Making a Contribution
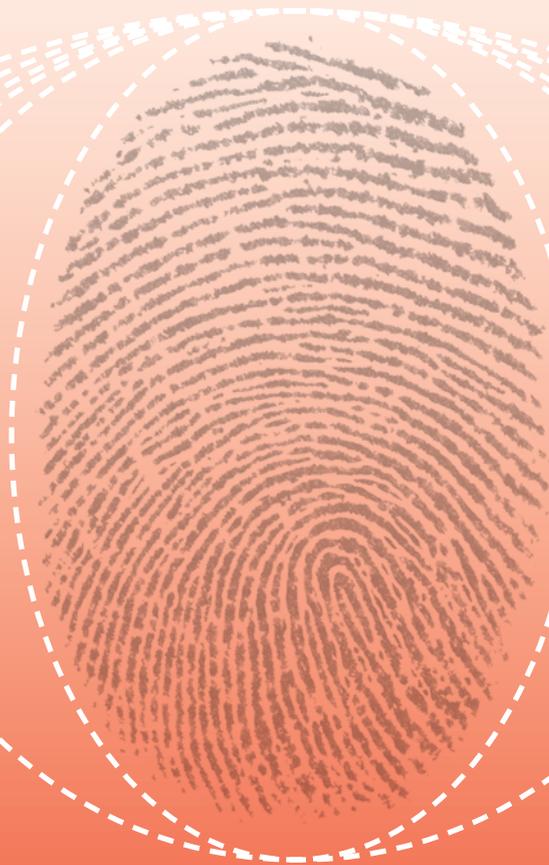
– NEW MIGRANTS AND BELONGING IN MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN

A RUNNYMEDE COMMUNITY STUDY
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RUNNYMEDE

About Runnymede Community Studies

In reflecting on the changing nature of ethnic diversity in Britain, it becomes increasingly clear that we have to move beyond binary notions of white and non-white to explain the ways in which racisms operate, identities are formed and people live out their lives. The societies in which we live are becoming more diverse and will continue to diversify as migration patterns change, and the impacts of globalization are reflected in labour markets as well as in transnational movement of capital.

This series of community studies aims to promote understanding of the diversity within and between different ethnic groups. Our intention is to build up a collection of studies which focus on communities; their demography, links to civil society, and key political and social issues. We hope that over time this will provide a rich resource for understanding how diversity is lived and experienced away from the necessarily crude ethnic monitoring form, in a vital and dynamic multi-ethnic society.

To find out more about the Runnymede Community Studies series, please visit: www.runnymedetrust.org

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1. Introduction

As an increasing number of migrants arrive from all corners of the world, the nature of multi-ethnic Britain is changing. Whereas previous waves of migration came primarily from former British colonies and commonwealth countries – most notably from the Caribbean and South Asia – people are now coming to Britain in great numbers from countries which have little or no previous historical or administrative links with the UK. In addition to former Eastern Bloc countries, many migrants come from previous French, Spanish or Belgian colonies, and would in the past have tended to migrate to these countries. The established routes of migration from the Global South to the Global North, previously determined largely by colonial links, are being disrupted and re-channelled. As a result, it is no longer appropriate to speak of ethnic groups in Britain in terms of the monolithic blocs of black, Asian, white and 'other'.[1]

The Runnymede Trust's programme of Community Studies seeks to shed light on these developments. The programme has taken the shape of eleven small-scale studies,[2] collecting in-depth interviews, narratives and accounts from nearly 300 individuals throughout the UK. Eight of these studies have explored some of Britain's smaller, more hidden, and often voiceless communities and ethnic groups – Bolivians, Vietnamese, Francophone Cameroonians, Romanians,[3] Thais, South Africans, Nepalese and Moroccans.[4] In addition, in order to contextualize the lived experiences of the many different groups who live in Britain, we also conducted three place-based community studies, exploring how diversity is lived within the framework of a specific locality – a university student community, a multi-ethnic council estate, and a street market.

The diversification that we explore is captured by what Steven Vertovec has called 'super-diversity'. One of the most noteworthy features of new migration is the great variety of immigrants' countries of origin, but while Vertovec highlights ethnic diversity as one of the hallmarks of super-diversity, he argues that the phenomenon captures other significant observable facts.[5] Channels and means of migration, and legal immigration status, are also important markers, and shape a range of factors such as group and identity formation, life chances, differential participation in the labour market, family reunification, discrimination "and to what extent people can make use of public services and resources (including schools, health, training and benefits)".[6] As a result, ethnicity is not the only, nor in many cases the primary, identity marker.

> It's all different mixed race here, it's OK. I think it works … Where we have so much different races here, in Croydon, I think everyone's kind of got used to it. It used to be all English, now it's different. (Clarice, Surrey Street Market)

This has been apparent in all our community studies. Yet neither researchers nor policy makers seem to fully understand how these sometimes overlapping but sometimes contradictory markers shape individual and group opportunities and experiences, and the broader impact on the shape and dynamics of multi-ethnic Britain. Although there are signs that the British government is waking up to the reality of super-diversity, many of the Home Office's policy responses are a cause for concern. Through our Community Studies programme, Runnymede has argued that public policy has been slow to get to grips with super-diversity. What we have found is that the lived reality of many of the new migrant groups include experiences of severe discrimination, exploitation and violation of rights. These experiences obviously hinder the capacity of many migrants to participate fully in their community and in Britain more generally.

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1   Berkeley (2005)
2   All reports are free to download at http://www.runnymedetrust.org/ projects/communityStudies.html. For a short summary of each study, see Appendix 1.
3   The Romanian report is based on research conducted by Andreea Torre from the London School of Economics.
4   The Moroccan report is based on research by Myriam Cherti, and an extended analysis is available in her excellent book *Paradoxes of Social Capital* (Cherti, 2008).

5   Vertovec (2007: 9)
6   Ibid.: 4

In this last report of the series, we will discuss the policy implications of the evidence we have collected.

[The other students] have other days they can come in [the youth club]. This is time for us Nepalese. It's fun to chill out – it's more comfortable. We speak Nepali and [the other students] would feel left out. They might think that we're speaking about them. (Leela, Nepal)

The development of a super-diverse Britain once again calls into question the relationship between immigration policies and race equality. This relationship has always been contentious; the extent to which institutional and official racism has shaped immigration policies is disputed. What is unmistakable, however, is that the immigration policies of the latter half of the 20th century have played a pivotal role in shaping today's multi-ethnic Britain. Even if we accept Randall Hansen's suggestion that British politicians have historically been more liberal than the British public,[7] and that they did not construct immigration policies based on overt racism, there was a clear racial bias in 20th century immigration policies, with unambiguous consequences for ethnic inequalities today.[8] In spite of these historical lessons, there is a growing consensus – on the left as well as right of the political spectrum – that debates about immigration and race equality should be separated. Politicians and pundits of all

I'm not perfect in English, and they think what are you talking about? Sometimes I feel let down and it's difficult to get a job. And they think of Thai people … they don't care about your certificate or what your experience is, they just put you down. That really hurts sometimes and I try to apply for jobs and keeping interviewing, interviewing… If I was in Thailand I would [snaps her fingers] get a job. (Jasmine, Thailand)

persuasions complain that raising the topic of immigration automatically engenders the charge of racism, thereby stifling any chances of an honest and open debate. In this attack on a politically correct straw man, the argument is effortlessly transformed into a clear non-sequitur – that immigration issues and policies are *never* racist.

At a time when the "biggest shake-up of the UK's border security and immigration system for 45 years"[9] has in fact been characterized by a messy and chaotic development of policy and "non-stop, unplanned reform",[10] it is imperative not to allow the immigration debate to proceed without a clear understanding of the implications for race equality. This final report in Runnymede's Community Studies series draws on our eleven qualitative studies – and the accounts of nearly 300 individuals – to argue that recent migration policies have a clear racial bias, and are therefore likely to have a negative impact on the future of multi-ethnic Britain. The two flagship policy developments of this shake-up – the Points Based System (PBS) and the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2009 – both introduce significant unequal treatment which will have severe repercussions on ethnic inequality for years to come. In spite of claims to the contrary, these policies have clear discriminatory and racialized consequences. A system which discriminates and distinguishes between different types of workers, with a hierarchy of rights pertaining to different kinds of migrants, will reproduce within Britain the global inequalities that drive migration in the first place. The PBS siphons migrants from the global South into dirty, dangerous and demeaning work and leaves them open to exploitation, while the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act further restricts their rights and means to defend themselves from discrimination. This places some groups at a disadvantage in the labour market, belittles their contribution to society, and prevents them from engaging with major British social institutions and taking full part in society.

7   Hansen (2000)
8   Spencer (1997)
9   CLG (2008: 10)
10   Somerville (2007: 82)

2. Methods and Impact

The aim of the Community Studies series is to start a dialogue on the changing nature of ethnic diversity in Britain. It is increasingly clear that we need to move beyond binary notions of white and non-white to understand racisms, how identities are formed, and how people live out their lives. A clear understanding of the experiences of different groups and individuals, how they interact amongst themselves and with others, and how they see their place in Britain are all vital components of an effective and constructive policy on social cohesion.

For this reason, we embarked on the task of exploring Britain's less visible communities, the changing dynamics of place and day-to-day living, and the various ways in which people socialize and form bonds. As the subject matter of the studies is the current development of diversity in Britain, we discovered from the outset of each study that statistics and academic literature are fairly scarce. Indeed, it is exactly this information deficit that we have strived to address, in large part by initiating a dialogue with each community. The aim of each study was not to present a comprehensive picture of each community, but rather to identify and map out the main issues relevant to them. For this reason, as well as the small scale of the studies, the methodology used for our community studies was principally qualitative. Adopting a purposive sampling technique – where interviewees are selected specifically a) for their specific experiences or knowledge, and b) to capture the diversity and breadth of views within the sample group – has allowed us to speak to key information holders such as individuals directly involved with community organizations, as well as ordinary people getting on with their everyday lives. By adopting a unified methodology throughout the different studies, we have identified key themes of particular importance to the communities under study, and developed research tools for comparing them.

We do not purport to represent conclusive ethnographic descriptions of the communities we study. While the purpose of our studies is to map the main issues identified by the participants of the studies, this can only amount to a 'snapshot' of the various communities. It must also be stressed that not every issue of importance could be identified or discussed in each of the reports. Further research is necessary to fill in the ethnographical details for a comprehensive understanding of the communities in question.

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected primarily through in-depth interviews and focus groups with key informants. A total of 297 individuals were consulted. Interviews were semi-structured, in which we explored a defined set of issues with each interviewee. The questions were open-ended in style to encourage a fulsome response. However, the conversations were steered in certain directions according to themes that needed to be discussed with all interviewees. Where possible, interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed in order to draw out key themes, concepts and emergent categories.

Primary data collected through in-depth interviews were supplemented with various secondary data sources. Where appropriate, online qualitative questionnaires were used. The principal purpose of these questionnaires was to provide 'triangulation' data, i.e. material to help confirm, improve, or add an extra dimension to the research findings. Also, the researchers for each study visited and involved themselves in various community events and cultural exhibitions, in order to acquire an 'on the ground' understanding of social relations within the communities.

