

The housing and neighbourhood impact of Britain's changing ethnic mix

Round-up
Reviewing the evidence

October 2008

Housing pressures in British cities partly result from the net migration of people to Britain over the past ten years. Immigration has also changed the nature of minority ethnic communities, while long-established minority ethnic communities are changing with successive generations. What does recent research tell us about the nature of these changes, and their impact on policy and practice in housing and neighbourhood renewal?

Author

John Perry
Chartered Institute of Housing

This paper:

- summarises evidence, largely from Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded studies, on the nature and impact of Britain's changing ethnic mix
- reviews recent policy responses and lessons from the studies for Government policy

Key points

- Whilst the 'super-diversity' resulting from recent migration presents new policy and practice challenges, the nature of long-established communities is also changing. Some are experiencing new forms of discrimination, while others fulfil aspirations that are very similar to those of equivalent white communities.
- Government policy has adapted to some recent changes. If it is to continue to be evidence-based, it needs to take account of findings from new research (such as these studies).
- Housing is critical to the welfare and integration of new migrants. Most migrants live in the private rented sector with many enduring poor or insecure accommodation. Policy has not responded to these poor conditions and their wider impact on neighbourhoods. It has in fact shifted away from a 'neighbourhood' focus in community cohesion work.
- Policy should recognise that two groups in particular – asylum seekers/refugees and many Muslim people – feel discriminated against. A radical change of language and policy is needed at central Government level to address this.
- Policy on funding of minority groups should recognise the need for services targeted at new migrants and for work targeted at isolated groups within longer-established communities. There is also a need for targeted community development work in many 'white' communities.
- Policy should treat with caution ideas about 'social capital' (see page 11) developed from experience in the United States. In particular, the argument that social capital is lower in more diverse communities is not supported by the studies reviewed here.
- Further investigation is needed of 'what works' in creating more cohesive communities, and why some communities are more cohesive than others.

Introduction

How people engage with the housing market depends on a complex mix of their housing experiences, economic possibilities and how their aspirations match the real housing options available to them. People's experience of their relationships within communities is added to this mix. In the case of new migrants in particular, the limitations of what the market offers – or immigration law permits – to those recently arrived in the UK is also crucial.

Understanding this complexity has become more demanding because of the 'super-diversity' within Britain's population resulting from new patterns of migration. At the same time, this issue has become highly politicised in a housing market where demand for affordable housing vastly exceeds supply.

The changing nature of ethnicity in Britain has challenged many of the conclusions from older research studies that focused on long-established communities. Both the research agenda – and policy – have sought to adapt to 'super-diversity'. Some of the questions raised include:

- How has recent migration impacted on established communities and neighbourhoods?
- In particular, what is the effect on deprived neighbourhoods and on competition for scarce resources such as affordable, good-quality housing?
- How are long-established minority communities changing in response to the dynamics of new generations born in the UK?
- How do the three elements in the 'neighbourhood mix' – long-established white and black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, and new migrant communities – interact?
- How should the policy of promoting 'community cohesion' change in response to the changing dynamics at neighbourhood level?

How Britain's ethnic mix is changing

The broad picture

The challenges faced by housing policy-makers and practitioners are made more complex by the increasing 'super-diversity' of minority ethnic and migrant communities (Vertovec, 2006). This 'super-diversity' results from higher levels of migration from many different sources. Furthermore, longer-established communities are also changing as second and third generations share not only their British nationality with the majority community, but also many aspects of their lifestyles and aspirations.

If this were not enough, the politicised environment that greeted earlier migrants – such as the Ugandan Asians in the early 1970s – has returned with a vengeance, with whole groups such as asylum seekers, migrants from European Union (EU) accession states and Muslim communities (even long-established ones) suffering the hostility of the media and politicians. A climate of opinion that had begun to accept diversity in the 1980s and 1990s may now have been superseded by one where past accommodations are challenged, legal rights of new migrants are frequently changed and made more limited, and public opinion now sees 'immigration' as a key political issue.

Changes in more detail

Some of the key elements of and reasons for 'super-diversity' are:

- *Greater mix of nationalities coming to the UK.* The 'traditional' Indian, Black Caribbean and Pakistani communities now account for less than half the BME population. New migrant communities often have few social or cultural similarities to longer-established BME groups.
- *Migration a bigger factor in population growth.* Net migration has become much more significant over the last ten years and is expected to form about half of population growth up to 2030.
- *Migrant workers from new EU countries.* About 800,000 workers from new EU states have registered for work in Britain. Many have only stayed short-term but aspirations about staying in the UK may be changing.

- *Asylum seekers and refugees.* Although numbers peaked in 2002 and have since fallen sharply, the arrival of asylum applicants has added to Britain's ethnic diversity both in the short term and (as many become accepted refugees) in the long term.
- *Greater diversity of places with new communities.* In addition to cities already used to large BME communities, migrants have moved to places unaccustomed to such diversity – especially through migrant workers going to rural areas for agricultural jobs and dispersal of asylum seekers to parts of Britain away from the south-east.
- *Changes within established BME communities.* Some long-established BME communities have advanced rapidly in economic terms while others have not. In all long-established communities, generational differences are increasingly evident between original migrants and second or third generations.

