area manager, she said, oh, I am coming with my boss. I said okay, fair enough. And it was another African. So all black people who siding their own. This is how you come to know certain things. So, when we were talking, I didn't, everything can be heard and they are listening to everything. So I said one girl had gone to work and three were in there. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

Here, too, the problems of overcrowding, even when they were putting the interviewee under enormous personal stress, were seen as problems of administration, not as the fault of the new arrivals. The comment that black people side with their own conveyed a particular view of social cohesion, which assumed that ethnic groups look after their own. The real issue of social cohesion for the interviewee, however, was why there was no reasonable response from the relevant authorities to her problems. She could not get anyone to address the matter effectively and noted in the interview that this was the first time anyone had listened to her since her difficulties had begun.

The social cost of overcrowding and its wide-ranging consequences for social cohesion were outlined by another interviewee:

But most of my work is trying to get people transfers, 20,000 people on the transfer list. And, you know, people sort of routinely have to use their living room as a bedroom. That's kind of like standard. Because that is part of, you are not statutory overcrowded, you have to count your living room as a sleep space. But I mean, on Saturday, I had this Somali woman who's got a one-bedroom flat and she's got four children, four boys, six years to two months, living in these two rooms. And the baby, two months, is not sleeping very well so the older children who go to school get woken up and can't concentrate at school. And it just impacts absolutely. (Key informant, Kilburn)

New arrivals subjected to overcrowding become associated with the many problems that overcrowding induces. Children unable to perform at school are identified as minority ethnic children with poor educational performance, rather than as children suffering from overcrowding. The statutory definitions of a viable living space can in reality amount to overcrowding for a family, making their lives difficult and sometimes the lives of their neighbours also. In this way, new arrivals may become identified as problem families, which reduces their chances of developing good relations with the wider community.

The issues of overcrowding that emerged in the research were structurally linked to the availability of housing, definitions of what constitutes overcrowding and the commitment of some recent arrivals to include all family members threatened by homelessness. However it is produced, overcrowding limits people's capacity to engage with the wider world, because the daily pressures it imposes are so intolerable. For new arrivals, the realities of overcrowding add another element to an already challenging life.

### Social housing and the politics of entitlement

The politics of entitlement to social housing create tensions between those who are entitled and those who are not. When housing is a scarce resource, these tensions become more acute and when the remit of entitlement includes the needs of new arrivals, this puts strains on a relationship dynamic, which is, in and of itself, difficult because it requires a build-up of knowledge on both sides in order to become positively workable. When that intercultural conversation is shaped by regulations of housing entitlement that are seen as unfair, relations are compromised whatever the merits of the assessment of unfairness. Many of the housing predicaments faced by long-term settled interviewees were perceived as unfair and for many, the explanation lay in the entitlements of new arrivals.

In Kilburn, entitlement to social housing is framed by the history of immigration as well as housing scarcity. Routes into housing through homelessness confronted one second-generation Irish young man with the hierarchies of need that are implemented in housing allocation. In his view, this represented an injustice because new arrivals had not contributed to the system:

At first, when I went from my hostel, I tried to go down the Irish route, I am a minority *[laughs]*. They weren't having a part of it. No way. No, no, sorry, son, you have to go into a hostel like the rest of them. And, when I went in there, there was loads of heroin addicts ... I did two-and-a-half years, three years. I think it was three in the end ... But, erm, I had to deal with it all when I was in the hostel system. Like, you know, like I just remember foreigners coming in and getting places straightaway. I had around five, six sets of neighbours while I was living there and I stayed there, you know. I used to, me and my housing officer used to have mental rows because I was getting to the point where I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. And I was like why am I rotting away here and everyone else is moving in and up. But you can't say immigrants are moving, getting shit and moving out again. But if they knew the true story, you know. My family come in, so we were immigrants at one point. Do you know what I mean? But we never come here and just expected – my family never ponced a day in their lives, they always worked. They come here and built the country for them. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Irish man, Kilburn)

The frustration felt towards a system of inclusion that was perceived to discriminate unfairly prompted a very troubled and ambivalent marginalisation of 'foreigners' as people who did not recognise the contributions of earlier immigrants. Attempting

to 'work' the priority system, with limited understanding of exactly how negligible the rating given to a young single man is, made entitlements for 'foreigners' seem comparatively privileged:

Well, I mean, for example, erm, the immigrant has more rights over you. Like my council said to me, they said, you do know that for everyone that comes in they go straight above you, they are considered priority? Like, you know. I was trying to lie and everything to get myself prioritised. To be this priority. And I used to think to myself, I am not trying to say I'm owed anything, but my family come here, they worked, they built this country. I am not trying to say that I'm entitled to something but more than these people, I am. Yeah, definitely. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Irish man, Kilburn)

This view that one set of needs cancelled out the other closed out considerations of distributive strategies that should include the needs of both asylum seekers and settled residents. The idea of relative entitlement by virtue of belonging and family contributions was also invoked by some recent immigrants who viewed the duration of their life in the UK as affording them entitlement over the most recent arrivals:

The local council is partly corrupt. We applied this year for help with accommodation. Practically in the winter is unbearable to live here, with three children – a daughter 14, a son 15 and another son of 9, all in one room. This is not humanly right. We took our papers to the council, an interpreter went with us. Behind us was an immigrant from Africa, she even lived on the same street as us. The person that was with us knew her and after four months she was allocated somewhere. Whereas us, being an EU country, living here for two years and paying taxes, here with my family and children whom attend school. I thought that England was not so corrupt ... how can you explain that the woman who had just come to the UK a few days ago had more points, compared to myself who has been working here for two years and trying? Something is not right. (New arrival, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

In claiming his entitlement on the grounds of fairness, the interviewee was invoking a notion of fairness for some, which was justified by excluding the rights of A8 migrants. The politics of an inclusive fairness are therefore eclipsed and the limitations of housing provision are taken out of the discussion about how people do, or should be able to, get along with one another. As one key informant commented, this is not a new feature of the housing debate:

I mean again the evidence for this is a bit anecdotal but it's the sort of thing you hear in our offices frequently. My family's been here, we can't get a place, but I know someone who has only been in the country six months and they've got a flat just down the road you know. You hear those kind of stories and it's the same stories that white families were telling about black families in the 50s and 60s. And you've heard it all before if you work in housing as long as I have. But nevertheless it would be wrong to kind of dismiss that, whether it's right or wrong, it's there and it's something we have to address. (Key informant, man, Kilburn)

More localised claims of entitlement were also evident in negotiations of housing rights between settled groups and new arrivals. In the predominantly majority ethnic area of Braunstone in Leicester, successful integration of some Pakistani families had occurred because they shared the values of extended families living in close proximity. This family ethos, which relied on newly formed families being able to live near their parents and siblings, was disrupted by refugee families being housed in the area:

Now, if you've got a family structure where your family wants to live as close as possible to yourself right, those people don't have priority for housing through the city council housing policies. And a Somali family comes here and a Kosovan family comes over here and all of a sudden they get priority to move into this housing. Then you create a tension over there, you know. So I think, to say that these people are getting bricks thrown at them and stuff because Braunstone is racist, I'd say that they are probably wrong. (Long-term settled, British-Pakistani man, Leicester)

Originally Braunstone was developed to rehouse people displaced by slum clearance projects. Subsequent development with better quality housing produced an internal hierarchy between, as this interviewee put it himself, 'better off' Braunstone and 'dodgy' Braunstone. He said he had not experienced racism in Braunstone himself and positively chose to live in 'dodgy' Braunstone. What lay behind the attacks on outsiders was not properly captured, in his view, by the term racist. 'I think there are other issues at work at the same time as well. Possibly jealousy, possibly a feeling of frustration of why has this family got this house, why hasn't my daughter got this house. You know, that kind of stuff.'

Different issues of entitlement and loyalty were evident in Downham. One woman who had lived on the majority ethnic, working-class estate all her life was able to buy a property in Downham, nearby but off the estate. This was seen as an act of treachery by her neighbours, because she had disrupted traditions and brought into

question the entitlements that tradition was meant to deliver. In Downham, there were also alterations in the relations of the neighbourhood brought about by the growing numbers of black homeowners. According to one interviewee, middle-class black families were able to buy their own house but only because it was a poor area:

No, I think there are black people that are doing well enough now to buy their own homes. But still not doing well enough to buy a house in a white area if that makes sense. So there are more black homeowners who are doing well in their jobs. But in amongst that there is lots of, erm, like I said, housing association with all sorts living in them ... it's an area where people get shoved and get forgotten about. It's just one of those areas where all the people are struggling. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Downham)

Although there was some homeownership among minority ethnic families on the outskirts of the predominantly majority ethnic estate, this had little impact on the homogeneous identity of the area. Many asylum seekers dispersed into Downham complained of the racism and hostility they experienced, and their pleas to be relocated were accepted.

The different accounts of entitlement given by our interviewees reflect the lack of consensus that exists on this central question of what entitlements the long-term settled and new arrivals should or do have to housing in Britain. The acceptance of the idea that not everyone has the same claims to entitlement produces hierarchies, which, in the context of scarcity, inevitably positions those at the bottom as beyond entitlement. Those allocating housing and the people, both long-term settled and new arrivals, seeking housing mobilise hierarchies of entitlement either to justify their decisions or to reinforce their claims to housing. This solves neither the problem of housing scarcity nor the problem of homelessness. In challenging the official terms of entitlement based on need, some of our key informants signalled the need for a public and open debate on housing, which did not review competing claims to housing but rather considered solutions that would provide adequate housing for all. This would locate the issue of housing in the frame of social cohesion and not in the competing and non-cohesive frame of the politics of exclusion.

### Conclusion

Housing demand created by recent immigration has been at the forefront of debates on housing. While many of our interviewees thought that recent immigration placed additional strains on an already stressed system, many also thought that everyone should have the right to choose where they wanted to live. At a local level, the ability of neighbourhoods to include new arrivals straddled these two realities of an overstretched system and the values of housing access for all. The balance between the realities of housing provision and the belief in housing rights was best achieved in places where the problems and pressures of housing and locality were collectively recognised and publicly addressed. Where housing dynamics and relations were not acknowledged or fully understood, many took the view that housing problems derived from recent immigration. This view of the problems of housing placed new arrivals in networks of blame and hostility in which, on occasion, they also participated. The difficulties this posed for social cohesion coexisted with the problems of housing provision and availability.

The housing of new arrivals in settled communities has produced different problems for neighbourly relations and inclusive policies. Where new arrivals have moved into areas in a relatively short period of time, the process of adaptation can be fraught, particularly when the new arrivals are perceived to have better housing and/or more privileged access to housing. Good relations between groups unaccustomed and unfamiliar with each other can nonetheless be achieved if public support exists to familiarise groups one with another and to mediate the disparities between them. Issues of overcrowding and entitlement, however, are more systemically those of the structure of housing provision and availability, and require a different level of resource commitment if the difficulties they give rise to are not to produce unsustainable relations between groups with different, changing and conflicting housing need.

Housing provides one of the key physical structures to living and being without that space, being homeless, represents an acute crisis for the individual as well as society. However, the changing politics of housing allocation and the privileging of criteria of need have produced impossible predicaments for some marginalised long-term settled people already living in inadequate housing, and it is unsurprising that the claims of asylum seekers to housing were often blamed for these predicaments.

By contrast, overcrowding in the rented sectors in Dungannon, Peterborough and Glasgow was identified as the fault not of new immigrants but of greedy landlords. In Glasgow and Peterborough, where Asian landlords predominated, this criticism was racialised. In Kilburn, where the memories of earlier migrations were part of the community, the realities of overcrowding and hot-bedding were seen as less



surprising. In Kilburn and Glasgow, the dynamics of the housing market were understood as part of the history of migration, where migrants themselves become landlords and rent to other migrants.

In the UK, replenishing and refurbishing the housing stock is an ongoing government target. Changes in family formation and re-formation, and non-familial modes of living have imposed demands on the housing market and housing provision that are not easily met in the short term. Moreover, the needs of many new arrivals for large family homes go against the general direction of household formation in the UK. The ambitions of many new arrivals to bring their families to Britain will introduce another family dynamic into the housing market. Moreover, as many interviewees commented, both in the past and today private rented housing and social housing have lagged behind demand, and poor housing stock requires upgrading.

### **Key points**

- Existing housing provision is in the grip of a crisis between availability and need, which will not be resolved in the foreseeable future.
- Adequate housing availability is essential to social cohesion and its limitations will accordingly undermine cohesion.
- Competition over scarce housing resources produces relations of conflict and racism, undermines communities and depletes neighbourhoods.
- The allocation of social housing for new arrivals needs to include consideration of existing relations within a neighbourhood or estate, and to provide support to facilitate good relations between new arrivals and settled populations. Where this has occurred, for example in Glasgow and Peterborough, it has proven effective.
- Etiquettes of neighbourliness should engage with poor neighbourly relations between settled households as well as those between settled and new arrivals.
- Issues of housing need, housing provision and housing resource allocation should be debated publicly so that the current lack of affordable housing is widely understood as the base of competition over housing.
- Statutory definitions of overcrowding contribute to the fragility of social cohesion in many areas.

## 6 Deprivation and social cohesion

The inflows of new arrivals into deprived areas that were already familiar with the isolation and marginalisation caused by poverty and neglect created particular issues for social cohesion in these neighbourhoods. Trust, security and respect were not commonly the day-to-day realities of places marginalised from the economic well-being shared by the rest of society. However co-operation and shared circumstances often linked people and relations in these areas. Evidence of combined networks of resilience, as well as of disconnections between people, could be found in neighbourhoods characterised by poverty and deprivation.

Deprivation is an index of failures of social integration and these deprived communities represent the limits of inclusion strategies based on the radical individualism and neo-liberal welfare reform introduced by the Thatcher Government. Strategies of regeneration brought in by the second period in office of the current Labour Government have had some impact on the infrastructure of deprived neighbourhoods and the New Deal for Communities programme incorporates community capacity building as part of its delivery. The dynamics of these regeneration programmes are complex and are made more so when they combine with the dynamics of new arrivals to the area who can be perceived as more privileged than local inhabitants, either because they attract greater welfare support or because they have better skills in accessing jobs. The combined effect of these altered circumstances is to introduce significant change into communities previously marked by stagnation and lack of support.

One of the indices of deprivation is the limited capacities of communities for social participation and collective engagements. Deprived communities with little to offer their own members have even less to offer newcomers. Moreover, the reputation of these communities as failed places can create particular hostility to outsiders. New arrivals may enter social spaces marked by the resentment of insiders who feel their neighbourhoods to be unfairly judged as failed places. These are not propitious conditions for social cohesion, either for the long-term residents of deprived areas or for incomers positioning themselves within the spaces and relations of poverty and deprivation.

Many asylum seekers have also been dispersed to these areas and were usually without work while awaiting decisions on their status. An Institute of Housing survey in 2003 (cited in Phillips, 2006) showed that the national map of asylum allocation matched the map of deprived areas in many parts of the country. The arrival of asylum seekers, economic migrants and refugees into deprived communities

introduced new patterns of entitlement (to housing and welfare), and a different skills base (economically active skilled and semi-skilled workers) into areas where social citizenship and economic capacity were limited by the effects of long-term unemployment and reduced welfare provision.

Regeneration funding from central government was made available to stem the progressive economic and social deterioration and marginalisation in these and similar areas. Glasgow and Downham were given regeneration funding for specific projects, and South Kilburn and Braunstone were given significant, long-term funding through the New Deal for Communities initiative. At the time of the research, the funding period was about two-thirds of the way through. Thirty-nine of the most deprived areas in the country were funded through the New Deal for Communities initiative, which allocated substantial funding packages of up to £50 million per area to reduce deprivation and regenerate the social well-being of these communities.

The pattern and composition of new arrival settlement varied across the areas of deprivation that were found in the six research sites. The areas of deprivation are in Braunstone (Leicester), Downham, South Kilburn (Kilburn) and Glasgow. In this chapter, we begin by reviewing the legacies of poverty and deprivation in these areas. These legacies constitute a particular challenge for building social cohesion and framed the prospects of new arrivals belonging to these communities. After reviewing these contexts, the chapter proceeds to look at the impact of new arrivals in the context of regeneration.

## **Legacies of poverty and deprivation: challenges for social cohesion**

The characteristics shared by communities supported by regeneration money are to be found in the measures of deprivation that gauge income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and living environment. The designated areas of deprivation in Downham, Braunstone (Leicester), South Kilburn (Kilburn) and Glasgow scored very high on all counts and produced high total deprivation scores as measured by the Office of National Statistics. Braunstone, for example, was designated the fifth most deprived ward in the country, Glasgow has the highest male mortality rate in the UK, and South Kilburn and Downham have higher than average teenage single parent rates. The pattern of deprivation across the sites, in spite of their different characters and characteristics, arose out of long-term structural unemployment, which produced very poor physical and mental health rates, low educational achievement, poor housing and high crime rates. These hard measures

of deprivation describe communities in the grip of worklessness, acute family vulnerability, incapacitating poor health, low levels of educational achievement and limited life expectancy:

Well, the problems are as in most disadvantaged communities, you know. Health – health services before the health centre were built were the worst in the city. You actually died younger if you lived in Braunstone. The death rate for men was something like ten years less than the national average. You had teenage pregnancy problems there. So there was a health – at the time there was one doctor's surgery over here where there was one doctor. All the others had basically fled. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

These patterns of deprivation that link communities across the country provide inhospitable environments for social cohesion:

I think it has [*changed over time*]. I think it's got a lot more rough. People blatantly dealing drugs on our road. You know, five years ago they might have been dealing it but they wouldn't have done it blatantly. But now even we know who's in which car and who is the dealer and who isn't. I hate that. I hate knowing. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Downham)

There is a lot more amenities have shut down. So the Tiger's Head and the Green Man both closed down ... But yeah, the Green Man, it burned, whether or not it was arson. Most people tend to believe that it was ... because that almost feels like all their kind of co-ordinates disappearing of how they define themselves in this community, you know, these old pubs they used to go to. So I think there's that physical aspect to it as well. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)

Where I live now in West London, it's like – the area is too much. There is so many things going on. There is police every day in my estate. Everything is just – people are everywhere. You know, there is too much police. Everyone are not really doing much with their lives. People are just selling drugs and same old, same old. (Long-term settled, young, minority ethnic man, Kilburn)

*[Sighthill]* was excluded in three ways. There was one pub, one shop in the area. You know, a lot of people living there. People having to walk into the city centre ... It's absolutely excluded in every sense. No one wanted to live there, high crime, drug raids, you know, there is graveyards and things all round it. It's literally really excluded. No one wanted to live there, lots of empty flats. And they stick asylum seekers in it. (Key informant, Glasgow)

The sense these quotations convey of communities being pared down to the harshly reduced circumstances of poverty and abandonment is powerful. It would be wrong to read from this, however, a uniformity in the experiences of deprivation. Attachments to the localities were different both within and between the sites, and the complex ways in which these attachments (or desires to disengage) connected with other patterns of belonging gave rise to different relations between conditions of deprivation and the cohesive nature of communities.