2.2 Seminars and Roundtable Discussions

Alongside the studies, we organized a number of meetings and events to discuss the findings with various stakeholders. At the end of studies, we invited representatives from community organizations, policy makers, local authority representatives, and community media to discuss a working paper. The aim of these roundtable discussions was twofold: 1) to democratize the research process by inviting participants of each study to comment on its findings prior to the publication of final reports; 2) to encourage local authorities and policy makers to engage with the 'hidden' communities and discuss forward looking strategies. The

roundtables generated a dynamic discussion, not only on the contents of each paper, but also what conclusions could be drawn, and what lessons could be learned.

If you make activities, not for the Bolivian community, for the English community. Because the English community don't know nothing about Bolivia. And that's reality. And if we can make activities to show the English community what is really Bolivia, people will start to feel Bolivian, because it's a feeling thing, it's not a political thing. You have to *feel* Bolivian. (Hernando, Bolivia)

In order to facilitate a dialogue between the communities and central and local government, two high-level seminars were organized at the House of Commons. The first was chaired by Simon Hughes, MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey, discussing the reports on the Bolivian, Vietnamese and Francophone Cameroonian communities. The second seminar was chaired by Meg Hillier, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, discussing the reports on the Moroccan, Nepalese, South African, Thai, and Romanian communities. Both seminars drew together a variety of people – civil servants, community activists, policy makers, politicians, researchers, NGOs and others – for an evening of open debate, and demonstrated in the clearest possible terms that Whitehall policy can and must listen to the voices of those who fall below the radar.

3. Reconnecting Migration Policy and Race Equality

For decades, anti-immigrationists have striven to disconnect migration discourses from race equality, with slogans such as 'it's not racist to impose limits on immigration'. Hyper-sensitivity and political correctness, so the argument goes, have cast anyone talking about migration as bigots, thereby stifling mature discussion. However, as is often the case with calls for an 'honest' and 'democratic' debate on race related issues, this particular formulation of the immigration debate is a thinly veiled attempt to legitimize the use of ugly and xenophobic language by politicians and the press.[11] Condemning the "daft, so-called politically correct notion that anybody who talks about immigration is somehow a racist"[12] is merely fighting a straw man.[13] It is indeed a banal truism that immigration issues are not racist by default. But this conclusion is too often suggested to imply an opposite position – that immigration issues and policies are by definition *never* racist – that is both fallacious and untrue. Unfortunately, however, influential figures of all hues of the political spectrum have accepted this contention, which has consequently been allowed to win the argument.

Looking back on the latter half of the 20th century, it is clear that past immigration policies have had a pivotal role in shaping the ethnic inequalities of the early 21st century.[14] Contrary to what some politicians and commentators maintain, racism and anti-immigrant sentiments have historically been closely linked. Anti-racists are disillusioned with Labour's commitment to race equality, and have experienced waning optimism and enthusiasm since 1997.[15] Grillo aptly describes the developments in public policy and political discourse over the past decade or more as a 'backlash against diversity',[16] typified by a major shift away from accepting difference towards asserting sameness amongst the public, politicians and in the press. This applies to new migrants as well as settled minority ethnic groups.

Although talking about immigration is not racist in itself, immigration policies can – and often do – have a clear racial bias, and therefore have a knock on effect on race equality years down the line. It is therefore reasonable to expect that immigration policies drafted today may be a significant factor in shaping the future of multi-ethnic Britain. Given that recent changes in immigration policy – which the government has lauded as the "biggest shake-up of the UK's border security and immigration system for 45 years"[17] – have gone hand-in-hand with the 'backlash against diversity' and a return to assimilationist language in political rhetoric, we should examine these policies closely and critically, and assess their potential impact on race equality.

3.1 Government Thinking on Migration Policy

Recent policy documents on migration have indicated that politicians and policy makers are finally beginning to appreciate and respond to the diversification of Britain, which is encouraging. A closer look at these developments, however, reveals an increasingly hostile stance towards migrants. From conditions of entry to requirements for citizenship, the government is treating migrants, asylum seekers and refugees as guilty until proven innocent, forcing them to provide evidence for their own worth above and beyond what is required of British citizens.

Recent years have seen a range of measures aiming at minimizing the impacts of migration at a local level. Some of the proposals are quite sensible, such as providing funds to tackle homelessness, strengthening measures to protect vulnerable workers and providing additional support to children for whom English is an additional language. How these measures have been realized is another matter. For example, if recent developments in the crackdown on irregular migrants are anything to go by, the protection of vulnerable workers merely

11   Sinha (2008)
12   John Reid (quoted in Travis, 2006)
13   Legrain (2006)
14   Hansen (2000); Berkeley, Khan and Ambikaipaker (2006)
15   Back et al. (2002); Grillo (2005); Vasta (2007)
16   Grillo (2005)

17   CLG (2008: 10)

amounts to targeting small minority ethnic businesses,[18] rather than supporting migrants' rights and directly addressing the inequalities and exploitation in the labour market, including by much larger mainstream organizations. Indeed, the notion that migrants might have rights is becoming ever more remote, except in instances where the discussion revolves around how rights can be further curbed. Political rhetoric on migration is increasingly mimicking the tabloid press, where migrants and refugees are portrayed as social and economic parasites unwilling to integrate, and whose values are incompatible with British values.

This is my adopted country, and it's the country in which I managed to make my life. But I want to show my Britishness, if that's the word, in my behaviour, in my work, in my standard of living. I've never been unemployed, I always pay my taxes, I educate my daughters to the highest education they can possibly have. And that's the way I think I'm British. I contribute. Perhaps more than any other Englishman. I'm not relying on the welfare state, or anything like that. (Victor, Bolivia)

These representations of the motivations of migrants are important to questions of race equality, because the development of Britain's super-diversity is in large part driven by a re-patterning of migration channels, which has changed the shape and nature of ethnic diversity in the UK. The aspect of these changes that has received greatest attention and examination is perhaps the arrival of migrants from EU accession countries in the wake of the 2004 EU enlargement, but the almost obsessive focus on 'swamping' from eastern European migrants has masked the extent of Britain's diversification. People have increasingly been finding their way to the UK from regions which have in the recent past had little historical, cultural or administrative links with Britain, such as Latin America, South East Asia or francophone parts of Africa. The

18 Migrants' Rights Network (2008)

way the British state treats migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is important in its own right. But there is more at stake than the welfare and human rights of today's migrants. Many migrants and refugees will not go back to their countries of origin but will make Britain their permanent home. Thus, the migration policies being formulated at this time will be influential in deciding the future shape of race equality in the UK. If there is a racial bias in the immigration system today, rendering some groups more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and demonization, this is likely to have an impact on the life chances of their children.

3.2 The Lived Reality of Super-diversity

The most striking common characteristics running throughout the Community Studies are the rich narratives of integration and belonging. Most migrants want to contribute positively to their host society, and our interviewees conveyed a sense of appreciation for Britain giving them a chance to contribute. But they also described difficulties in trying to do so, because of widespread prejudice and discrimination. Interviewees explained in great detail the processes they experienced of deskilling, exploitation and unequal treatment in the labour market. Many had university degrees or other qualifications, but could not find work suitable to their expertise and were therefore forced to take jobs well below their level of skills. This disempowerment and lack of opportunity to create their own fortune places migrants in a precarious and vulnerable position, which often leads to exploitation and a *de facto* negation of rights. As a result, many found themselves doing dirty, dangerous and demeaning work.

If everyone in Cameroon left the country and came in Europe, who is going to do things in Cameroon? No one. When you got something, you have to go back and show people the thing that you learned. Because here, you've got so many people, how many engineers, doctors, some of them here are doing stupid things like cleaning. (Claude, Cameroon)

The Community Studies reveal that many new migrants feel that the discrimination they face is attributable to their nationality or ethnic identity, and many problems associated with integration are certainly country specific, and therefore often require targeted solutions. Francophone Cameroonians face a different set of barriers in the labour market than their Anglophone compatriots; the racist abuse many Thai women face on a day-to-day basis manifests itself differently from the stereotyping of British-born Vietnamese youth; and Bolivian migrants have a different set of push and pull factors influencing their decision to migrate from those of Colombian refugees. All of these factors – and many more – strongly shape the experiences and life chances of different groups. Importantly, however, the only group which did not speak about discrimination were the South Africans. Indeed, they were acutely aware that their ethnicity was a great advantage in everything from employment prospects to being accepted in their local community.

The migrants we interviewed reported a variety of survival and coping strategies to live with the discrimination, inequality and humiliation they experienced in Britain, but the most important strategies involved collective action of some sort. For example, migrant community organizations were cited as a valuable resource for settling into life in the UK. These kinds of organization came under fire following a report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, which recommended that "funding to community groups should be rebalanced towards those that promote integration and cohesion" and that "'Single Group Funding' should be the exception rather than the rule".[19] This recommendation, however, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of what migrants and minority ethnic groups hope to achieve when they form associations. Most of the groups in our Community Studies use community organizations and services because they lack the confidence or knowledge of how to engage with major British social institutions. Single-group organizations are in many ways a 'one-stop shop' for people who may either lack the confidence, language skills or knowledge of how to navigate some of the basics of life in the UK, whether socially, economically or administratively.[20]

There are lots of students like me, but they're Black African, Black Caribbean, and Eastern European. We get along alright; we have the same problem with White English people! They look at us like we're silly, or that we can't speak English! ... My college has 16 and 17 year-old English people, but apart from that it's people like me: immigrants. I feel normal when I'm there. (Nid, Thailand)

I think being at a school where I was the only Chinese/Vietnamese/Oriental person there made me feel quite weird too; I remember looking in the mirror and wondering why I did not have white skin and brown hair like my friends…. But now that I am a lot older I do feel like I wish I had kept speaking other languages, and knew how to cook and so on, because now I realise it is what makes me different and interesting…. (Mai, Vietnam)

When I first came in this country, my experience was very bad. I had serious problems to integrate in this country and to socialise with other people. And also all the problem I had as an asylum seeker. And that's one of the reasons I set up this organisation. To help other people like me, to avoid facing the same problem I faced when coming in this country. (Bernard, Cameroon)

Fostering strong identities and intra-ethnic support networks can often alleviate feelings of degradation which result from racism

19 Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007: 160)
20 Khan (2008b)

and discrimination.[21] For many new migrant groups, a potent sense of ethnic identity is a survival strategy which by no means precludes engagement in the wider society, but can – quite to the contrary – promote participation. From this perspective, ethnic communities are a support structure and a framework for stable identities, in sharp contrast to the received wisdom that ethnic communities are self-segregating.[22] Furthermore, for migrants that feel discriminated against on the grounds of their national or ethnic identity, these identities can usefully become a platform to pursue their rights. In the case of marginalized and often exploited groups, the issue of rights is essential, especially for those who experience voicelessness and invisibility.

> You don't want to be somewhere where you are alienated [...] You want to stay somewhere where there is a community, where you know people and you have something in common with them. Yeah, there is a masjid [mosque] around here, a school around here, Muslims around here. You know, kids won't feel isolated, especially now, the bad image about Muslims everywhere. To go and live somewhere where there are no Muslims you will be like [...] the black sheep (laughs). (Hanane, Morocco)

These findings echo research commissioned by Communities and Local Government, which provides robust evidence and compelling arguments that inequality is a bigger threat to cohesion than diversity. In their analysis of the Citizenship Survey, Laurence and Heath are unambiguous in their findings:

> Most significantly, this study demonstrates that, far from eroding community cohesion, ethnic diversity is generally a strong positive driver of cohesion. In particular, areas with both high levels of disadvantage and high ethnic diversity record higher average cohesion scores than highly disadvantaged, homogeneous White areas. **It is thus deprivation that undermines cohesion, not diversity.**[23]

In spite of the powerful evidence that inequality and deprivation are the greatest threats to community cohesion, and equally the lack of evidence that migrants' choices and intentions are antithetical to integration, there is still immense political resistance to include non-citizens in equality and rights discourses. The clearest evidence of this resistance is that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are totally absent from the Equality Bill.