One in every twelve people in Britain is now foreign-born, and this percentage is increasing. Of the total BME population of 4.6m in 2001, half were born outside Britain.

These trends form the background to many of the research studies covered in this *Round-up*.

Policy responses at national level

The changes have elicited a range of policy responses at national level that often appear to be contradictory. For example, the Government promised to cut asylum applications but at the same time allowed massive growth in migration from new EU states. It introduced dispersal of asylum seekers while at the same time expressing concern about community cohesion and relationships between newcomers and long-established communities. It has called for local authorities to be more active in challenging myths (e.g. about the amount of social housing allocated to migrants) but has few policies in place to improve the housing prospects for new migrants in the private sector, where most in fact live (see Somerville, 2007, for an overview of recent policy on migration).

If the Government's responses have been mixed, its main 'positive' response to 'super-diversity' has been to update its policies on integration and community cohesion. Many of the *Round-up* studies comment on or have implications for these policies. The catalyst for policy change has been the work of the independent Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC, 2007) and the Government's responses to it. For example, there is now a new definition of community cohesion (see box), which emphasises a 'shared future vision', what communities have in common, valuing diversity and strong relationships between people of different backgrounds.

Policies on communities and housing

Following the CIC report, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Housing Corporation issued new good practice guidance which showed how the CIC and subsequent policy changes affected housing and neighbourhoods, and how practitioners could respond (Perry and Blackaby, 2007). The Corporation also published a new community cohesion strategy, *Shared Places* (Housing Corporation, 2007). The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has been carrying out an inquiry, jointly with the Local Government Association (LGA), about the extent to which migrants make use of social housing (for its interim findings

The Government's new definition of community cohesion

Community cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on *three foundations*:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities.
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities.
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And *three key ways of living together*:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging.
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity.
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Source: CLG (2008a) *The Government's Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion*.

see IPPR, 2008). Most recently, the Government has addressed the policy 'gap' identified in the CIC report around integration of migrants (other than refugees). *Managing the Impacts of Migration* (CLG, 2008b) is a cross-government policy statement about the relationship of migration to community cohesion and pressures on local services, including housing.

This *Round-up* focuses on the lessons research offers for Government policies towards communities and housing. Many continuing policy gaps and conflicts are, however, also evidenced.

What do we know about new migrants and their experiences?

There is well-founded criticism about the lack of basic information about new migrants, their numbers and status, where they are settling and their economic circumstances. This not only comes from some of the *Round-up* studies (Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Spencer et al, 2007) but is reflected in official reports (CIC, 2007; Audit Commission, 2007) and is now acknowledged by Government (CLG, 2008b). Several of the *Round-up* studies cast light on the experiences of different migrant communities in different localities.

Gaps in knowledge at national and local levels

The rapid growth of net migration is a recent phenomenon and elements of it (such as the increase in asylum applications) could not easily have been forecast. The expansion of the European Union from 2004 was however a known event. Few restrictions were placed on 'A8' migrants (people from the eight main countries that joined the EU that year) and apparently little thought given to the scale and impact of migration that would result. It led directly to over 800,000 worker registrations by A8 migrants, but little is known about either the overall scale of such migration (i.e. including those who did not register) or what proportion are staying long-term. Better national and local data is promised (CLG, 2008b).

There is a similar gap (Perry, 2005) about numbers of asylum seekers and refugees. While the number receiving support from the UK Borders Agency at any one time is known (33,865 at the start of 2008), those who refused or were denied support, and remain in the country, are not recorded. The only point at which refugee numbers are recorded is when they are given the right to settle.

Such gaps in national data make planning for housing and other needs more difficult, and mean that local surveys are currently the only way of profiling new communities, where they are living, and their needs (Audit Commission, 2007).

Migrant workers from other European countries

The Spencer et al (2007) study shows that A8 migrants are mainly people without families – usually single, less often in couples, and sometimes with family left at home. Migrants are slightly more likely to be male than female and most likely to be young adults (the average age of interviewees was 27). Spencer et al's (2007)

study was followed by a range of local and regional studies (reviewed in the *Opening Doors* website, see Resources), which tend to confirm their findings about the profile of A8 migrant workers. These other studies (and national data on worker registrations) show that, of the A8 nationalities, Polish migrants predominate. A majority of A8 migrant workers have a reasonable level of English: the significant minority who do not are clearly disadvantaged in terms of employment and housing opportunities.

One neglected aspect of European migration is that of workers coming from the A2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania), which joined the EU in 2007, and from non-EU countries in Eastern Europe. Despite the restrictions placed on A2 migration, many people from these countries, as well as from Albania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, have entered as workers, e.g. as self-employed or under seasonal worker schemes. Markova and Black (2007) show that A2 and non-EU workers are more likely to be couples (usually without children) and the proportions with English language skills on arrival were similar to those of A8 workers.

