Neighbourhood experiences of new immigration

Reflections from the evidence base

David Robinson and Kesia Reeve

This report pieces together a picture of the daily realities of life for new immigrants and the local consequences of their arrival and settlement.

Much is being said about immigration and asylum in the UK today, but little is actually known about new immigrants, their contribution to society and the impact of their arrival for neighbourhoods, towns, cities and the country at large. Drawing on evidence from across a range of disciplines and policy realms, this report casts light on these hidden and neglected experiences. Discussion is organised around a series of conclusions regarding the local settlement patterns of new immigrants and the specifics of, and factors shaping, the experiences and consequences of new immigration. Lessons learnt regarding the management of new immigration at the neighbourhood level are considered and gaps in the evidence base highlighted. Key references are highlighted within the text and a detailed bibliography of the evidence base on neighbourhood experiences of new immigration is included.

Evidence of increasing diversity in the settlement patterns of new immigrants is revealed, the benefits for new immigrants associated with living in clusters of people from a similar background or shared ethnic or cultural identity are reviewed and the fact that community tensions are not an inevitable consequence of new immigration is explored. This report will be of interest to anyone researching new immigrants' experiences or working to manage the consequences of new immigration and population change at the neighbourhood level.

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1 Overview and outline

Introduction

Much is being said about immigration and asylum in the UK, but little is actually known about the daily realities of life for new immigrants or for 'receiving' populations. Even less is known about the factors shaping these realities. Much is also being made of the supposed crisis of cohesion in local neighbourhoods. Little, however, is currently known about the neighbourhood consequences of the arrival and settlement of immigrant populations on changing community dynamics or the everyday actions, interactions, relationships and experiences of different population groups. This report represents an important first step towards illuminating and understanding these hidden and neglected experiences, by detailing the key insights and the principal conclusions that can be drawn from what evidence currently exists.

Little attention has previously been paid to the neighbourhood effects of migration and there is a surprising lack of information about the experiences of new immigrants, given the heated debate that has surrounded the issues of immigration and asylum in recent years. The review was therefore forced to cast its net far and wide in a bid to capture insights of relevance, drawing on evidence from across a range of disciplines and policy arenas, including housing, urban policy, regeneration and renewal, immigration and asylum, race equality and race relations and community development. The result, rather than an annotated review, is a discussion piece structured around a number of inferences and contentions, generated by fusing together insights drawn from these disparate sources.

Scope, range and focus of the review

The review exercise focused on evidence relating to new migrants, irrespective of their legal status or their main reason for coming to the UK, who experience social and economic disadvantage. The situations and experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum were therefore considered alongside migrants from within the European Union (EU) and people from outside the EU entering the UK to work or to join family members. Some key lessons of significance to the contemporary situation were also drawn from the experiences of previous immigration streams into the UK, in particular, from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Attention focused on experiences and consequences of new migration within the local area of settlement or neighbourhood. The mechanics of the immigration system were of interest only in so far as they impacted on experiences at the neighbourhood level. The collation and analysis of statistical evidence relating to immigration into the UK did not fall within the remit of the review exercise. The review team's efforts focused instead on unpicking the variable effects of new immigration on different neighbourhood forms, differentiated in terms of population diversity, social networks and interaction, and the availability, nature and utility of local services.

The review was also framed by attention to three key questions.

■ What is currently known about the settlement experiences of new immigrants and their families, the response of receiving populations and the implications for life at the neighbourhood level?

■ What is the positive contribution and what are the negative consequences of institutional practice, agency attitudes and actions, and service provision on these experiences?

■ What lessons have been learnt regarding the management of change in such circumstances, including how to limit tensions and conflicts between different groups and to foster the development of positive relations between different population groups?

Research approach

A preliminary review revealed there to be little explicit evidence in the UK context regarding the experiences and consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level. The review exercise was therefore immediately extended to include evidence relevant to at least two of three core issues considered fundamental to the experiences and consequences of new immigration: social justice, life in neighbourhoods and immigration. The result was three broad areas of analysis.

■ *Social justice and life in neighbourhoods:* an area of analysis well served by a rich evidence base of research and academic discussion, as well as guidance, evaluation and good-practice advice, ranging from the broad theme of equality, through regeneration and renewal, to the emerging policy agenda on community cohesion.

■ *Life in neighbourhoods and immigration:* a critical area of analysis with a limited contemporary evidence base, much of which relates to the specifics of institutional responses to the situations and experiences of asylum seekers and people granted leave to remain in the UK. Important insights and key lessons can be gleaned, however, from the rich body of evidence relating to the experiences of previous immigration streams into the UK, as well as research findings relating to the minority ethnic population more generally.

■ *Social justice and immigration:* a contested but fundamental area of analysis, often rich in rhetoric but limited in evidence. Examples of relevant evidence include practical guidance and good-practice documentation regarding support for the integration of asylum seekers into UK society and academic discussion of identity and citizenship in the context of the evolving policy response to asylum in the UK.

This framework served to focus the review exercise and facilitate the generation of a long list of source documents – academic studies and journal papers, policy-oriented research reports, policy documents, guidance notes, strategy statements, good-practice papers and position statements issued by Government and local and national service providers and campaign groups. These were categorised into a number of bundles, on the basis of subject matter. Each bundle was then searched for evidence and insights relevant to the focus of the review. The rigour of the search exercise and the validity of assumptions made regarding the relevance of documentation to the review were subsequently verified through a brief email survey of key agencies and organisations and individual researchers across the UK, who were asked to point the review team to relevant documentation they had either produced themselves or thought the review should consider.

Content and structure of the report

The report is divided into four key sections.

■ *Chapter 2* explores the settlement patterns of new immigrants to the UK, drawing on the extensive literature regarding the local settlement patterns of previous immigration streams and their subsequent trends in mobility to consider the possible settlement patterns of more recent and future immigrants. The positive and negative consequences of clustering are reviewed, alongside consideration of the implications for new immigrant settlement patterns of contemporary policy's concern regarding settlement patterns of particular minority ethnic populations.

- *Chapter 3* considers conditional factors that inform experiences and consequences of migration at the neighbourhood level. Discussion centres around the aspects of local neighbourhoods (social, cultural and economic) that appear to determine the impact and consequences of new immigration at the local level.

- *Chapter 4* focuses on the specifics of life at the neighbourhood level for migrant households and 'receiving' populations. Material conditions, social contact and networks, as well as community relations, are all considered, alongside initiatives designed to tackled or minimise some of the challenges identified. The limits of the evidence base, however, mean that discussion tends towards making inferences and reflecting on potential scenarios, rather than presenting hard facts.

- *Chapter 5* draws a series of conclusions regarding lessons that can be extracted from the review, including reflections on gaps in the current evidence base and priorities for future research.

Each chapter is organised around a number of contentions or assertions, generated by fusing together insights and drawing inferences from available evidence. Key references are provided within the text, while a full list of all sources reviewed is contained in the Bibliography.