It is disheartening that the government's current policy responses to Britain's emerging super-diversity tend to ignore the actual experiences of different groups and individuals, how they interact amongst themselves and with others, and how they see their place in Britain. The government has adopted a populist stance towards migrants as undeserving and suspect by default, guided by the flagship policy of the Community Cohesion agenda. Its proponents hold that multiculturalism has driven a wedge between communities, highlighting differences rather than similarities. Difference, in this sense, is seen as something naturally divisive which needs to be contained and managed. Community tensions, therefore, are the effect of unconstrained difference and diversity.

This kind of 'sleepwalking to segregation' argument has been statistically demonstrated to be false: minority ethnic people in the UK are less likely to live in areas with high levels of segregation, and were furthermore less likely to do so in 2001 as compared to 1991, a trend that shows no sign of abating. Conversely, white British people are most likely to live in segregated neighbourhoods.[24] Yet the myth of migrants refusing to integrate and minority ethnic groups choosing to self-segregate is no longer confined to tabloids, far-right groups and the anti-immigration lobby. Numerous left-wing commentators have joined in the condemnation of multiculturalism as a 'failed experiment',[25] and

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21 See also Datta et al. (2007)
22 Schönwälder (2007: 5)
23 Laurence and Heath (2008, original emphasis)
24 Finney and Simpson (2009)
25 E.g. Goodhart (2004); Phillips (2005)

the myth has found its way into serious political discourse and indeed into public policy.

> [Multiculturalism] is a good philosophy for us, a good policy. To help people build, within themselves, their culture, their civilisation. What we love in this country is, when you come, with your culture or your civilisation, they don't wash your brain. Like in France. France wash your brain. Here, you come with your culture, you come with your personality. Because British people, British system believe that the UK should be a place of exchange, where people come together, and everyone could give what he has to build a better community. (Bernard, Cameroon)

Runnymede's Community Studies programme provides a qualitative dimension to the statistical dismissal of the 'parallel lives' myth. Most of our interviewees expressed a clear desire to contribute to the British economy, and have pragmatic reasons for doing so. Contribution is a prerequisite for acceptance into the mainstream of British life. Acceptance, in turn, leads to inclusion and increased capacity of economic participation, a major concern for economic migrants. Narratives of migration invariably involves a complex interplay between push and pull factors, but the purpose of migration is generally to raise the life chances of you and those closest to you, including building a safer future for your children. To this aim, many of Britain's most marginalized migrants are willing to make enormous personal sacrifices, but fair access to the labour market and the prospect of upwards social mobility is a minimum requirement for their efforts to be worthwhile. While the Government seems to recognize the importance of participation in key social and economic institutions in its financial inclusion agenda, these concerns are somehow less prominent in their immigration strategy, a surprising omission considering the link between labour market participation and access to

products such as bank accounts.[26]

If maximizing the benefits of migration is the primary concern of the government, it must recognize that the legitimate interests of migrant workers are by no means antithetical to the interests of Britain. In any case, it is nonsensical to speak of the interests of Britain as if Britain was a homogenous mass, without hierarchy, stratification and conflicts of interests.[27] While some segments of British society may benefit from violating migrants' rights and exploiting migrant workers, the majority of British workers do not. In fact, exploitation is arguably a larger threat to local communities than the myth of new migrant communities disproportionately accessing benefits or public services. Cementing migrants' rights and protecting them from exploitation is the most effective way to ensure healthy labour market participation. The "biggest shake-up of the UK's border security and immigration system for 45 years"[28] is therefore a potentially strong opportunity to make immigration work not only for Britain, but for the migrants themselves as well. Unfortunately, the flagship developments in immigration policy – the Points Based System on the one hand, and the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act on the other – indicate an increasingly retrogressive stance towards migrants.

3.3 Points Based System

The centrepiece of the recent immigration policy shake-up is the Points Based System, which has been hailed by its pundits as a tool allowing Britain to "control migration more effectively, tackle abuse and identify the most talented workers".[29] Not everyone has shared the government's enthusiasm for the system, which has drawn criticism from various migrants' rights groups, especially because it is too hierarchical and discriminatory.[30] The PBS distinguishes between the rights available to migrant workers on the basis of obscure and arbitrary principles about which 'skills' and 'attributes' they would add to the British economy; migrants deemed

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26 Khan (2008a)
27 Ryan (2008)
28 CLG (2008: 10)
29 UK Border Agency (not dated)
30 Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (2006); Runnymede Trust and Migrants' Rights Network (2007)

to have a larger and more valuable set of skills have access to a more generous set of rights. The PBS conforms with Stephen Castles' formulation of "differential policies towards migrants with different levels of human capital, which seem to be generating a new transnational labor force, stratified not only by skill and ethnicity but also by immigration status."[31] As such, the hierarchical and discriminatory design of the PBS replicates within Britain the key elements the North/South divide of the global economic stratification that drives migration in the first place. The poor and marginalized in the world order become poor and marginalized within the British hierarchy.

If you are Bolivian, it doesn't matter if you are a genius. You are a Bolivian. And that's it. It's a legal matter. No more. I cannot work. (Hernando, Bolivia)

One important consequence of the focus on 'skills' is the deskilling of migrants from the 'South' of this global economic landscape. The narrow formalism of the PBS fails to acknowledge, and thereby manage, the complexity of migratory processes. It assumes that precise measurements of skill levels can be gleaned from formal evidence of qualifications. However, across a wide range of professions and jobs, real skills are a mix of general educational qualifications, work experience and the presence of various kinds of soft skills.[32] The formulation of the PBS means that certain nationalities will be recruited into the lower echelons of the labour market, even if they have higher qualifications that should get them better jobs. As a number of our Community Studies demonstrated, the skills brought in by migrants from the global South are often ignored, leading to severe deskilling.

Although the PBS falls within the framework of immigration policy – and despite the concerted effort to disconnect immigration discourse from racial discourse – its implementation has clear implications for race equality. For example, family reunification and the prospect of eventual settlement are on offer to some

It was a good job, I can not complain but of course this was not what I was trained for. The fact is that it is very difficult when you arrive here to do the job you were doing at home. And then, if you don't have documents ... well, as you can understand, it is even worse. I hope that next year things will change and maybe I could start working as a midwife again, but ... I know it is not going to be easy. (Maria, Romania)

groups of workers, while others are denied such opportunities. Although the same basic human rights should be afforded to everyone,[33] irrespective of the skill component of migrants' posts, the PBS blatantly discriminates between groups of people. The lines of discrimination are inevitably drawn along lines of race, ignoring the lessons of the last 30 years.[34]

I mean Brits are always very nice to us, and they are to all foreigners. Who are white, I imagine. I mean, I think if you come from the Cameroon it can be a bit different. Anywhere in Europe. It's easier immigrating to Europe as a white person than a person of colour. (Nathan, South Africa)

However, the systematic corralling of migrants from poorer countries into low skilled and low waged employment is likely to have the most devastating impact on the future of race equality. If we take the London labour market as a case in point, there are clear connections between nationality, immigration status, race and inequality. Ninety per cent of people working in London's low paid 'elementary jobs' – that is to say contract cleaning, hospitality work, home care and food processing – are migrant

31   Castles (2004: 871)
32   Runnymede Trust and Migrants' Rights Network (2007)

33   Affirmed as such in international instruments such as Art. 44(2) of the United Nations Migrant Workers Convention and Art. 13 of ILO Convention 143.
34   Berkeley, Khan and Ambikaipaker (2007:14) argue that the 1971 Immigration Act, which made family reunification more difficult, disproportionately affected "Bangladeshi and Pakistani families who were widely suspected of fraud".

workers, predominantly from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. These migrants do not end up in this sector because they lack skills; around 50 per cent have tertiary level education, and severe deskilling and downward social mobility is common.[35] For many migrants, this kind of deskilling is a source of frustration and feeling of debasement, and many link the discrimination leading to menial jobs to their nationality and ethnic identity. For those whose English is poor, this represents a catch-22 situation. As Frances Carlisle rightly points out, "It is a vicious circle as the only jobs available to non-English speakers are 'hidden' jobs, which offer no opportunity to socialise or network with other English speakers".[36] Migrants in this situation usually lack the tools to defend themselves against the discrimination that keeps them within this vicious circle.

So I can work one office 6-8 in the evening, another office maybe 8:30-10:30. So I am working four hours. But that is with no communication. Alone. You don't talk with anyone. We have what we call *madrugada* – early morning – 5-8. And then, again, you are working on your own because you are cleaning the office before other people is coming. (Marcela, Bolivia)

At the time of writing, the PBS's Tier 3 – i.e. "limited numbers of low skilled workers needed to fill temporary labour shortages"[37] – was temporarily suspended on the basis that these labour shortages would be filled by migrants from within the EU. At the same time, and in spite of a tough stance taken by the government on irregular migration, the estimate of the total irregular resident population has risen from 430,000 in 2001 to 725,000 in 2009.[38] If official migration routes are closed down for the people who fill vacancies in the 'elementary job' market, it is likely that they will find other means to enter Britain. As 90 per cent of these workers

are migrants – primarily from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America – it is reasonable to assume that most irregular migrants will be from the global South. It is similarly reasonable to assume that the restrictions of Tier 3 will increase the number of irregular migrants in the UK; as Castles observes, for migrants who live in corrupt and violent states, "migration rules become just another barrier to overcome in order to survive. Potential migrants do not cancel migration just because the receiving state says they are not welcome – especially if the labor market tells a different story".[39]

You never know exactly what the Home Office will do. You know, they say, 'If you employ a person who you know to be illegal, you can get into trouble.' … You see, every time they say, 'You should not help illegals. You will get into trouble.' And then they relax the law, and they say 'Yes, help them, yes, we need them.' So where do you stand? Do we need them? Do we give them jobs? Or are they here illegally? What do you do? Every day we get new laws here. (Stella, Bolivia)

The detrimental effect of irregular migration status on the mental and financial wellbeing of individuals is well documented,[40] but the harm it does to communities is no less significant. The stigma attached to irregular migration status, and the fear of the consequences of helping 'illegals', can drive a wedge between those who have full administrative permission to live and work in the UK and those who do not. Thus, while irregular immigration status damages community cohesion, the capacity of civil society to limit or alleviate this damage is restricted. The government is forging immigration policies that are causing a growth of the irregular population, but intransigently refuses to consider a regularization programme. Adopting a hostile stance and using populist language to talk about irregular migrants may appease the right

35 Evans et al (2005)
36 Carlisle (2006: 239)
37 Home Office (2006)
38 Gordon et al. (2009)

39 Castles (2004: 860)
40 Evans et al (2005); Datta et al (2007); McIlwaine (2007)

wing press, but the consequential effect of such short-sighted policies are likely to be severe on disadvantaged people, and injurious to the building of a cohesive society in the UK.