For all migrant workers from new EU countries and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, employment tends to be in low-paid jobs in agriculture, food processing, construction, hospitality and domestic work. This is confirmed by other local studies. Levels of unemployment are very low, but when people do lose their jobs, significant hardship can result from lack of entitlement to welfare benefits or lack of knowledge of them.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Newly-arrived asylum seekers also tend to be young (typically under 35), are more likely to be male than female and are unlikely to be accompanied by family dependents (Perry, 2005). Typical nationalities vary from year to year as international pressures change – currently, the 'top six' nationalities represented among asylum seekers are Afghanistan, Iraq, Zimbabwe, Iran, Eritrea and Somalia.

In addition to asylum seekers who may subsequently be granted refugee status and leave to remain in the UK, small numbers of refugees come directly to the UK with accepted refugee status. The main programme for doing this is the Gateway programme, through which (for example) small numbers of Liberian refugees were settled in Sheffield (Robinson et al, 2007).

Other migrants

Studies included in this *Round-up* reflect the complexity of other migration routes. They bring many more people to Britain than are covered by the 'headline' categories of asylum seekers or European migrant workers. Other than broad national figures collected at port of entry or because of other control systems (such as the skilled workers scheme), little is known about these other categories beyond what is found through local studies. Among the groups covered by the *Round-up* studies are:

- Somali people who have migrated from other EU countries to Britain, in many cases having held refugee status elsewhere, such as Holland or Sweden;
- people joining family members here, often from 'traditional' sources of UK migration such as the Indian subcontinent; and
- working migrants coming from outside Europe.

Housing and other experiences of new migrants

In housing terms, new migrants often enter the market through the least desirable accommodation, often in disadvantaged areas or where demand for housing is lowest, filling the voids created by people who have moved on to better conditions. This has been described as the 'new migrant penalty' in the housing (and jobs) market (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008). Their situation on arrival has also been described as 'constrained and dependent', with the restrictions gradually easing with time as migrants acquire better rights or legal status, experience, resources or contacts (Robinson et al, 2007).

Problems faced by new migrants that are highlighted by the *Round-up* studies include:

- *Uncertainties about immigration status* – arising through the asylum process, through entering as a worker but without being properly aware of the conditions, or because the person's circumstances have changed (e.g. he/she enters as a student but then starts to work).
- *Lack of advice* – poor information services and advice facilities; lack of signposting to those that do exist.
- *Language barriers* – although many new migrants have good or basic English, many do not; many experience difficulty in accessing English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.
- *Unstable accommodation* – new migrants typically have to find (or, in the case of asylum seekers, are

sent to) temporary accommodation on arrival, and have to move on quickly.

- *Poor housing conditions* – even longer-term housing is often poor quality and at high rents. Many migrant workers suffer overcrowded conditions and/or accommodation linked to their job (so loss of job means losing the accommodation too).
- *Frequent moves* – case studies of the 'housing pathways' of recent migrants show complex housing careers with many moves (Robinson et al, 2007).
- *Poor access to wider services* – lack of knowledge, lack of entitlement (or assumed lack of entitlement), unsuitable local facilities and barriers such as language can combine with frequent moving to create severe difficulties for migrants in accessing health, education and other services.

Will new migrants stay in Britain?

Less than a quarter of the A8 migrants interviewed in 2004 by Spencer et al (2007) planned to stay in Britain long-term, although plans did tend to change as people lived here longer. Half the interviewees in the Markova and Black (2007) study, who had already been here longer than they planned, intended to return home. Although their intentions are not well-researched, those here for asylum or family reasons are likely to want to stay permanently, subject to their immigration status.

Changes in long-established minority communities

The *Round-up* studies also recognise the deprivation and poor housing conditions still faced by many long-established minority communities who are often living in neighbourhoods where new migrants are still arriving. For example, both Moss Side in Manchester and North Tottenham in London are among the most deprived wards in Britain, and have a strongly mixed population of long-established white and BME communities, as well as new migrants. While this mix was welcomed by many residents, for some it fuelled resentment about newcomers in which (for example) black residents born in the UK sided with white British residents in believing that Somali newcomers were getting better housing opportunities (Hudson et al, 2007).

Particular experiences of Muslim communities

Although newcomers suffer the 'new migrant' penalty mentioned earlier, long-established minority communities may also be disadvantaged. In particular, there is what has been described as a 'Muslim penalty' in terms of housing, employment and wider deprivation

(Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008). Traditionally, Muslim communities such as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Somalis do worse in housing, skills and jobs markets, and are more likely to live in the most deprived neighbourhoods, even though they may be long-established in the UK (Hudson et al, 2007).

Women and elderly people in some Muslim communities may be very isolated. For example, some young Yemeni women living in Butetown, Cardiff, have never been to the city centre, only a short distance away. Barriers include not speaking English, the lack of confidence resulting from marrying at a very young age, and dependence on men even for basic necessities such as shopping (Threadgold et al, 2008).

Muslim communities are also unusual in reporting high levels of discrimination on religious grounds. This has been augmented by the tensions that have arisen since the London bombings and similar events. The resulting Islamophobia and alienation can be seen as 'another layer of exclusion', to add to the 'Muslim penalty' in housing, jobs and wider deprivation described above (Perry and El-Hassan, 2008). People within Muslim communities are reported to have closer ties within the community (including giving support to recent Muslim migrants) compared with non-Muslim BME communities. This may be partly a defensive reaction to the exclusion they feel (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008).