Many of the sites in our research inspired strong feelings of belonging and loyalty among their residents in spite of the deprivation they experienced. Shared histories and ways of being and belonging were valued. Remaining within and valuing the community was often a protection against its public identity as deprived and dysfunctional. However, powerful desires to escape to safe and harmonious places not afflicted with the burdens of poverty, ill health and bleak futures were also present in deprived neighbourhoods. Thus how people got along and the quality of relations between them cannot be unproblematically read off circumstances of deprivation. The dynamics of social cohesion in these areas become more complex with the advent of new arrivals who bring different expectations of community capacity and community well-being.

In Downham, the history of the community is a relatively recent one dating from the 1920s when internal migration from the inner-London docklands of Bermondsey led to resettlement in the leafy suburbs of newly constructed Downham. This original migration had been met with hostility from residents of adjacent Bromley who identified the newcomers as 'Bermondsey scum' who brought the area into disrepute. Notwithstanding the perceived similar ethnic homogeneity of both Bromley and Downham (although it should be noted that there was a large Irish-descent population among those moving from Bermondsey to Downham), differences in the class composition of the two neighbourhoods became the critical axis of negative social relations. Class came to shape Downham's reputation as unacceptable 'other' and these stereotyped identifications of the new arrivals produced something of an inward-looking, class-bounded community, which itself became hostile to outsiders. Whereas Downham residents disturbed the class identity of Bromley, it also came to

have a different profile to neighbouring Lewisham (the borough in which Downham is located), which was more diverse. As post-industrial restructuring exacerbated the inequalities of class, economic decline in Downham came to underpin its insularity and generated a level of support for the BNP, with which the area became associated. Although the BNP was never elected in Downham, what support it did enjoy earned Downham a reputation as racist and out of step with the politics of multicultural Lewisham Council, which supported campaigns against the BNP. Thus Downham in its other (internal) boundary with Lewisham was again found wanting by its neighbours:

Maybe but then, if you just build houses and no general infrastructure, you know, and then people start to lose work and lose confidence. I would imagine that that's quite depressing. There is so many of you in the same situation it must feel like the whole world is like that. And there's also the sense that people are feeling very nervous about moving away from Downham. (Key informant, Downham)

Although predominantly majority ethnic working class, Downham had Irish, African-Caribbean and Asian residents who made up the minority ethnic groups in the area. One long-term settled minority-ethnic, middle-class woman who had grown up in Downham spoke of the relentless day-to-day racism that she experienced throughout her childhood, which she took to be the 'normal' circumstances of belonging in the area. When the National Front marched down the street in which she lived her parents told her to stay inside and this too was taken as everyday. As she saw it, relations in Downham for herself and her family were integrated through the conventions of racism but, in part, she felt protected from these conventions because her family was middle class and this gave her greater opportunities. Her life in Downham also included positive multicultural experiences:

Yeah, I remember the primary school being quite mixed. I remember having a lot of friends that weren't white. And I remember the teachers, I just remember the teachers being really nice and being very encouraging. Erm, and being quite interested as well. Erm, they used to encourage us to talk about the food we ate, the clothes our parents wore, the kind of music that we listened to, whether we had been to the countries our parents had come from and what did we think of it. So I remember being encouraged to talk about it by the teachers. So ... (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Downham)

In spite of the poverty and racism, Downham also included capacities for intercultural dialogue and understanding, and acceptance of diversity. Another black professional

woman who lived in the area spoke of the networks of white friends and neighbours her children knew on their routes to school, which made her feel assured of their safety on the surrounding streets. This illustrates how the prevailing identity of an area, whether made up of measures of deprivation or stereotypes of belonging, cannot fully capture the rhythms and realities of cohesion that it sustains.

In Braunstone, which was also a predominantly majority ethnic, working-class community, economic marginalisation and deprivation had similarly generated a culture of isolation and a sense of separateness from the relatively more prosperous and more multicultural parts of the city. Braunstone had a media-driven reputation as a troubled and troubling area, a reputation, as in the case of Downham, which stuck in spite of its complexities and the changes that occurred. As with Downham, some ethnic diversity characterised the area, although Braunstone was 97 per cent majority ethnic at the last Census. However, in both areas, the demographic changes since the Census have made a significant difference to the ethnic composition of the respective areas.

Long-term settled African-Caribbean families moved into Braunstone after earlier post-war migrations and Pakistani families were also attracted to the neighbourhood because the housing provision in the estate accommodated large families. Pakistani families shared the values of the majority ethnic community for local extended family networks in which two and three generations of a family lived in close proximity:

I mean, I am Asian, I am Pakistani but, erm, and what I like about Braunstone is the extended family element. So on our street you've got mother, grandparents if you like living in one house, their children and grandchildren maybe not living far away and it's – although they don't live in one house, they do live very close to each other and that – so family social interaction, if you like, is much greater than in the rest of the city. You know, parents look out, grandparents look out for the children in the summer, you know, in the holidays in the summer. If the parents need to work then the grandparents take them or even aunts and uncles that live close by. So it's very nice. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Braunstone)

This interviewee had previously been outlining the awful dearth of facilities in the area, but these did not foreclose the possibilities of good relations between families and the protection they represented. The lack of amenities, however, was exceptional. Braunstone was without pubs or restaurants and, until it became a neighbourhood supported by New Deal for Community funding, it had little in the way of social amenities:

Because in my street, for example, when my children were younger, when they were 6,7, in the early 90s, we never let the children go to the park, nobody let their children go to the park, the biggest best parks in the – ... Because it was perceived as dangerous. There was lots of bushes and that, you know, drug dealers and needles, things like that. So there was actually, up to four years ago there was no lights, there was two lights on the biggest park in the city. So in the winter, when it gets dark at 3.30, this is just a black hole within this estate. But what happened was neighbours would form teams of children and close off roads and play over there. And things like that. So that's what would happen. So there was no tradition. But what did happen was that, if families wanted to play football, let's get eleven kids together, let's put a bit of money together, do this, buy their kit and form a football team. So families were quite, erm, capable of organising themselves into these kind of social groupings. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Braunstone)

Here, neighbourly relations were secured through families' commitment to their children, which overrode ethnic difference and the limitations of deprivation. Cohesiveness emerged from these shared values and the community was sustained accordingly.

Nonetheless, racist incidents did prevail more in Braunstone than elsewhere in the city. When asylum seekers began to be housed in the area, the ensuing racist harassment they met with reinforced the area's reputation for racist intolerance. The new arrivals were from the Philippines, Portuguese Africa, Poland, Albania and Somalia, of whom Somalis were the largest group. The demographic of Braunstone thus changed from the 2001 Census and one key informant estimated the current population was 10 per cent minority ethnic new arrivals. The Somali new arrivals also changed the class profile of Braunstone because many of these were educated middle-class families who had come from Europe and were part of an earlier migration from the war in Somalia.

In Kilburn, growing deprivation in one particular estate – the South Kilburn estate – earned it New Deal for Communities (NDC) designation. The estate is made up of nine high-rise blocks built in a contained island between the rest of Kilburn to the north and the more affluent Maida Vale to the south. It was also bounded by a main dividing road and a railway line, and further demarcated by belonging to the borough of Brent and not that of Camden, the other borough in whose jurisdiction Kilburn fell. As with Kilburn generally, the estate was shaped by the histories of migration for which the area was renowned. Although Kilburn is also a predominantly working-class area, its overriding identity was historically that of a multicultural mixture of



Jewish, Irish and African-Caribbean communities who lived amicably together. Deprivation is shared across these ethnic groups (although most Jewish people and many Irish people have now migrated out of the area), as are the inequalities of gender, age and the realities of ethnic disadvantage and racism. In South Kilburn, the major ethnic groups are African Caribbean and Irish and, unlike Braunstone, the area has a number of long-established and popular pubs, and a reputation for acceptance of diversity.

In certain ways, however, relations of cohesion in South Kilburn were rather fraught. The estate was renowned for drug dealing and supplied communities well beyond the estate. Gun crime was significant and the local parish priest had compiled a catalogue of murders and suicides that had occurred in the estate in recent years to present to the District Coroner (Hales, 2005). One interviewee recounted that, at the age of 12, he witnessed a man being shot in the face in the estate. Another interviewee told of how he had been sitting alone in the bar in his local pub when what the police had subsequently referred to as a 'stray bullet' had come through the window (the neat bullet hole could still be seen in the window). The pub itself, however, was clearly a haven for the community and its conviviality could not be mistaken. Although it was located in stark and bleak concrete surroundings, its interior was comfortable and well cared for, and the clientele, all of different ages, genders and ethnicities, were well known to one another. Here, too, deprivation was only part of the story and, while it had terrible and destructive effects on the community, there were spaces that allowed for intricate patterns of association and conviviality.

South Kilburn also had a concentrated set of problems and difficulties in the number of problem families on the estate who were unable to properly sustain themselves:

Yes, I think we've got the highest teenage pregnancy rate. Yeah, I think we've got about 22 per cent of unemployed lone parents. So yes, it is. Quite a lot of young mothers with two children in one bedroom or three children. That would be quite typical in a way. (Key informant, Kilburn)

One key informant suggested that communities such as South Kilburn should have some right of redress against local authorities that forced them to carry such heavy burdens of social deprivation. By putting people in difficult circumstances together, particularly in conditions of overcrowding, the difficulties they faced were exacerbated and made more intractable. This was so regardless of whether the families were long-term settled or had arrived recently. Deprivation subjected them equally to conditions of crime, drug abuse, overcrowding and a resource-poor environment. A survey of South Kilburn residents undertaken by South Kilburn NDC found that 51

per cent wanted to move from their present property and that 51 per cent also felt unsafe in the area after dark (South Kilburn NDC, 2007).

Because of the multicultural character of Kilburn, new arrivals have an easier passage than their counterparts in either Downham or Braunstone. The hospitality is, however, a sharing of deprivation:

And it's a very deprived area, there are a lot of problems, you know, there is a lot of petty crime and there is a lot of violent crime as well in this area of London. But you don't ever feel it's around racial tensions or cultural tensions. It's generally because people have nothing in the area, don't have a lot of opportunities, there is very high unemployment, there is a fairly low skills base in the workforce, there is poor housing, poor statutory resources in the area ... And so, you know, I think the population here encounters some challenges but I feel that they deal quite admirably with those. And they generally rub fairly well together considering the challenges they face. (Key informant, Kilburn)

However, although our data shows mixed experiences of cohesion in deprived neighbourhoods, deprivation overall did diminish and damage cohesion. In Downham and Braunstone, community relations were circumscribed by very poor and sometimes non-existent communal facilities. The loss of youth clubs in particular was felt to be responsible for leading to young people hanging about on the streets and menacing public safety. Young people 'having nothing to do' and having no venues for social gatherings was identified as a problem across the sites. In Downham, one long-term resident said that the area always had a reputation for the young people being rough and troublesome, but in the past this had been sorted out in the youth clubs. He listed the many thriving youth clubs in Downham in the past. All but one had been closed down and the possibility of mediating antisocial behaviour in the clubs had been lost:

As I say it [*Downham*] always was [*seen as rough*]. The clubs we had in the 60s, 70s and on into the 80s. There was Durham Hill, which was a big school, which is now a council estate, an estate. Yeah. Built over. They used to take youngsters in the evening, youngsters above 14, and they used to do classes in craftwork, table tennis, volleyball. And they had a snooker table and they had a canteen. Wesley Hall here we were affiliated with London Fed. So we met two nights a week ... There was Bellingham Boys' Club, which again was very big. There was Marbles Lane Boys' Club. All three were affiliated to the London Fed. ... There was Grove Park Youth Club, which was run by the Lewisham Borough Council

and that is still there. There was North Downham Youth Club. We've got now, this one. I think the one down the road here has closed down ... And they didn't give any trouble because they were all involved, you know, and playing football or volleyball, and the boys and the girls used to mix together and they were all good friends. There is nothing for them now. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)

Drug abuse and drug dealing in areas of high unemployment were also identified as undermining community relations. In South Kilburn, relations between the police and the community were difficult and, although community policing provided evidence that residents welcomed police drug raids, the execution of these raids often contributed to widespread hostility to police on the estate:

I'd have to say it's got better since these raids that went down. It's got a lot better. There's still a little bit of animosity towards the police, I guess, which is understandable. But that's sort of the families concerned. But as a whole I'd have to say they are not as frightened, half as frightened as they were prior to the raids. If it's easy money, that's probably one reason because it's very deprived, you know, some of these kids, you know, it must be so hard for them. Either, they are probably a one-parent family, you know, not much money coming in. I am not condoning it but then, again, they make choices. (Key informant, Kilburn)

This view that hostility to the police was limited to the families involved in the raids was contradicted by other evidence, however. An event where police had stopped and searched a young man on the estate produced a reaction from the community significant enough that reinforcements had to be called in to support the arresting officers. This event had occurred between two major raids on the estate. Although it was predominantly African-Caribbean young men who were arrested in the raids, the hostile response to the stop and search incident had involved a cross-section of the community who objected to what was perceived as police harassment. The police also initiated a meeting with the community following the event, which indicated the fragility of trust in the neighbourhood and highlighted the contradictory role of the police in attempting to build trust in the community, while simultaneously using tactics that undermined trust and community relations.

In Glasgow, the legacies of poverty were felt across the city and Glasgow had one of the worst deprivation profiles in the country. The demise of the Clydeside shipbuilding industry brought terrible poverty in its wake, as did the restructuring of the steel industry. In the communities left in the wake of this devastation, social relations often bonded around the commonality of this shared past and the present predicament.

The dynamic of social cohesion this gave rise to, especially in the context of widespread unemployment and incapacity, was identified by one interviewee as problematic:

... you know, people keep banging on and complaining the shipyards have closed in Glasgow. Get over it, that's 30 years ago. There is a bit of a tendency in Glasgow to bang on about the good old days, you know, that was fantastic and all the rest of it. And there is – it's only just now that people are beginning to say, wait a minute, get over this, you know. You can't keep going on about how fantastic it was and you worked on a ship. It wasn't fantastic, people fell over and got killed, they got struck deaf, they got terrible lung diseases. They used to get pissed and go home and beat their wives up. To me that is not necessarily a collection of really, really good things. Alright, there is a bit of camaraderie there, you know, but there is pluses and minuses in all of these things in the past. And some things I think in Glasgow we could draw lessons from, you know. I don't actually remember it as that fantastic. (Key informant, Glasgow)

Here, deprivation was seen to have produced a romantic view of the past, which effectively obstructed people from engaging with their predicament as something belonging to the present.

Several key informants identified Glasgow's overriding characteristic as that of poverty and the 1960s' high-rise housing estates that became the home of dispersed asylum seekers illustrated this. In Glasgow, these estates of marginalised communities sustained some of the worst measures of inequality and deprivation in Western Europe, and showed little evidence of resilience. Male mortality was one of the highest in Europe. Drugs, crime rates, teenage pregnancy, the prevalence of single-parent families, addiction and the experience of mental ill health and violence were the norms of communities that had become structurally redundant populations. The level of deprivation experienced in Glasgow had produced flight from the city and a major reduction in population. But, for those who remained, the impact of deprivation was not universal but instead differently negotiated:

There is a lot of poverty in Glasgow for lots and lots of reasons. But ... for young people, if you can make it out of growing up in a poor environment ... it can be a very good and very happy place, but there are very many vicious circles, kind of vortexes that exist ... where people disappear into. I grew up in a ... reasonably nice area, just beside a big kind of estate ... The area and school were characterised as impoverished ... only about ten of us would have gone through onto university, the school was about

1,200 ... quite a number of my classmates are dead now through drugs and things and that. It's also the case that quite a few of my classmates and friends are now doctors and lawyers and academics. (Key informant, Glasgow)

The widespread heritage of deprivation in Glasgow traced different routes and patterns of belonging and, although many areas suffered from chronic worklessness and addiction, other textures of belonging were also possible.

Social cohesion in areas of deprivation is challenging in many different ways and good community relations in areas of poverty and multiple inequalities are reduced both by the poor resources and by lives diminished in myriad ways by sustained poverty. New arrivals in the different sites in the study highlighted both the continuing resilience that exists within deprived communities and the existence of profound disconnections between people, groups and institutions.

## **Regeneration and social cohesion: Downham and Braunstone**

Regeneration programmes in Downham have notably upgraded some shared facilities, particularly a leisure centre complex and the academy school discussed in Chapter 3. The recently opened leisure centre is architecturally noteworthy. Although it is an undoubted community asset, its development nonetheless produced anxiety among long-term settled people because the area is unused to such high standards. Many were troubled by the possibility of matching these standards with a similar quality of community ownership, and expressed concerns that the leisure centre would be defaced by young people and its utilisation marred by graffiti and a lack of popularity. Other concerns were that Downham had for so long been a place that people avoided, or passed through, that the leisure centre would not attract sufficient public support to keep it going:

I just worry that [*the leisure centre*] is a little bit alien, you know. It's very flashy. And Downham isn't a flashy area, yeah, it does look – I mean I love buildings like that but it does look a bit out of place [*laughs*]. And it's up on this hill, which you didn't even realise there was a hill in Downham, looking out over Bromley ... I think this is what will happen. They have already excluded quite a lot of kids ... And what I imagine will happen is that the people who can afford it will be going. And because it's nice and posh it will be people like me who live locally, not too far, lovely big car park, no charges to park there, you know, and if they keep the riff-raff out

[laughs]. I have heard people say that. You know, let's see how it looks in a few months' time if the kids have destroyed it or if they managed to keep it looking nice and fresh and clean and I'll go. Which will again leave, you know, quite a big group of people who don't feel it's for them, you know. (Key informant, Downham)

Others considered that, insofar as the leisure centre did attract local people, it would serve only to act as a magnet for existing tensions in the area and provide a new arena for conflictful relations to be played out:

Downham will always be Downham. If not, it will make trouble. That's how I see it. You've got a new gym. You've got them white boys there whose Tavern is across the road from the gym. You got them white boys who hang out there. If they are getting drunk then you've got a couple of black folk walking by going to the gym and they are hooded up and they come out of the gym and then the white boys are going to be watching them and there's going to be trouble ... like you are going to get people from New Cross, Deptford, Catford to go into the gym. Then they are going to come out of the gym and go to the shop. And they are going to see somebody who they've seen before and they are going to cause a problem. Or even if they went to the gym and ... like someone robs their stuff, like they will go back home and call their people and one day their people will come down and there will be trouble. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Downham)

This lack of belief in its own sustaining capacity was also evident in Braunstone when it too had to confront the changes promised by regeneration money. Fearful that this massive investment in public resources would produce facilities beyond the reach of local people, the community initially felt that new resources would attract outsiders who were easily able to pay for the new facilities and the local people with much less disposable income would become further marginalised within their own community. Acknowledging the depth and pervasiveness of this malaise prompted a real commitment from community leaders to ensure that capacity building started with embedding the idea that local people could rightfully and cost-effectively have access to the new developments. By listening to the views of the residents and incorporating them into new community provisions, they ensured that relations of cohesion were enhanced.