Three months after we came, we helped the cousin of my wife, she lives here as well. She get pregnant, she get a boy, and he doesn't have a nationality. He doesn't have any papers. Just a paper to say he born here, but there is no nationality. Because both of them are illegals. (Hernando, Bolivia)

Many of Britain's irregular migrants are likely to stay in the UK long enough to raise a family, but will be perpetually working in low paid jobs with little prospect for promotion or advancement. The children of these migrants, as well as those who are legal but unable to find work suitable to their skills and qualification, will be born into a disadvantaged position in life, as are many of the children and grandchildren of the Commonwealth migrants. The negative consequences of the PBS are therefore not confined to migrants' rights today, but are likely to have an impact on the future of multi-ethnic Britain as well.

3.4 The Path to Citizenship and the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act[41]

The second major recent policy development in recent years is the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2009. The Act builds on the PBS's notion of 'selective migration', but adds to it the twin concepts of 'earned citizenship' and 'probationary citizenship', which were first introduced in the Green Paper *The Path to Citizenship*.[42] The thinking behind these concepts is couched in notions of Britishness. The Green Paper states several times and in different ways that this piece of the immigration reforming process is about "putting British values at the heart of the system"[43] and is designed to

"contribute to the government's wider agenda of reinforcing shared values".[44] The ultimate aim is to build community cohesion through promoting shared bonds and values, and ensuring that some communities do not isolate themselves. Importantly, however, this framework presupposes migrants to be undeserving and suspect by default, and that it is therefore both reasonable and acceptable to require them to prove their worthiness and commitment to Britain: "The key feature of the proposed system is that it aims to increase community cohesion by ensuring all migrants can 'earn' the right to citizenship and asks migrants to demonstrate their commitment to the UK by playing an active part in the community".[45] In our response to *The Path to Citizenship*, Runnymede used the Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) to calculate Britain's MIPEX score should these proposals be adopted:

> Given the proposals on economic resources, integration, good character, and active citizenship, the conditions for naturalisation in the UK could go from [a] "middle of the road" (score 57) to becoming some of them [sic] most onerous in Europe, on par with Austria and Denmark (a score of 26).[46]

Nonetheless, the negative and accusatory tone adopted in the Green paper, along with the basic tenets of the concepts of 'probationary' and 'earned citizenship', was implemented in the Act. These concepts are deeply flawed. First, 'probationary citizenship' is a contradiction in terms. As well as certain duties, citizenship in liberal democracies bestows certain rights, most prominently the right to full and equal participation in the political process. Should this be lacking, it is no longer appropriate to speak of citizenship. By breaking down the equality of citizenship, 'probationary citizenship' would amount to a category of second-class citizenship, which is generally regarded as a violation of human rights. Second, if the State declares categories of people to be required to 'earn' basic civil equality, this will obviously affect not

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41 Runnymede has followed these policy agendas closely, and has written several policy responses on this topic. This chapter draws on some of the arguments made elsewhere, developed by Michelynn Laflèche and Kjartan Sveinsson (Runnymede Trust, 2008a; Runnymede Trust, 2008b; Runnymede Trust, 2008c)

42 Home Office (2008)

43 UK Border Agency (2008: 9)

44 Ibid.: 11

45 Ibid.: 12

46 Runnymede Trust (2008a: 2). We are indepted to the Migration Policy Group for providing us with this analysis.

only their self-worth, but also the worth in which other people view them. Thus, the introduction of 'probationary' and 'earned citizenship' is likely to have the opposite of the intended effect and engender resentment and therefore create tension and reduce cohesion.[47]

Despite the fact that I've lived here for 25 years and feel more British than Bolivian, I have a name that is not British, or English, I speak Spanish, I have relatives that are not English. So whatever happens I will be Bolivian by default. (Emilio, Bolivia)

The evidence collected through the Community Studies contradicts the view that migrants do not want to participate in British society, whether socially, civically or economically, and that the government therefore needs to devise policies to force them to do so. Contrary to the assumptions guiding the 'path to citizenship' agenda, there is no inherent contradiction in belonging to more than one place, or committing to more than one location, group of people or set of ideals. Our interviewees saw nothing paradoxical – let alone untoward – with being a British Moroccan, a British-born Vietnamese or a Bolivian Londoner. Even where pride in their cultural heritage was still strongly felt amongst the 2nd and 3rd generations, this did not signal a rejection of British society and its values, but rather the possibility of embracing both. Indeed, for those born in the UK, allegiance to Britain was taken as a given. New migrants, however, were under no illusion that belonging needed to be earned. In this sense, belonging was often formulated in

47 See Osler (2009) for an extended analysis.

terms of contribution, and many interviewees would stress how they work hard, pay their taxes, do not access benefits, play an active part in the local community and wider society, and do not break the law.

Yes, I vote in England, the next one is on the 10th of June; the day after tomorrow […] I try to tell all my friends to make sure they vote too. I believe we must vote in order to have a voice in this country. (Zohra, Morocco)

Even if the objective is to make the most of migrants' contribution to Britain – this stands at the heart of all current government thinking on migration, including how and when to grant citizenship – it would be more fruitful to focus on how migrants can be given a stake in society, rather than placing further and bigger obstacles in their path to citizenship. Such a focus would necessarily have equality and rights at its centre. Yet the issue of rights was lost throughout the entire development of the 'path to citizenship' agenda, and is virtually impossible to find in the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2009. Our Community Studies indicate that migrants and their motivations are not the problem where integration and community cohesion is concerned. Most have fairly modest aims to better the lives of themselves and their family, and therefore have instrumental reasons for wanting to integrate. A bigger threat to integration and community cohesion is the racism and discrimination that places them at a disadvantage in the labour market, belittles their contribution to society, and prevents them from engaging with major British social institutions and taking full part in society.

4. Conclusion

The incremental growth of the number of different ethnic groups finding their way to the UK calls for a clearer understanding of their trajectories, experiences and opportunities, as well as how these developments are shaping multi-ethnic Britain. Runnymede's Community Studies programme has endeavoured to start a dialogue on the changes in Britain's ethnic diversity, and what these changes mean for policy. Vertovec explains that super-diversity is not only about ethnicity, but also immigration status and means of entry.[48] The Community Studies show that these are all intricately connected. It is true that channels and means of migration and legal immigration status have a massive impact on people's life chances in the UK, but these are often determined by nationality, ethnic identity and race.

> I find that people who went to college together will stick like glue and you can't break them up at all. And that really infuriates me that you've come to university for a whole new experience, integrate. I was really worried that I wouldn't be able integrate with Asian people because I never had Asian friends before and now I have so many Asian friends, non-Asian friends, white, black, mixed; it's a good feeling. (Anjali, University Campus)

The two major immigration policy developments discussed in this report – the Points Based System and the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2009 – are in many respects a belated attempt to respond to Britain's super-diversity. As a number of commentators have noted, the official response to increased diversity has been that difference is dangerous; policy must therefore demand sameness.[49] In this sense, we are witnessing a return of the discredited 1960s posture that good 'race relations' depend on strict migration control. 'Community Cohesion' has become the guiding light and the ultimate purpose of migration policies; yet its obsessive focus on ethnic identity, and its discounting of rights and principles of equality, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the aspirations of, and opportunities available to, migrants. Our Community Studies confirm that migrants do not need to be forced to integrate; it is in their own interest to do so. Their greatest barrier to full participation in society – and thereby integration – is racism, discrimination and disempowerment. Migrants want to participate in society, but society does not always allow them to participate as equals.

> On the estate, there's a pretty good mix, I think sometimes that white people on the estate are in a minority. But we all seem to muddle by, one way or another. And as far as I can tell, there's not a lot of racism, as such, on the estate. I think everybody's learnt to live together. (Ben, Crossfield Estate)

It is disheartening that the government's policy responses to Britain's super-diversity tend to ignore the actual experiences of different groups and individuals, how they interact amongst themselves and with others, and how they see their place in Britain. Instead, the value of equality and diversity – and subsequently rights, social justice and respect as well – is being eroded in policy by a view from above that minority ethnic groups and migrants naturally self-segregate and that multiculturalism necessarily leads to ethnic segregation. These policy developments clearly have an impact on race equality in the short term, where the focus is shifting away from tackling ethnic inequalities towards eradicating cultural difference, but the long-term effects are no less significant. The systematic rounding up of migrants from poorer countries into low skilled and low waged employment is "generating a new transnational labor force, stratified not only by skill and ethnicity but also by immigration status."[50]

48 Vertovec (2007)
49 Back et al. (2002); Grillo (2005); Finney and Simpson (2009)
50 Castles (2004: 871)

There is a clear racial bias in the 'biggest shake-up of the UK's border security and immigration system for 45 years'. Nonetheless, the call for separation of immigration from race equality debates is no longer confined to the right wing of politics. In the last decade, it has slowly moved leftwards to develop a broad political consensus that restrictive immigration policies need not verify their equality credentials. Unfortunately, the association between anti-racist and migrants' rights movements appears to follow this pattern. Too often, it seems as though migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from the equalities agenda. When the Equality Bill was introduced, for example, it contained no mention of migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, and the government was not vigorously confronted on this by equality groups. Similarly, the argument for exemption of immigration from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 – which Hugo Young dubbed "the bluntest piece of state-sponsored ethnic discrimination in the 35 years since British parliaments started legislating in the field"[51] – is generally accepted, and race equality groups have not been able to successfully challenge UK Border Agency to provide evidence to prove their race neutrality.

We may join Vertovec in asking "what kind of forums, spaces and networks should be created and supported to stimulate inter-relationships of new-comers and settled communities?"[52] Discussion about super-diversity, and the increasing complexity of the demography of minority ethnic and new migrant groups, is in danger of glossing over what people have in common. Although many problems associated with integration are certainly country specific, and therefore often require targeted solutions, discrimination and disadvantage continues to blight the lives of migrants from the global South.

Developing a collective voice to represent the rights and interests of smaller, more hidden and often voiceless ethnic groups is therefore an important and timely task. However, given the complexity of Britain's ethnic diversity,

> We are becoming stronger. Three or four years ago, it was not like now. But because of these problems we are facing, Cameroonians started thinking that we have to be together to be strong. That's what we are doing right now. (Bernard, Cameroon)

the three platforms on which discrimination is usually fought[53] – civil rights, religious rights and ethnic rights – are not adequate to respond to the various predicaments of new migrants. Obviously, a large part of recent arrivals have no claim on civil rights; not only do they lack citizenship, but some lack full administrative permission to live and work in Britain. Furthermore, working-class Bolivian migrants may have more in common with Romanian or Cameroonian migrant workers than they would with affluent Bolivians, or with their fellow Catholics. It is therefore pivotal to develop a strong migrants' rights discourse. In this sense, there is an urgent need to reconnect the migration and race equality agendas, not only in policy, but also in the 3rd sector and amongst campaigners. If social inclusion and good community relations are to be promoted, Flynn has argued that:

> The relative degree of success in achieving these objectives depends on the capacity of migrant communities to represent their collective interests to the local authorities, to gather allies from amongst other groups in promoting their needs, and their ability to negotiate favourable outcomes with the various levels of power-holders.[54]

An affiliation with other people with similar experiences of the migratory process, but not necessarily of the same ethnic group, could provide various new migrant groups with support and a forum through which they could learn about and collectively pursue their rights.