However, there is some evidence that material circumstances are improving in some long-established Muslim communities. For example, attainment levels of Bangladeshi school children are rising rapidly (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008). The women from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities in the Harries et al (2008) study reported increased independence and prosperity compared with their parents: many had skilled or administrative jobs, and access to a car. These women saw themselves as the main decision-makers in their families and valued the status and wider opportunities they have achieved in Britain.

Feelings of 'Britishness'

This is a hotly contested area (Zetter et al, 2006), with views being expressed from the Prime Minister downwards on what being 'British' entails. Two of the *Round-up* studies found that while recent migrants tend to identify strongly with their home country, they identify with Britain too. Such dual identity is weaker among first-generation members of long-established communities, who tend to place more emphasis on their identity with Britain. Younger people who were born here often see themselves as unequivocally British (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008; Hickman et al, 2008).

While both migrants and long-established BME communities may identify 'Britain' with desirable features such as democracy and economic opportunity, their feelings of 'Britishness' may be tempered by experiences of intolerance and racism here. Young second- and third-generation people who identify strongly as British may be even more resentful of any discrimination they meet.

Again, it is important to emphasise the need to avoid stereotypes: there are doubtless many people who do not fit into the patterns just described. Vertovec argues that 'super-diversity' also applies to individuals, with many people having multiple or 'transnational' identities (e.g. a Kurdish, Turkish-speaking North Londoner; an English-speaking Somali with a Dutch passport – both also identifying themselves as Muslims).

Apart from generational differences, many minority ethnic communities are a mixture of long-established people and recent arrivals, for example spouses or other family members. Some communities such as Somalis are particularly diverse. For example, Cardiff's Somali community includes adults who have been in Wales long enough to have been taught the Welsh language in school – but also includes recent asylum seekers (Threadgold et al, 2008).

How are housing aspirations changing?

Greater prosperity and the growth of second- and third-generation households appear to be creating tensions between older people in long-established BME communities – who maintain 'traditional' attitudes towards families, housing and neighbourhood – and younger people whose aspirations are similar to those of equivalent white British people. Young adult women from British South Asian communities in the Harries et al (2008) study tended to want to live in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, not extended families, and placed little importance on culturally sensitive housing design or the availability of appropriate financial products (e.g. for Muslims, Sharia-compliant mortgages).

This is not to say that housing needs and aspirations are becoming uniform. For example, in the study just cited most interviewees were home-owners, whereas many people in minority ethnic communities live in rented housing, and their needs are likely to reflect their poorer circumstances. The point is that needs and aspirations are more complex than before, and assumptions should not be made that are based on stereotypes: specific research is needed to develop appropriate housing solutions for different communities.

Perspectives of white British communities

Expressions of tension or hostility

Studies in places as diverse as Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Dungannon (Northern Ireland), Glasgow, Manchester, Peterborough, Leicester and various parts of London uncovered hostility between some white British and BME communities – with hostility apparently more prevalent towards new migrant communities than towards long-established ones. Not surprisingly, hostility focuses on difference, on perceived change (i.e. deterioration) of an area, and on competition for resources or alleged preferential treatment in their allocation.

Racist feelings can be part of a generally negative view towards an area and its prospects (e.g. young people's views about living in Merthyr Tydfil). Yet in contrast, in some places hostility coexists with positive feelings towards places and their ethnic diversity. That is to say: people seem to be perfectly capable of appreciating living in an ethnically mixed area while being hostile to particular groups who form part of that mix.

What causes friction?

The CIC's perception that friction is fuelled by lack of resources (such as housing) and competition – or perceived competition – for them, is born out in several of the studies. In a deprived borough, town or neighbourhood, it is evidently simple to blame newcomers for inadequate housing, jobs or public services: 'victims' blame 'victims' (Hudson et al, 2007). This may be partly based on reality (e.g. asylum seekers being seen to get homes equipped with white goods) but often inadequately understood (e.g. that asylum support is very limited financially and asylum seekers are generally forbidden to work), and against a background of real shortages in many areas.

Further sources of friction may also be housing-related – the multiple occupation and sometimes overcrowding of properties (e.g. by migrant workers in accommodation arranged by the employer or gangmaster), and the effect on the environment of newcomers having different cultural norms or being unaware of rules (e.g. when to put the bin out for it to be emptied) (Perry and Blackaby, 2007; Audit Commission, 2007).

What brings people together

Despite the intractability of resource problems such as the shortage of affordable housing, there is evidence from places like Peterborough and Glasgow that provision of better information (e.g. about migrant entitlements) can defuse tensions. Places such as Leicester, or Kilburn in London, which have a history of migration and population change, are also ones in

which friction is less likely to occur or may be more easily resolved.

As they become settled, migrants may share many basic values with both long-established BME and white British communities. Despite tensions, there is often a wish to live in mixed neighbourhoods (albeit not necessarily ones where the mixing is recent). There is an overwhelming desire for neighbourhoods to be safe and with good local infrastructure. Combined with frequently shared aspirations about housing (e.g. home ownership), there is plenty of common ground if people are able to find ways to recognise it.