New arrivals were less troubled by these issues of identity and deprivation. In Downham, the leisure centre was popular with new arrivals and appreciated by them. In Braunstone, new arrivals were not inhibited from using new resources in

the community and they were often more able to appreciate and enjoy them than the long-term residents.

## **Regeneration and new arrivals in Kilburn**

On the South Kilburn estate, the intake of new arrivals of asylum seekers, refugees and A8 migrants added to the diversity of the estate. Some new arrivals, however – particularly young single women and men who worked – felt less constrained by deprivation. They valued the multicultural ethos of the estate and the broad acceptance of newcomers it supported. They also felt that, because of their working and social lives, they were less bounded by the estate and that they belonged to both wider Kilburn and cosmopolitan London. This wider culture of inclusion and social cohesion and its perceived values of tolerance and equality were thought to more than compensate for the social problems with which the estate was associated.

However, the concentration of newly arrived asylum and refugee families awaiting transfer in overcrowded housing in poor condition has contributed to the long-standing tensions and pressures of the estate, and continues to fuel the desires of both established residents and new arrivals to leave. This sustains a degree of instability and limits the commitment of people trying to improve the estate. Overcrowding also impacts badly on the local schools and children experiencing overcrowding at home can be disruptive at school and contribute to poor educational levels for the school. The high intake of single-parent refugee families living in overcrowded conditions produces an additional cascade of problems, which compounded the existing problems of poor educational achievement, low skills base and poor mental and physical health.

Alongside these difficulties, the regeneration programme produced its own problems and South Kilburn Estate NDC was investigated by Brent Council in response to corruption charges, which proved to be unfounded. Managing community capacity building and the logistics of a major housing redevelopment project alongside the considerable social problems of dispossessed communities has proved a formidable task. The housing programme promised by the NDC Board has had a difficult history of implementation for a variety of reasons and, some six years into the programme, very little new housing has materialised. This has frustrated people's expectations about improved resources and consolidated the problems of overcrowding, which has contributed to making cohesive relations within the community rather difficult in certain circumstances.

## The arrival of asylum seekers in Glasgow

The dispersal of asylum seekers into deprived areas in Glasgow initially produced considerable hostility from the local residents who had sustained isolation for so long and who were given no forewarning or preliminary support for their reconstituted community – a failure willingly acknowledged by statutory agencies involved.

The dramatic change of different personal and family agendas being introduced into the community produced new dynamics on the estates and some surprising developments in cohesiveness. In August 2001, the murder of a Turkish asylum seeker, Firsat Dag, on the Sighthill estate triggered a community reaction against the poverty and vulnerability of all those living on the estate. This was positively responded to by the police and eventually led to the setting up of the North Glasgow International Festival, which was organised by the Strathclyde Police and people on the estate, including the new asylum seekers and other agencies.

Other estates took up the cause of asylum seekers, particularly after dawn raid deportations were instituted. These kinds of community involvements led both to a reduction of the dawn raids and to an increase in funding from the Scottish Executive to support community activities. Local residents' experience of inequality and deprivation was altered by participating in different ways of accessing the community resources provided for the new arrivals. The social profile of the new residents of the estates was that of a better educated and more skilled group who were not as marked by poverty and social isolation as the long-standing residents. Their different expectations of life and the future introduced a more vigorous social engagement with the possibilities they faced, and provided an antidote both to the lack of facilities and to past failures of resilience. Sharing resources such as the one-stop-shop facility, nursery provision and festivals of belonging reduced levels of racialisation of asylum seekers and created a situation where new migrations produced a mixed community to great mutual effect.

This pattern of good practice was not repeated, however, across the sites. This highlights the particular context of Scotland in providing a positive climate of reception to asylum seekers and new immigrants. Much of this climate arises out of the policy commitments of the Scottish Executive to counter the demographic effects of economic decline and sustained emigration by retaining newcomers to the community with the skills and abilities to work. Both new immigrants and asylum seekers in Glasgow have a higher skill base and education level than the settled population. Capacity building in the city represents a profound challenge when almost half the population is benefit dependent. This mix of factors has produced an attentiveness to the interface between new migrations and marginalisation that acknowledges the full scope of issues making up the comprehensive challenge of social cohesion.



The tendency to blame immigration for problems that preceded it continues to define the debate on immigration. The case of Glasgow alerts us to the very diminished character of communities ravaged by economic restructuring who were unfamiliar with the realities of cohesiveness and ill equipped to absorb further change. Asylum seekers themselves were often better able to deal with the problems of cohesion and change, and were in some instances more familiar with the dynamics of non-marginal community life. However, the good practices that grew up around the asylum population in Glasgow were not sufficient to deflect the many claims that asylum seekers were parasitic on the society that gave them haven.

## **Conclusion**

Deprivation has many consequences for social cohesion. It limits the resources of a community not least because it diminishes, in both quantity and quality, the shared spaces and amenities for social gatherings, and thus limits the formation of and relations between different groups within communities. Failures in youth provision can support street cultures that lead to feelings of a lack of safety for many, particularly for older people. Informal economies, particularly those related to drugs, problematise relations between communities and the police. Unemployment and poverty can limit people's capacity for community involvement and produce cultures of resentment around issues of entitlement. Social cohesion, however, does take place in deprived communities and the conditions of deprivation can produce closer social bonds and relationships that can be threatened by regeneration programmes.

Recent immigration similarly has complex effects on social cohesion. New arrivals, particularly young single women and men, can change the work profile of the community and break patterns of concentrated deprivation. Refugees and asylum seekers coming into a community can enhance its resource base and change dynamics for the better in terms of increasing the expectations of marginalised communities for social support. Immigration can also place enormous strains on communities that identify as homogeneous and feel unable to provide capacities to involve newcomers. When these capacities are already limited by deprivation, the combined effect seemingly brings social cohesion issues into crisis. When recent immigration is held responsible for this, relations of cohesion are further undermined. In communities where multiculturalism and diversity are part of the texture of daily life, new arrivals pose much less of an issue.

The regeneration programmes set up to tackle deprivation have had mixed success in our sites. In Glasgow, regeneration around housing eventually led to improved

community relations between asylum seekers and the local populations when the resources following asylum seekers were shared by the community as a whole. In South Kilburn, however, while New Deal for Communities money has enhanced facilities in the estate, it has also had the unwanted effect of dividing the estate from the rest of the community and creating resentment around the privileged allocation of resources received by the estate. In Kilburn, as in Braunstone, the NDC money led to media scandals about mismanagement, which impacted negatively on social cohesion. Although, in both instances, the accusations were not confirmed by investigations of the dealings of the NDC boards, they contributed to people's disillusionment about the capacity of the programmes to deliver real change.

The relations between social cohesion and new arrivals in communities experiencing long-term deprivation are complex and challenged particularly by the legacies and continuing limitations of poverty, deprivations and multiple inequalities. Programmes of regeneration have recast these relations in ways that both hinder and improve social cohesion, and the experiences of the different places of deprivation in our study show that, to understand these processes fully, it is necessary to view these relations as specific to place.

### Key points

- Deprivation cannot be assumed to equate with an absence of cohesion.
- Social cohesion can be severely circumscribed by deprivation on a number of different registers, such as poor housing, the effects of worklessness, low community expectations and concentrated shared realities of poverty.
- The limitations of deprivation can be blamed on new arrivals and this view of immigration can further undermine social cohesion.
- Immigration can damage cohesion in deprived communities that have limited experience of diversity and of socially supported community relations.
- Programmes to tackle deprivation can have mixed effects in communities where capacity building is particularly difficult because of experiences of poverty and worklessness.

# 7 Place and belonging

The established relationship between place and belonging is a key aspect informing the encounter between long-term residents and new arrivals. In the implementation of the research, conceptualising places as 'made of' social relations (Massey, 1994) meant researching the rhythms and realities of the everyday life of long-term residents as well as those of new arrivals. As new arrivals settle in an area, they enter a pre-existing system of social relations and of mutual perceptions between groups of long-term residents. This chapter will examine the way in which local experiences of living and belonging in a specific place are influenced by, and in turn influence, long-term residents' reactions to the arrival of new groups of immigrants. This means engaging with the relationship between local structures of belonging and the way these impact on communities' reactions to social transformations, including the arrival of new groups, it also means analysing the relations between long-term residents and new arrivals with reference to the system of social relations and the definition of locality within which their encounter 'takes place'.

This chapter will first address some aspects of the relation between place and belonging that were shared across all sites and will then focus on contrasting experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with local areas. Thus we aim to analyse what underpins 'positive' and 'negative' outcomes of the encounters between long-term residents and new immigrants. Having discussed these two different outcomes, the chapter continues by addressing the specific role of social interventions and the relevance of public spaces and events in improving negative outcomes and promoting social cohesion.

## **Common aspects of the relationship between place and belonging**

We will start our analysis by focusing on the main discourses and trends characterising the relation between place and belonging across all the research sites.

### **Locality and belonging**

One of the main findings of the research is that, at a neighbourhood level, locality prevails over ethnicity/race/class as the main 'official' discourse defining the right to and experience of belonging. This does not mean that race, ethnicity or class

play no part in the emergence of local structures of belonging, but that the main discourse through which they are expressed and are, indeed, socially viable is the one of locality, in other words, an ideology of being 'from here'. For instance, the material gathered in the context of the research shows that friendships and enmities are often extremely localised, with structures of belonging and attachment usually being limited to a road or to the end of a road. As it emerges from some of the quotations that follow, affinities between different ethnic groups are sometimes traced in localised family systems and (extended) family structures, and in 'being from' a specific road or estate, rather than in more abstract characteristics such as race, faith or ethnicity:

In Dungannon, we grew up in a very nice neighbourhood. There was none of this carry-on Catholics and Protestants, none of it was mentioned in them days, we all played together and we went from one house to the other. But there was a great house in the street, the McBrides', they are all dead and gone now, but it was the main house, they were shoemakers. Everyone gathered in that house. (Long-term settled, Protestant man, Dungannon)

Although the above example is from a place marked by ongoing faith-/ethnicity-based polarisations, it is important to underline how these are resisted at a very immediate neighbourhood level.

The very same localised dimension of belonging characterises new arrivals' experiences, which are often centred on local liaisons and relations, especially with neighbours, as the following five quotations show:

Interviewer: And how do you find this neighbourhood? Do you like living here?

The neighbourhood is really good, especially our next-door neighbours, like, when we moved here, I couldn't speak English and so like she, they used to take us to the library and there was a girl, they had a daughter called Charlie and she used to come help me with my English, my homework and stuff. (New arrival, young woman, Downham)

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your neighbourhood? Do you like living there?

Both my neighbours are Somali; we know each other and respect each other. We support each other, especially the one that is a single mother. We help her with the shopping and look after her. I'm very happy there. (New arrival, young man, Leicester)

Yeah, it was really good. Because I met some, two or three Filipinos are living down there. And then I had good company. Then we start playing basketball. We go out like, you know, walk down the streets, chat. (New arrival, young man, Kilburn)

Yes, lovely here. It's very quiet. Is a common behind us. Big park. The neighbours is lovely. (New arrival, woman, Glasgow)

Interviewer: What else, what do you think about your neighbourhood? About the place where you are living now?

I have got fantastic neighbours, on one side an Irishman, I am not a racist, he is a Protestant, very nice, an older man, he shares with us a semi-detached house, very nice elderly man. And his daughters visit him, about my age. So he is an elderly guy, lives there with his wife. For example, if we had to cut the hedge, he lent us the tools. And on the other side there live Portuguese people. Also very nice people. For example, when we brought some wood from a dump, because we could not afford to buy wood to light a fire, so they lent us an axe, because we did not have one and they lent us other things as well. Very nice. They came before the New Year's Eve and they brought us a present, bottle of vodka, because they saw there were four of us living in this house, and that was their present for us for New Year's Eve. (New arrival, woman, Dungannon)

These quotations are from a variety of sites, marked by both predominantly positive and negative experiences of the encounter between long-term settled residents and new arrivals. Against this heterogeneous background, it is important to note that the presence of positive relations with (immediate) neighbours plays an important role in the emergence of feelings of appreciation of the area of settlement. Our interviews show the complex nature of positive social relations. These are sustained by acts of

everyday solidarity and friendship in places both where there are significant social tensions and where social relations are more harmonious.

### Convenience and belonging

Most interviewees, both new arrivals and long-term settled, showed quite a pragmatic understanding of the conveniences of a good place to live and this played a central role in their feeling of belonging to their area of settlement. However, as the following quotations demonstrate, individual understandings of what is convenient or inconvenient are formed in relation to priorities and perceptions emerging at the intersection of race, ethnicity, class and gender. The term 'intersection' refers to the theory of intersectionality, alluding to the way in which different social and cultural categories and dimensions overlap and interact within social relations and processes to legitimise specific social hierarchies and inequalities (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 192). It is this specific understanding of local intersection that shapes prevailing as well as more individually specific understandings of 'convenience' and acceptable public and private behaviour:

I like the area because it's very close to work, takes me five minutes to get to work. I just like it when things are close. So those probably are two of the primary reasons. And I'm happy with the accommodation in itself. The only thing that would impinge on that is the noise coming from across the road. Those people [*new arrivals from Eastern Europe*] often play loud music and stand outside fiddling with their cars or do you know what I mean? And so there's sort of loud music and the drinking that goes on. And then some of the people on the other side of the road sometimes look marginally threatening. Maybe it's because I'm uncomfortable around people drinking as much as that, maybe it's my own kind of discomfort. But, you know, it's just when people are in large groups drinking and stuff, it just makes me a little less comfortable. And so that's made it sort of, it's not, it doesn't bother me a great deal but it has made it a little less comfortable because sometimes, because you know, it's a very narrow street, I step out of my front door, and, although it's kind of double yellow lines, there's cars parked all along it. But, you know, when I walk out of my front door, yeah, those two factors are kind of, they impact upon the previous positives, but the positives definitely outweigh. (New arrival, South African white man, Peterborough)

It's quite a friendly atmosphere round here. Because, well I come from Africa but sometimes, I've been to India as well, and this area sometimes reminds me of India people you know? Because people are always standing outside, little groups are talking ... I used to live on Moat Road before when the children was small, the school was just like one, you just cross the road and the school was just there. But then, when they grew up, you know, you need rooms for the boys and girls so we had to move down there. But I didn't want to go very far, because there's a shopping area and you can go walking you know? Post office is there, school is there, so, even if you haven't got a car, you can go and do your things. (Long-term resident, minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

These last quotes show how different social groups and individuals seem to rate convenience very highly when evaluating their satisfaction with the place of living. However, these considerations, as indeed those about the role between discourses of locality and belonging, are still rooted within the specific requirements prescribed by ethnicity and class, and within the community relations characterising social groups and the areas they inhabit. For instance, for an East African Indian, minority ethnic, long-term resident the presence of people talking out in the street can be seen as a 'convenient' and positive aspect of social relations, as it reminds her of India, a place she associates with home. However, this very same behaviour in Peterborough is seen as threatening and disruptive of local patterns of neighbourly behaviour. In fact, as the next two subsections will explain in greater detail, different social groups have different understandings and requirements of what constitutes convenience and safety. The relation between these, the possibilities offered by specific places and the social relations and groups characterising them shapes very different experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the place of living. These contrasting experiences will be the main topic of the next section of the chapter.

### **Contrasting experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with area of settlement**

After having analysed the main discourses and trends characterising the relation between place and belonging across all the research sites, we will now focus on the contrasting experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with local areas. These will be dealt with in separate subsections, each framing specific experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the area of living.

### Satisfaction with the local area

One of the key questions we asked regarding people's relations with the places they inhabited focuses on feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their areas of residence. The main finding of the research in this respect was that people who were most satisfied with the place of settlement were those whose everyday life matched their expectations regarding:

- safety, referring to different understandings of what constitutes a safe environment and the interactions and activities one should feel safe about;
- neighbourliness and civility, referring to different understandings of what constitutes the 'right' balance between closeness and distance, as well as that between courtesy and intrusion in neighbourhood and wider social relations within the area of settlement;
- social mobility, referring to the way individuals or groups can move upwards or downwards from one status or class position;
- lifestyles (individualised, family-oriented, community-based, work-/money-oriented, etc.).

The ethnographic and interview material gathered in the context of the research allowed us to come to the conclusion that understandings and requirements of convenience and safety shape feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the area of settlement. These are unequally defined by the intersection of class, race, ethnicity, faith and gender, and are ultimately rooted in the specific histories of local places. The following quote from an Irish Muslim, long-term settled, female resident from Kilburn shows exactly how culturally and socially sited these perceptions are, as the increased number of mosques and the widespread availability of halal food are seen as factors prompting a positive sense of satisfaction with the area in which she is living.

It's changing, when I came here first there was a few different shops, there was Mothercare, there was, erm, now the Mothercare has gone, it's been taken over by Peacocks. Superdrug has just moved in in the last years. Hamdullah, there is lots of mosques going up and there's lots of Muslim food you can get now whereas, before, we really had to search for food. Asda is around the corner. You've got the tube station just around the corner, the shops are just around the corner. So I am right in the middle of everything. The tube station is near, the shops are near. And



that's it. And the buses are to go to anywhere on the bus. Now I know my way round it, I don't want to move from here. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

However, in a different area and from a different (majority ethnic) point of view, the arrival of new groups of Muslim people in Highfields and the spread of mosques and shops providing halal food is experienced as a 'Muslim takeover' of a previously more diverse area. The following excerpt from Leicester refers to a situation of 'concealed white flight' from a culturally pluralist and relatively deprived locality (Highfields) to a more homogeneous and affluent neighbourhood:

We moved near Leicester Forest East because my husband got fed up because he couldn't park outside the house. That was three years ago. And we find that, I loved my house ... I was there 27 years, I mean I loved it round there and I loved the people. And we'd got Muslims, Hindu and there was quite a few different people around near us. Neighbours were lovely. I find when I go round there now it's a bit overwhelming, you know, because it's so, it's more Muslim orientated. Maybe I shouldn't say that. We find that a lot of them have moved into, a lot of them have moved into the housing. I think there's only two white couples now on the street. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Leicester).

Within the interplay between these dimensions, perceptions about which individuals and groups have the right to (upward) social mobility, defined as the possibility to change (improve) social position within any given social hierarchy, emerge as a key factor informing people's satisfaction with the place of settlement. This should be seen as the outcome of a comparative evaluation between:

- where people feel they should 'be at'; and
- where they are 'actually' at in relation to their (self-)identification and social positioning, and to their understanding of existing hierarchies of the right to improve one's status, in other words of 'who should be where'.

The adoption of a particular lifestyle can also be seen as an outcome of all of these interlinked factors and as actually embodying and implementing the related understanding of what constitutes a 'convenient' environment. The interaction and intersection between different sets of priorities, expectations and experiences, and the possibilities present in the places within which these are active will tend to produce largely positive outcomes, depending on how well individual/group expectations match the actual possibilities encountered locally.