Contrary to the assumptions guiding the policy developments discussed in this report,

51 Young (2001)
52 Vertovec (2007: 30)
53 Cf. Baumann (1999)
54 Flynn (2006: 2)

We've got to communicate with other groups, they've got experience in this country. I want to learn their culture. And you may be interested to know my culture as well. It's why we came here. To get a view of different cultures from different countries. It's why we are here. (Victor, Cameroon)

there was a strong feeling amongst our interviewees that strong identities and intra- community relations need to be nurtured in order to achieve community cohesion and integration. A potent and healthy ethnic identity is in a symbiotic relationship with community cohesion: one appears to be dependent on and nurture the other. Pride in one's ethnic origin, it was argued, would present people with a platform on which they could constructively interact with other groups. Indeed, the multi-ethnic character of Britain is a welcoming environment to build and retain a strong ethnic identity, which is vital for new migrants to feel part of our community of communities.

5. Recommendations

1. Immigration policies need to be reconnected to and informed by principles of race equality. The exemption of immigration from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 should be abolished. At minimum, the Immigration Race Monitor should be reinstated.

2. The Points Based System should be subjected to a thorough, general review examining whether it has promoted equality and cohesion. A Race Equality Impact Assessment should be conducted, which should include medium to long-term consequences of the hierarchical nature of the PBS, and the effects of low-skill jobs being filled by A8 and third country nationals. Ethnic monitoring data should be collected in relation to the PBS, and annual summaries of BME data should be produced and published.

3. There is a need for a better and clearer connect between migrants' skills and the structure of the labour market. A wide range of professions and jobs require a combination of general educational qualifications, work experience and the presence of soft skills of various types. The narrow formalism of the PBS ignores many of these, which leads to the deskilling of certain groups of migrants. The Government should consider the ways in which migration policies influence deskilling, and their effects on brain drain and brain waste.

4. The Government should consider an amnesty for irregular migrant workers. The benefits of a carefully designed regularization programme have been demonstrated by the Greater London Authority[55] to outweigh the costs; more importantly, a regularization programme would have a positive impact on the welfare of migrants and the communities in which they live.

5. 'Earned citizenship' and 'probationary citizenship' are unjust and illogical concepts. The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 should be amended to eliminate discussion of earned and probationary citizenship.

6. The meaning of 'integration' in public policy needs to be clarified. Any definition of 'integration' should have at its core principles of rights and equality. Rather, 'integration' should focus on justice, equality and democracy. There is a greater threat to our shared values from the British-born supporters of the British National Party than from disadvantaged migrants from Africa, Asia or Latin America, who are fundamentally concerned with building a better life for themselves and their children in a safer and more just society.

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55   GLA Economics (2009)

Appendix 1: Summaries of the Community Studies

Bolivians in London –
Challenges and Achievements of a London Community

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

Despite the evident impact that Latin Americans have made on the cultural life of Londoners, their presence has to date gone fairly unnoticed by both local authorities and national government; nor has it generated much academic interest. Little is actually empirically known about Latin Americans, and their interests are often overlooked by the authorities as a result of being consigned to the category of 'Other'.

We don't know for certain how many Bolivians are living in London, but estimates range between 10,000 and 20,000. Bolivians have been arriving in London since the late-1960s. Initially there were not so many, but more recent years have seen a substantial increase in Bolivian migrants finding their way to London. This has led to a divide within the Bolivian community: long-term residents who largely came to London as spouses or under a work permit system; and those who have migrated here within the last few years. In spite of many common motivations and experiences, the two groups have little contact with each other.

Documentation was a topic of great importance to the interviewees, in practical as well as ideological terms. It was generally felt that documents and legal status illustrate with great clarity the social and economic topography of Bolivians in London. However, there was a distinct disparity in the experiences of long-term residents and the recent arrivals. The long-term residents interviewed for this study all came to the UK via official channels, and mostly complained about the stigma attached to their nationality. As Gabriel put it: 'It's a stigma. Colombia, Bolivia, you're definitely carrying drugs. For sure, you get victimised for being Bolivian.'

The experiences of recently arrived Bolivian migrants are different. Interviewees said that irregular immigration status is common amongst recent arrivals, irrespective of their original motives for migrating or their social status back home. This creates a financial uncertainty exacerbated by the fact that the only work available to them is poorly paid, often below the national minimum wage, and certainly well below the recommended living wage for London. All recent arrivals had at some point worked in the cleaning industry, in which exploitation of irregular migrants is common.

The immigration status of recent arrivals is one factor undermining intra-community cohesion, as many long-term residents feared the consequences of helping irregular migrants. Many interviewees commented on this, and how this could be remedied. Strengthening people's sense of Bolivian-ness was considered key in this respect: creating an interest in Bolivian people amongst the local population, it was argued, would provide Bolivians with a platform for unification through collective pride in their culture. Thus, the celebration and promotion of Bolivian culture is not just for Bolivians, but was felt to be instrumental in paving the way for integration with British society as well.

If a complex and essentially elusive term such as 'integration' could be quantified, one could say that Bolivians integrate well to London life. In this respect, the multicultural aspect of London was cited as a facilitator for integration. The discrimination described by interviewees was primarily experienced at an institutional level. While many interviewees said they had experienced racism from the public, this was not considered to be a prominent part of life in London. Rather, the multicultural character of London allows for being both a Bolivian and a Londoner, fostering a sense of belonging.

Still, most were of the opinion that a potent Bolivian identity is in a symbiotic relationship with intra-community cohesion. Pride in Bolivian-ness, it was argued, would present Bolivians with a platform from which they could constructively interact with other groups.

The Vietnamese Community in Great Britain – Thirty Years On

Jessica Mai Sims

The Vietnamese are just one of the many ethnic groups in the United Kingdom that never quite make it into the public consciousness. Unlike their perceived cultural ally, the Chinese community, the Vietnamese community is very small.

Despite the majority of refugees from Vietnam being in fact ethnically Chinese, there is a definite division between people of Vietnamese background and the Chinese community in the UK. The reality of the Vietnamese flight from Vietnam as political refugees is just one reason why the two communities might not see eye to eye. Mr Lê, who works in a Vietnamese community organization, puts it this way:

> In terms of the Chinese, apart from having Soho, they also have a very strong business network. And because they are not refugees, they are immigrants mainly from Hong Kong; and there are also Chinese students. They have very close contact with the Chinese Embassy; last year for the New Year they had quite a lot of financial support from the government. This is something that would never happen in the Vietnamese community.

Unlike the Chinese, who have a longer history in the UK, the Vietnamese are not monitored by the government as a settled minority. Any monitoring that does occur is often in the category of 'country of birth' which totally disregards the generation of Vietnamese born in the UK. So not as much is known about the Vietnamese community as one might expect, and the task of understanding them, and their place in wider British society, is enough of a challenge to qualify them as one of many 'less visible' communities in Britain.

Despite the majority of Vietnamese people having come to Britain nearly thirty years ago as refugees, there has been no large-scale study of their experiences here. Since the first influx of Vietnamese refugees, subsequent 'waves' of immigration have taken the form of family reunions, overseas students, asylum-seekers and undocumented workers. Yet this community remains largely overlooked. Arriving as refugees, the first Vietnamese migrated to the UK under unfavourable economic conditions. Most of them were from rural backgrounds with challenging social conditions, and were largely completely new to the English language and British society and culture. Once in the UK, these refugees were forcibly dispersed around the country into what were effectively pockets of isolation.

Existing research into the Vietnamese community has concentrated on the first large wave of immigration, or the first refugees. This information gives us a picture of the Vietnamese as poorly educated, with few transferable employment skills and a debilitating lack of English language competence – but the information largely stops there. From anecdotal accounts one could infer that, emerging from this disadvantaged background, the next generation have been seizing opportunities in education and employment in order to raise their position in society. But the lack of information we have on the Vietnamese makes it extremely difficult to isolate and address problems that segments of this population may be facing. Without knowing the barriers associated with engaging with the community, service providers will be hard pressed to deliver equitable service.

Not only is lack of information on the Vietnamese community a key issue that emerged from this research but also participation from this group. One cannot think of the Vietnamese community solely as the refugees who arrived nearly 30 years ago, and their British born children. Nowadays the composition of the Vietnamese community is varied. The different subcategories that we assume make up a Vietnamese community – the first-generation refugees, the British-born Vietnamese, the undocumented migrants, the asylum seekers, the overseas students – will have their own set of pressing socio-economic issues. Equating the

needs of the 'community' with the needs for every Vietnamese individual would be impractical if not contradictory. In order to attempt to understand the dynamics of the Vietnamese population in Britain today, some in-depth and long-term research would need to be done. What we are presenting here is an initial sample of the views of Vietnamese people we were in contact with via a range of community groups. Our report attempts to discuss obstacles to engaging with Vietnamese people as a group, such as language barriers, their perceived lack of confidence in accessing public institutions, and internal divisions within the community.

The second section of the report explores the identity of British born Vietnamese (BBV) who are constructing their identities from the influences of their parents' more traditionally Vietnamese values and those of British society. This group, for whom language and familiarity with institutions do not pose barriers, focus more on cultural discovery and recognition. The issues surrounding the identity of the second generation provide insight into how small and dispersed communities, like the Vietnamese community, can transmit and perpetuate cultural traditions across subsequent generations and why this cultural identity is important.

Though small in scale this report aims to present the reader with a snapshot of the Vietnamese community in Britain, with particular focus on the London area. The principal use of this report will be to provide a general-interest briefing on one of the many groups that make up multi-ethnic Britain, which will assist policy makers in their task of interpreting the key issues and barriers to inclusion that segments of the Vietnamese community face, and to some extent that second generation of Vietnamese themselves, who may be searching for commonality and belonging both within the Vietnamese community and British society.

This research hopes to stimulate debate within the Vietnamese community about what it means to be British Vietnamese, and set up a broader conversation among the wider society on the subject of what is really known about groups swallowed up by the 'Other' ethnic group category. Our brief picture of the Vietnamese community highlights the issues of lack of information, participation and inclusion of Vietnamese people in British society, and what a British Vietnamese identity may look like through the eyes of its second generation.

Bienvenue? –
Narratives of Francophone Cameroonians

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

Since the 1990s, the numbers of Francophone Africans settling in the UK have increased dramatically, a trend that is changing the profile of the African presence in London. However, few empirical studies have been conducted on Francophone Africans in Britain. This is an unfortunate situation, because it is clear that many of the issues faced by French speaking Africans are not necessarily shared by their English speaking neighbours.

The Francophone Cameroonian community in London provides unique insights into the issues faced by Francophone Africans in Britain generally. Although the majority of Cameroon is French speaking, there is a substantial minority of English speakers as well. While the tensions between the two groups in Cameroon do not appear to translate over to London, most of the interviewees of the study stated that there is little contact between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians in London, where French speaking Cameroonians tend to form links with other Francophone African communities, while English speaking Cameroonians tend to associate themselves with other Anglophone Africans, such as Nigerians and Ghanaians. This may, to a certain extent, reflect differences in cultural preferences of the two groups. However, the divide between them also represents different barriers to social and economic inclusion they face in London, largely due to differing migratory experiences.

The interviewees spoke about five main barriers. First and foremost, none of the Francophone interviewees spoke English when they first arrived. This presented them with problems in the labour market, in education, and adaptation to British society. Second, and connected to the previous point, many interviewees commented on how the British administrative system is different from the Cameroonian system, which largely follows the French model. This was most apparent in terms of education, where a large part of interviewees had studied at university in Cameroon, and had a hard time getting their qualifications recognized in Britain, which in turn led them to take on jobs well below their level of skill.