Implications for community cohesion policy

Comparing research findings with the analysis underpinning the CIC report and recent Government policy changes, there are some important points of agreement (although also differences of emphasis):

- *Significance of deprivation* – emphasised as a factor in the CIC's interim report, but given less significance in the final report, poverty is seen as a key factor in several of the *Round-up* studies. In line with the CIC final report, however, Hudson et al (2007) suggest that poor neighbourhoods need not necessarily be socially divided; much depends on the levels of interaction within them.
- *Housing is a key issue* – rather underplayed in the CIC final report, housing emerges as a key issue, both in terms of availability, quality and location, and in terms of competition for a scarce resource between different groups.
- *Ability to speak English* – most migrants who do not have adequate English want to learn it: they see it as key to their progress here, but ESOL provision is inadequate and there are restrictions on eligibility.
- *The role of the media* – key to shaping people's perceptions of groups such as working migrants and asylum seekers. Stereotypical and misinformed views about one group taking all the jobs at low wages, while the other gets housing and welfare benefits without working, are very damaging to social cohesion. Muslim communities suffer a further penalty in this respect.

- *The importance of adequate communications* – media hostility or misinformation mean that there is a particular premium on having good communications strategies: to respond to damaging stories, to tackle myths in mainstream media, and to make accurate information (e.g. about housing allocations) widely known to local people.
- *Cohesion is not only a racial issue* – it may break down not just between white and BME communities, but between BME communities (especially in some instances between nationalities – e.g. Somali and Afro-Caribbean young people). In addition, problems between young people and older people within the same communities are often cited as undermining cohesion.
- *Unplanned movement of new communities into an area fuels tensions* – the original asylum dispersal programme (in 2000/01), recent dramatic increases in numbers of migrant workers in small towns and rural areas, and the Gateway programme for refugees are all examples of the introduction of new groups. Local authorities should be properly engaged (e.g. through liaison meetings with employers) so they can pave the way for new arrivals, where this is an active decision, not simply the unplanned result of housing market changes.
- *Support for new arrivals should be accompanied by benefits for long-established communities* – for example, if new facilities or services are provided, can that be done in a way that makes them available to all residents?
- *Residential clustering is not a key issue* – clusters have considerable advantages to new migrants who are dependent on informal networks, but communities are dynamic and will continue to evolve as BME communities achieve their housing aspirations, have more members who are second- or third-generation in the UK, and people naturally start to move out to new areas.

There are two broader and more contentious issues relating to the debate around the CIC report:

- what are the characteristics of a 'cohesive community'; and
- what are the implications for community development and empowerment?

What is a 'cohesive' community?

The definition of a 'cohesive' community has been changing at national level – from that adopted in the wake of the 2001 Cattle report, to that proposed by the CIC in 2007, to that finally chosen by the Secretary of State (see box on page 4). Such definitions have been controversial (Zetter et al, 2006), not just for their wording but for the direction in which they take Government policy.

The views of people from the case study areas in the *Round-up* studies help to provide a 'bottom up' view of what policy about community cohesion should try to achieve, and what a 'cohesive community' looks like. The Hickman et al (2008) study, in particular, compares areas with different experiences and explores the issues in some depth.

Although there is not necessarily a consensus view across the different studies, there are some important respects in which they challenge the prevailing 'official' views about cohesion and the direction of Government policy.

A 'shared vision' in neighbourhoods

Studies in different neighbourhoods show little support for the ambition of creating a 'shared vision' between people, at least at neighbourhood level, because of the complex and shifting nature of relationships in today's society. Where a large proportion of people in a neighbourhood have newly arrived or are not planning to stay, such an ideal is even more unrealistic.

Instead, two studies suggest that cohesion should be based on more pragmatic principles. It should aim for 'mutual respect and regular interaction between neighbours, rather than aspiring to a level of shared goals and mutual support that may never be achievable in increasingly transient societies...' (Markova and Black 2007). A balance is required between aiming for unity and recognising separateness. Most people do not expect to be 'surrounded by people who have the same values as themselves'. They do however want to be 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' (Hickman et al 2008).

Rather than hoping for a 'shared vision', therefore, it may be more realistic to establish some 'common values' about the neighbourhood, relating to community safety, maintaining or improving the quality of the environment, etc. The studies suggest that such values either may already exist or would be supported by different communities (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008).

Can a 'shared vision' be appropriate at a different level?

There is a wider sense in which something like a 'shared vision' might be very important to achieving greater cohesion, at the local authority or government levels. Hickman et al's (2008) comparison between different areas reaches three important conclusions:

1. Cohesion is strongly affected by prevailing attitudes about migration and diversity in an area. In case studies of inner city neighbourhoods in Leicester, and of Kilburn, a culture of accepting newcomers and tolerating (or even enjoying) differences was felt to prevail, and to be a vital element in their relative cohesiveness.
2. This culture can be influenced by government and the media. Even in a climate where national media are hostile, locally positive attitudes can be influential. One example is Glasgow, where initial hostility to asylum seekers was to a large degree 'turned round' by the efforts of government, the local authority and voluntary groups. Another is Peterborough, where local authority action and a proactive local advice centre successfully challenged hostility towards asylum seekers and migrant workers.
3. Where prevailing attitudes are positive, there can be shared acceptance of responsibility for neighbourliness and resolving problems. In contrast, where newcomers are seen as a threat, they are also seen as having the main responsibility for adapting and fitting in, or for having 'failed' to do so if there are conflicts.