Most of the assertions discussed draw only broad conclusions, reflecting the limits of what can reasonably be inferred from the evidence base. Where possible, discussion distinguishes between different immigrant populations and the locations where they live. There is, however, an inevitable tendency to talk more generally about 'new immigrants'. This reflects the failure of much of the evidence base to recognise diversity within the immigrant population, as well as the ambition that the review draw some conclusions of wider significance, rather than merely report on the fragmentary glimpses provided by the small number of local studies focusing on the lives of particular immigrant populations in specific locations. An inevitable consequence of this approach is the generation of a number of apparent contradictions, particularly in discussion of the situations and experiences of new immigrants (Chapter 4), reflecting the very different experiences and consequences of new immigration depending on the particulars of newcomer and 'receiving' populations and the specifics of the local context. Finally, in this report, 'minority ethnic' is used to refer to people of an ethnic origin other than white British. By definition, therefore, all new immigrants are recognised as belonging to the minority ethnic population. This is not to suggest, however, that all minority ethnic people in the UK are immigrants.

2 The settlement patterns of new immigrant households

Introduction

This chapter explores the local settlement patterns of new immigrant households. There is a relative dearth of evidence regarding contemporary settlement patterns of specific immigrant groups or new immigrants as a collective. Discussion therefore refers back and draws lessons from analysis of the settlement patterns of previous immigration streams into the UK. This is not to suggest that recent and current migrants, who are an increasingly diverse population and are arriving into a very different social, economic and cultural context, will necessary follow in the footsteps of people arriving from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh during the second half of the twentieth century. Accumulated evidence relating to the dynamics of residential settlement among previous immigration streams can be usefully drawn on, however, in a bid to chart the possible and probable settlement patterns of current and future migrants. Finally, the vital role that ethnic clusters can play as a resource for people new to the UK is explored, alongside consideration of the increasing tendency within public policy to regard minority ethnic segregation as a problem to be solved. In total, five assertions are considered.

- The settlement patterns of new immigrant populations are characterised by a distinctive regional geography.

- New immigrant populations typically cluster together with people from similar backgrounds and reside in less popular inner-city areas.

- The distinctive local geography of settlement reflects the vital role that the ethnic cluster can play in the lives of new immigrants.

- Settlement patterns of new immigrant populations shift through time, with clustering gradually giving way to a process of residential dispersal.

- Public policy has increasingly come to regard clusters of new immigrants, as well as minority ethnic people more generally, as a problem to be solved and has begun working to 'tackle' minority ethnic residential segregation.

The settlement patterns of new immigrant populations are characterised by a distinctive regional geography

The mass migration of people from the New Commonwealth (the Caribbean, India and Bangladesh) and Pakistan during the post-war period represented, in its early stages, a movement of people to meet labour shortages within the UK. This fact was reflected in the early pattern of settlement at the regional level, with clusters emerging in industrial towns and cities in the Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as the major population centres of London and Birmingham (Phillips, 1998). This pattern of settlement continues to be reinforced by chain migration, which sustains clusters of immigrants of similar local and regional origin in particular towns and cities (Phillips, 1998; Simpson, 2004). As well as these continuities, however, the limited evidence available suggests some distinct changes in the local settlement patterns of new and recent immigrants, reflecting the particular motivations that are drawing new immigrants to the UK (economic, political, personal), as well as the very different social, economic and political context into which they are now arriving.

The range of employment opportunities available to new immigrants on arrival in Britain today, for example, has changed dramatically, as major industrial restructuring and the decline of the manufacturing sector have reduced the opportunities available in the industrial towns of the North and Midlands. Thus, while migration has continued into these areas among groups with an established pattern of settlement (for example, the Pakistani population in Bradford), new immigration streams with less established patterns of settlement, including economic migrant populations, have been drawn to locations with a wider range of employment opportunities; principally to London, but also to other locations, such as small towns and rural areas of Lincolnshire and Norfolk where employment opportunities exist in agricultural and food processing industries (Beveridge, 2003; Gilbert, 2004; TUC, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2005).

Public policy has responded to the tendency for new immigrants to concentrate in London and other major cities by actively seeking to disperse people more widely. In particular, efforts have been made to disperse people seeking asylum beyond London and the South East of England through the NASS (National Asylum Support Service) dispersal programme. One consequence has been the settlement of migrant households in some towns and cities with a limited previous history of accommodating new immigrants. The long-term impact of the dispersal process on settlement patterns of new immigrants remains to be seen. One scenario is that cluster areas designated by the Home Office for the dispersal of asylum seekers will become long-term settlement locations for new immigrants and subsequently grow through chain migration. It appears, however, that some asylum seekers are

choosing to forgo NASS support and assistance in order to remain in locations, such as London, close to clusters of people from similar backgrounds, or returning to such locations once granted leave to remain in the UK (Cole and Robinson, 2003).

New immigrant populations typically cluster together with people from similar backgrounds and reside in less popular inner-city areas

The local settlement patterns of immigration streams into Britain over the last 100 years share a distinctive geography, with new immigrants gravitating toward neighbourhoods containing clusters of people from similar backgrounds. As far back as the 1800s, small clusters of African and Indian populations existed in a number of port locations, such as London and Liverpool (Fryer, 1984; Cole and Robinson, 2003). Post-war migration from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan was characterised by a similar geography of settlement, with populations clustering in declining and unpopular inner-city areas characterised by poor housing conditions (Bowes *et al.*, 2000). Settlement in these neighbourhoods reflected both the poverty and hostility that new immigrants encountered, which served to restrict entry to more popular neighbourhoods and better housing, and forced migrant populations into poor quality private rented and owner-occupied accommodation (Bowes *et al.*, 2000). Access to social rented housing was also limited, further promoting residential segregation, a trend reinforced by the increasing suburbanisation of the white population. The concentrating effect of these processes was then reinforced by the tendency of subsequent immigrants to gravitate towards clusters of people from a similar background for reasons of mutual support and security, as well as access to material necessities, including housing (Phillips, 1998; Johnston *et al.*, 2002; Simpson, 2004).

Available evidence suggests that new immigrant populations have followed a similar pattern of settlement at the local level for many of the same reasons, although the particular experiences of different groups and individual households vary (Kyambi, 2005). One obvious distinction is between the experiences of migrants following in the footsteps of family, friends or other group members, on the one hand, and, on the other, migrants who are spatial pioneers, representing the early stages of a new immigration stream into the UK. The former might be drawn to existing population clusters and the support and assistance available therein, perhaps through networks of kith and kin, as with the Pakistani population in Bradford (Simpson, 2004). The latter have no such resource to draw on, are likely to be more footloose (although poverty and hostility will constrain residential choice) and will be more reliant on their own capacity to negotiate access to housing and meet other material needs, as with migrant labour in rural areas (Robinson *et al.*, 2005). In time, clustered networks of

people from similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds might form around these spatial pioneers. There are, however, a number of mitigating factors that might restrict the formation of new population clusters.

New immigrants arriving in Britain today are a far more diverse population than was the case in the post-war period, when immigration was dominated by the mass migration of people from the Caribbean, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, with smaller numbers arriving from European destinations, such as Poland and the Middle East (Berkeley *et al.*, 2005). Contemporary immigration is characterised by smaller numbers of people from a wider range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds arriving from a diversity of locations that they have left for a variety of reasons (to escape persecution, to take up employment, to be near family members). The possibility therefore arises that certain groups might not posses the numbers necessary to forge a recognisable cluster at the local level, particularly if dispersed to different towns and cities by NASS (the National Asylum Support Service) or as a consequence of direct recruitment to a particular industry or employer, in the case of migrant workers in rural locations. This assertion, however, fails to recognise the factors that can draw together new immigrants from diverse backgrounds. In particular, evidence suggests that new immigrants can be drawn towards existing clusters of minority ethnic settlement, regardless of whether they share a similar ethnic or cultural background (Robinson *et al.*, 2005). Beveridge (2003), for example, suggests that the in-migration of Portuguese migrant workers to Boston in Lincolnshire has served to draw other immigrants from Iraq, Russia and Eastern Europe to the area. Poverty and hostility still also serve to direct new immigrants into less popular inner-city neighbourhoods. New immigrants, however, are arriving into Britain at a time when public policy increasingly regards the residential segregation of minority ethnic populations at the neighbourhood level as a problem to be solved and steps are actively being taken to restrict residential segregation and increase integration (Community Cohesion Panel, 2004; Home Office, 2004b, 2005b). The immediate and long-term consequences of these developments for different immigrant populations are difficult to discern, but may include more isolated settlement patterns for some new immigrants (for example, migrant workers) and the emergence of smaller and more contained population clusters in certain locations (for example, in NASS dispersal areas).