The third barrier to social participation, as outlined by interviewees, is the discrimination they have had to endure as Francophone Africans. While African-ness figured prominently in this, so did language. Some interviewees stated that the British public tends to make a connection between Francophone Africa and refugee issues. As there is discrimination against refugees generally, their identification as refugees would consequently lead to discrimination. Fourth, poverty and lack of finance was seen as a fundamentally marginalizing element where participation in British society was concerned. Many interviewees said that they had endured financial hardship in London. Fifth, and a direct consequence of the previous four barriers, interviewees said that a lack of confidence was a major problem for Francophone Cameroonians, for instance in seeking jobs in accord with their level of skill, or dealing with situations where they actually have rights. Taken together, the five barriers to participation in British society, as identified by the interviewees, illustrate with great clarity how and why many Francophone Cameroonians feel both voiceless and invisible.

There is another important consequence of the deskilling and social exclusion many of the interviewees had been through. Remittances were said to be of utmost importance, and not getting a job in accord with their skills severely hampered the interviewees' capacity to send money to family back home, which was a source of great anxiety. Furthermore, many interviewees expressed aspirations to one day return to Cameroon with experiences and enhanced skills acquired in the UK, or using these skills to set up business links between Britain and Cameroon. While skilled migration has certainly been recognized as a powerful tool for international development, the conditions for generating potentially positive effects of skilled migration do not seem to be present in the UK, neither for return migration nor transnational business networks.

Importantly, however, it would be a grave error to ignore the agency and great resourcefulness of Francophone Cameroonians in London, who are not willing to become helpless victims of circumstance. Extensive participation in community organizations, as well as highly effective social networks set up to provide mutual help, illustrate the aptitude of Cameroonians to change – or if change is out of reach, adapt to – the adverse situations they may find themselves in.

Not Enough Understanding? –

Student Experiences of Diversity at UK Universities

Jessica Mai Sims

Much like society at large, the university is a site where issues surrounding equality, difference and cohesion are becoming more pronounced. With policies intended to provide greater opportunities for 'non-traditional' students – students from underrepresented ethnic, racial, age, ability and socioeconomic groups – more attention must be paid to building up the university environment into something more inclusive in its appeal. Besides, universities have the legal duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between those of different racial groups.

The relationship between UK universities and diversity in student populations is a positive one, as BME students are more likely to attend university, but it merits more attention. Universities are far from offering equal opportunities, as BME students are more likely to be concentrated at modern universities in London, are less likely to perform as well as their white peers, and are more likely to be unemployed after graduation. Additionally, the racial climate on campuses could do with greater intervention, as reports of faith groups feeling victimized and vulnerable in the university environment are on the rise.

The positive outlook is that there is diversity, and when properly utilized this diversity has implications for a more tolerant society becoming more comfortable with its multi-ethnic character. However, besides improving academic opportunities for BME students, universities must in turn place greater emphasis on social opportunity to foster university student communities as positive learning environments.

'State University' (SU), the university discussed in the paper, is one of those few universities that have a high intake of BME students. In focus groups with SU students, it was revealed that SU's diverse student body was an asset to the university, but also provided some unease. The students felt that many friendship groups were made up of students who were visibly similar to each other and that this may be an indication of segregation and hostility to engaging with others. Students were unsure whether groups formed themselves out of choice or exclusion from the mainstream, but they did believe that the university should take a stronger role in promoting more opportunities for all to meet students of different backgrounds.

Student clubs and societies offered an extensive range of opportunities for many students, but some felt that these associations were mainly for people who had a prior connection. There was a consensus between the students that culturally based societies (such as those based on faith or cultural background) and 'mainstream' societies (such as sports and academic interest) did not do enough to reach out to non-traditional potential members. 'Mainstream' associations, while not exclusive to any particular ethnic group, were believed to be largely comprised of white British students (with a few 'token' minority ethnic students) largely because many of their activities involved drinking, which exclude non-drinking students in general, and Muslim students in particular. Students felt that both culturally defined societies as well as mainstream clubs needed to rethink how they could promote a welcoming environment to students of all backgrounds.

The presence of diversity on campus does not necessarily mean that students will have an improved understanding of each other or their diversity, as improved understanding is necessarily dependent on interaction. Numerous studies have shown that interactions with close friends of a different race or ethnicity is a powerful way for students to accrue the educational benefits of enhanced self-confidence, motivation, intellectual and civic development, educational aspirations, cultural awareness and commitment to racial equity, and the likelihood of developing these attributes is enhanced when they experience a racially diverse student body.[56] In the study, the students felt that university staff needed to lead more strongly in promoting cross-cultural dialogue to build a stronger university community.

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56   Chang et al. (2006: 432) and Chang et al. (2005:525)

Creating Connections –
Regeneration and Consultation on a Multi-Ethnic Council Estate

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

Council estates are often considered to be characterized by 'inner-city misery'[57] in the public imagination, blighted by deprivation and dysfunctional social dynamics, a situation for which estate residents are often themselves blamed.[58] On a multi-ethnic council estate, the situation is seen as being even more desperate and dangerous, where different ethnic groups living 'parallel lives' present the state and wider society with a potential time-bomb of ethnic tensions. The multi-ethnic council estate of Crossfield – in Deptford, Borough of Lewisham, south-east London – poses a serious challenge to both assumptions.

On Crossfield, distinct ethnic identities are cherished as an indispensable part of the meaning of Crossfield as a cohesive community. Generally speaking, and irrespective of their ethnicity, the interviewees who took part in the study were of the opinion that overt racism is not part of everyday life on the estate. This did not amount to a denial of ethnic differences, but the diverse and multi-ethnic character of the estate was pronounced to be a good thing. What unites the residents is a commitment to 'our area,' manifested in a range of different ways, such as everyday courtesies, practical help, and strong and lasting friendships. In this way, the meaning ascribed to the notion of 'community' is racially inclusive. Thus, the strong ethos of multiculturalism has not led the ethnically diverse inhabitants of Crossfield to live 'parallel lives' or to self-segregate.

This is not to say that the estate is free from tension. However, this tension was said to exist between different socio-economic groups, rather than racial groups. Although interviewees were not uniform in their opinions about the implications of this, all had the impression that there is little social mixing between themselves and the more affluent inhabitants of Deptford. Situated in the Thames Gateway zone of change, Deptford is in the midst of a major regeneration initiative, with a number of new developments. The Crossfield residents weighed up both positive and negative potentials of these, particularly the prospect of the introduction of a more affluent – or 'posh' – group of people into the historically poor area of Creekside and Deptford. Some could identify several benefits of upmarket developments, which mostly revolved around public services and improvements in the physical environment. A number of other residents, however, were more ambivalent towards the effects of regeneration. The crux of their argument was scepticism towards the intentions of the council's planning department and, particularly, property developers. Many voiced suspicions of ulterior motives, where the needs and views of council tenants would largely fall by the wayside.

It is clear that community cohesion is just as much about socio-economic status as it is about race. Tunstall has argued that 'mixed tenure' has long been a mere euphemism for privatization,[59] and we may add that this euphemism is painted in the colours of 'community' to give it "a more progressive and sympathetic cachet."[60] This appears to be the case with recent and ongoing developments in Deptford, where demolished or converted social housing units are not replaced by new ones. As Lewisham Council states itself: "The Council believes that it should not be obliged to require additional social housing in locations where there is already an 'over-provision' of that tenure."[61] Apart from the dangers of disruption and displacement, the extent to which mixed tenure in new housing developments manages to generate "a more viable and sustainable mix of households in areas of residualised social housing"[62] largely depends on how this policy is realized in practice.

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57 Baeten (2004)
58 Bauder (2002)

59 Tunstall (2003)
60 Cochrane (2003)
61 Lewisham (2005)
62 Ibid.

Living Transnationally
– Romanian Migrants in London

Andreea R. Torre

The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in January this year became the subject of intense media scrutiny and public anxiety. Indeed, Romanians – and to some extent Bulgarians – have in many ways taken the place of Polish immigrants on the tabloid front pages. Parts of the British media, along with certain segments of the political landscape, have contributed to an image of Eastern European migrants as poor, uneducated, inclined to crime and difficult to integrate. Romanian migrants in London actually pose serious challenges to these assumptions.

It is not entirely clear how many Romanians live in Britain. According to the 2001 census, they numbered 7,500; the most recent estimates of the Labour Force survey, however, recorded 19,096 Romanian citizens residing in the UK. A significant presence of Romanian nationals is found in Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Cardiff, but London is by far the main destination. Within London, Romanians tend to be dispersed but the northern boroughs have a greater concentration.

Contrary to many popular accounts, a considerable part of migrant workers from Eastern Europe, working in the building, catering, cleaning or domestic industries, are not only not criminals but often have medium to high levels of education and professional expertise. This paradox reflects an established dichotomy, one which currently informs much of the immigration policy agenda: that of skilled vs. unskilled and wanted vs. un-wanted migrants. The experience of a growing population of Romanian migrants living and working in the 'super-diverse' city of London illustrate this well.

When analysing migratory experiences, it is important not to adopt an exclusive focus on the impact of the macro–structures, such as the state and its policies or other large scale institutional factors, but to consider these carefully in relation to the motivations and actions of individuals and groups involved. Motivations, as well as individual or collective decisions, are not predetermined or permanent, and may change over time. Decisions regarding the time-period of migration, for example, cannot be easily delimited. People may set out for a particular destination, but then spend time – often prolonged periods – in other countries en route. This is apparent amongst Romanian migrants. Some of the interviewees of this study expressed their desire to return to Romania, but for some this desire was complicated with what they felt was best for their families. Besides family, legal status, transnational connections and economic situations influence migrants' reasons to stay, return or to move on. For the interviewees, along with the drive to provide more opportunities for themselves and their families, they had to work within the context of a popular feeling of anti-immigration, as conveyed through the media.

Though existing literature concerning Romanian migration in Europe is sparse, the few studies conducted to date have revealed that Romanian migrants are involved in several types of transnational activities. Activities range from community-wide organized projects to contact with the homeland such as remittance sending, regular and temporary returns, regular phone calls, or watching satellite television. While many of these contacts are on a small scale, they nonetheless represent a significant way of maintaining a continuous engagement with the homeland. Indeed, Romanian migrants in London keep family links very much alive in spite of the distance. The use of new media to keep family links strong means that family back in Romania are able to actively participate in emigrants' economic and social life despite geographical distance; families are able to feel close which has an important role to play in the everyday life of Romanians abroad.

A significant proportion of Romanians leaving their country of origin to work in Western Europe are prepared to accept employment below their qualifications, as well as a salary below the national average. As a consequence, many Romanians end up in the informal labour market, even following Romania's accession to the EU. This is certainly the case for many

Romanian migrants in Britain. As a result, many Romanians in London must adopt continuous adjustment and renegotiation strategies in order to settle and gain access to the local labour market. This type of situation may have dramatic results – especially when the decision to migrate was infused with dreams, hopes and expectations – unless people manage to maintain a positive attitude towards navigating this new reality. In spite of deskilling, harsh working environments and often poor living conditions, many interviewees would refer to themselves not as victims, but – and primarily – as individuals who have responsibilities and who are ready to work hard in order to achieve what is needed for themselves or their families. Ultimately, however, many have surrendered to the exploitative nature of work in the informal sector because it is a step up from their past experiences in Romania.