In Hudson et al's (2007) study of Manchester and Tottenham, local authority staff spoke about atmospheres of tolerance, and pride in the places being diverse and multicultural, as important elements in avoiding conflict. In Sheffield, there has been broad political agreement on policy towards asylum and refugees (Perry, 2005), culminating in its recent 'City of Sanctuary' status. In at least some cases, therefore, neighbourhoods or cities that are accustomed to diversity may avoid tensions even if they don't necessarily foster positive interaction between communities.

Should people have a 'sense of belonging' to neighbourhoods?

The new definition suggests that both a 'sense of belonging' and having strong and positive relationships are important aims for community cohesion. One of the main ways of assessing these features is by asking the question used in the Citizenship Survey: whether a neighbourhood is one where 'people from different backgrounds get on well together'. Markova and Black (2007) show that whereas the great majority of people in case study areas (like those responding to the national survey) answer this positively, responses as to whether people 'help each other' or 'talk to neighbours regularly' are much more mixed. In the Hudson et al (2007) study of Moss Side and Tottenham, there were also very mixed views. Paradoxically, even in neighbourhoods polarised on ethnic or faith grounds, people may have strong local relationships (suggesting strength in adversity, perhaps) and a sense of belonging. A study of place attachment in deprived areas (Livingston et al, 2008) suggests, however, that while ethnic mix is not a negative factor in deciding whether or not there is a 'sense of belonging', rapid changes in mix can erode people's attachment to a place, especially if they are not managed or planned for.

Such detailed investigations of neighbourhood relationships bear out a point made strongly by the CIC, which is that cohesion means different things in different places and any definition should be open to local variation. It is dangerous to generalise from evidence about 'how neighbourhoods work', especially in ethnically mixed areas, because the local history of how areas became diverse, how this relates to their economic success (or otherwise) and how public services have responded will differ from place to place, as will judgements about whether neighbourhoods are cohesive and what 'cohesive' means.

Whether accidentally or by design, both the definition of cohesion recommended by the CIC, and the one adopted by the Government (see box) omit any reference to neighbourhood, yet all the *Round-up* studies would suggest that the neighbourhood focus is crucial. The previous (post-Cantle) definition *did* refer specifically to neighbourhood.

Do people identify with Britain?

Another belief featuring strongly in the CIC report and in Government policy generally is that migrants should quickly identify with Britain and should see themselves as British citizens (or aspire to that status). There are five messages from the three studies that examined this question:

1. Both established and new migrant minority ethnic people often do identify with Britain and/or have strong perceptions of the advantages of being in Britain. In this respect, policy would appear to be pushing at an open door.
2. There is evidence that identification with Britain is stronger than identification with neighbourhood, implying that nationality is a stronger concept in people's minds.
3. Paradoxically, people can have 'transnational' identification, i.e. continue to identify strongly with their country of origin while also feeling 'British'. In any event, transnational feelings tend to diminish the longer that people are here.
4. The CIC report identified ability to speak English as a key factor in feeling 'British', and this is reflected in people's desire to learn the language despite insufficient facilities in many areas.
5. What can undermine identification with Britain is experience of being made unwelcome or of unjust treatment. Two groups in particular stand out as having problems: asylum seekers/refugees and Muslims.

The last point reinforces the need for Government (and ideally the media) to understand how their constant treatment of asylum seekers as a problem – together with the denial of legal routes of entry to them, and the ways in which they are treated on arrival (e.g. being kept in detention centres) – undermines the objective of getting successful refugees to then identify strongly with Britain. One particular source of resentment (which provokes negative reactions from others in a neighbourhood) is that most asylum seekers are not allowed to work.

Similarly, the frequently reiterated need to 'prevent violent extremism' in Muslim communities provokes fear and suspicion and acts against community cohesion.

As the Government says in its latest policy statement on migration (CLG, 2008b), 'we must work to develop an atmosphere of trust and understanding'. Such an atmosphere will require a radical change of language and policy at central Government level, not just at local level.

Developing and empowering communities

The CIC report placed considerable emphasis on the 'critical importance' of community development work in supporting and building integration and cohesion, acknowledging the commitment in (for example) the local government white paper but calling for a 'step change' in the level of activity.

At the same time, the CIC recommendations on what it called 'single group funding,' and the subsequent Government consultation paper, called into question the approach to supporting community-based groups and projects. This is in part because both the CIC and Government attach considerable importance to Robert Putnam's (2000) ideas of 'social capital' and especially his distinction between 'bonding' and 'linking' social capital. 'Bonding' is about relationships with close family or friends; bridging or 'linking' is about being part of wider networks that help people get jobs, influence authority and have contacts outside their immediate community. Some neighbourhoods, e.g. traditional 'white' estates, or areas of traditional south Asian settlement, are seen as having too much 'bonding' and too little 'linking' – to be too inward looking and remote from wider life in the town or city. The argument is not unlike the 'parallel lives' analysis of the 2001 Cattle report.