The distinctive local geography of settlement reflects the vital role that the ethnic cluster can play in the lives of new immigrants

The minority ethnic population clusters that provide a home to many new immigrants (people seeking asylum, people granted leave to remain or refugee status, chain

migrants moving to be with relatives and migrant workers) represent a vital resource for people faced with a whole host of problems and challenges meeting their material needs, integrating into British society, coping with hostility and exclusion, engaging with key agencies and service providers, satisfying their cultural requirements and asserting their own identity.

Segregated communities of people from similar backgrounds or with shared ethnic and cultural identities can offer a sense of identity and security that can prove vital when faced with the persecution and harassment that is a common feature of life for many new immigrants in Britain (Wilton, 1998). Many previous immigrants, and minority ethnic people more generally, have talked about the safety and comfort that come from living alongside people from a shared background or culture. Similar reasons appear to inform the tendency of some new immigrants to gravitate towards clusters of people from a similar cultural background, at a time when major hostility exists within society to people perceived to be immigrants or asylum seekers (Cole and Robinson, 2003). The resources available locally through networks of kith and kin and from community-led organisations can also help counter the social and economic exclusion that new immigrants face, regardless of status. Social ties can serve to facilitate both access to and engagement with key agencies and service providers (for example, health care) and act as a substitute service when problems are encountered accessing or utilising formal provision.

Population clustering can also provide the demand required to sustain culturally sensitive services, religious and recreational facilities and shopping opportunities (JRF, 1999). In turn, community-led groups and businesses provide important employment opportunities for local people (Harrison, 1992; Bloch, 1996). Clustering can also allow new immigrant populations to secure a degree of power, which would not otherwise be available, to influence local representative and consultative political structures (for example, the election of local councillors and the deliberations of regeneration partnerships). The clustering of new immigrants can also serve to make their presence visible to statutory agencies and service providers, providing a critical mass of demand that prompts services to acknowledge their particular needs and respond by sensitising provision to better meet their specific requirements. Ethnic clusters can therefore represent a repository for a range of key social, economic and political resources fundamental to the efforts of new immigrants to satisfy their material needs, engage with key institutions and agencies within society, ensure their safety and security, and secure a reasonable quality of life (Phillips, 1998; Cameron and Field, 2000; Silburn, 2003).

As well as the benefits of living in clusters of people with a shared ethnic identity or from a similar cultural background, there can be benefits associated with living in

clusters of people with a shared experience of persecution and exclusion, for example, on the basis of race or colour. This is not to say that differences and tensions do not exist between some established minority ethnic populations and new immigrant groups (Leicester City Council, 2003; Lemos, 2004), but research has pointed to benefits that can stem from living in a neighbourhood with a relatively large minority ethnic or immigrant population, particularly for members of relatively small groups and isolated households. Smaller immigrant populations, for example, can tap into resources and opportunities that would not be available were it not for the presence of other minority ethnic groups, such as religious facilities. Safety can also be derived from living in an area where people do not stand out merely because they are not white (Robinson *et al.*, 2005). The clustering of immigrant households from different minority ethnic groups might also provide a critical mass of demand that will result in local service providers making greater effort to respond to the requirements of minority ethnic people more generally.

Settlement patterns of new immigrant populations shift through time, with clustering gradually giving way to a process of residential dispersal

Available evidence suggests that, through time, residential clusters of new immigrants break down as the population gradually disperses. Johnston *et al.* (2002), for example, map ethnic segregation in 18 towns and cities in England, and reveal an association between the length of time a group has been resident in the UK and the degree to which it is residentially assimilated. The Irish population, one of the oldest migration streams into the UK whose culture might be considered similar to that of the majority ethnic population, is reported to be the least concentrated minority ethnic population; the South Asian population, a more recent and more culturally and linguistically distinct immigration stream, is more residentially segregated; while the African Caribbean population is reported to be occupying an 'intermediate position' (Johnston *et al.*, 2002, p. 606).

Just because previous immigration streams into the UK have dispersed out from original settlement clusters does not mean that subsequent populations will necessarily follow in their footsteps or that spatial integration will take the same form or proceed at a similar rate. Cultural, religious and linguistic features are important contingent factors shaping a population's experience, as is the prevailing social, economic and political situation. Analysis of the 2001 Census of Population, however, appears to support the integration scenario. According to Dorling and Thomas (2004), the dominant pattern within the Indian, Chinese and black Caribbean populations during the 1990s was out of cities to more distant suburbs and small towns, a process consistent with changing settlement patterns hinted at by

analysis of the 1991 Census (Peach, 1996, 1998; Rees and Phillips, 1996). Even the Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations, revealed by the 1991 Census to be rarely present among households moving out of inner-city areas (Phillips, 1998), are found to be actively dispersing out of traditional areas of settlement, reflecting increasing differentiation in settlement patterns on the basis of social class (Ratcliffe *et al.*, 2001).

So why does public policy appear to presume that these populations are actively retreating into neighbourhoods made up of people like themselves? One reason is that, as Simpson (2004) reveals, the process of dispersal can be masked by the ongoing arrival of new immigrants. Drawing on detailed population statistics with a racial dimension Simpson reveals that overall segregation in Bradford between South Asian and 'other' populations remained unchanged during the 1990s. This picture of stability, however, conceals major population movements. The net migratory trend among South Asian populations in the city was found to be dispersal out from traditional inner-city areas to the outer edges of the city and beyond. During this time, however, the population in existing areas of settlement grew, as a result of new immigration and reproduction, the South Asian population almost doubling between 1981 and 2001 at a time when the white population declined by almost 10 per cent (Rees and Phillips, 1996; Simpson, 2004).

The process of residential integration for new immigrants settling in distinct clusters is inevitably gradual and difficult to predict. Dispersal involves moving beyond established areas of settlement and leaving behind the resources that immigrant households and subsequent generations of minority ethnic people can often rely on to negotiate the discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion they experience from wider society. There can, therefore, be a tendency for households that do move beyond traditional areas to 'recluster'. Risks might be associated with alternative locations, research revealing heavily racialised notions of space among minority ethnic populations, with particular locations (rural areas, suburban neighbourhoods and social housing estates) being perceived as 'white' or 'hostile' spaces (Cameron and Field, 2000; Phillips *et al.*, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2005).