Migration towards Western Europe often includes large numbers of educated Eastern Europeans who experience downward social and economic mobility instead of improvement. This issue, which emerged time and again in discussions with Romanians interviewed for this study, has significant implications for integration policies for new migrants. Recent qualitative investigations among different groups of migrants throughout Europe have shown a common mismatching between migrants' qualifications and their low-paid jobs, as well as common experiences of deskilling. Nonetheless, the distinction between 'skilled' and 'unskilled' migrants – the latter referring particularly to migrants employed in the low-paid jobs of the secondary and tertiary sectors – still persists. This distinction is becoming the core divide in the development of the managed migration policies which most of the EU nation-states, including the UK, are adopting. A major implication of this approach is the creation, at both policy and public debate levels, of a split between 'wanted' and 'unwanted' migrants. So called 'highly-skilled' professionals receive little or no criticism while those migrants who fill the low-income jobs not attractive to the native population are seen as a threat to the stability and 'social cohesion' of the destination country.

Empowering Individuals and Creating Community

– Thai Perspectives on Life in Britain

Jessica Mai Sims

The UK has a history of strong diplomatic relations with Thailand, which has manifested itself through military alliance, tourism, trade, investment, education and more recently sport. According to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK is Thailand's largest European export market and largest European investor. Also the numbers visiting Thailand from the UK are unmatched by those from other western countries.[63] Considering these existing connections, it is unsurprising that there is also movement from Thailand to the UK.

According to the last Census, nearly three out of four people born in Thailand and living in the UK were reported as females. Home Office data further substantiates this speculation – figures in *Control of Immigration* for the years 2003–5 have shown that 64 per cent of total grants of settlement for Thai nationals have been given to 'wives' compared to 3 per cent for 'husbands'. Also, during the years between 2001 and 2006 data from the series *Persons Granted British Citizenship United Kingdom* show that the majority of Thai nationals naturalized as UK citizens were marriage migrants, whereas only one-third of citizenship grants occurred through residence. Since so many more Thai women have settled in the UK than men, it is likely that many of these women are in ethnically mixed relationships.

When conceptualizing the 'Thai community', the interplay between gender, location, migration and family structure becomes central. Because of the evidence of gender imbalance and the perception that Thais are a migrant group, this community study has an admitted bias towards the experiences of migrant Thai women. However, the research does include the voices of a variety of people with some affiliation to Thais or Thailand through three different forms of primary qualitative research, in-depth qualitative interviews, two separate focus groups and a detailed household survey, and by means of these different research methods, the experiences of Thais – and their families – who are marriage migrants, overseas students, overseas workers and British-born are expressed in this new report.

The areas of education, employment, health, discrimination and community development were all discussed by the research participants. Because Thais represent a migrant group, their health and well-being is influenced by living in a new country where rights and entitlements, language and culture are often different from those of their home country. For those who are migrating, employment becomes a primary condition for settlement. Many Thai migrants reported the need for employment-related training to adjust their qualifications and English-language classes to help them improve their employment capabilities. Since many Thais are involved in the restaurant and hotels industry, their employment concerns are related to business training and support and low-paid work subject to unsociable hours. As a result, their ability to care for their families and make friends can be circumscribed by their lack of English language skills and restrictive work schedules. Beyond socializing and employment opportunities, the Thai women involved in the research recognized the need for fluency in English to help them make informed choices and lead independent lives. For example, many feared that language barriers combined with ignorance of rights would lead to otherwise avoidable health risks and even render Thai women more vulnerable to domestic violence.

Compounding these policy areas was the overwhelming feeling projected by the research participants that Thai people are stereotyped and discriminated against in British society. In the UK Thai women are often negatively viewed as 'Thai brides' – commodities bought through agencies – when they are the more customary complex mix of women, wives, mothers, workers and citizens.[64] For example, a survey respondent from Glasgow felt she has been specifically harassed,

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63 Renton (2005)

64 Piper and Roces (2003)

'Not by being Thai, but by being a Thai woman and married to a white man', while a White British man from London remarked on how this kind of discrimination towards Thai women is tolerated: 'If it was another nationality, it would probably be deemed as racism, or at the very least, sexism'.

Despite experiences of discrimination within British society, the research participants wanted to 'reach out to their local communities' – an ambition that has also been expressed in a separate research sample of Thais living in Bath.[65] By planning summer festivals, Thai holiday celebrations and taking part in other events showcasing Thai performance arts, some of the research participants hoped to challenge stereotypes through the promotion of positive images. Organizations consulted during the research, such as the Bournemouth Thai Language School, Thai3Counties Advice Line, the Thai Cultural Association in Wales and more informal locally based social clubs, are all examples of these emerging grassroots efforts. The services and activities these organizations provide also feed into community development initiatives aiming to boost Thai

migrants into active citizens by providing them with opportunities to express their alternative representations of Thai people and culture, and by educating them in an appreciation of their rights and entitlements.

However, because Thai women are located in many different areas, reflecting where their husbands have already settled, a lot of the locally centred community initiatives are working in isolation. This has left the research participants with the feeling that there is a Thai community in their area, but not a unified Thai community in the UK. Also, because many of the interviewees were women in ethnically mixed marriages, Thai 'families' do not necessarily fit within the mainstream conception of community as representing a singular or discrete ethnic identity. The widespread locations of Thai people, and their families' associated 'mixedness',[66] pose challenges to Thais seeking to organize nationwide community activities and policy makers seeking to engage with Thais as a group. Despite these challenges Thais are filling the gaps left by mainstream service providers for targeted services while lobbying for increased recognition of the specific issues facing other Thais.

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65   Prentice et al. (2006)

66   Sims (2007)

Understanding Diversity – South Africans in Multi-Ethnic Britain

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

South Africans are one of the largest foreign national groups in the UK. According to the 2001 census, there were 132,300 South Africans living in Britain in that year, but analysts expect this figure to be closer to 750,000.[67] This places them amongst the most populous immigrant groups in the UK. South Africans are not by any means invisible – there are numerous South African bars and shops across London as well as newspapers and sports magazines, and a number of South African expats have become well known figures in British public life. Nonetheless, as an immigrant group they have sparked little interest in the national media – certainly much less than far smaller groups such as Romanians – or indeed in academic research.[68] Phrases such as 'community cohesion' and 'ethnic segregation' are seldom evoked when speaking of South African migrants, and South Africans are not considered to be adding to the migrant pressure on public services such as housing.

South African migration to the UK has a long history, and has seen a number of peaks: most notably in the periods of 1960-1, 1976-9, 1984-6 and from 1999 to more or less the present day. During apartheid, these were mostly reactions to political and social events in South Africa, such as the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and the Soweto uprising of 1976, as well as a series of legislative changes cementing the realities of apartheid. The latest wave, however, has been triggered by a number of factors, including concerns about violence and high crime rates, a struggling economy and job insecurity, declining quality of public services, and general pessimism about the future of South Africa.

At the end of apartheid, Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the term Rainbow Nation to capture South Africa's ethnic and cultural diversity. This diversity is apparent in the demographic makeup of the South African presence in Britain. Proportionately, however, these communities are not representative of South Africa; while the overwhelming majority of South Africans are black, the reverse appears to be true in the UK. Accurate figures are hard to come by, as the 2001 census is likely to be out of date. However, the biggest group is without doubt white South Africans. Although the ratio between English speakers and Afrikaners is unclear, some interviewees suggested that Afrikaners could currently comprise up to a quarter of all South Africans in the UK, and that their numbers are growing. The Jewish South African community is also notable, which according to the 2001 census, comprises 9 per cent of South Africans in London.

The themes discussed in the report differ in significant ways from Runnymede's previous Community Studies. South Africans are affluent and well off relative to many other migrant communities, such as Bolivians or Vietnamese. For instance, the South African employment rate is amongst the highest in London, with a notable concentration in high paid sectors of employment.[69] Thus, a comparison between South Africans and other migrant groups can be revealing in many ways. For example, the visa application process has become a professionalized and remunerative business, with a number of companies and agencies offering to manage the whole process of UK programmes, work permits and visas available to South Africans. As one interviewee put it:

> The whole thing has been professionalised now, so you don't even go through governments … as a South African you're dealing with a professionally run company, and you say 'Do you think I'll be able to do X, Y and Z? Will I be able to get this kind of visa?' They process everything for you, they give you an answer back.

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67 Dr Robert Crawford (personal communication)

68 The most conclusive study to date is Mark Israel's *South African Political Exile in the United Kingdom* (1999). However, three studies were being conducted at the same time as this one: Dr Robert Crawford of Menzies Centre for Australian Studies/King's College London; Max Andrucki for the University of Leeds; and the International Organization for Migration.

69 Data Management and Analysis Group (2005a)

In this way, South Africans have access to resources not readily available to less affluent migrant groups, and are therefore more likely to be successful in their visa or work permit applications. Furthermore, many South Africans are eligible to enter the UK on an ancestry visa, which gives permission to stay and work for five years and the right to apply for permanent residency. Many of the interviewees of this study had entered Britain this way. The concept of ancestry visas raises problematic questions about access to citizenship, as it implies that some people are genetically more entitled to citizenship than others. This is particularly apparent in the case of South Africa, where the 'ancestry' lines are clearly drawn along racial categories.

However, South Africans can also teach us a lot about how migrant groups can successfully organize themselves in order to optimize their opportunities in Britain. Throughout the apartheid period, South Africans were able to organize themselves, and the exile diaspora, centred in Britain, played an instrumental part in the fight against apartheid. Today, South Africans are an immigrant success story, with a high employment rate and concentration in highly paid sectors. They have also managed to elude anti-immigrant sentiments from the right wing press in a way EU8 migrants have not.

Soldiers, Migrants and Citizens –
The Nepalese in Britain

Jessica Mai Sims

The Brigade of the Gurkhas have been considered the fiercest of fighters and have been part of the British Army for almost 200 years. After the handover of Hong Kong to China, they have been stationed in the UK and have recently won rights to permanently settle in UK upon retirement. While not a distinct community in Nepal, with the increase of retired Gurkhas setting in the UK they have started to form a community in the UK.

As of the last Census there were nearly 6,000 people born in Nepal living in the UK, of which 75 per cent lived outside of London. In the UK there are approximately twice as many men than women, which may be largely attributed to Gurkha recruitment only being open to men. At any time there are approximately 3,000 Gurkha soldiers stationed in the UK, which account for almost a third of the Army's foreign personnel.[70]

In 2004 retired Gurkhas who have served for over four years won the right to settle permanently in the UK.[71] The regulations allow for further eligibility for citizenship after 12 months of UK residence. Most likely taking advantage of the new regulations, there was a substantial rise in grants of settlement to nationals of Nepal. Grants of settlement rose from 3,095 in 2004, to 3,610 to 2005, and in 2006, Nepal ranked fourth on the top ten countries granted settlement with 6,940 grants of settlement.[72] The sharp increase in grants of settlement is most likely due to retired Gurkhas exercising their right to settlement upon retirement.

Along with grants of settlement, an indication of the size of the settled Nepalese population in the UK is through the grants of British citizenship. Since 2004, grants of citizenship to people from Nepal have been mostly due to residence and have increased. Between 2004 and 2005 the total grants of British citizenship rose dramatically by over 300 per cent from 195 to 655, with a further 915 grants of citizenship made in 2006.[73]

Areas in Hampshire, North Yorkshire and Kent are assumed to have the concentrations of Nepalese people because of the presence of military bases. In Hampshire, there are approximately 6,000 Nepalese people living in the areas of Farnborough and Aldershot, most likely due to the Aldershot Garrison.[74] Folkestone, Kent is home to the Royal Gurkha Rifles – there are an estimated 200 families in the area.[75] These families probably arrive in the area because of the Army, but may even stay after retirement because of the small Nepalese community that has formed - between 2002 and 2007 there were over 1,700 new National Insurance numbers given to people from Nepal in Kent County Council.[76] While this does not equate to a settled population, it does show a steady flow of migrant workers from Nepal into Kent; they were in the top ten countries for new NI numbers for every year except 2004-05.[77] It is then not unreasonable to assume that the 2001 Census figures are an undercount of the current Nepalese community in the UK.