### Inner-city multicultural areas

The title refers to inner-city areas characterised by the availability of cheaper housing and an atmosphere of relative acceptance of diversity (and safety from racist harassment and attacks). Recent migrants and long-term settled minority ethnic groups living in such areas thought that, overall, they lived in a place that was suitable for their needs, according to their perception of what their current social position should be. Working-class and lower-middle-class, long-term settled, minority ethnic people, and in particular people more easily identified (from the outside) and self-identified as Muslim (both minority ethnic and new arrival groups), were particularly likely to appreciate and resort to living in culturally pluralist areas, which they saw as safer from violence and marginalisation, and as enabling them to express their identities more fully, whether these were articulated mainly around notions of race, faith or ethnicity. The following examples show the different ways in which culturally pluralist areas cater for the needs of different groups and individuals, and their priorities in terms of safety and identity:

So we fortunately did get housed in Pollokshields, which was like worlds apart, totally worlds apart, it was great. Erm, the neighbours, the neighbours were, there was a Pakistani community and you felt so much safer. And it seemed to be cleaner than it was – in my mind and how I would describe it is like thugs, I know there are thugs there but it was like different from Drumoyne. Because Drumoyne it was, there wasn't any other Asian families and it was just horrible. So I thought about moving to a house with a garden, so that took me about a year-and-a-half to actually find somewhere. And now I have been here three years and I love it, it's just great. Every day is like a Sunday. (Long-term settled, Pakistani, minority ethnic woman, Glasgow)

Yes, I like living in it. The neighbourhood is very important since we all got to interact, especially children and then, if you don't want them to get any bad habits from the children around you, best way is to keep them away from bad habits. That's why we, I actually pioneered and helped Turkish community to set up a community centre in Leicester. What we outside school hours and during weekends, we send our children there so they socialise and learn good things there so that they don't get any bad habits. (New arrival, man, Highfields – Leicester)

In particular, these two excerpts show the role of the interplay between ethnicity and relations between groups and lifestyles in the development of individual and social identities and in determining priorities of resettlement. In the first quote, the

interviewee's desire to have a house with a garden and her experience of social antagonism prompt her to resettle in a neighbourhood where there are other Asian families, which makes her feel safer. In the second quote, the interviewee appreciates the possibility for his children to socialise with other children from different groups, as well as to stay with other Turkish children, something he sees as important to steer them away from 'bad habits'. The appreciation of the possibility to enjoy living in a pluralist environment was also openly expressed by some majority ethnic long-term residents. In the following quote, a majority ethnic man living in Highfields talks about his attachment to and enjoyment of the neighbourhood he lives in, Highfields in Leicester, where he sometimes feels like a 'minority in my own community', which encompasses a majority of Muslim long-term residents and new arrivals:

Interviewer: In terms of this neighbourhood then, do you like living here?

I love it, and sometimes I just wonder how I fit in as well, when I look at the neighbourhood round here we know that a very significant majority of the people are from a much more traditional Muslim culture. So, in a sense, I'm a stranger in my own community. Having said that, within this little microcosm of a community within which I live, all I have to do to move out of it is get on me bike and cycle and five minutes I'm in the city centre. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Highfields – Leicester)

This last quote is important, as it shows how cultural and social diversity can be an attraction and a positive aspect by itself for many people who are drawn and choose to live in culturally pluralist places in order to enjoy the everyday experience of their sociocultural diversity.

Most importantly, in this subsection, we wanted to underline the plurality of trajectories and priorities of long-term residents and new arrivals who decide to live in multicultural inner-city areas. For new arrivals and minority ethnic long-term residents, these are places where they feel safer and more able to give their children the opportunity to engage in their 'ethnic' culture. For majority ethnic long-term residents, these areas provide the opposite opportunity to experience different cultures and customs in places where they can enjoy the feeling of being 'a stranger in my own community'.

### New arrivals from the EU

The majority of new arrivals from the European countries that joined the European Union in 2004 (also known as A8 countries) were relatively satisfied about their migration and settlement experiences. They indicated that, overall, their lives had improved considerably by moving to the UK, despite the fact that they often worked long hours, for low pay, in low-status jobs. The following two quotations show specifically how women and young people can find a wider range of opportunities for self-development through migration, which they saw as worth undergoing despite feeling exploited or working unsocial hours:

My plans were ... I wanted to earn money to finish my studies and to pay off my debts. So, after three months here, even though I was earning £1.50 per hour and felt very used, I managed to save up £1,000. I really missed my children and so told my mother to come over, as it was the summer holidays ... It was a shame to me to miss out on the next two months of earning. So I told her that after we would go back. I had to rent somewhere to live with the children, so even my mother said: 'There is no point in returning. Even after your studies you will not find work.' ... I thought England was better than I had expected, I thought it would be harder to find work, but I feel that this country if you want something you can get it ... This is my home now. (New arrival, Polish woman, Leicester)

Interviewer: Why did you want to leave Slovakia, why did you want to migrate?

Because I would like to find new friends here or I would like to see another country. I wanted to learn the English language ... I am working just night shift, from 1 at night to 7 in the morning every day, it's very good, because I am working just six hours every day, it is not too much hard work. I have all day for me, I can use a lot of things in Derry, I can go see my friends, I can go shopping, I can go to theatre or cinema, you know, for me it's very good. I sleep from maybe half 8 maybe to 2 or 3 in the afternoon, it's different every day ... I am working five days a week, Monday to Friday.

Interviewer: Do you think your life is better here than it was in Slovakia?

I think so, my wage would be better and, because I can learn English language, I can find a better job in my country because I can speak English, so I think it would be better. (New arrival, young Slovakian man, Dungannon)

These last two excerpts demonstrate the relative nature of expectations and comparative evaluations leading to migrants' appreciation of current experiences of settlement. These are usually measured against the opportunities that would be available at home and considered as an investment (English language) within the longer-term (working-)life trajectory. In this respect, our findings further corroborate other recent research on A8 migrants' working and non-working lives (Anderson *et al.*, 2006; Spencer, 2007). More specifically, migrants from the A8 countries, like most recently arrived migrant groups, seem to share what can be described as a work-centred lifestyle, influenced by low income and by working unsocial hours, but also by the commitment to remitting money back home. In many cases, A8 migrants lived with friends and/or with their partners. These factors have an important impact on their expectations of and investment in the process of social inclusion in the UK. Because of the availability of friends and partners from the same country, many A8 migrants can be seen as 'staying among themselves' and they do not seem to perceive any negative atmosphere towards the arrival of new groups. For example, the following quotation demonstrates that the history and heritage of 'the troubles' did not influence the choice of Northern Ireland as a country of destination:

My girlfriend decided to come here [*Northern Ireland*], so I left together with her father ... I had some savings, then I got a job and I was OK ... When I first arrived [*in Newry*] I didn't have a clue that it was a Catholic area, I didn't have a clue ... I just heard the possibility of accommodation. I came from Poland, I booked a flight ...

Interviewer: Has the problem between Catholics and Protestants affected you, if at all?

No, it's not a problem for me, but I think it's not a very important thing for me. I am Catholic, and everyone can believe in his belief. (New arrival, Polish man, Dungannon).

When analysing the migration and settlement of A8 migrants, it is important to underline the relative self-reliance of this group with reference to non-work-related aspects of social participation and interaction (friendships, etc.). Most people tend to migrate with and settle within a network of family members and friends who can be seen as complementing and countering the regime of differential exclusion they encounter in the UK. This incorporates them as workers while excluding them from social support (benefits and welfare state) and non-work-related forms of social interaction. In turn, the work-based experience of settlement in the UK seems to match many A8 migrants' expectations of returning in the near future, although a large number of people, especially those with children, increasingly see their future in the UK.

### **'Leafy suburbs'**

Long-term settled majority and minority ethnic people living in affluent suburban areas or in areas that they saw as conforming to their expectations/hopes of social mobility were also very likely to show appreciation for the areas they were living in. However, sometimes the satisfaction with the process and area of settlement set in after an initial phase of adaptation from the previous place of residence. This is also true when people moved from more deprived and ethnically diverse settings to more affluent neighbourhoods inhabited by a greater proportion of majority ethnic long-term residents. For instance, in the following excerpt, the same majority ethnic woman who was quoted in the subsection headed 'Satisfaction with the local area' above, who felt that they (as a couple) had to move away from multicultural Highfields because of the pressure on parking spaces from the increasingly Muslim population, talks about the difficulty they experienced while adjusting to the new, less diverse and quieter area:

We are comfortable now ... but it took me a while because I wasn't used to quiet, and it's a bit more open because you're not in a terraced house. It took me a long while to get used to it because I was used to the people around me on my road. It doesn't matter what race, my friends were Asian as well as ... I mean my neighbour was African Caribbean, we'd got friends there, you know. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Leicester)

However, the following interview, also from Leicester, shows how the arrival of affluent Asian families in the very same leafy neighbourhoods in Leicestershire was resisted at first, although it has come to be more accepted:

Because I have success I can afford to buy a house in an affluent area, because I can send my daughters to a private school. It was interesting when I first moved to Leicester and saw a house. I made an offer and invested money to value it, and the owners undervalued it and had the legal work completed quickly because they didn't want to sell to an Asian. I think, generally, the Asian people are now seen as an asset. If you go to a middle-class area, they know you will keep the house, expand the house, you will invest in garden you will invest in so and so. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Leicester)

This last excerpt frames the resistance to Asians' access to the higher strata of the housing market as something of the past. However, minority ethnic citizens can still be subject to a process of re-racialisation as undesirable 'asylum seekers' when they move to suburban areas characterised by a self-perception in terms of majority ethnic homogeneity, as the following quote from an interview with a councillor in Peterborough shows:

When they do move out of their traditional areas, you've got the indigenous population saying, oh, asylum seekers! And I have to say I do break confidentiality sometimes and say 'that person was born here and so were his two kids'. I had one in my village, and you can imagine it's even worse in a village. Had to go tell the whole pub! Once they knew, it wasn't a problem. (Key informant, Peterborough)

These dynamics of stigmatisation of and resistance to mobility, both social and geographical, happen whenever minority ethnic long-term residents are seen by majority ethnic, long-term residents as 'transgressing' implicit social and economic hierarchies. In Peterborough, as we have seen in the section on 'The impact of housing support for new arrivals in Peterborough' in Chapter 5, Pakistani long-term resident families are benefiting from renting out their properties to migrants, and are becoming socially and geographically mobile by moving out from a multi-ethnic, working-class, inner-city neighbourhood to more 'leafy' and majority ethnic areas. At the same time, long-term residents perceiving themselves as part of the majority ethnic community expressed their concern about A8 migrants' resort to multiple occupancy as a way to resist the social repositioning of Pakistani families higher on the property and social ladder. The following quote is from the interview with a representative of an organisation involved in initiatives of cultural and social mediation between new arrivals and long-term residents in Peterborough:

Well, the long-term resident communities do get upset when there is large groups of young men living in houses because there's been issues with noise. White residents are upset that new-arrival people are being put into houses or they feel it looks as if they are being put into houses where they fear they are going to be exploited, they are going to be charged high rents, overcrowded. And their anger really is with the landlords, not with the migrant communities. People were saying that there is a lot of Pakistani landlords that are buying up the properties. So it then becomes a race issue because local long-term white people are then angry at the Pakistani people, you know, so it's not about the individuals, it's about the nationalities when actually it's about the individuals ... that's what they should be talking about but it becomes about nationalities. (Key informant, Peterborough)

The excerpt shows how the interplay between the arrival of new migrant groups and the ethnicity/class intersection structuring the relations between majority and minority ethnic long-term resident groups influences local dynamics of 'social cohesion'. In this respect, a migration-related problem can become the focus of struggle between different groups of long-term residents. This struggle is often about the way new and old groups are seen as faring in relation to imagined hierarchies of the right to improve their social positions, rather than about the migrants' behaviour being presented as an 'issue'. In order for projects of social intervention to be able to improve social relations, they need to consider problematic migration-related issues such as multiple occupancy or the perceptions that 'migrants steal our jobs' against the complicated grain of pre-existing social relations. It is only by addressing both the specific migration-related issue at stake and the long-seated tensions framing it as an 'issue' within the relations between long-term residents that local social relations can be improved.

### **Dissatisfaction with local area**

In a symmetrical reverse of our observations regarding the social processes underpinning feelings of satisfaction with the place of residence, one of the main findings of the research was that interviewees whose expectations of social mobility, were very different from those they encountered in their lived realities of everyday life were the most dissatisfied with their place of living. In particular, the two most dissatisfied groups were long-term settled residents and new arrivals living in deprived inner-city estates.



Social relations within deprived inner-city council estates such as in Braunstone (Leicester), South Kilburn Estate (Kilburn), Downham and Sighthill (Glasgow) are characterised by antagonism and (sometimes) conflict over scarce resources, such as subsidised housing, income support and unskilled labour. In these contexts, long-term residents, both majority and minority ethnic, have felt betrayed by the State, by the transformation of the local labour market and economy, and by the allocation of scarce resources to new arrivals who sometimes get priority of allocation because of the severity of their socio-economic deprivation. On the other hand, new arrivals (particularly refugees and asylum seekers) experience violence and stigmatisation in relation to racialised understandings of the right to access subsidised housing and income support. The following three excerpts show different 'negative' examples of the encounter between differently disadvantaged groups of long-term residents and new arrivals, and of the conflicts and tensions that can result, particularly around the allocation of subsidised housing:

They did give me a council house in Braunstone where I had severe problems. It was horrendous. It was a brand-new house, we moved in next to a family of asylum seekers ... Somalis [*sic*] from Holland. And there was so much trouble ... because I was ill at the time and children from the back of the estate used to come to cause trouble, deliberately provoke trouble with the Somalis. And I couldn't stand it. I was really angry, really angry ... with the police and whoever put them there. I have no problem with them being there. But I said, look, these kids are coming with no other reason than to cause trouble. And the Somalis themselves ... although it wasn't very nice for them ... but they did have a lot of support for them. It was like, my husband was in prison and my family ... there was no support for my family. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, married to Pakistani husband, with children, Leicester)

Amongst refugee communities again you're beginning to see a predominance within council accommodation and there is some evidence that that's beginning to cause some tensions with more established communities, and I don't just mean the white community. Because you're seeing, for example, black Caribbean households who are feeling themselves pushed out by black African households who have sometimes come as refugees, not always. They've gone through the homelessness route and are now in public housing, can't get into the same accommodation, they can't through the routes that are available to them, they can't get council accommodation. And those kinds of resentments, I mean it's a common complaint you know. (Key informant, Kilburn)

Downham is actually a place where, erm, I can call it a place where white people actually live. And they tend to be the working-class white. I remember refugees have actually been offered accommodation there and, after two weeks, three weeks, they will come here complaining about racism and the council actually – because the police, they could not actually help the clients, they were recommending the households to be moved to surprise, surprise to Deptford. So you have a large number of asylum seekers who actually moved to Downham but unfortunately could not sustain because they were uncomfortable and they experienced racism and they phoned the police and the police actually recommended that they should be moved. (Key informant, Downham)

As is corroborated by existing research (Robinson *et al.*, 2007), the allocation of council housing to asylum seekers/refugees and other new arrivals within or around deprived estates was the single circumstance most associated with cases of racially motivated violence across all sites. However, the quotations presented above show how local resentments are fuelled by conflicts originating from inadequate provision for differently disadvantaged groups and by the disturbance of hierarchies of the right to social support and mobility (see further discussion of these issues in Chapter 5).

Although working-class long-term residents in Braunstone (Leicester), Downham and Glasgow were among the most dissatisfied with their place of settlement, they also showed a particularly pronounced attachment to their areas. When prompted to explain what these feelings were related to, most interviewees indicated the close-knit network of social relations that they can (still) enjoy there, the stigma they (sometimes) face when they leave their area and their lack of self-confidence originating from the long-term experience of deprivation, as the following quotations show:

There's a lot of like community spirit around the estate, like there's a little kid who died a couple of year back, and everyone chipped in for the headstone, everyone on the estate chipped in. So it's like, if something like, if someone needs something they'll be happy to like lend you some sugar or something like that ... But, because of where I'm from, people will like, if I'm going around another estate or something, people will automatically think I'm a thug or something. So it's just like a stereotypical view of the estate. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Braunstone)

I love the accommodation and it's, the only thing, there's a stigma living where I live, which I think members of my employment find quite strange. Whether I leave there or not, if I had to live somewhere else, but at present I'm OK. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Braunstone, Leicester)

Interviewer: Do you like living here?

I do. Ehm, the neighbourhood I'm in was one of the first kinds of council estates in Glasgow and was a successful estate. It's got a good community kind of feel about it ... there's a good feel about the place. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Glasgow)

These interviewees in Braunstone and Glasgow show how people from or choosing to live in working-class estates appreciate the feeling of belonging to a relatively close community, and this is a counterweight to the stigma attached to the estate and to people living in it. As in the other social settings explored in the context of the research, solidarity and proximity are expressed more in moments of particular distress for the community around a specific issue or need. On the one hand, these relations of solidarity and proximity, and the strong feelings of attachment and belonging to the neighbourhood mentioned above are very important resources, as they counter the stigma associated with living in deprived inner-city estates. On the other hand, these very same resources can be mobilised against new arrivals when they are perceived as further undermining long-term residents' already marginalised position. It is this complex politics of belonging that needs to be decoded when trying to understand the relations between new arrivals and long-term residents in deprived inner-city estates.

## **Place and social relations between groups**

The six sites were characterised by different experiences of the encounter between long-term settled and newly arrived groups. More specifically, in some places, such as Belgrave and Highfields (Leicester), Kilburn (except the South Kilburn Estate) and (after initial resistances and racist attacks) Glasgow, the arrival of new social groups was accepted mainly as a 'positive' or necessary (for humanitarian/economic/demographic reasons) contribution to local society, or ignored as a matter of normal everyday life (particularly in Kilburn). In other places, such as Braunstone (Leicester), Downham, and, initially, in Glasgow, Peterborough and Dungannon (Northern

Ireland), it was consistent with the emergence of 'negative' feelings of resentment, social antagonism and racially motivated attacks. Most of the research sites witnessed the mobilisation of feelings of resentment between long-term residents, majority ethnic working-class people and new arrivals (people newly arriving in any social setting, whether minority ethnic, long-term settled migrants or asylum seekers).

These processes of social antagonism should not be seen as fixed social and cultural aspects of any particular area, but as part of a wider and historical 'settled backlash' phenomenon, which we have introduced in Chapter 3. The concept refers to ideologies of 'settlement' (being 'from here') that challenge ideologies of equality that emerged in the 1960s. It also refers to a new stance in public debates and policies about the governance of multicultural societies, emphasising a form of cultural assimilation that involves the adoption by minority ethnic groups of the cultural traits of the majority ethnic group as the main mechanism to deal with 'ethnic difference'.