The significance of these perceptions and fears in sustaining residential segregation will vary through time and impact on different populations in different ways. The sense of anxiety and suspicion, for example, that pervades attitudes towards Islamic culture in the post-9/11 and 7/7 environment is reported to be feeding open hostility towards people identifiable as or presumed to be Muslim. Similarly, the hostility and anger that pervades current debate about asylum in the UK is fostering animosity against people and groups perceived to be asylum seekers, regardless of their actual immigration status or nationality (Cole and Robinson, 2003). In this context, it

would hardly be surprising if the willingness and enthusiasm of Muslim households and refugee populations to move beyond traditional areas of settlement had been somewhat dented.

For many minority ethnic households, residential mobility is associated with the ability to buy into the opportunities provided by the owner-occupied sector in locations beyond original areas of settlement. The ability to move beyond traditional areas of settlement is therefore closely associated with social class and position in the labour market, which can be slow to show significant signs of improvement following arrival in the UK; all minority ethnic groups in England, including long-established populations, remain disadvantaged in terms of employment and occupation attainment (Kempton, 2002; Cabinet Office, 2003). New immigrants arriving into Britain today, however, have the benefit of protection from the worst excesses of institutional discrimination visited on previous immigrant populations, following the introduction in 1976 and the reinforcing in 2002 of the race equality legislation. Asylum seekers granted leave to remain in the UK, for example, now have the right of access to social rented housing. Whereas access to social housing was effectively denied to many previous new immigrants, asylum seekers granted leave to remain are now being accommodated by local authorities under the homeless legislation, although choice is being restricted by attempts to tie them through local connection criteria to the town or city to which they have been dispersed by NASS (Home Office, 2004b).

Public policy has increasingly come to regard clusters of minority ethnic people as a problem to be solved and has begun working to restrict ethnic residential segregation

In response to the street disturbances that shook various northern towns and cities in England in 2001, central government commissioned and sanctioned various reports (Home Office, 2001; Independent Review Team, 2001; Oldham Independent Panel Review, 2001; Burnley Task Force, 2002; Community Cohesion Panel, 2004). Set the task of exploring the roots and causes of the violence and suggesting how to minimise the risk of further disorder and to help build stronger, more cohesive communities, these various reports were as one in their diagnosis; the social isolation of different ethnic groups, borne out of physical segregation, had fostered increasing mistrust, misunderstanding, suspicion and hostility between different population groups. A worrying drift towards increasing self-segregation was identified and emphasis was placed on the need to reverse this process.

The Independent Review Team (2001) identified the challenge as being to confront the 'them and us' attitude common in situations of increasing division and to foster common goals and a shared vision. The Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion emphasised the importance of forging unity through a common sense of place and shared sense of belonging (Home Office, 2001), leading to the emphasis placed in the various reports on challenging the perceived self-segregation of (minority) ethnic groups into what Ouseley (2001) referred to as 'comfort zones' made up of people like themselves. The result has been an increasing emphasis within policy on the creation of more ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, with housing development, allocation and management being recognised as having a key role to play.

The emphasis in contemporary policy on ethnic residential integration as a cure for the perceived crisis of social cohesion in Britain's towns and cities parallels an increasing emphasis within immigration policy on the importance of integrating new immigrants into British society. In the foreword to the Government's five-year strategy for asylum and immigration published in 2005, for example, the Home Secretary asserts that migrants will only be allowed to settle permanently in the UK 'where they are prepared to integrate socially' (Home Office, 2005b, p. 8). Other examples illustrative of the increasing emphasis on integration within immigration policy include the introduction of citizenship ceremonies, an oath of allegiance, English language proficiency tests and tests assessing people's knowledge of the UK. The loans available to refugees (replacing backdated Income Support) have been branded 'integration loans' and made available to support activities that facilitate integration (Home Office, 2004b). Meanwhile, the National Strategy for Race Equality and Community Cohesion argues that 'national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness' and promotes 'the expectation that people will play their part in society' as the payback for the benefits of citizenship, including the 'offer of fair and mutual support – from security to health and education' (Home Office, 2005a, p. 20).

The belief in integration as the means of fostering a sense of belonging, cohesion and inclusive Britishness, which runs through immigration policy and the community cohesion agenda reflects a more general shift in public policy since 2001 towards a more assimilationist position. This involves, on the one hand, a commitment to integration as equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and, on the other, a resolution to limit immigration, which is portrayed as a catalyst of intolerance and hatred towards minority ethnic populations (Back *et al.*, 2002). Within this context, cultural diversity is tolerated as long as identities, values and principles perceived to be at odds with the (unspoken) norms and standards of British society do not spill into the public domain. The concern of contemporary policy regarding the residential segregation of minority ethnic groups, evident within the community

cohesion agenda, therefore, can be understood as a concern about the values and moral commitments being asserted by particular minority ethnic communities. This concern has not, as of yet, led policy to intervene directly in the settlement patterns of new immigrants, beyond the dispersal of people seeking asylum to designated Home Office cluster sites. Doing so would appear, however, to represent a logical extension of current thinking within both policy strands.

Finally, it should not go unnoted that various warnings have been issued regarding the logic of pursuing and the feasibility of delivering more ethnically mixed neighbourhoods. The following is a summary of these warnings.

■ Available demographic evidence regarding the settlement patterns and residential mobility of different minority ethnic groups questions the supposed 'self-segregation' of certain groups and their apparent unwillingness to move beyond traditional ethnic clusters. Analysis of the 2001 Census of Population reveals the prevailing trend for all minority ethnic groups to be one of active dispersal out from traditional population clusters, although this process is taking place at differential rates for different population groups, often reflecting class differentials (Simpson, 2004; Robinson, 2005).

■ Analysis of the 2001 Census of Population reveals the white British population to be, by far, the most isolated group, raising questions about why it is that only the settlement patterns of certain minority ethnic populations are being regarded as problematic (Dorling and Thomas, 2004).

■ Where segregated communities do exist, they do not necessarily represent the product of active choice. As outlined above, more mixed neighbourhoods can be perceived as hostile and inhospitable. At the same time, the resources available in ethnic clusters can prove vital to people managing a range of challenges, including hostility, harassment and exclusion from wider society. Rather than undercutting civic development through separatism, a pre-existing community, cultural networks and minority ethnic-led organisations can prove critical in allowing new immigrants to establish themselves within British society (Robinson, 1993; Simpson, 2004).

■ Physical isolation is not a measure of cohesion and geographical separation of culturally distinctive groups is not necessarily harmful. Inter-community tensions or ethnic-relations tensions can arise in ethnically mixed towns and cities (such as London), as well as in locations (such as northern towns and cities) where new immigrant groups and minority ethnic populations are clustered in inner-city

neighbourhoods characterised by poor housing. The converse is equally true, with relatively harmonious relations existing in both types of location (Amin, 2002).

■ The emphasis on the management of ethnic divisions denies the diversity within clusters of new immigrants and established minority ethnic populations (age, class, ethnicity, gender, household structure, educational attainment and economic activity) (Forrest and Kearns, 1999a; Bowes *et al.*, 2000; Mason, 2003).

■ Crude stereotypes, explicit in the media coverage of the 2001 disturbances and implicit within the community cohesion agenda, of disaffected white youth and threatening South Asian young men risk an over-dependence on punitive measures against anti-social behaviour, at the expense of more constructive and holistic interventions designed to tackle more fundamental causes, such as unemployment, educational attainment, poverty and deprivation, racism, poor housing and policing issues (Harrison *et al.*, 2005).