In October 2007, the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation UK (GAESO) held a meeting in coordination with the London Borough of Hounslow for the local Nepalese community to communicate their main issues to the council, and it was a chance for the local councillors to meet the local community and tell them what the council can do for them. The meeting was attended by retired Gurkhas, their wives and their children, or approximately 300 people out of an estimated 350 families in Hounslow.

After a presentation from Cllr Paul Lynch (Chiswick, Riverside) on the council's services, the families broke into discussion groups

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70 BBC (2006)
71 BBC (2004). There have been significant developments since the publication of this Community Study. In May 2009, Gurkhas who retired before 1997 won the right to live in the UK with their family. Until then, only Gurkhas who retired after July 1997 – the year that their headquarters left Hong Kong – were allowed to become resident in the UK. Those who retired before this date were only given this right under special circumstances.
72 Home Office (2005; 2006)

73 Mensah (2006, 2007); Woollacott (2005)
74 Bayman (2005)
75 BBC Inside Out (2005)
76 KCC Analysis and Information Team (2007)
77 Ibid.

to discuss key issues that are facing their community. Issues ranged from benefits, employment and training to community safety, however mainly centred on children and young people's services. Parents at the meeting were concerned with their children's safety from racial and sexual harassment and intimidation. Worried about the impact of their working schedules, the parents felt that the odd shifts and long hours they worked were interfering with maintaining relationships with their children.

Because most young people in the community were in secondary school and further education, the most pressing issue for the group was the residency requirement to qualify for EU home tuition fees in university. The adults argued that the residency requirement for home fees was inconsistent with the special settlement rights for retired Gurkhas and their families, and that international fees were too expensive for many families to afford. These inconsistencies also applied to their children's inability to join the British armed forces – if their children were in Nepal they could join the Brigade of the Gurkhas, but while in the UK as Nepalese nationals, they are unable to join the military.

The concerns of the Gurkha families may be similar to other Nepalese in the UK; however, their special immigration status may put them at an advantage to other Nepalese migrants. During the meeting in Hounslow, a question asked was whether Gurkhas and their families form a unique community apart from a broader Nepalese community. Aside from the Gurkha, in the UK there is also evidence of Nepalese people arriving as asylum seekers, students and professionals. In the Community Study report, we explore the impact of these different backgrounds on a broader conception of the Nepalese community, and also seek the voices of young people as to what they feel will be the future of Nepalese people in the UK.

British Moroccans –
Citizenship in Action

Myriam Cherti

A walk down Golborne Road in London - commonly known as 'little Morocco' - reveals a myriad of Moroccan-owned cafés, restaurants, grocery stores, mosques, supplementary schools and community organizations. The presence of a thriving Moroccan community could not be more evident. Yet little is actually known about British Moroccans, who remain officially and statistically invisible.

There is a long-standing and well established economic and diplomatic relationship between Morocco and Britain that goes back to the 13th century.[78] Thus, it should come as no surprise that Moroccan migration to Britain has a long history, and dates back to at least the 19th century.[79] Moroccans, according to Lydia Collins,[80] were among the pioneers in Manchester where they made up a sizeable proportion of the Sephardic community in its early years. However, this migratory movement, along with its stories and lived experiences, remains one of the most 'invisible' and least researched in Western Europe. Indeed, little is actually known about British Moroccans. The exact size of the Moroccan community in Britain is not known, although some unofficial sources suggest they might number 65,000 to 70,000. In this respect, Moroccans are part of Britain's invisible migrant groups, unidentified by the British Office of National Statistics in the 1991 and 2001 censuses, which collapses ethnic, racial and national identities.[81]

Interview data gathered for this study indicate that Moroccan migration to Britain can be divided into four phases. The first started in the 1960s and consisted of unskilled workers, mostly from northern Morocco – specifically the Jbala region, especially Larache, Tetouan, Tangier and the surrounding areas, with a smaller community from Meknes and Oujda. The majority of these immigrants settled in cities such as London and

Edinburgh, with smaller concentrations in towns like Slough, St Albans, Crawley and Trowbridge. The second phase – family reunification – followed from the early 1970s onwards. The third phase started in the 1980s, and was made up of young semi-skilled professionals and entrepreneurs, mostly from Casablanca and other larger cities. The fourth and most recent migration wave started in the early 1990s with the emigration of highly skilled Moroccan professionals, both from Morocco itself and from France. Many of these recent immigrants currently work in the finance sector in London.

The first phase of Moroccan migration remains the most significant in terms of numbers. This was driven largely by individual initiatives and encouraged by social networks of friends and relatives. This illustrates one of the first distinctive traits of Moroccan migration to Britain in contrast to other Western European countries with bilateral labour movement agreements, such as France, the Netherlands or Belgium. Family ties and social networks thus played a key part in shaping the migration of many individuals who came to Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Partly as a result of this, Moroccans created enclaves throughout the UK. In London, a significant number of Moroccans settled in North Kensington, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith, Lambeth and Croydon also have a sizeable presence of Moroccans.

In the early 1970s the Moroccan community was relatively small. There were no community centres, or even a mosque, for Moroccans. However, many of those who made a home in London had known each other back in Morocco, or knew someone who knew someone. Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square became their meeting points, where they would usually gather to help each other write letters, meet friends, exchange news about Morocco and welcome recent arrivals.

Ever since the first major wave of Moroccan migrants in the 1960s, Moroccans have worked hard to establish their own religious and social facilities, such as mosques, Koranic and Arabic classes for the younger generation, and spaces for various community activities. These efforts

78   Belmahi (2006); Rogers (1990)
79   Halliday (1992); Hayes (1905)
80   Collins (2006)
81   Goulbourne (2001)

have not been fruitless. In London alone there are now more than 15 Moroccan community organizations catering for the needs of their local communities. Many organizations provide advice and support in accessing services, especially to the first generation, which still remains relatively isolated because of the language barrier and lack of knowledge of the intricacies of the British administrative system. The majority had few qualifications when they arrived. The 2001 Census data indicates that this picture is still relevant. Of Moroccans living in London, 48 per cent have no qualifications, 29 per cent have lower-level qualifications and only 22 per cent have higher-level qualifications.[82] The relatively low educational and skill levels have served to relegate Moroccans to the margins of British mainstream society, a position from which they find it difficult to move. Many felt unable to engage with the host country as they lacked the

intellectual tools to decode the system. Partly as a result of this feeling of being on the margins, Moroccans have become a very 'close-knit' community, especially in North Kensington, and a strong and proud Moroccan identity continues to be one of the hallmarks of the community, even amongst the second and third generations.

This report endeavours to highlight some of the challenges and achievements of British Moroccans. It forms part of a larger body of work, based on extended fieldwork within the Moroccan community in London. An extended theoretical analysis is available elsewhere,[83] but here the focus is very much on real lives and real people. The voices of British Moroccans are placed at the fore, in the hope that the richness of their narratives will evince the richness of their experiences, as well as the important contributions Moroccans have made to the cultural lives of Londoners.

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82   Data Management and Analysis Group (2005b)

83   For an extended analysis, see Cherti (2008)

Surrey Street Market –
The Heart of a Community

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson, Franziska Meissner and Jessica Mai Sims

Street markets have a special place in Britain's social and economic landscape. Resisting the development of the dominant paradigm of retail ethos – where shopping is becoming ever more monochrome, atomized and impersonal – street markets remain a quintessentially social space. Shopping for life's essentials is becoming increasingly anti-social, a purely functional activity on which most people want to spend a minimal amount of time and effort. As a result, the moguls of quick and easy retail – large chain stores designed for the needs of busy individuals – are not only changing the face of Britain's town centres, but also the meaning of social relations within them. Independent and small businesses – including market stalls – are in retreat.

Not everyone is easy about these developments. Prince Charles, who made a royal visit to Surrey Street Market in 1994, wrote in his foreword to a book dedicated to Surrey Street, *A Stall Story: 100 Years of Market Trading*:

> I believe quite passionately in the importance of preserving and, frankly, celebrating our unique street markets. They are a particularly colourful part of this country's cultural heritage and it is a cause of great sadness that so many are now under threat because of so-called 'progress'.[84]

The Prince observes that the social and cultural aspect of street markets make them valuable above and beyond a mere business venture. Markets are a site of social – as well as economic – interaction, a place where people often come to pass the time of day at the same time as shopping around for bargains. The combination of cheap prices, quality produce and a personal, enjoyable shopping experience attracts a diverse range of people from all walks of life. A market also has the ability to upset social rules and hierarchies prevalent elsewhere in society with its own set of rules and codes of conduct. Thus, a street market can be a valuable tool to meet policy objectives relating to community cohesion. This will not happen spontaneously or inevitably, but with some investment and the right planning, markets have the potential to bring people, who would be unlikely to have contact elsewhere, together in a relatively safe and neutral social space.

In spite of the immense social and cultural value of street markets, and their potentially beneficial effects on community cohesion, they are in decline throughout Britain. Surrey Street Market is no exception. The market holds over 100 pitches, all of which would have been occupied in the not-too-distant past. Today, there are only 30 stalls, and the current stallholders are concerned that as people retire, they will not be replaced by new traders. This is obviously a sad development for those have both economic and emotional vested interest in the market – the stallholders themselves. But its demise could also have an adverse impact on the wider community. Surrey Street is an inclusive space which serves and welcomes a wide range of people. It may not be a visionary system of multicultural perfection, but it does constitute a place where different ethnic groups interweave with relatively little tumult and agitation. Apart from the possibility of fostering mutual respect and understanding between different groups, the market also represents a public space within which socially excluded individuals often feel accepted and are able to socialize.

Our report, *Surrey Street Market – The Heart of a Community*, explores how Surrey Street's stallholders view the market as a community in itself, and their role in serving the wider community of Croydon. The traders are quite aware of the social role they play, and they believe that the market has the potential to become a valuable vehicle for promoting intercultural dialogue. For this to happen, however, policy makers need to accept that the value of a street market goes beyond economic growth and monetary worth. Surrey Street clearly serves an important social purpose. Many people would consider it the heart of Croydon, a place where people pass the time of day.

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84   In Lovett (1996)

Although street markets have different meanings for different people, they do represent a social meeting space. In Surrey Street, people of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds rub shoulders with relatively little agitation.

This is not to say that the market is free from tension. Indeed, some of the long-term stall holders expressed a nostalgic longing for Surrey Street's past glory, and implied that they did not necessarily consider the ethnic diversity an altogether positive development. Nonetheless, all interviewees said that tensions between different ethnic groups are at a minimum, and it appears that the market is progressively becoming more intercultural and accepting of difference. The reason for this development is difficult to pinpoint. It could partly be a result of everyday contact dampening prejudice, and partly the pragmatic understanding of stallholders that their livelihoods now depend on a highly diverse customer base. Whatever the reason for the relatively successful multiculturalism of Surrey Street, the important point is that the market is a focal point of social relations in Croydon city centre.

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Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, we have worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today.

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