By associating the concept of backlash with that of settledness, we want to acknowledge the contemporary switch of the ideological legitimisation of marginalisation and social exclusion from race to the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and class. At the same time, we want to underline the emergence of the discourse of locality (being 'from here') as a key vehicle for the reinforcement or challenging of existing social hierarchies. In this perspective, social cohesion and antagonism should be seen as two possible outcomes of competing narratives 'informally' regulating the right to belong, the right to be assisted and move on. It is on this dynamic and complex perspective that the following two subsections will focus, respectively, on situations in which the arrival of new groups coincided with negative social tensions or were positively accepted as part of the social dynamics of everyday life.

### **Negative dynamics**

In areas that are relatively deprived and perceived (by insiders and outsiders) as culturally homogeneous, conflicts and cohesions emerge in relation to access to key (scarce) resources such as work, education, peer acknowledgement, recreational spaces, (subsidised) housing, income support and proximity (the possibility of living close to family/friends). More specifically, a recurring 'negative' dynamic was observed in areas characterised by:

- the feeling of declining (cultural, economic, spatial) predominance of a group representing itself as ‘from here’;
- a prevailing social and cultural heritage referring to a ‘close-knit’ social environment and translating into specific codes of neighbourly and civic behaviour;
- a strain on strategic resources (employment, income benefits, subsidised housing, good education facilities);
- a lack of information about the arrival of new groups in their immediate setting, their background and their right to access shared (scarce) resources.

In these areas, and particularly in Downham, Braunstone (Leicester), Thetford (Abbey Farm) and different inner-city estates in Glasgow and Kilburn (South Kilburn Estate), people who feel they represent the predominant ‘declining’ majority:

- interpreted minimalist or different (cultural, urban–rural, etc.) notions of neighbourliness and ‘civility’ as lack of interest/respect and/or hostility;
- expressed feelings of resentment for their subjection to prolonged deprivation/marginalisation and lack of access to social mobility by blaming newcomers for structural shortages in social provision (subsidised housing, non-exploitative low-skilled jobs, economic support, education);
- produced dynamics of acute social antagonism (racist attacks, harassment, bullying) against newcomers.

The following two quotations, both from Downham, show the interplay between disappointment with one’s life trajectory and feelings of resentment against newly arriving groups and individuals. They also show the way political parties such as the BNP are ready to capitalise politically on disaffected long-term residents by ‘playing the migration card’:

Then the recession hit in the 80s and the house got taken.  
So that got repossessed ... the council gave me a house  
back in Downham. I nearly fell over ...

Interviewer: Now, about the BNP, didn’t they contest the area?

Yeah, they did. They did extremely well. I mean, it's a dreadful thing to say, it was the amount of immigrants that were getting in, it was like a tsunami of people coming in and you know that there is only so much that this small country is going to take. We did have a bit of a surge and that is then where people actually started voting. Not because they agree with BNP policies, not all of them. It wasn't to do with the BNP, it was to do with the fact that the BNP wanted to look after their own as opposed to keep looking after others, but your own people suffering for it because that's how it was feeling. They did not get the seat in the end, but they did very well, they did very well, compared to other years. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic, woman, Downham)

At the moment the main problem is getting a job, a full-time job. Because, no matter where you look, all the jobs have gone. Don't get me wrong, I am not a racist person or anything else but they are all going to the immigrants. You look on the building sites then the immigrants have got it, because they are cheaper labour. It just seems to me that everything has gone downhill. It's like even the housing. My name has been on the housing list since I was 14. And I still now, 23, I haven't heard anything. But then you have all these people coming over and they get handed cars, they get handed houses, jobs. Do you know what I mean? It's just like, it does wind a lot of people up because it's like, well, you can't look after your own, but then you are willing to let anyone else in and give it to them on a plate. Do you know what I mean? (Long-term settled, majority ethnic young man, Downham)

These two examples from Downham refer to a context where long-term inadequate social and economic provision fuels resentment against people who are seen as reaping the benefits of current social and economic transformations instead of those who should have priority – 'local people'. In this context, people who are without a job and who would like a car and a house oppose 'migrants' who have a job, a car and a house by arguing that being 'from here' should be the prevailing criterion for the allocation of resources.

### Positive dynamics

The opposite 'positive' case is that of areas marked by:

- a significant demographic, economic and cultural presence of diverse migrant populations;
- the common (by long-term minority ethnic residents and by new arrivals) acknowledgement of the area's social and cultural heritage as mixed;
- the common acceptance of a plurality of styles of neighbourliness;
- the common acknowledgement of the coinciding of socio-economic growth/stability and the arrival of new migrant or minority ethnic groups.

In these contexts, the absence of a feeling of privileged entitlement to belonging to the area attached to a specific ethnic/faith/racialised identity makes it easier for the majority of residents to:

- accept or ignore different (cultural, urban–rural, etc.) notions of neighbourliness as part of a predominant acceptance of cultural pluralism;
- express feelings of appreciation for the cultural diversity of the area, which is seen as a positive asset of local identity;
- produce adequate institutional responses of acceptance and solidarity towards newcomers (Kilburn, Leicester – Belgrave, Highfields, and Glasgow);
- experience the arrival of new groups as in line with the history and everyday experience of the place, and as a resource for the economic well-being of the area, such as in Glasgow, Kilburn and Leicester (East African Gujarati).

The following excerpt shows exactly the interplay between the demographic and cultural predominance of minority ethnic groups within any social setting, feelings of pluralist belonging and the openness to relations with people from different social and cultural groups:

Yeah, I love my neighbourhood, to me, and I speak for myself, I talk to everybody, I joke with everybody, I don't see anything, everybody is different. You see. If my own people, they may say, they say, oh, why are

you talking to them and them? They are so and so. And I say, why not, they talk, I talk, I don't see the difference. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

As it emerges from this quotation, in predominantly multicultural settings, the very ethnic diversity of place becomes a positive social and cultural asset. The following case, also referring to Kilburn, a historical hub of Irish migration in the heart of London, shows a more complex and contradictory picture of strategic alliances between different groups of both long-term settled and new arrivals. In Kilburn, the shared experiences of discrimination and migration of African-Caribbean long-term residents and their Irish counterparts were cited by interviewees from both groups as the source of the ease with which these two groups were able to live together. This shared history can be seen as having produced shared feelings of belonging in Kilburn, which were also supported by a common experience of British colonialism, including a British-inspired education system and the establishment of English as a dominant language. The involvement in similar processes of resistance to discrimination and marginalisation in the context of migration to Britain and in relation to the British (post-)colonial experience created a positive footprint that was to make Kilburn a place of constructive relations between different migrant and long-term resident individuals and communities to the present day. The following quotation is an example of this identity 'alliance' taking place in Kilburn:

It's Irish and Caribbean youngsters, and they do round here, which is quite confusing, not like anywhere else they plot together. And here in Stonebridge they plot together. They hang around together. Whereas, in Hackney or somewhere like that, or New Cross in Lewisham, or whatever, there is big Irish communities and Caribbeans that live next to each other but they don't mix. But here for some reason they mix ... I sort of know why, it's, you know, back ages and ages ago when everyone come over, some Irish people would buy up and then let Caribbeans stay. And then some Caribbeans would buy up and let Irish stay. So it's a sort of mutual respect thing. From Ladbroke Grove it started up and just moved up towards here like.

Interviewer: Do you think it is because they were both discriminated against?

Yeah. No dogs, no blacks, no Irish. I even wrote a tune about that. (Long-term settled, young, minority ethnic, Irish, Kilburn)



What the last two quotations have in common is a social and cultural context where, because of the acknowledged mixed heritage of each place, nobody can claim to have a privileged right to belong and benefit from shared resources. More importantly, in each plural place, the acknowledgement of the intrinsically mixed heritage of local society mobilises the right resources and initiatives to identify and manage problems and issues that could destabilise the shared environment of relative prosperity and harmony. These initiatives of social intervention played a pivotal role in the transformation of negative situations into more positive ones, as we will explain in more detail in the following subsection.

### **The role of social interventions**

In all of the six research settings, projects of social intervention played an important role in maintaining or actually improving relations between new arrivals and long-term residents. This positive role was evident particularly in Dungannon, Glasgow and Peterborough, where the co-operation between the council and non-governmental organisations played a key role in improving mutual relations and perceptions.

In Peterborough, where the settlement of new arrivals coincided with the rapid economic and demographic expansion of the city, the arrival of different groups since 2001 has ignited different kinds of social alarms for differently established groups. More specifically, the settlement after 2001 of mostly single male Kurdish Iraqis, Afghan and African asylum seekers and refugees in deprived areas was greeted by racist abuse and attacks, and with suspicion and hostility in the local media. In 2004, the street fighting between Pakistani Peterborian and Kurdish young men in the Gladstone neighbourhood over the issues of inter-ethnic relationships (Kurdish men going out with Pakistani woman) and spatial boundaries remained deeply embedded in both key informants' and biographical interviewees' accounts. The arrival of Eastern European migrants since 2004 has also triggered anxieties of 'invasion' among long-term settled Peterborians, expressed mainly through complaints about their supposed lack of 'neighbourliness' and 'civility', and about their Pakistani landlords' ruthlessness in profiting from new A8 migrants by allowing multiple occupancy. These dynamics were addressed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 5.

Similarly, according to Police Service of Northern Ireland data (PSNI, 2007), the arrival of A8 Eastern Europeans in Dungannon was consistent with a 48 per cent increase in the number of local racist incidents (including those between minority ethnic individuals) from 2004 to 2006 and with a negative press campaign. The specific role of the media is explained in this quote from an interview with a key informant working for a migrant support organisation in Dungannon:

Yeah. To be honest we would find it would be quite negative in terms of, if we had one incident, it would blow it completely out of proportion and it would almost make things more difficult for us because we have had incidents which didn't have to be a major incident which the media have been blowing out of proportion and have classed the migrant workers as 'barbaric' and things like that, and obviously those kind of statements don't help us in terms of trying to integrate the migrant workers into the community. (Key informant, Dungannon)

As the peace process and the end of the conflict brought about economic growth in Northern Ireland, a trend emerged, with local people leaving their lower-paid jobs in factories, which resulted in a labour and skills deficit within the local economy. Although key informants in particular highlighted that many industries would have struggled to survive if it had not been for inward migration, some long-term residents felt that migrant workers were taking jobs from local people and that their presence had increased the demand and need for housing in the area. Other recurring discourses referred to migrants being seen as rude or indifferent, as they did not know the codes of 'civility' and 'neighbourliness' expected to be abided by in Dungannon. The ignorance of these unwritten rules of neighbourliness is partially corroborated by the fact that most A8 recent migrants (unlike those who moved into the area 20 years ago) did not know whether they were living in a Catholic (Nationalist) or Protestant (Unionist) area – a sign both of the degree of improvement of the situation in Northern Ireland and of the new arrivals' level of unawareness of the complex identities and histories of their places of settlement.

In both Dungannon and Peterborough, a number of initiatives of social intervention (promoted and delivered by our partners New Link in Peterborough and STEPS in Dungannon, in particular) have risen to the occasion and actually produced very good examples of mediation services between long-term residents and new arrivals, which have impacted very positively on their relations. The following two quotations refer to the activities undertaken in Peterborough and Dungannon, where there was a significant decrease in racially motivated incidents in the last year:

We have something like 250 new clients a week through New Link. Because we have something like 17 service providers who come to New Link so that people can access services here as well as being referred on. I think it would be fair to say there are other organisations like the women's centre. They do a lot of work with women in the community from very varied backgrounds and have done for quite a number of years. We have a network of community contact centres that were set up with Urban 2 funding right across the city and they are increasingly seeing people

from migrant, asylum seeker or refugee backgrounds because they are kind of living – people are moving out and living in different parts of the city now. There is a local health centre, Millfield Health Centre. We have good contacts with the Healthy Living Partnership because they do a lot of work in Central Ward as well. So there are lots of things going on. I think it's really important that people don't think that New Link is the only thing going on in Peterborough. And sometimes that is the impression that is given. (Key informant, Peterborough)

Some of the best work being done, the people into the Old Warren estate in Lisburn, which is a very, very strong loyalist community, but again it has a good community infrastructure, that grouping in there is doing very much the same work that we are doing here, and creating a whole positive environment, which is actually helping their own community to move forward. If you go out here in town, Cumberland and the Cunningham's resident group out at Belmont are the most active and organised local community group working to integrate and negotiate and manage the difficulties, and that's a Protestant community and organisation working in the realities of their existence and therefore working closely with existing organisations like the Boys' Brigade to incorporate young lads into sports and things that are happening ... The media have improved and again because of intervention at different levels. (Key informant, Dungannon)

The quotations above show how the efficient networking of different targeted services carries the delivery of efficient social intervention catering for the complex issues emerging from the encounter of long-term settled and new arrival groups. In Dungannon, where racist incidents started declining after 2005, the fact that some of the most positive initiatives are located in Protestant neighbourhoods implicitly challenges their association with a higher degree of resistance and hostility to new arrivals, when compared with Catholic neighbourhoods. In both contexts, the ability to work across and with different communities, long-term settled and new arrivals, as well as to link existing and new projects and initiatives, is key for the improvement of social relations.

The ethnographic and interview material gathered in the context of the research enables us to argue that the interplay between place, social interventions and the public and individual acknowledgement of migration as part of everyday life is very relevant for local experiences of social cohesion. The delivery of projects of social intervention mediating between long-term residents and new arrivals' own acknowledgement of the intrinsic heterogeneous nature of local society also plays a

key role in the emergence and maintenance of good relations between groups. When people conceive their society as homogeneous and their relations with new arrival groups are not facilitated by local authorities or agencies, tensions are more likely to emerge.

### **The organisation of public spaces and social relations**

Finally, private and public spaces play a crucial role in the fostering of positive attitudes towards social and cultural pluralism, as they provide opportunities for common interaction and leisure. More specifically, places marked by positive relations across social groups are always places where there is a good offer of venues for people to share their leisure, shopping and working time. In this respect, Kilburn High Street with its shops, its 'ethnic' restaurants, its offer of cultural opportunities (notably the Tricycle theatre) and the diversity and intensive mobility of its population acts like a catalyst for the predominant feeling of belonging in Kilburn, structured around a self-representation in terms of mobility and transience, rather than permanence and fixity. The following two quotations show how important the shared enjoyment of multicultural recreational opportunities is in producing a very positive sense of belonging to Kilburn, centred on the celebration of its multiple aspects of diversity:

Kilburn High Road is actually a very multicultural community. And they respect each other and it's great. I mean, I talk to a lot of people from different backgrounds, a lot. And I don't judge people with their colour and their race, what they wear and what they dress, what their sexuality is. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Kilburn)

I love living here because it's so multicultural and we rejoice in that, we love going out to the, you know, constantly discovering different restaurants and this is something we really love. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

At the same time, there is a direct correlation between the emergence of a positive sense of belonging and the existence of opportunities and facilities to celebrate it. In fact, going from culturally more homogeneous to more multicultural settings in Lewisham and Leicester coincides with moving from deprived places with very few opportunities of social and cultural interaction to thriving places characterised by economic, recreational and social activities. The wider questions arising from these analyses have implications for regeneration initiatives, which usually see the

delivery of infrastructures such as leisure and shopping centres as a key response to the feeling of isolation and to the long-term lack of social and cultural stimulation characterising deprived areas:

Since the leisure centre closed down at the top of Moorside Road there was no sort of leisure facilities around here or library or anything like that. And even as you get older, it's like I am 23 and the pubs that I used to go to round here have all been shut down. You've got the Green Man, that got burned down. And you got the Tigers End at the bottom of Watford Lane, that got closed down. Yeah. The only two pubs you've got around here is the Tavern and the Baring ... Erm, but the Tigers, that is one pub that no matter who you speak to they will turn round and say that was the pub. Because that was the one pub that you could walk in and everyone knew everyone. It was a good atmosphere down there, do you know what I mean? And it was a really nice pub. So that's been missed a lot since that got closed down. (Long-term settled, young majority ethnic, Downham)

This quotation from Downham, previously discussed in another context in Chapter 6, shows how the absence of local recreational opportunities, particularly – but not exclusively – for young people, impacts on the texture of community relations and on the wider experience of belonging to an area. In interviews, young people complained about the lack of facilities and places where they could 'have fun' in the immediate neighbourhood and saw Downham as a place where there was 'nothing to do'. As a result, many play and 'hang out' in the street, which older residents find threatening, especially when they are confronted with large numbers of young people. Most young people in Downham claimed that they did not feel a sense of belonging to the local area and that they planned to move in the future to other places where there were better chances to improve their lives.

In Leicester and Sighthill (Glasgow), the institution of multicultural festivals became a key aspect of the maintenance and emergence, respectively, of a positive stance towards the presence and arrival of new and different groups in the city. In Leicester, the Caribbean festival was the most mentioned genuine celebration of Leicester's diversity by the majority of the city's population, as the following excerpt from an interview with a young man from 'majority ethnic' Braunstone shows:

I mean the Caribbean carnival ... It's a great way to meet new people, different races, different backgrounds, try different stuff. I mean the parade, the parade for the carnival, that was a great sense of community then. It made you proud to be from Leicester sort of thing. (Long-term settled, young minority ethnic, Leicester)

In Sighthill, one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow, the murder of an asylum seeker on the estate led to police involvement in integration strategies and the police subsequently spearheaded the idea of a Sighthill International Festival. Early political hostility to dispersal was subsequently transformed by this and other interventions, and more recently many local people joined the city-wide campaign that grew up to oppose the deportations executed by Whitehall. Such was the success of eventual integration in Sighthill that, on receiving refugee status, many asylum seekers tried to remain in the community rather than move to the private sector.

From the evidence gathered during the research, it emerged that the availability of structured and unstructured occasions for different groups to mix and share leisure time, as well as learn about each other was key in the development of positive relations. In this perspective, it is important to underline how, in many circumstances, festivals and opportunities focusing on the tradition or history of a particular group could be moments of enjoyment and celebration for the rest of the community. This means that projects of social intervention aimed at improving relations between groups do not necessarily have to create new occasions where citizens can share their cultures on common ground. The ethnographic and interview material gathered during the research shows that, in many cases, long-term residents and new arrivals already know how to share their free time within each other's cultural and social spaces.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the material presented in this chapter demonstrates the importance of the relation between place, social interventions and the public and individual acknowledgement of migration as part of everyday life. The interplay between these three factors is very relevant for local experiences of social cohesion. The presence of specific social projects facilitating the relations between new arrivals and long-term settled residents, and the predominant perception of local society as heterogeneous play a key role in the emergence and maintenance of cohesive social environments. On the contrary, when relations between new arrivals and long-term settled residents are left unattended and the predominant perception of local society is in terms of ethnic and class homogeneity, tensions are more likely to emerge.