■ The ethnically mixed neighbourhoods that policy aspires to will prove difficult to manufacture. Policies to widen housing and locational choices in the social rented sector have begun, in a small number of instances, to facilitate the movement of minority ethnic households into non-traditional areas (Phillips and Unsworth, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2004). Whether the resources will be made available to mainstream such approaches, which have, to date, secured only modest gains, remains to be seen.

3 Factors shaping the experiences and consequences of new immigration

Introduction

This chapter considers the various factors informing the experiences and consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level, before the specifics of these experiences are considered in Chapter 4. In particular, discussion focuses on neighbourhood aspects, attributes of the local population and circumstances of new immigrants that appear to be primary determinants of the impact and consequences of migration at the local level. Five key assertions are presented and discussed.

- Local socio-economic conditions are an important determinant of relations between new immigrants and receiving populations.

- The previous history of settlement and current ethnic composition is an important determinant of a neighbourhood's capacity to successfully accommodate new immigrants and provide a positive settlement experience.

- The settlement experience of new immigrants varies between ethnic and cultural groups.

- A fundamental tension exists between immigration policy and other policy realms in which Government is seeking to improve the lives of people living in deprived and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

- Media portrayals of new immigrants can fuel local tensions and foster hostility towards immigrant households.

Local socio-economic conditions appear to be an important determinant of relations between new immigrants and receiving populations

Regardless of status, the arrival of new immigrants into deprived neighbourhoods can serve to increase competition for scarce resources and fuel animosity among existing residents (Boswell, 2001; Amin, 2002; Casey *et al.*, 2004; Community

Cohesion Panel, 2004; Wren, 2004). Communities experiencing high levels of deprivation are also reported to be more likely to be lacking the 'material well-being and social worth that can help in reducing jealousy and aggression towards others seen to be competing for the same resources' (Amin, 2002, p. 962). Economic decay and a lack of employment opportunities do not, therefore, appear to be conducive to good community relations (Waldeck and Singh, 2002; Lemos, 2004).

In the past, refugee resettlement programmes recognised the potential consequences of settling immigrants in socially and economically deprived neighbourhoods. In the 1970s, for example, Government decreed that deprived locations were inappropriate resettlement areas for Ugandan Asian refugees entering the UK under 'quota' refugee programmes (Robinson, 2003; Quilgars *et al.*, 2004). Such considerations appear largely absent from current policy, despite recognition of the principle of ensuring that new immigrants settling in locations that already accommodate vulnerable populations do not accentuate deprivation and exclusion experienced by the host communities (Castles *et al.*, 2002) and the Select Committee on Social Cohesion concluding that the disproportionate number of asylum seekers placed in deprived communities by NASS can have a damaging effect on those communities (ODPM, 2004).

Official concerns regarding the potential impact of new immigration on existing populations in deprived neighbourhoods echo the reported concerns of residents in these neighbourhoods that the presence of new immigrants (and in particular asylum seekers) will result in a neglect of their needs over those of asylum seekers and erosion of their cultural identity (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). In particular, it has been reported that hostilities can emerge in deprived neighbourhoods where existing populations perceive that the needs of new immigrants are being prioritised (for example, through the development of specialist services) above and beyond the needs of the existing population, or where services are already too stretched to meet the needs of the established population (Casey *et al.*, 2004; Community Cohesion Panel, 2004; Wren, 2004).

Tensions can also emerge at the district, as well as the neighbourhood level. Hostility and resentment have been reported to emerge among residents of predominantly white British neighbourhoods that are geographically disconnected from local minority ethnic communities but are located in cities with a large or growing immigrant population, who perceive that the district's resources (for example, regeneration funding) are being targeted at the needs of new immigrant populations, rather than long-standing problems of deprivation in their own communities (Leicester City Council, 2003; Robinson and Green, 2004). These findings appear to chime with evidence that hostilities towards, and harassment of, new immigrants are

frequently perpetrated by people living outside the neighbourhoods in which they live (Casey *et al.*, 2004).

As well as raising concerns for local residents, the settlement of new immigrant households in deprived neighbourhoods can throw up particular challenges for service providers, who might already be struggling to meet the needs of the existing population. Not only can demand for services increase, but also the profile of need can change dramatically, becoming more diverse and extreme, reflecting the recent experiences and personal circumstances of new immigrants (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). The apparent prevalence of psychological and emotional distress and other mental health issues among asylum seekers, for example, can place demands on existing services of a nature and scale not previously encountered (Wilson, 1998; Kelly and Joly, 1999; Macaskill and Petrie, 2000; Fazel and Stein, 2002). The arrival of immigrant children whose education has been disrupted by their migration, who might be unfamiliar with the British educational system, who may not be skilled in English and who might have experienced recent trauma, can place a strain on local schools, particularly if the resources or training to understand and respond to these new educational needs are not readily available (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000; Rutter, 2003; GLA, 2004b). Service providers in some locations will have little experience of responding to many of these needs (Grewal, 2004). Even in locations where service providers have experience of working with a diverse local population, they may have limited experience of responding to the particular needs of the new immigrant population and may lack the necessary understanding, awareness and expertise (for example, translation and interpretation) required to provide a culturally sensitive service that people are able to engage with and utilise (Klaushofer, 2000).

A positive settlement experience and the capacity for immigrants to be successfully 'integrated' into a neighbourhood is affected by the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood

Available evidence suggests that tensions between new and existing populations are less apparent if new immigrant households settle within or adjacent to neighbourhoods of established minority ethnic settlement (Forrest and Kearns, 1999a; Boswell, 2001; Loney, 2001; Barclay *et al.*, 2003; Casey *et al.*, 2004). This is not to say that relations between newcomer populations and established minority ethnic communities cannot be problematic. Beider and Goodson (2005), for example, report tensions between Somali, Pakistani and Caribbean populations in areas such as Sparkbrook and Handsworth in Birmingham. It also appears that new immigrants find settling into and committing to an area far easier if people from a similar ethnic or cultural background live in the neighbourhood, challenging the

wisdom of dispersing new immigrants (Robinson, 2003). Furthermore, gradual, planned settlement of new immigrants appears less likely to give rise to community tensions than the unplanned and unexpected arrival of new immigrants in a relatively short space of time. In Leicester, for example, a city referenced as a beacon of good community relations (Independent Review Team, 2001), difficulties are reported to have emerged following the arrival within a relatively short space of time of an estimated 8,000 Somali households (including secondary migration from other EU countries), who encountered extreme levels of harassment from both white and minority ethnic residents (Leicester City Council, 2003; Robinson *et al.*, 2004).

As noted in the previous chapter, established clusters of people from a similar ethnic or cultural background can be rich in key resources that help people to settle into and negotiate a place within their local community and wider society. The clustering of people seeking asylum, or granted leave to remain or refugee status can also allow refugee agencies to concentrate their resources and activities, as well as promoting other local agencies to develop relevant systems and procedures for working with new immigrants. In contrast, areas with little history of receiving new immigrants can lie beyond the reach of specialist refugee services, which are often operating on limited resources, while mainstream providers often have to start from scratch in developing appropriate service provision (Zetter and Pearl, 2000, Tomlins *et al.*, 2003). It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that residential 'drift' has been noted, for example, among Ugandan and Vietnamese refugee households who were settled in relatively small, isolated clusters. Cut off from people with whom they had an immediate ethnic or cultural affinity, households struggled to develop a settled sense of home and tended to drift towards areas where existing populations and associated ethnic and cultural networks were already established. In contrast, Bosnian refugees, who were placed in clusters, were more likely to remain in their area of initial settlement (Kelly and Joly, 1999).