What evidence is there from the *Round-up* studies to support these interpretations?

'Bonding' is important for new migrants

First, the studies show the importance of 'bonding' for newcomers, in the form of local, informal networks of people of a similar migrant background. Apart from the obvious value of contact with people who speak the same language and 'know the ropes', such networks also help counteract the multiple disadvantages they experience – the poor availability of advice services, discrimination, lack of entitlement to services for some types of migrant, insecurity of housing and/or income and negative experiences of authority (e.g. through the asylum system). Community-based groups provide support for people who are often 'below the radar' of local authorities and other providers, or simply not entitled to publicly-funded services.

This suggests that migrant and refugee community organisations (MRCOs) are of vital importance in helping newcomers to adjust to life in the UK, and that policy should recognise this by:

- providing for their role in refugee and migrant integration strategies;
- supporting and developing their capacity;
- encouraging their engagement with public services, even possibly to become service providers themselves; and
- as new migrants become established, working with them to develop their links with other communities and their relationships outside the neighbourhood (Perry, 2005; Perry and El-Hassan, 2008a).

This would mean accepting the need for 'single group funding' for services aimed at new migrants, as well as encouraging established MRCOs to have a wider role, as indeed many now do.

Working with isolated groups or communities

There is also a need to recognise that some groups can remain isolated even after they have spent many years in the UK, perhaps because of deprivation, discrimination, lack of English, or a combination of these. Muslim women (e.g. in some Somali and Bangladeshi communities) sometimes have very limited social contacts. There are examples of successful community development work that has built people's confidence, given them wider experiences and provided access to ESOL courses (Perry and El-Hassan, 2008b). Again, the 'single group funding' debate should acknowledge the need for such targeted work as a stepping stone to greater community participation.

Work with the majority ethnic community

The extent of racist attitudes and 'racialised resentment' in some areas suggests a strong need in those places for community development work targeted at the majority ethnic community, particular where there are tensions with newcomers (whether new migrants, or people from long-established BME communities moving to 'white' estates). There are successful examples of this in Peterborough, Glasgow, Leicester, Dungannon and elsewhere (Hickman et al, 2008). Where community development is led by residents it can be particularly effective, e.g. the Northfields estate in Leicester, where residents took the initiative to welcome asylum seekers, and what was a largely 'white' estate with many empty properties is now both mixed and more popular (Robinson and Reeve, 2006).

Complexity of community relationships

There is therefore no 'one size fits all' approach to community development, as both the CIC and the Government response to it (CLG, 2008a) acknowledge. Approaches are required that are sensitive to local circumstances rather than driven by a 'top-down' view. The CIC produced a typology of 'family groups' to characterise areas and approaches that may be needed, but the *Round-up* studies suggest that (if anything) real-life communities are even more complex and there will always be exceptions to any attempt at categorisation. Whether or not there are merits in Putnam's ideas of social capital, they should not be uncritically adopted as the basis of policy without further exploration of their relevance in the British context. For example, the latest version of Putnam's work (2007) suggests that social capital is lowest in areas (in the United States) that are more ethnically diverse, but the evidence from the *Round-up* studies contradicts this, at least in part.

Implications for community development work at local level

Although the CIC made a recommendation about the importance of community development work, the Government has interpreted this in terms of engagement with local authorities rather than in the wider sense of developing community capacity. This is a very limited view. At present, community development seems likely to remain an area that is under-resourced or subject to short-term funding. Innovative approaches may be at risk from the 'single group funding' discussion, which is already being interpreted by some local authorities to mean that the types of targeted work mentioned above should no longer be supported.

Community cohesion initiatives have led to a wide range of approaches to working with communities. The Government is promising more good practice case studies, but there is still only limited evaluation of the different approaches that have already been used. Further investigation of 'what works' in creating more cohesive communities, and why some communities are more cohesive than others, is needed to build on the findings of the *Round-up* studies.

Implications for housing policy

Earlier it was noted that the CIC report did not give sufficient attention to housing, despite the significance of housing issues at neighbourhood level. We have seen that minority ethnic groups (and particularly new migrants) often enter the housing market via the least desirable properties, are often dependent on the private rented sector where they may experience overcrowding and poor conditions, and may have to move several times before finding secure accommodation. We also saw that – for established minority communities – housing aspirations are changing and may be very similar to those of long-established white communities.

This section summarises the policy implications.

Housing demand is a key issue

Housing emerges as a key issue because the current shortage of and high demand for affordable housing coincide with increased migration. Although pressures are particularly intense in parts of London, high levels of housing demand and competition for available housing are common factors in all the areas studied. This is not surprising, given that numbers of social lettings to new households continue to decline at national level. Although increased investment in newly built social housing is gradually resulting in more houses available to rent (almost 25,000 in England in 2006/07), the increases are far from sufficient to make good the decline in lettings. At the same time, the Government anticipates an annual growth in household numbers of more than one per cent. A key component is net migration, which accounts for about one third of forecast household growth (Wilcox, 2007 and CLG, 2008b).

Limited use by new migrants of social housing

The studies confirm what is known from national data, that recent migrants in practice make little use of social housing because (in some cases) of ineligibility, poor knowledge of their rights, and the fact that many are childless and therefore (if they become homeless) unlikely to be allocated social housing – as well as the underlying issue of the limited availability of new lettings.