Although all areas, with the partial exception of Kilburn, were involved in the 'white backlash' of the 1980s and/or in the 'settled backlash' of the 1990s and 2000s, this process took place according to different understandings and experiences of local belongings, which emerged out of different local intersections of class, race, ethnicity,

religion and gender. Of our six sites, in Kilburn and Leicester (except in the context of inner-city council estates), the awareness of the fact that migration was an integral part of the area coincided with local narratives of belonging based on the celebration and acceptance of diversity. At the same time, local administration and civil society had adequate economic and cultural resources to identify and address timely issues of potential concern. In both Kilburn and Leicester, migrants were also seen as a key economic asset for local society.

In other places, like Downham, Dungannon, Leicester (Braunstone) and Peterborough, a local self-representation in terms of homogeneity and closeness, and pre-existing social tensions and inequalities were the background for hostile reactions to the arrival of new groups. Moreover, the arising tensions were addressed after a considerable delay, although, in all of these settings, measures were put in place that consistently improved the situation. In all of these contexts, popular discourses emerged framing newcomers as people who would exert a further strain on scarce resources, rather than as people who could contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic context of the area.

The key issue at stake in understanding dynamics of social cohesion is the degree to which the complexity of each social and cultural setting according to age, class, race and ethnicity is acknowledged within predominant narratives and practices of local belonging. It is within this context that new arrivals will be perceived and addressed as an opportunity or a threat, and it is this wider context that initiatives of social intervention need to address through specific initiatives of cultural mediation and support addressing both long-term residents and migrants.

Local feelings of belonging can be encouraged towards a positive acceptance of social and cultural pluralism through the improvement of the overall shared rhythms and realities of everyday life. This can be achieved through the delivery of services targeting the specific needs of new arrivals together with the long-seated needs of long-term residents, such as lack of employment and training/education and the associated lack of self-confidence. In this way, new arrivals become (and are perceived by the long-term settled as) an opportunity for, rather than a strain on, local resources. The experience of Glasgow, where the decision to share the assistance given to asylum seekers to the long-term residents living in deprived areas was at the basis of a turnaround of an initial position of hostility to one of support and empathy, is an example of good practice in this respect.

### Key points

- Locality is the main discourse used by the long-term settled to define outsiders, but encapsulated within it there are many types of differentiation based on class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with local areas emerges from comparative evaluations between experiences and expectations of convenience, safety, neighbourliness, social mobility and lifestyles.
- Positive responses to new arrivals emerge where past and present trends of racialised and settled backlash are adequately addressed by social intervention, and where migration and heterogeneity are acknowledged as key aspects of the locality, now and in the past, at a collective and individual level.
- Negative responses to new arrivals emerge where past and present trends of racialised and settled backlash are not addressed by social intervention, and where homogeneity and being 'from here' are perceived as key aspects of the locality, now and in the past, at a collective and individual level.
- Deprivation and the strain on strategic resources (particularly subsidised housing) are important factors fuelling negative relations between new arrivals and long-term settled residents. However, these two factors alone are not responsible for the development of negative reactions to new arrivals.
- The possibility to enjoy and experience cultural pluralism on appropriate social and cultural occasions, and in appropriate public and private spaces is key to the development of positive social relations between long-term settled residents and new arrivals.
- In order for migration to be perceived as a resource for local communities, the needs of new arrivals should be addressed jointly with those of long-term residents and more resources should be made available to both groups as a result of the arrival of new groups.



## 8 Politics of belonging

In this chapter, we present the key discourses and dynamics that arose in the interviews that enable us to understand social processes encompassing social cohesion and its relations with new arrivals. The main aim of this chapter is, therefore, to explore interviewees' sense of belonging to Britain and their understandings of social cohesion in the context of the transformation of social relations as new groups arrive. We will do so by focusing on two main themes: experiences of belonging to Britain and local understandings of social cohesion. We asked interviewees what it meant to belong in Britain, their idea of social cohesion and how they thought it could be improved.

The first theme, experiences of belonging in Britain, is examined in terms of the experiences of the three main categories of people we have been addressing throughout the research: majority ethnic long-term residents; minority ethnic long-term residents; and new arrivals. The second theme, local understandings of social cohesion, is explored through a broad comparison between places that are characterised by a self-representation in terms of homogeneity, separation and settlement and those that are characterised by the prevalence of an acknowledgement of the formative role of migration and of heterogeneity in the emergence and prospering of the locality.

### **Belongings to Britain**

Researching the way that feelings of belonging unfold in people's everyday lives meant engaging with a complex interplay between different (and similar) understandings of interconnected personal and social (nation, community, family, etc.) identities. The material presented in this chapter reveals that, as is to be expected, 'belonging to Britain' has different local, national and transnational meanings for the people we interviewed. Further, we found that there were different degrees of intensity of belonging to Britain for three different groups of interviewees, and their similar and diverging experiences of belonging will be analysed in the following three subsections.

### Majority ethnic belongings in England: 'minus one ethnicity'?

Some of the majority ethnic interviewees' narratives of belonging to Britain can be considered as examples of what Michael Banton (1998, p. 159) described as 'minus one ethnicity'. This refers to the way predominant identities tend to be naturalised as unmarked and to define all other groups as ethnically marked and different. This phenomenon was reflected in the findings of our research by the fact that, in most cases, majority ethnic long-term residents found the question about the meaning they attached to belonging to Britain hard to answer. The following quotation exemplifies this difficulty, as the interviewee seems to have never questioned her belonging to Britain:

What does Britain mean to me? Oh dear, that's a difficult one. I don't really know. Yeah, I don't really think about it to be honest with you. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Downham)

This second quotation is an example of another frequent response to the question of belonging, as many majority ethnic interviewees, after hesitating as if surprised by an unexpected question, referred to a 'minimalist' positive feeling of belonging to Britain because it is their home, as the following quote shows:

It's me home, I feel proud to be British, even though there is a lot of things I don't like about it, which, wherever you'd be, there is something that you wouldn't, you know. I mean, there is a lot of things that the governments could do to improve the living standards. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Leicester)

Although, as this latter excerpt shows, many majority ethnic people combined their positive sense of belonging to Britain with a critique of government action or inaction (most frequently mentioned were the welfare state and the war in Iraq), in other cases, feelings of positive belonging to Britain were associated with the perception of British society being tolerant, fair and safe, as the two following quotations show:

It means, um, a fairly tolerant society, a fair society ... Some might have more money but ... it's becoming more egalitarian, compared to when I grew up, I would like to think so anyway. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)

Well, it's like my homeland. Somewhere that I feel comfortable and safe really, at the end of the day. Obviously we are really, I know that we are quite privileged here compared to people in other countries. I know that I

am always going to be looked after. I mean, I am a lucky person, I know that I have not only got family but I do feel that if I really needed help with social services or something like that I know that, well, hopefully, not that I have experienced it but, you know, I do believe that I would get the support I needed. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

This last quotation shows the relevance of the welfare state and the perception of having the right to, and the possibility of, relying on social support in sustaining positive feelings of belonging. Another recurrent aspect mentioned as a positive aspect of belonging to Britain by majority ethnic people was tolerance of ethnic diversity, as this excerpt from Downham shows:

Umh ... yeah, that is a difficult one, isn't it!? I think it is a more kind of a multicultural country now ... I think it is good ... I think it is a good thing, it's not without its problems but ... you know, I think we're quite a tolerant country and that we do try and live with our neighbours as well as we can. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Downham)

When the perception of Britain being a place characterised by fairness and tolerance was betrayed by opposite personal experiences, the outcome in terms of positive belonging is quite different. The following quote shows a very specific experience of belonging, which seems to sit well with the rhetoric and discourses typical of the 'settled backlash' scenario (described in Chapters 3 and 7). For this young man with an experience of poor education provision, unemployment, economic difficulties and family breakdown, being proud of belonging to Britain was seen as historical, since the country was now perceived as catering for the needs of new arrivals:

I don't know really. Britain to me is sort of home, do you know what I mean? It will always be home. But, like I say, a lot of things have changed. Because, the way I see it, it's not our country any more. Not like that as in whites, blacks, things like that. But British people have sort of been pushed aside and they are not sort of thought about or recognised as British citizens. The attention and all that is on the immigrants and all that coming over. So Britain to me seems to be, it's a messed up place really. Because if you look anywhere else they look after their own and make sure their own is alright and sorting everyone else out after. But where Britain has sort of done it the other way round. They look after the new people that are coming in and the people that have lived here all their lives and worked and earned what they got, they are sort of pushed to one side. So that makes you think, what is the point? (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Downham)

The quotation above shows how, in contemporary ‘settled backlash’ times, locality (being ‘from here’) rather than race (the black–white thing) is the main discourse through which new hierarchies of people who (should) belong and receive state support are argued for. Most importantly, the last quote and the other quotes from Downham preceding it show how individual experiences of relative success and contrary experiences overrule general trends characterising localities or ethnicities regarding feelings of belonging to national and other forms of community (local, ethnic, etc.). In fact, although Downham is the research site where evidence of ‘settled backlash’ was more available and recent compared to all the others, within it there are a plurality of voices expressing different experiences of current social transformations and of their relations with new arrivals.

### Minority ethnic belongings in England

Compared to people who are and perceive themselves to be in a position of relative majority, minority ethnic groups tended to be more openly appreciative of belonging to Britain and many did so with reference to the possibility of enjoying the range of opportunities available for self-advancement in education and in the wider social sphere. Another important factor mentioned in the interviews is safety, which is often related to the existence of the welfare state and of a legal and institutional system that is accountable to and responsible for citizens. The following excerpts offer a demonstration of some of these discourses at work:

Yes, it’s a free country isn’t it? I should say Britain is great *[laughs]*! I would say it like that. Because, even if you’re unemployed, you get your Jobseeker’s Allowance, and the NHS is there, so you’re not struggling. That way it’s quite good. Otherwise, if we had to pay everything, then people would be like struggling, so there’s no struggle. That way it’s quite alright. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

I think it is a country of opportunity. Erm, I do feel that you make of it what you will ... It has given me a lot of opportunity. A better standard of living than I could have expected in my own country, so you know, I do feel that, you know – and I give thanks that I am here. The place is more secure as well. I mean, there is a problem, there is a higher authority. In my country I feel that, if there is a problem, there is no higher authority, you deal with the problem yourself. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Downham)

Although these feelings of appreciation of the degree of fairness and tolerance of British society were the prevailing narratives, they were sometimes tempered by the awareness of hierarchies of inclusion and dynamics of exclusion at work within Britain and Britishness. These were sometimes mentioned in relation to different expectations and degrees of incorporation into the imagined community of the British Empire. The following two excerpts, from an African-Caribbean and an Irish minority ethnic perspective, respectively, reveal the complex interplay between affiliation and separation characterising post-colonial relations, and show two different individual reactions to experiences of disappointment and discrimination. Both respondents were able to incorporate these negative experiences within a feeling of positive affiliation to Britain:

I always think I belong to Britain, deep down in my heart I always think I belongs to Britain, but I don't know if Britain think I belong. See? I always have that, that thing. So the feeling of belonging is positive from my point of view, but reversing it. It's like two people in love, one might be in love and the other one mightn't. Britain is the motherland of a lot of the Caribbean islands, but we see it as the motherland but you come here and it's totally different, this is one time you think, well, 'mother not looking after us!' But deep down I think Britain is a good place to live, apart from the cold. But I find people of all different race and religion will find it easier to live here. When you think of, they say there's nowhere in the world you're safe at the moment, but looking at what's happening in all different part of the world, Britain seems to be the place to be. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Leicester)

Well I would say, as an Irish person here, I feel that, um, with the Irish and the English we are like first cousins, gibing with each other and fighting – it's stupid but at the same time liking each other ... Now that is not to say that I haven't been subject to – when all the bomb were going off – to certain remarks that were made, which I found hurtful but there was nothing I could do about it, you know. I remember standing in front of a few people and said I don't know the IRA, I don't know who they are, do you know what I mean? And I said to [*husband's name*], if I was in Ireland I wouldn't be subjected to this you know, and I wondered what the hell I was doing here, I would never ever be subjected to this and it was very hurtful but it is part and parcel. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Downham)

These two last quotes show the deep ambivalence characterising postcolonial relations of belonging and attachment to Britain. These are characterised by the coexistence of feelings of proximity, experiences of disappointment or antagonism and the pragmatic appreciation of other positive 'parts and parcels', such as the opportunity to enjoy cultural pluralism and safety.

As was the case with majority ethnic long-term residents, the perception of the possibility of social support and of the viability of the welfare state plays an important role in minority ethnic long-term residents' feelings of positive belonging to Britain. The following is just one such extract from the interview material:

Interviewer: And what does that British identity mean to you? What is it about Britain that you like and identify so strongly with?

I think it's, erm, education, the health-care system gets slated but I think it's the opportunities are there and I think the Government are continually fighting for those things.  
(Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

Many minority ethnic long-term residents have a sense of belonging to Britain as well as to their country of origin, even if they were born in Britain. The following two quotations show the different degrees and intensity of multiple belongings characterising the experiences of two minority ethnic long-term residents:

Where do I feel I belong? That's a split between Britain and India. Both places, yeah. That's why I said that I'm a British Indian. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Indian woman, Leicester)

All I can say is that it's somewhere betwixt and between. I really mentally I belong at home with the option of coming back here. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic, Irish man, Kilburn)

Finally, young second and third generations of minority ethnic long-term residents show different feelings and degrees of belonging to Britain, and different understandings of what constitutes political engagement. In Leicester, minority ethnic (East African) long-term settled interviewees, both parents and offspring, talked openly about young people's unavailability to subscribe to relations of authority, which were established by previous generations. In particular, second- or third-generation Asian young people tend to refuse what they perceive as the 'colonised' pragmatism of their parents' generation and their tendency to engage in relations of 'subordination'. Their refusal takes the form of becoming more assertive and

confrontational vis-à-vis the cases of injustice and discrimination they experience or witness in Britain. In the following quote, the representative of a youth organisation working with majority and minority ethnic young people in Leicester explains how this more assertive stance poses both opportunities and predicaments, as younger generations who refuse to negotiate risk being excluded from the political debate:

Yeah, I think that the older generation are more prepared to accept what was there. And there were elements there who were prepared to negotiate and did negotiate and did change things. I think our generation is less tolerant to having things being done to them. I think unfortunately that we have lost that skill to be able to engage and have those conversations in my generation for the vast majority of people. I think we are far more likely and say we don't accept it but we go away and do our own thing. Which in some ways is quite good. That you are actually able to say, forget it, I will go away and do my own thing. At the same time it undoes some of the work that our elders did. It's actually no longer a problem because you are not on the radar, are you, you just sort it out ... And, if you don't think about the wider picture, you are not able to engage with the wider picture in terms of people in policy. And, if you don't engage with people in policy, you are automatically accepting yes, I should disenfranchise and accept what is given to me. (Key informant, Leicester)

This view, that the more assertive stance of new minority ethnic generations could offer a greater potential for resistance and affirmation at an individual level, is therefore contextualised by the fear that it might also lead to the exclusion of minority ethnic young people from collective forms of social participation.

It was a view voiced to us also by the representative of an Asian business association in Leicester. In the quote that follows, he analyses the different positions he and his son occupy in relation to Britishness and the different ways in which they would react in a situation of racist abuse. These observations prompt him to then express his concern about young Asian people's recourse to violence, which he sees as a consequence of isolation:

For example, my sons now, they consider themselves as totally British, they have got nothing to do with Africa or the Indian subcontinent. So they will make, I mean, he supports Leicester City in football. He will do everything which a white man will do. Except that, you know, they will still maintain the faith and also, you know, we are in a good position that we earn good money as well. But you see the other important factor if

somebody calls me 'You Paki, go home' or – I will say thank you very much. But if you say the same to my son you will get a slap, he will retaliate. Because he is British, he's born here, this is home, he wants to live here, he's been educated here. And he doesn't see anything else. That's the worry that I have. You see the way the media portrays the Asian community in some cases and also what's happening in Bradford and the 7th of July is that particularly the Muslim groups have been isolated I think. And, erm, as I said, that's the fear that I have, you know, that my son will not be treated as equal by the mainstream and that will cause resentment for the future. I mean, that's not a very positive thing but that's what happens in reality. (Key informant, Leicester)

These last two quotes show an interesting interpretation of Asian young people's recourse to violent behaviour as an outcome of a combination of factors – both a closer experience of belonging to Britain and a contradictory experience of isolation. In this context, the increase in assertiveness of some young, minority ethnic long-term residents can be seen, on the one hand, as a great opportunity for the renegotiation of personal and collective identities, which are more responsive to their transformed position as people who feel they are 'from here'. On the other hand, the ambivalence or unwillingness to participate in established mechanisms and processes of political negotiation could potentially undermine both established local systems of governance of diverse societies and the possibility of representation of the younger generation through them.

### **Belongings in Scotland and Northern Ireland**

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, long-term settled interviewees' relations to belonging to Britain were particularly contested, in different and specific ways, according to the way that interviewees negotiated their (national) identity position in relation to Britain. In Scotland, the issue of belonging to Britain was seen as irrelevant for most people, who would rather relate to Scotland or not relate to any national affiliation at all. The following quotation shows this specific national positioning within Britain:



Interviewer: What does Britain mean to you?

Erm, in fact I think, for Scottish people, it's quite a complex thing, Britain, in terms of your identity and your various identities, Scottish and British. And so, so I think it can mean quite a few things, it's not altogether quite relevant actually. (Long-term settled Scottish man, Glasgow)

Interviewer: What does it mean to belong in Britain?

*[Pauses]* Don't know. I only lived in Scotland.

Interviewer: OK, so I guess it doesn't mean anything to you?

No. (Long-term settled Scottish woman, Glasgow)

In a parallel fashion, in Northern Ireland, many long-term settled interviewees did not express feelings of belonging to Britain, but to Ireland and/or Northern Ireland, depending on their ethno-religious positioning within local society and in relation to whether the question was asked about living in Ireland or abroad:

Britain is a country that is across the water from us. (Long-term settled Catholic man, Dungannon)

Well, Northern Ireland is basically my home. But again, if I was abroad or working or whatever, I would say I'm Irish. (Long-term settled Protestant woman, Dungannon)

These last two quotations show how, in Northern Ireland, people's ethno-religious position according to the Catholic and Protestant division can shape the degree of affiliation to Britain, which is refused in the first case (Catholic) and more contextual in the second (Protestant). Whereas neither the Catholic nor the Protestant interviewee felt they belonged to Britain, in the first case this is argued by underlining geographical separation, whereas in the second case a more careful distinction is made about the feeling of belonging to Northern Ireland in the context of inter-Irish relations and feeling Irish when abroad. However, in many cases, interviewees underlined a sense of distance regarding issues of belonging to Northern Ireland rather than to Ireland or Britain, which could be seen as coinciding with a currently prevailing desire to leave ethno-national struggles and affiliation behind, as the following quotes from interviews with two Catholics – a young woman and an older man – in Dungannon show:

Interviewer: What does it mean to you to be living in Northern Ireland or belonging to Ireland, Northern Ireland?

It doesn't really bother me what or where.

Interviewer: Where would you most like to live?

Probably somewhere hot and warm like Spain!