These findings are of particular relevance to people seeking asylum, who, since the introduction of dispersal, have increasingly found themselves living in towns and neighbourhoods with only a limited history of minority ethnic settlement (CIH, 2001; Hewitt and Cwerner, 2001; Carter and El-Hassan, 2003). This is reported to have occurred in spite of Home Office guidance that dispersal areas should have pre-existing minority ethnic populations, language clusters and the scope to develop support services, largely because of the challenge of identifying readily available accommodation. As reported on page 7, it appears that some people forgo NASS support to leave such locations and move to towns and cities with established populations of people from similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Migrant workers taking up opportunities in the agricultural and food processing sectors in small towns and rural areas are also confronted with the challenges associated with settling into

locations with little history of minority ethnic settlement (Beveridge, 2003; TUC, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2005). It is unclear whether these challenges can in some instances override the economic imperative that leads migrant workers to settle in these locations, resulting in people moving to areas of more established settlement.

The settlement experiences of new immigrants vary depending on ethnic and cultural identity

A number of studies of the variable geographies of settlement and dispersal experienced through time by different immigration streams into the UK suggest that people from certain cultural backgrounds can find it easier to integrate into and be accepted by British society. Peach (1996), for example, points to the fact that many African Caribbean immigrants came from a society deeply penetrated by English values and education to help explain the higher levels of residential integration within this population, compared to immigrant populations from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Similar explanations have been drawn on to explain the settlement experiences of Ugandan Asian refugees, who are reported to have settled successfully and to be one of the wealthiest minority ethnic populations in the UK (Mattausch, 1998; Robinson, 2003). In contrast, South Asian populations, and in particular Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations, are relatively deprived and less residentially dispersed, experiences that are thought, in part, to reflect their cultural, religious and linguistic distinctiveness, as well as class position (Peach, 1996; Johnston *et al.*, 2002; Silburn, 2003).

Implicit in this reasoning is the assumption that new immigrant populations that can less readily be identified as 'different' or 'foreign' are more likely to be accepted by existing residents and, thereby, find it easier to integrate into their local community and engage in wider society. This analysis is complicated, however, by the shifting patterns of prejudice and perception that inform attitudes to new immigrants. The reaction of receiving populations is particularly difficult to predict in the context of increasing diversity in the profile of new immigrants to the UK. Hence, on the one hand, a young Somali man born and raised in Liverpool whose family have been resident in the UK for four generations is abused as an asylum seeker (Cole and Robinson, 2003), while a group of migrant workers from the EU moving into an area with a limited history of previous immigration face fewer problems because they are not readily identifiable as 'foreign' (TUC, 2004).

Immigration policy is a major determinant of the settlement experiences of many new immigrants, their integration into society and access to key opportunities and resources

There is an extensive evidence base regarding the impact of immigration policy on the settlement experiences of new immigrants, and in particular asylum seekers, including relations with receiving populations and issues of social justice, quality of life and well-being (Carter, 1996; Bloch, 2000; Zetter and Pearl, 2000; Boswell, 2001; CIH, 2001; Unity Sale, 2003; GLA, 2004a, 2004b; Patel and Kerrigan, 2004; JRF, 2005; Refugee Survival Trust, 2005; Dawson, undated). The broad consequences of current policy, including the active dispersal of people seeking asylum, restrictions on benefit entitlements and employment and Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which denies support to asylum seekers not making an application as soon as possible on arrival in the UK, can be summarised as including the following.

- *A reinforcing cycle of social exclusion:* people who arrive in the UK with few possessions or resources are accommodated in socially and economically deprived locations and forced to live in poverty, as a consequence of restricted benefit entitlements and limits on their right to work.

- *Impeding the engagement and active involvement of people seeking asylum in society:* restrictions on the right to work, for example, cut people off from a key realm of social engagement and interaction that can help bind them into wider society.

- *The promotion of community tensions:* the visible presence of people presumed to be seeking asylum (for example, as a result of dispersal beyond existing minority ethnic clusters and the 'hanging around' of people with no job or leisure opportunities to fill their time) can serve to exaggerate the perceived scale of new immigration into an area and propagate myths, peddled in certain media portrayals and political discourse, that new immigrants are contributing little to society, thereby fostering animosity among existing residents towards migrants.

- *The denial of social justice:* with key rights denied and access to key services blocked, people seeking asylum are restricted in their ability to play an active part in society and integrate socially. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that some people seeking asylum do not perceive themselves to be part of wider society and are not perceived as such by the receiving population.

Reflecting on these consequences, a number of commentators have pointed to the apparent contradiction between immigration policy and various other government objectives. The destitution of asylum seekers, as a result of restrictions on employment and difficulties accessing services and information about entitlements, has been presented as representing 'the ultimate form of exclusion from society and … as working directly against the community cohesion agenda' (JRF, 2005, p. 3). Penrose (2002), meanwhile, argues that immigration policy clashes with the stated objectives of a number of other policy agendas and government programmes: the Social Exclusion Unit, for example, was established to combat the marginalisation of disadvantaged groups, yet asylum policy, she argues, is compounding poverty and social exclusion; government policy is actively seeking to integrate minority ethnic groups, but at the same time is consigning asylum seekers to a parallel system of support that serves to isolate and marginalise them; the Government is committed to eradicating child poverty, but asylum seekers are prevented from claiming the full range of family welfare benefits.

Picking up on this last point, a number of studies have illustrated the ways in which asylum policy is exacerbating child poverty (Rutter, 2003; GLA, 2004b). Contradictions have also been highlighted between immigration policy and the protection of children from harm and abuse, children being treated as asylum seekers or refugees first and children second (Rutter, 2003; GLA, 2004b). Jones (1998), for example, highlights the ways in which immigration legislation works against and undermines the principles of the Children Act 1989 and notes that immigration rules that restrict recourse to public funds and support can prevent migrant women removing themselves from violent domestic situations, thereby hindering their efforts to ensure the safety of their children. There are also hints that the rights of people granted leave to remain in the UK might be eroded. The proposed revision to guidance on 'local connection' criteria in England, for example, only recognises the local authority in the area to which people were dispersed as having a duty to find settled accommodation for people granted leave to remain in the UK and presenting as homeless, unless they are able to demonstrate a local connection elsewhere (for example, through family ties or employment) (Home Office, 2004b). The result could be to tie people to a district to which they have no affiliation, no desire to remain and an active desire to leave. In Scotland, meanwhile, NASS accommodation is not interpreted as representing a local connection under the homeless legislation, a distinction that raises questions about the possibility of increasing differentiation within the policy response to new immigrants in the context of devolution, with possible consequences for residential mobility and settlement patterns.

Media portrayals of new immigrants can fuel local tensions and create a hostile environment

Analysis suggests that media reporting of immigration and asylum issues is often inaccurate and unbalanced, giving prominence to crimes perpetrated by asylum seekers and refugees, while neglecting to report the far more common incidence of crimes against new immigrants. Neither is the positive contribution that migrant populations are making to society widely discussed. The language used is often generalised and inflammatory, perpetuating stereotypes and popular myths about immigrant populations (Barclay *et al.*, 2003; Home Office, 2004b; ICAR, 2004; Lemos, 2004). The consequence is to hinder the successful settlement of new immigrants and to increase the likelihood of community tensions (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004). Resentment within receiving populations is reported to have been exacerbated by inaccurate reporting that reinforces perceived inequalities and biases in resource allocation in favour of new immigrants and minority ethnic populations, an issue highlighted as contributing to tensions between minority ethnic and white populations prior to the disturbances in Bradford, Burley and Oldham in 2001. Direct correlations have also been found between the language used during incidents of harassment and key themes in recent press coverage (ICAR, 2004).