Although only a small number of migrants gain access to social housing based on their eligibility and level of need (some six per cent – CLG, 2008b) this can still provoke ‘racialised resentment’ in areas where housing pressures are severe and people are perceived to have preference over those who have ‘earned’ the right to housing through having been born in the UK or through their tax contributions. Housing providers should have accessible data on how stock is allocated, conduct open reviews of policies and consult widely on how

to make systems as fair as possible in a situation of shortage.

Impact of migration on the private rented sector

Overwhelmingly – with some exceptions, such as asylum seekers accommodated by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) – new migrants use the private rented sector. However, this can have a marked impact on local markets, as several of the *Round-up* studies (and the Audit Commission, 2007 and IPPR, 2008) have shown:

- Overall demand for private lettings may increase, stimulating growth in private lettings, pushing up rent levels and reducing the supply of low-cost housing for sale.
- Landlords may take advantage of migrant workers by allowing houses to be overcrowded and/or occupied on a ‘shift’ basis, reducing standards and causing environmental problems in an area.
- Some lettings may be in former Right to Buy properties, which people in the area may think are still social lettings (hence concluding that migrants have ‘jumped the queue’).

Neglect of the private rented sector by local authorities (e.g. a slow response to licensing of multi-occupied properties) has become more obvious in places as pressures have intensified (especially places where migration has led to considerable growth in multi-occupation). There is a need to review the resources available to local authorities to regulate the sector and make full use of statutory and discretionary licensing schemes. These issues should be considered in the review of the sector that the Government has commissioned.

Housing pathways and aspirations are complex and changing

There is a need for better targeted and in-depth approaches to discover how migrants navigate the housing system over time, as an aid to planning more effective interventions. Local housing strategies should also recognise that:

- in long-established minority communities, housing aspirations of younger generations may be different from those of older generations;
- the aspirations of younger BME and white people may be very similar;
- concerns about the poor quality of newly built housing (private and social sectors) may be shared across communities; and

- migrant workers' aspirations about staying in Britain or leaving, however, are complex and may change over time.

Dynamics of change at neighbourhood level

While not all movements of groups of people into new areas can be foreseen, local authorities and housing associations could work with employers or migrant workers and with gangmasters to consider the impact of migrants on the local housing market and to devise possible solutions. More rapid responses to market and community change could help to defuse tensions. Better communication is needed to tackle myths about why there are newcomers in an area or 'who gets what' in housing provision, and to respond quickly and in creative ways that reach residents effectively.

Encouraging housing choice and neighbourhood mix

Greater effort is needed to ensure that minority ethnic communities have access to available housing opportunities. For example:

- Provision of advice services should be reviewed – are those that exist open and inviting to people from minority ethnic groups, even to people who may have no local authority housing entitlement?
- As choice-based lettings schemes become more widespread, is effort being made to ensure that they are accessible to all groups?
- Do housing strategies consider the obstacles to home-ownership among minority communities and ensure that low-cost home-ownership initiatives are targeted at and appropriate for all communities?

Local authorities and housing associations could also work more actively to create diverse neighbourhoods in both existing areas and through new-build and regeneration schemes.

Better information about and links with new communities

Local authorities and housing providers need to have better data made available nationally and to carry out their own local surveys to develop detailed understanding of the needs of different communities. Recently published good practice guidance on establishing numbers (LGA and ICoCo, 2007) will need to be kept up to date. Housing providers also need to establish links with new communities, and can have a role in building the capacity of migrant and refugee community organisations (Perry, 2005).

Conclusions

None of the points made in this *Round-up* change the fundamental issue of the shortage of affordable housing. Both the housing shortage and other demands on community infrastructure might begin to be addressed if more of the economic benefits of migration were captured at local level, providing resources that could help to alleviate the pressures on local services. Inevitably, this will take time, and meanwhile the 'credit crunch' may mean fewer people moving into home-ownership and more opting to stay in rented housing, thus adding to the strain on local housing markets.

If responding to housing needs through greater bricks-and-mortar investment is a long-term task, it is even more vital that the culture of blaming certain groups such as asylum seekers or migrant workers for housing and other resource problems is not allowed to become even worse than it currently is. This is a challenging task, as evidenced by the *Round-up* studies and by the CIC report. It is also one where the Government has so far offered little response at national level, despite acknowledging that 'we must work to develop an atmosphere of trust and understanding'.

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Resources

In addition to the reports and publications cited on the previous page, the following web-based resources are available:

Housing rights website (describing housing entitlements of different categories of migrant – in England only): www.housing-rights.info

Opening Doors (joint hact/CIH project funded by the Housing Corporation and CLG): www.cih.org/policy/openingdoors/ and www.hact.org.uk/downloads.asp?PagelD=173

New European Migration toolkit
www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=6949778

Web resources on new migration based on the Audit Commission report *Crossing Borders* (including guidance on data sources, local case studies, etc): www.audit-commission.gov.uk/migrantworkers/

Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP. This project is part of the JRF's research and development programme. These findings, however, are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation. ISSN 0958-3084

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