Interviewer: How do you think things could be improved in Northern Ireland?

All this Ra thing [slang for IRA] and all about the PSNI [Police Service of Northern Ireland], if they would just give over and everybody just speak and stop all the rowing. Like people in the South of Ireland still think that the riots are going on up here, they think that we riot all the time. (Long-term settled, young woman, Dungannon)

Interviewer: What does Northern Ireland mean to you?

Really nothing.

Interviewer: Do you think it's good that the area is more multi-ethnic now?

Yes, I would say it's good to live along with your European friends, we should all be treated as one, all European, we are Europeans, we're not Irish. (Long-term settled, older man, Dungannon)

These relational dynamics, by which different local and wider affiliations become more or less relevant in different respects and contexts, and change over time, are by no means exclusive to Northern Ireland, but are a structural aspect of identity phenomena, as we saw in the previous subsection, focusing on the experiences of minority ethnic long-term residents in England.

## New arrivals

Appreciations of Britain as a place of security, fairness and opportunity were pronounced in interviews with new arrivals, both asylum seekers/refugees and A8 migrants. New arrivals in particular were extremely grateful for the opportunities for self-improvement they could secure by living in Britain, which they also linked to a wider degree of dignity and freedom, as the following three excerpts show:

I think it is very open, multicultural. Everyone has opportunity to be successful. Community members feel more confident to be successful in this country compared to Scandinavian countries. I feel other countries should learn from this country and I feel very pleased to be here. (New arrival, Somali man, Leicester)

You know about England, I like really their rules and laws and rights, because it's very useful and it's for everybody you know. Everybody has got their own rights and responsibilities and everything. So I like these systems, social system I think is the best. In Czech Republic is worse. (New arrival, Czech woman, Peterborough)

What do I think? Big country, lots of chance to get what you want. For me it's nice that they support the education, that they give you some money for it. That's very nice, no one give you in my country. Or the State just pays you basics, you know. And what's – what else? Opportunities to earn, that's good in here, you know. (New arrival, Czech man, Kilburn)

Some new arrivals particularly appreciate the availability of support for education as a way to express their belonging to Britain. Many refugee interviewees and migrant new arrivals were adamant in expressing and acknowledging their loyalty and gratitude to Britain, although this did not prevent them from criticising the racialised connotations attached to the label of 'asylum seekers' or other specific aspects of British society, as the following excerpt shows:

This country is, it's like a net for everyone. This country is so good, this country is so good. The country is good, the Government is good for, to be honest, the Government is good but there are people, people, for example, the people in this country maybe they will blame the foreigner, like asylum or immigration, because the name is not good, you know, when you say asylum ... because there is a kind of, you know, a racism inside. But I belong in this country, everyone, I think everybody has to be loyal for everything. I am not disloyal against this country. When I

escaped from my country, in the terrible time, I found myself here, and this country embraced me, and I am not disloyal against this country. I belong to and I support this country, but I have my own opinion, I am not supporting everything which happens in this country with people ... I don't like the drink culture, for example ... But, at the end of the day, I am, I have to be loyal to this country. (New arrival, male Kurdish-Iraqi refugee, Peterborough)

Often, as the opening quote of this subsection shows, the regime of rights and responsibilities and the level of security available in Britain are compared favourably to the situation in the country of origin, even when new arrivals refer to countries such as Sweden and Holland. Usually, Somali onward migrants from these two countries underline the wider degree of pluralism and integration they can enjoy in the UK, where they find it easier to live according to their lifestyle and mix with the rest of the population at the same time, as the following account from an interview with a Somali resident in Peterborough shows:

It's my fourth year over here and from day one nobody ever dared called me a foreigner. But in Sweden, I mean, our kids are going to be the fourth generation over there and ... we have a terminology in Sweden called 'third-generation foreigner'. And, erm, and even at times like you say I am a Swede, it's like no, you are not. Yes, I am. No, but you are not because you don't look like a Swede. So we had to sort of say, listen there are some Swedes in the world, which are not blonde and blue-eyed. There are some dark-skinned Swedes as well, okay. And that's not been taken very well. So I felt like, listen, I am not going to progress, carry on. So I need to go somewhere which is more English speaking ... And then, you know, you have halal meat over here, halal food, but that's very important. We had to travel like hundreds of kilometres just to find food. Right. We can't eat like Swedish food, we want to have Asian food, right. So we have to drive a long, long distances. Defreeze the food for a month ... I felt like now the best country in the whole of Europe in order to experiment would be England. Because it's an English-speaking country, it's tolerant, very well integrated. In Peterborough we have a mosque over here, we know from people from far away so, at least now, they are not relatives but I mean, know them, their family knows our family. So, you know, yeah, why not. Let's try it, this city. (New arrival, Swedish-Somali man, Peterborough)

As far as a sense of where they belonged is concerned, most new arrivals felt that they belonged to both their country of origin and their new place of resettlement. Their conditions of belonging in this respect were not very different from those of

long-term residents, for whom transnational relations are important and whose accounts are mirrored in the following excerpt from an interview with an Albanian young man living in Downham:

If someone asked me, I am saying an example, if someone asked me, choose quick, quick, quick, I would say Albania. But probably I'd say England as well because, as long as I have the right to go to Albania whenever I want, I would live here. Yes, if I have rights, I will be here. (New arrival, young man, Downham)

From the analysis of the material presented in this section, new arrivals and (majority and minority ethnic) long-term residents' feelings of belonging to Britain seem to be characterised by similar and comparable degrees of complexity. Many majority ethnic interviewees in England found it difficult to explain their feelings of belonging to Britain, because they perceived them as self-evident. Majority ethnic interviewees in Scotland and Northern Ireland explained how they felt they belonged more to their respective jurisdictions than to Britain, although most Northern Irish respondents also seemed to want to move on and away from previous patterns of divisive ethno-national belongings. Finally, minority ethnic long-term residents and new arrivals were, overall, more aware and explicit than all of the other groups about the positive reasons for their feelings of belonging in Britain or about their experience of belonging between different places. In general, we found that the more people felt safe in their right to reside and work and express themselves in Britain, the more they allowed themselves to be openly critical about British society and its predicaments. From this perspective, minority ethnic long-term residents and new arrivals' open appreciation of the advantages of being here can be seen as having a potentially negative implication, as it can be seen both as a sign of appreciation of the opportunities available to themselves in the UK and as a marker of the degree of vulnerability they perceive themselves to be subject to. And it is in this context that the resentments of some young second- and third-generation minority ethnic people should be understood.

## **Local histories and understandings of social cohesion**

Although social cohesion is a term that has been introduced only recently in the world of multicultural management, many biographical interviewees had an intuitive and complex understanding of its meaning. Most interviewees tended to associate the concept of social cohesion with a willingness and ability to understand and engage constructively with other people, and with having the capacity to

appropriately negotiate separateness and commonality. This contrasts with the predominantly 'consensualist' (Zetter *et al.*, 2006) interpretation of social cohesion that predominates in many public discussions. This interpretation sees social cohesion as being about togetherness and sharing, rather than about being able to negotiate an appropriate balance between unity and separation. The following six quotes, one for each site, express this latter view in different ways:

It is, I think it is about sort of live and let live. It's not about total integration, I think it's not that, it is about people being able to feel free and able to make up relationships with individuals depending on, you know, what's the word? You know similar interests and things. Things that they have in common, and it doesn't necessarily need to be colour you know, so. But it is, it's about people recognising that, you know, that we have our own ways of doing things. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Leicester)

Well, personally ... it means understanding, not wanting to stay in your own little box and not wanting to get involved. That doesn't mean that you come out of your box and that you become something else than what you are. You know, it does take people from my background to come out of our backgrounds and learn a little bit and be more open to other ideas or whatever. So that there is a proper discussion, there's not just a whole load of boxes, do you know what I mean, isolated from each other, because, if you are in boxes, then there is inevitably antagonism. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Kilburn)

I think give and take, I think is the word or phrase I would use, living together, people being able to be tolerant of each other, people being as integrated as they want to be but not being forced to be integrated, certainly not allowing ghettos to form – and saying that's where the Asians live that's where ... It's got to be that people can live alongside each other and tolerate each other's differences and try to get the best out of the benefits that each other can bring from their experience. (Long-term resident, majority ethnic man, Downham)

People living in harmony, being together, being private as well but being able to work together as a whole. Not 'them and us' and etc. But that's my idea of social cohesion, as a city we work together. And perhaps you could say, when somebody set fire to the chairs in the cathedral three years ago, the first thing that came as answer to this was a cheque from the Sikh community saying, this is our city, it's our heritage, this is from us

to help the restoration. That was cohesion. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic woman, Peterborough)

Social cohesion? Well I suppose that there's a community of people that know each other for one thing and that aren't alienated from each other where people, you know, at least respect each other if not like and get on with each other. I think that the most important immediate element of social cohesion is that people know each other and they are genuinely part of a community rather than people living in boxes separated from each other. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Glasgow)

Interviewer: What does the idea of social cohesion mean to you?

I suppose a willingness to get along, a willingness to integrate and to be more accepting and shared community beliefs. (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Dungannon)

All of the quotes are from majority ethnic long-term residents, with the partial exception of the first one, from Leicester, where minority ethnic groups are likely to form the majority within the next ten years. What emerges from these quotes is a prevailing understanding of social cohesion to be about the choice and possibility, and sometimes the duty, to reach out to people, whenever the appropriate occasion arises. This 'contextual' and 'relational' idea of social cohesion can be seen as congruent with Peter Mann's 'latent neighbourliness' concept (quoted in Buonfino and Hilder, 2006, p. 14), rather than with the nostalgic reference to 'consensualist' forms of collective solidarity, which are based ultimately on the misleading imagination of communities as inherently settled and homogeneous. Against prevailing understandings of social cohesion as being about 'commonality' rather than difference, many of our interviewees actually understand it to be about being willing and able to negotiate a difficult line between commonality and separation. As two of the quotes reported above show, the metaphor of 'boxes' is sometimes used to indicate what many interviewees consider to be the real opposite of social cohesion, social fragmentation, which is seen as potentially conducive to antagonism.

The following excerpt from an interview with a successful entrepreneur from the Gujarati East African minority ethnic community in Leicester shows a similar perspective. According to this interviewee, the fact that ethnic communities tend to live in ethnic 'silos' is a lost opportunity to find a 'common purpose and sense of belonging'. This is something that is seen as promoting social cohesion, which needs to encompass a socio-economic as well as a 'mental' dimension:

Interviewer: What does the idea of social cohesion mean to you?

It's a very misused term, I think in a given time, a set of values, making people coexist together, with a common purpose and a common sense of belonging, without silos. Leicester for example has silos, you got the Belgrave silo which is Gujarati, you got the Highfields silo which is Muslim, and you got further up the Knighton which is Punjabi silo. So social cohesion is more than that, it is also the mental part and a social economic phenomenon. I think we have to get back to our core values of why we came to this country, any group of immigrants, including Anglo-Saxons who came across from over *there* to here. (Long-term settled minority ethnic man, Leicester)

However, this deeper 'mental' dimension of a common experience of belonging can be achieved only through a self-reflective effort on the part of all of the groups composing locality, whether they are, or see themselves as, 'from here' and/or from 'somewhere else'. This last excerpt, by underlining how social cohesion can happen only if all of the different 'migrant' groups who currently inhabit Britain, including 'Anglo-Saxons', find common values around their motives for 'being here', underlines four very important issues distinguishing prevalent understandings of what social cohesion is about. These are:

- responsibility for cohesion (who should make an effort);
- its direction (in terms of what should be learnt by whom);
- the role of separateness in hampering/promoting social cohesion;
- the acknowledgment of the historical role of migration in the emergence of localities.

More specifically, although most interviewees shared a compatible notion of what social cohesion is about, the way responsibility for cohesion, its direction and the positive and negative role of separateness in social cohesion was understood changed consistently across the settings investigated by the research, in relation to the:

- degree of public and individual acknowledgement of the role of migration in the constitution, evolution and survival of local social environments;



- experience of local management and government of complex local social environments.

The combination of these sets of factors shaped different local understandings and experiences across the sites. In particular, in Kilburn and Leicester (except Braunstone), which are characterised by the acknowledgement of the role of migration and of the structural heterogeneity of society, people's understanding of social cohesion tends to refer to a minimised expectation of commonalities, the acceptance of cultural pluralism and the acknowledgement of the necessity to proactively understand and adapt to the social changes introduced by the arrival of new groups. The following quote from Leicester shows how the awareness of the social unsustainability of conflict and the minimisation of the expectations of the degree of exchange between groups produce realistic expectations of positive social interaction between them:

Yes. It's got to work out, it can't not work. We can't chuck out one member of society because we don't like what he does or don't like what religion, what god he prays to. We've just got to learn to respect each other. And help each other in our hour of need and, if you put the hand of friendship out to them, hopefully they'll put the hand of friendship out to you when it's your turn ... Because you can't make people integrate. I don't suppose Muslims want to come round to our churches any more than we particularly want to go round to their mosques. But there's no reason why they can't have a football match after church or whatever, as we've seen in Leicester when particular religious groups played each other and were refereed by another religious group. It's a major starting point and then they can all go off to their own communities, do what they want to do, and come back and meet up again for a tea party. Why not? (Long-term settled, majority ethnic man, Leicester)

The following two quotes from Kilburn show similar responses to a question about how social cohesion could be improved. Both of them emphasise the importance of listening and learning from other people, and avoid identifying a specific responsibility or direction for the flow of information, whether this is from the long-term resident to the new arrival group or vice versa:

I think it can help to bring people together. And trying to listen to people. And not being judgemental because you don't know what everyone is carrying, you don't know what everybody is going through. Or because people see a happy face, you don't know what is going through, they may be sick, there may be trouble. All sorts of baggage, people have all sorts

of baggage. But, if we are trying to be patient, listening and accommodate each other, things could be better. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic woman, Kilburn)

Erm, it's maybe like, erm, I mean, erm, in that some clubs or not clubs, you know, some social centres where people meet, they meet and talk about everything and about problems like we are talking now. This is social cohesion. To start talking to strangers. Or ... to people they think are strangers but they are not, you know. I have experienced this in the pub, you know, you have to talk to everybody and you find out what they are. Where they are from, how old they are ... how they interact. I think this is what a social centre should be for. To teach people how to find just the sociology of the people, you know, how to find out that there is no stranger on the street if you know the people. (New arrival, Czech man, Kilburn)

Each of these quotes, both from 'pluralist' Kilburn, highlight factors that are key to the development of harmonious social relations between new arrivals and long-term residents. The first is the ability and willingness to operate some 'willing suspension of disbelief' towards newcomers by empathising, preventively, with their potential difficulties and needs, and by accepting that relations between long-term resident and new-arrival groups will improve only by mutual listening and accommodation. The second is about being willing and having the open-mindedness and opportunity to 'talk to strangers', in order to learn more about and familiarise with them. This quote from an interview with a long-term resident in Glasgow explains how the initial problems that accompanied the arrival of refugees in deprived areas had to do with a lack of information of the long-term communities about new arrivals, which was then redressed in later interventions:

Interviewer: How do you think social cohesion could be improved?

More money. More money and more education, which obviously go hand in hand. What they should have done in Glasgow when they brought in a lot of the asylum seekers was to educate the area they were going into, cos they put them into poor areas. People think they're getting all new stuff in their house, which some of them are getting furnished. But it's not their stuff but people don't see that. Education should have been done because the right wing just move in and that's where the support is. (Long-term settled man, Glasgow)

Against this view, in Downham and Braunstone (Leicester), as well as in Dungannon (initially) and Peterborough, the predominant self-representation of local societies in terms of homogeneity and settlement manifests itself through the insistence on the extension to newcomers of specific canons of neighbourliness and civility. Within this framework, the burden of cohesion tends to be placed on the shoulders of newcomers, rather than on those of all subjects involved in community relations. The following two examples, from Peterborough and Dungannon, show how explanations and solutions for conflicts emerging in relation to the arrival of new groups are sought and found primarily in newcomers' behaviour. In both cases, the negotiation of common values and neighbouring practices takes for granted that the direction of learning is from the long-term resident to the new arrival group, rather than an exchange between the two:

And I know that there are big issues between particular communities and their way of viewing things and others. Erm, for instance, the problems we had, and to a lesser extent still have, between the Pakistanis and so on around how women could be viewed. Also of course how some Eastern European men view English women, right. And, because of the way that they are dressed and so on, feel they are easy and that they can go and have their way with them. I mean, for instance, if I went to, if say I went to Bulgaria, right, or Czechoslovakia or anywhere, Czech Republic, right, I would find out, right, what I needed on a car before I drove it ... It has to be a two-way process, I also want my values to be respected and these common values have to be shared. I have to say that, whilst I understand that the police have to do particular crackdowns on things and that we can't have young ladies insulted in parks, at the same time you need to be doing the work to make sure that communities before that happens understand that's not acceptable behaviour and so on and so forth. You know. And that in this country, you know, women still don't go around with their dresses down to their ankles, you know. (Long-term settled, minority ethnic man, Peterborough)

What we say to our migrant workers is that there are things that they can do that would help your own situation and your own acceptance within the community. I tell them open the curtains, because they have an awful habit of keeping their curtains closed. Open the windows, cut the grass of the house. Because a lot of people really resent, especially if they are in middle-class semis, all the locals are trying to keep their gardens tidy, etc., but the migrants don't open the curtains, don't cut the grass. So I tell them to do these, maybe pick up some litter and also to say hello to your neighbour. In fact in the class this morning we were speaking about

neighbours and three of the women all had positive experiences with their neighbours in different housing estates here in Dungannon, and only one said she didn't know her neighbours, but that is because she has only been here for two months. The other three made an effort and in fact one lives in what is called the Windmill Heights, traditionally the most difficult republican housing estate in Dungannon. She has lived there now for five years and loves it, knows the neighbours, but she has made the effort.  
(Key informant, Dungannon)

Both respondents were involved personally, although in different ways, in the social processes examined by this research. The first is a member of a very stigmatised ethno-national minority ethnic group, Irish Travellers, and the second is directly involved in language and other forms of social and cultural intervention with new arrivals. However, both these respondents implicitly place the responsibility for the development of cohesive social relations on new immigrants and communities, and seem to indicate that it is them, rather than long-term residents, who should 'make an effort' to cohere to the (internally disputed) criteria and values of Britishness.

The material analysed in the present section shows that it is not the long-term versus the new arrival divide or the majority versus the minority ethnic perspectives that influence most people's understanding of social cohesion or the quality of inter-ethnic relations in any given area. Local understandings of social cohesion tend to be more oriented towards a pluralist and reciprocal interpretation in places characterised by a higher degree of public and individual acknowledgement of the role of migration in the historical formation of the local area. The role of effective social interventions in the management of heterogeneous social environments is also very important. Places that are less aware of or do not acknowledge the role of migration in the historical formation of their locality and that lack the appropriate social interventions or skills to manage heterogeneous local environments will tend to be more oriented towards an assimilationist and unidirectional interpretation of social cohesion.