The impact of media portrayals of new immigrants is reported to have been most apparent in areas of deprivation and locations where community tensions already exist, representations serving to reinforce prejudice and hostility (ICAR, 2004). The consequences for new immigrants have been reported to include difficulties engaging with key services for fear of harassment and abuse from other service users (Stanistreet, 2003). Some specialist refugee services, meanwhile, rather than challenging misinformation and untruths about immigration, appear to have been driven underground, being reluctant to adopt a high profile within communities where animosity and hostility towards new immigrants is running high (Hewitt and Cwerner, 2001). Inaccurate and insensitive press coverage is also reported to have caused distress and alienation among new immigrants, who have complained about the lack of respect, understanding and humanity in media coverage, which can make them feel unwelcome and, in itself, represents a form of harassment (Craig *et al.*, 2004; ICAR, 2004).

Such are the consequences of inflammatory and inaccurate reporting of asylum and immigration matters that the development of local media strategies is frequently suggested as a vital component of efforts to successfully settle new immigrant households and prevent local hostility. Developing positive relationships with the local media prior to immigrant settlement, producing media packs and compiling

accurate information for use by the media are all suggested as necessary to challenge stereotypes, promote positive images of migrants and foster good community relations (Barclay *et al.*, 2003; Home Office, 2004b).

4 The neighbourhood experiences and consequences of new immigration

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed a range of place-specific determinants of the experiences and consequences of new immigration. In this chapter discussion moves on to consider the specifics of these experiences. Attention focuses on describing the challenges and difficulties encountered by immigrant households and the neighbourhood implications of new immigration. It is important at the outset to emphasise that there is little hard evidence regarding the experiences of new immigrants or receiving populations. Discussion therefore focuses on six general assertions that can be substantiated by the limited evidence available.

- New immigrant households typically live in poor quality, inappropriate accommodation.

- The neighbourhoods where many new immigrants settle provide a poor living environment.

- New immigrants often struggle to access the services, care, support and assistance they require.

- The arrival of new immigrant households can reinforce and increase levels of neighbourhood deprivation and disadvantage.

- New immigrants can serve as an engine for regeneration.

- Community tensions can arise but are not an inevitable consequence of new immigration.

New immigrant households typically live in poor quality, inappropriate accommodation

Housing experiences are significant because housing is a critical determinant of health, well-being, quality of life and settlement experience. In most cultures, and for most people, housing provides the realm within which the ontological security and

safety of home is nurtured and, as such, can represent a sanctuary from the hostility and exclusion that many new immigrants encounter in wider society (Kelly and Joly, 1999). The size, condition, design and appropriateness of accommodation are key determinants of health and well-being, while secure and sustainable accommodation is fundamental to wider engagement in society.

Available evidence suggests that new immigrants, regardless of legal status, migration pathway, ethnic origin or cultural identity, typically reside in poor quality accommodation that is often inappropriate to their needs (size, design, location, facilities, services) (Buck, 2001; Wilson, 2001; Cole and Robinson, 2003; Shelter, 2004). Poor conditions have been reported to be particularly extreme within the private rented sector (Garvie, 2001), but poor living conditions appear to be a cross-tenure experience. Commonly reported problems include overcrowding and poor physical conditions (for example, cold and damp living environments), which can be compounded by the failure of landlords to carry out essential repairs. New immigrants and, in particular, people seeking and granted asylum and refugee status are also over-represented in the population of people living in temporary accommodation, such as hostels and bed and breakfast hotels, where conditions are particularly extreme and can be unsafe and unsuitable for children (Brent and Harrow Health, 1995; Carey-Wood, 1997; Barer *et al.*, 1999; Kelly and Joly, 1999; Buck, 2001; GLA, 2004b).

Migrant workers, whose accommodation is often organised or provided by their employer, have been found to reside in overcrowded conditions, sometimes in isolated locations where they encounter hostility from local people resentful that incomers are 'stealing local jobs' (CAB, 2004, Anderson and Rogaly, 2005). In contrast, chain migrants (for example, people following in the footsteps of family and friends) are often drawn to established minority ethnic clusters where the local housing stock is in poor condition and inappropriate to local needs but in high demand and difficult to access, particularly for people with limited resources. The result can be poor living conditions, hidden homelessness and high levels of overcrowding, as people accommodate friends and family members who are destitute or in need of support (Craig *et al.*, 2004).

Dispersed asylum seekers and refugees tend to have few resources (financial, social or political) to draw on. Often becoming homeless on being granted leave to remain in the UK, given the requirement that they vacate NASS-sponsored accommodation within 28 days of receiving a decision, many refugee households are reliant on the social rented sector for accommodation. Placed in temporary accommodation while waiting for their homeless application to be processed or waiting for an offer of permanent accommodation, people granted leave to remain in the UK are exposed

to the range of problems commonly associated with hostel and bed and breakfast accommodation – overcrowding, poor physical conditions (inadequate heating, limited cooking facilities), inappropriate mixing of ages and household types and isolation, if placed in temporary accommodation away from existing areas of settlement (Cole and Robinson, 2003). These problems can be compounded for larger families by the time they are forced to wait in temporary accommodation because of difficulties that local authorities can encounter in identifying suitable accommodation (size, location and design). Once accommodated, refugee households have tended to find themselves in the worst housing on the least popular estates, homeless applicants having historically been limited in the number of offers they can refuse and typically being considered less deserving of better quality accommodation than other applicants (Jeffers and Hoggett, 1995), although there is evidence suggesting these long-standing practices are beginning to be addressed (Pawson *et al.*, 2001). Existing residents, meanwhile, who live in high-demand areas such as London and might have been waiting some time to transfer to a larger dwelling or for a son or daughter to secure a tenancy of their own in the local area, can resent the arrival of new immigrants, who are perceived to be 'jumping the queue' (Casey *et al.*, 2004).

The neighbourhoods where many new immigrants settle provide an unsafe living environment

As already revealed, many new immigrants settle in neighbourhoods characterised by poor housing, a deteriorating physical environment, crime problems, high levels of unemployment and limited local amenities and facilities, and share in the problems of social exclusion and deprivation experienced by existing residents. It is not, therefore, surprising that many new immigrants express concern and dissatisfaction with their local environment (Jones, 1998; Macaskill and Petrie, 2000; Buck, 2001). Indeed, they share many of these concerns with longer-standing residents. New immigrants, however, have to cope with an additional factor that impacts on their neighbourhood experience – racial violence, harassment and abuse.

Incidents of harassment and violence can have a corrosive effect on the lives of new immigrants. First, the experience or fear of harassment can drive people out of, or deter them from settling in, particular locations (towns or neighbourhoods), thereby restricting choice and opportunity. Second, harassment can serve to cut off or alienate new immigrants from wider society, impacting on the extent to which they feel able and willing to leave their home and to interact with other members of the local community (Chahal and Julienne, 1999; Buck, 2001). Harassment, abuse and

violence can also be seen by new immigrants as part of the more general lack of respect, understanding and humanity that can make them feel upset, angry, annoyed and alienated (Craig *et al.*, 2004).