## Conclusion

The material presented in this chapter demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between local histories of migration and relative socio-economic progress. All of the areas analysed by the research show that the arrival of new migrant groups coincided with a relative improvement of their social and economic settings. In this context, the most relevant difference emerging from the data gathered in the research is that between:

- places where the positive contribution of migrants to the local social and economic texture is accepted as part of the rhythms and realities of everyday life and capitalised upon; and
- places where the arrival of new groups is seen as a disruption of the rhythms and realities of everyday life, and becomes an occasion to blame newcomers for long-seated problems and tensions.

In the first case, the predominant expectation is that good social relations are based on mutual acceptance and understanding of different needs and values. In the second, the onus of negotiation tends to be placed on the shoulders of newcomers, who are in the difficult position of cohering according to models of civility and neighbourliness that are not known to them and that are often highly disputed and ambivalently implemented within the receiving society.

In each of the areas where the research was carried out, we gathered accounts that refer to understandings of local society and of the world in terms both of heterogeneity and settlement and of heterogeneity and migration. The trends outlined above are not intended to be read as the establishment of typologies of response to change associated with any specific area. On the contrary, these observations refer to the way different communities went through similar stages of (acknowledgement of) internal differentiation, corresponding to the emergence of the need for new perspectives, skills and techniques to manage the changes they faced. At the time the research was undertaken, each site had already moved away from an initial phase of resistance and refusal of heterogeneity and diversity, what we called 'settled backlash', which was mostly associated with the arrival of new groups of migrants and minority ethnic long-term residents. However, not all sites had the same historical experience of migration and the same degree of people recognising themselves as migrants or recognising the structural role of migrations and exchanges in sustaining local societies, and this, as we have seen, made a significant difference in the responses to the arrival of new groups in past and recent times.

### Key points

- Most interviewees understand social cohesion to be about the negotiation of the right balance between separateness and unity, rather than about having consensus on shared values and priorities.
- Long-term settled residents' and new arrivals' positive narratives and experiences of belonging are based equally around values such as freedom, fairness and security, and around the appreciation of the role of the welfare state in guaranteeing decent living standards for all.
- Majority ethnic long-term residents' belonging to Britain is complex and changes in relation to different national (UK) settings.
- Minority ethnic long-term residents and new arrivals are more explicit than majority ethnic long-term residents in their appreciation of Britain, and in their expression of multiple belongings to Britain and other significant places (of origin).
- Places where migration is recognised as part of everyday life capitalise on it and develop socially and economically.
- Places whose inhabitants tend to see migration as a disruption of everyday life and blame newcomers for long-seated social problems tend to capitalise less on its socio-economic development potential.
- Where the majority of inhabitants acknowledge the intrinsic heterogeneity of local society, social initiatives are put in place favouring harmonious social relations and residents tend to think of social cohesion as a shared responsibility between long-term residents and new arrivals.
- Where the majority of inhabitants ignore the intrinsic heterogeneity of local society, this tends to be unaddressed by local intervention, inter-ethnic relations tend to be less harmonious and residents tend to think of social cohesion as more the responsibility of new arrivals having to adapt to local customs.

## 9 Conclusions

In a challenge to prevailing conceptions of social cohesion we asked: do people have to get on well together? Or do they have to be able to live in close proximity, accept differences and feel able to resolve conflicts through agreed means that have common legitimacy? We also asked: is Robert Putnam's thesis, that the greater the diversity in a community the greater the civic desolation, applicable to the UK? In this concluding chapter, we aim to draw the threads of our analysis together in order to answer these and other questions.

We found that a majority of the long-term residents, across all sites, understood social cohesion to be about a willingness and ability to be able to negotiate a difficult line between commonality and separation. Most people do not live with an expectation that living locally means being surrounded by people who have the same values as themselves. What many people welcome, again across all sites, is the opportunity to meet people in their area at social occasions, or at cultural events and festivals, and to exercise the choice of, selectively, getting to know people better. Although many of the long-term residents shared broadly congruent notions of what social cohesion is about, this did not mean they were agreed on how it was to be achieved. One of our most significant findings helps explain this further. It highlights a specific aspect of the relationship between place and belonging that does not always get the attention this research suggests it warrants.

A central thread of our report is that the dominant narratives and practices in local settings are key to understanding how new immigrants will be perceived and addressed. The dominant narrative can either be that of a single ethnic group or it can be one where no single ethnic group is in the ascendancy numerically, culturally or politically. If the dominant narrative has strong elements of perceiving the local area as comprised of people who are 'the same' or 'like us' or 'from here' until new immigrants appear, then the likelihood of a more negative response to new arrivals is heightened. Alternatively, if the dominant narrative is one that recognises the history of immigration to the area and the mixture of residents in terms of a range of social divisions, and sees no ethnic group as having a privileged claim on the area, then the likelihood of an accepting response towards new immigrants is correspondingly heightened.

We found that these narratives were a key part of the complexity that underpins the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion. So that, even if broadly similar definitions of social cohesion were in circulation – as they were, for example, in Downham and Kilburn – the different narratives of history, immigration

and belongings that characterise each place produced differences in who had responsibility for achieving social cohesion.

- Thus, in Downham, Braunstone (Leicester) and (initially) in Dungannon, Glasgow and Peterborough, the self-representation of local areas in terms of homogeneity and 'settledness' (being 'from here') generates expectations among long-term residents that the burden of achieving social cohesion lies with the new immigrants. We identified the phenomenon of 'settled backlash' in these places. This can involve the long-term settled minority ethnic population as well as the long-term settled majority ethnic population.
- In Kilburn and Leicester (except Braunstone), places that are characterised by an acknowledgement of histories of immigration, the existence of many transnational families and the heterogeneity of the local area means the burden of achieving social cohesion is a shared one. The long-term settled population's understanding of social cohesion in these places tends to include a minimalised expectation of commonalities and the acceptance of cultural pluralism and of the necessity to adapt to the social changes introduced by the arrival of new groups.

These are two broadly different narratives and we found them repeated across the six sites of the research. They are nevertheless fluid narratives that are susceptible to change. In certain areas where a majority of long-term residents felt 'this is our place', there has been a shift that has allowed an acceptance, and valuing, of heterogeneity to be represented. This can occur for a variety of reasons. However, we found that successful social interventions in Peterborough, Glasgow and Dungannon led by local agencies were useful in heightening mutual understandings between long-term settled residents and new arrivals. These mutual understandings might include letting new arrivals know the local terms and expectations of neighbourliness; and engendering an appreciation of what new immigrants bring to an area among the long-term settled. In areas such as Kilburn and Leicester, these communications are more likely to take place directly between long-term settled residents and new arrivals – for example, the exchanges between the long-term settled Somali community in Kilburn and new arrivals fleeing war.

Our data supports the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's (2007) conclusion that there is no simple relationship between high levels of diversity and poor cohesion. But we would go further and argue that, where there are high levels of historical diversity, there is likely to be a positive relationship between diversity and social cohesion. What is critical in the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion is the dominant narratives of particular places. The engagements we documented in Kilburn and Leicester (except Braunstone), and the transformation



that occurred in Sighthill in Glasgow, and to a different extent in Dungannon, Peterborough and Downham, seem to question Putnam's thesis about the greater the diversity in a community, the greater the civic desolation as generally applicable across the UK.

One of our conclusions, therefore, is that the dominant 'consensualist' sensibility informing current policies of social cohesion, with its implication that immigration threatens a cohesive national identity and emphasis on identifying processes that can ensure social cohesion, is out of step with the rhythms and realities of everyday life on two grounds. First, this 'consensualist' sensibility is at variance with our finding that most of the long-term settled residents understand social cohesion to be about the negotiation of the right balance between separateness and unity, rather than about having consensus on shared values and priorities. Second, the 'consensualist' sensibility implicitly overlooks the deep-seated social divisions and transformations shaping the everyday life experiences of both the long-term settled residents and new arrivals. These transformations emerge from structural processes (individualisation, post-industrialism, globalisation) at work locally, nationally and transnationally.

Our research shows that the demands of the neo-liberal, post-industrial order are impacting on lived relations and collective belongings in myriad ways, and that migration is an entrenched characteristic of the economy because of a wide range of social, economic and cultural transformations that the UK is undergoing. The centrality of immigration is as pertinent to understanding changing family forms and the accelerating need for care workers as it is to grasping the extent to which the engine of economic growth depends on immigrant workers being willing to work long hours for low wages. However, even if we found a broad understanding of what constitutes social cohesion in this rapidly changing social order, there were differences of view about immigration. These ranged from the laudatory comments about migrant workers from employers to the deep resentments of people who have been waiting for social housing for years. This difference of view is part of what any policy on social cohesion has to address.

We found that deprived communities can work internally through shared values of homogeneity or heterogeneity, but the relative capacities of these value systems have different consequences for renewal and regeneration, particularly in a period of intensive immigration. Social cohesion is challenging in areas of poverty and multiple inequalities, and improving cohesion necessitates addressing a range of issues in a continuous and integrated manner. Most of these challenges are not related to immigration. What the arrival of new immigrants can highlight, depending on the area, is either the continuing resilience within deprived communities or the existence of profound disconnections between people, groups and institutions.

Deprivation alone does not produce hostility towards new immigrants, but we did find evidence of a failure to institute policies and programmes quickly enough to facilitate an enhanced provision of public services in areas that are receiving new arrivals. In places where there is an antagonistic response to new immigrants, sustained investment in the infrastructure and in social interventions that are redistributive and available to long-term residents and new arrivals alike is very important. In areas of deprivation that either welcome or adapt easily to accommodate new immigrants, investment is also required so there are resources sufficient to integrate (often large numbers of) new arrivals and rectify existing inequalities. These latter places are the ones that many new immigrants seek out because of family ties or friendship networks, or because they are known to be more secure and tolerant multi-ethnic places. A long-term and integrated approach to addressing deprivation is vital because the neo-liberal context of social markets and individualisation is inherently inimical to social cohesion for everyone, but especially those in long-term poverty. This may require reviewing the interrelationship of different areas of public service provision because the evidence is that the track record of, for example, regeneration programmes and new school academies is mixed in relation to social cohesion.

The messages from central government about immigration and immigrants have not always been clear (perhaps because they can stem from the Home Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government or the Prime Minister's office), but the Government is generally perceived to be pro-immigration. For some long-term settled majority ethnic people in England – especially, but not solely, in older age groups – this represents a greater concern with the interests of globalised business than with their issues and gives rise to feelings of betrayal. The implementation of multiculturalist policies in England from the 1980s onwards has come to be perceived as neglectful of this group. On the one hand, this was partly because minority ethnic groups (who were assumed to be black) became the object of the social interventions that multiculturalist policies inspired. On the other hand, it was because much of the professional and political rhetoric about multiculturalism did not recognise the white population as constituted ethnically. In other words, the term 'white' was stripped of ethnic content. For example, a survey of the Irish in England in the mid-1990s found that a majority thought they were a minority ethnic group but a large minority did not think they could be because they were white (Hickman and Walter, 1997). This assumed homogeneity of the white population reinforced the idea that ethnicity was the property of historical immigrations and not of the majority ethnic group, the English/British. This has made it all the more difficult in a period of renewed immigration, this time on a bigger scale and drawn from across the globe rather than Britain's former colonies, to open up the 'box' of Englishness. If this 'box' could be opened up, it would enable the variety of experiences of those who identify as English to come to the fore and to participate equally in contemporary heterogeneity.

In Scotland, motivated by the economic need to raise the numbers in the workforce, the political leadership began to actively promote immigration as a solution to the problems of a small country with a declining population, and to recognise that integration at a local level was an important factor in the retention of migrants (see Curran, 2005). We found in Glasgow that this political and economic imperative to secure new populations refigured the frame of belonging. The political leadership assumed a degree of ownership of the problems of new arrivals coming to settle in the city and consequently solving the problems of cohesion and integration is seen as a collective political responsibility. The motivation stems in part at least from recognising that immigrants can leave just as they can arrive. Therefore policy development is based on acknowledging that immigrants are a constituent element of the settled population with equivalent claims of rights and entitlements. The issue for cohesion from this standpoint is not immigration but addressing the distribution of rights and entitlements. The key point we take from what we found in Scotland is that proactive political leadership on the subject of the necessity and benefits of immigration was able to effect some changes in policy direction that have contributed to a greater acceptance of immigrants and the lowering of certain tensions.

In Northern Ireland, we found concern about how the society was adapting to significant immigration for the first time and about the welfare of new arrivals in a difficult context of social transformation due to both global and local reasons. In Dungannon, the interviews revealed a high degree of similarity with other areas of the research, in particular Peterborough, in terms of initial response to immigrants, the nationalities of the new arrivals, the jobs that they are doing, the gradual acceptance of immigrants by many and the usefulness of social interventions. As in Scotland, we found little interest in discussing the meaning of belonging to Britain among long-term settled residents but we found significant evidence of a wish to leave a divisive past behind. Methods of expressing antagonism towards immigrants, especially on some relatively deprived housing estates, mirrored those used during decades of ethno-religious conflict – exclusions of specific groups from pubs, gangs ‘putting out’ families from their homes during the night – although it was clear that long-term settled residents and new arrivals alike could be subject to these hostilities. There is evidence that projects of social intervention in Northern Ireland have a role in diminishing anxiety and fear by providing avenues for socialisation (Hughes *et al.*, 2007), and our study would suggest that the implications and impact of new immigration should be a central aspect of these interventions.

In debates about social cohesion policies, we conclude that there needs to be a shift away from:

- the link frequently made between social cohesion and terrorism to one that links social cohesion and social transformations;
- the assumption that transnational ties weaken a sense of belonging to Britain – we found no evidence of this at all – to one that recognises that it's possible to have diasporic ties without this being at the expense of belonging to Britain;
- a set account of what Britishness entails to, the provision of safe, secure and convenient neighbourhoods and good public services for everyone.

We found that it is new immigrants and the long-term settled, minority ethnic population who express strong attachments to Britain in terms of appreciation of the values of democracy, free speech and tolerance. The greatest criticisms of the Government came from the long-term settled, majority ethnic group. They were most critical of government handling of and the practices of the welfare state (largely because the welfare state figures prominently in accounts of what they appreciated about Britain) and the pursuance of war in Iraq. Nevertheless, for most of this group, Britain was a taken-for-granted home. A generation of young second- and third-generation, long-term settled, minority ethnic people, mostly Asian, were also critical, mostly about cases of discrimination and injustice. This stems, not from their disengagement from Britain, but from their sense of belonging to Britain. The contradictory sense of isolation they have as they experience or witness discriminatory or unjust actions, or hear stereotypes can bring them to question whether the much acclaimed British values of tolerance and equality apply fully even to citizens born and brought up in Britain.

In summary, our overriding message is that, in order to ensure the cohesion of the social fabric of society, it is necessary to address both relational and structural issues. That is, we need to consider how people relate to each other as well as addressing fundamental issues of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination. We have argued that a crucial aspect of understanding the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion is the identification of the dominant narratives that are a key part of the complexity of different places. Although these narratives are fluid and can even overlap, we identified one narrative that is about homogeneity and 'settledness' (being 'from here'), and another that is about acknowledging histories of immigration and heterogeneity (being 'from here and/or elsewhere'). This research suggests that, in addressing the relational aspects of the dynamics of new immigration and social cohesion, it is necessary to enable and support expressions of both *difference* and *unity* in local areas. Both are opportunities for people to learn about each other and relate to each other if they so wish. The public events and public spaces that enable people to mix are welcomed by most, if not all, people. In

addressing the structural aspects of the relationship between new immigration and social cohesion, it is necessary to ensure that the benefits of investment in local places accrue to both the long-term settled (majority ethnic and minority ethnic) and new arrivals. This should be facilitated by, for example, a restructuring of the housing debate away from need and entitlement to a focus on the provision of adequate housing for all.

To answer our original question: everyone does not have to get on together. Most people we spoke to did not want to be told what they should be doing in this respect. They want safe, secure and convenient neighbourhoods in which they have reasonable neighbours, among whom they can choose to get to know some more than others; and they want good public services, especially in housing and schools. If problems arise, particularly with neighbours, they want responsive local structures that can either mediate effectively or identify the structural cause of the problem and deliver a solution. The nearest to a picture of social cohesion that can be generated by this research is one where all people are able to live in close proximity, accept differences, mix with those they wish to, and have local agreed and effective means for resolving disagreements and problems. It is in the provision of this environment that social cohesion lies.

# 10 Implications

## **What does our emphasis on the need to address relational and structural issues for social cohesion mean?**

- The support given to new arrivals needs to be negotiated with long-term residents before new groups enter a local area; the long-term settled residents of all age groups need to be informed about forthcoming new arrivals.
- Addressing the relations between long-term residents and new arrivals involves cultural mediation, especially in places with a narrative of settledness and homogeneity.
- Tackling the long-seated problems, inequalities and discriminations ‘in place’ is essential for social cohesion for all; the ways in which different strategies of intervention across a range of policy areas – unemployment, lack of public and leisure facilities, low educational achievement, family breakdown – interrelate, needs to be assessed.
- Projects addressing the needs of new arrivals can become a new and visible opportunity for enhanced support for long-term residents, in order for the arrival of new groups to be seen as bringing benefits rather than taking from local communities.
- Initiatives of social intervention, including regeneration, need to be long-term and to enable local people to establish meaningful interpersonal relations with the spaces and staff delivering support.

## **Schooling and heterogeneity**

- Geography and history should be reintroduced as key subjects within the national curriculum so that the normality of migration and heterogeneity within local societies can be better understood, and that the issues of asylum and migration can be comprehended as embedded in local and global social transformations.
- All pupils and adults should be in the condition to pass the citizenship test – ideally without having to take it.

## **Language**

- ESOL classes are a fundamental moment of integration for young pupils and young adults. Appropriate funding should be available at the right time to facilitate the participation of new arrivals in local society. Local education authorities should be able to mobilise these funds flexibly and rapidly in order to respond to rapid demographic changes, such as the arrival of new groups. These funds should be seen as complementing, rather than substituting for, those dedicated to the translation of council or health services material.

## **Social cohesion and relations between groups**

- The celebration of commonality (what we hold in common) should not substitute for, but complement, the celebration of cultural specificity (what makes us different). This means acknowledging that projects and events reflecting or celebrating a particular culture and community can be shared by all social groups in the same way in which Englishness/Britishness and its traditions are shared by different groups of new arrivals. This is important for areas with narratives of settledness and homogeneity, and for those with narratives of acknowledging immigration and heterogeneity.
- This also means that the framework of social cohesion can offer Englishness the possibility of decentring itself from its condition of invisibility and predominance, and presenting itself to itself and to other groups as a specific ethnic group, with a specific history, values, expectations and affiliation to the national project.
- The economic and social contribution of migration to local societies should be celebrated by specific cultural programmes at a local level, showing the ways in which new arrivals have contributed historically to the advancement of local society. Initiatives could be local documentaries, photo exhibitions, cultural festivals, etc.

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