Little hard evidence is currently available regarding the experiences of violence, harassment and abuse among new immigrants. There are no official statistics relating to such incidents against new immigrants and only extreme acts, such as murders and violent assaults, tend to surface in the media. Available evidence, however, suggests that immigrants (like minority ethnic people more generally) are far more likely to be the victims of crime than to be the perpetrators, despite the opposite being inferred in political debate and media portrayals. Indeed, the negative stereotyping inherent within the portrayal of new immigrants by sections of the media in recent years has been directly related to an apparent increase in violent incidents against new immigrants (ICAR, 2004). The experience of violence and abuse appears to vary, however, between locations, racist incidents being a more common experience in locations with a limited history of minority ethnic settlement (Home Office 2004c), reflecting the significance of a previous history of minority ethnic settlement as a determinant of community relations, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Research in Scotland has found that over half the asylum seekers and refugees interviewed felt isolated and unsupported, while many had experienced abuse or physical attacks and were concerned that their neighbourhood was characterised by crime, drug problems and unemployment (Buck, 2001). Similar experiences of harassment have been reported among young people and the children of new immigrant households, and recorded incidents include stone throwing, threatening phone calls, verbal abuse and attacks on their home (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000). Abuse, assault and the extortion of migrant workers have also been reported (Gilbert, 2004). The victims of these incidents can appear reluctant to report their experiences, in some cases because of concerns regarding their immigration status or through fear that doing so could prejudice their application for asylum (Gilbert, 2004; GLA, 2004a). It is also possible that some people see little reason to report incidents, not knowing or believing that any action will be taken against the perpetrator (Jones, 1998; Macaskill and Petrie, 2000). There are, however, local examples of initiatives that appear to be succeeding in mediating between communities, minimising tensions and helping to resolve conflicts. Local projects funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Community Facilitation Programme in 34 areas identified as showing signs of high inter-ethnic community conflict and tension, for example, are reported to have minimised emerging tensions through community development work, prevented conflict escalation through mediation activities and helped extinguish conflicts as and when they arise (NRU, 2004).

New immigrants often struggle to access the services, care, support and assistance they require

New immigrants can be highly vulnerable, arriving into an unfamiliar social context and, perhaps, lacking the resources (cognitive, financial, social) required to satisfy even the most basic material needs. It certainly does not appear, on the basis of available evidence, that immigrants, whatever their status, are the skilled manipulators of the generosity of British society that they are often portrayed to be. Available evidence suggests that immigrant households, rather than exploiting every opportunity for all it is worth, are often struggling to access the services and facilities they require. In particular, limited English language skills, inadequate interpretation support and the unfamiliarity and limited capacity of service providers to respond to the needs of new immigrants all serve to limit access to key services (Kelly and Joly, 1999). Problems appear to be particularly acute for households settling in towns and neighbourhoods with little history of accommodating new immigrants, where appropriate local service provision is typically limited. Carter and El-Hassan (2003) cite Wakefield and Hull as two cities where such problems have emerged for dispersed asylum seekers.

The language barrier appears to be the key obstacle preventing many new immigrants from accessing and effectively utilising local services and facilities and accessing employment. Recognising this fact, new immigrants, such as the Somali people surveyed by Cole and Robinson (2003), have expressed the need for more accessible and relevant English language training. More immediately, however, there appears to be an unmet need for translation and interpretation support. At least two factors appear to explain this unmet need. First, the increasing diversity of the new immigrant population can present challenges for local interpretation and translation provision, even in locations with a long history of minority ethnic settlement. Second, the dispersal of people seeking asylum to cluster areas where there is little local expertise of working to meet the needs of a diverse population can place new and unfamiliar demands on service providers. A reported consequence is the reliance of people on community-led services or family and friends, including children, for translation and interpretation support (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000).

The consequence of these various factors appears to be restricted access and utilisation of key services. New immigrants, including children, are reported to be disengaged from health and social care services, despite experiencing disproportionally high levels of mental and physical health problems and disability, and often residing in conditions likely to exacerbate existing health problems (McLeish, 2002; Roberts and Harris, 2002; Johnson, 2003; GLA, 2004b). Low-level take-up of childcare services has also been recorded (Daycare Trust, 2001), as has

low take-up of pre-school and post-compulsory educational opportunities (Rutter, 2003; GLA, 2004b). This latter point is of particular importance, given the difficulties that new immigrants can encounter obtaining formal employment. In addition to the consequences of limited English language skills, academic and vocational qualifications gained outside the UK are often not recognised by employers, while the training and educational opportunities required to allow people to convert existing expertise and training into qualifications recognised in the UK context either do not exist or are not proving accessible (Sargeant and Forma, 2001; Bloch, 2002; Dunn and Somerville, 2004). Employer discrimination against immigrants has also been recorded (Bloch, 2002), as well as a reluctance to employ immigrants, partly because of a general lack of understanding about the relationship between immigration status and eligibility to work (Carter 1996; Sargeant and Forma, 2001). The result is high levels of unemployment – the Department of Work and Pensions estimating a national unemployment for refugees of 36 per cent (Bloch, 2002) – and underemployment, with highly qualified people often ending up in low-skill occupations (Morrice, 2005).

Many of these problems mirror the challenges encountered by established minority ethnic populations and underpin acknowledged inequalities in access to key resources and opportunities (housing, education, employment). Why, then, distinguish between the experiences of new immigrants and established minority ethnic populations, given that both are subject to the patterns and practices of racial discrimination within British society? Two reasons emerge from the evidence. First, the problems encountered by new immigrants appear to be more extreme and severe than those experienced by longer established minority ethnic populations. Second, these experiences reflect the more limited range of resources that new immigrant populations are able to draw on to manage and challenge the problems they encounter. This point is well made by reference to the social and political resources at the disposal of new immigrant populations.

Community-led groups have historically played a key role in offering alternative provision for populations struggling with the inadequacies and insensitivities of mainstream, white-led service provision. In addition, they have often lobbied to secure improvements in provision and, through doing so, become bound into local representational structures. It can take years, however, for community-led organisations to develop the capacity and presence to impact on local decision making. Meanwhile, new immigrant populations are effectively 'squeezed out' out of local representative structures and consequently wield little power or influence (Cole and Robinson, 2003; Beider and Goodson, 2005). This situation can be compounded by assumptions that existing minority ethnic led agencies are capable of both representing the interests of new immigrant populations and responding to their

needs. A recent study of Somali housing experiences in England, which collected evidence in London, Bristol, Liverpool and Sheffield, however, revealed people to encounter many of the same barriers that restrict access to and limit the use of mainstream, white-led service provision when approaching minority ethnic led service providers staffed by and with a history of responding to the needs of other distinct ethnic groups (Cole and Robinson, 2003).

The arrival of new immigrant households can reinforce and increase levels of deprivation and disadvantage at the neighbourhood level

As revealed in Chapter 2, the constraints of the housing market, reliance on the resources available in existing minority ethnic clusters and the policy and practice of statutory agencies and service providers all serve to direct new immigrants into some of the most disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods, characterised by poor quality housing, high levels of unemployment, crime problems, restricted service provision and limited local amenities (Harrison, 1995; Ratcliffe, 1996b, 1998; Bowes *et al.*, 1998; Open Society Institute, 2002; Shelter, 2004). Many of the 39 New Deal for Community Areas, for example, designated on the basis of being some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, are home to relatively large numbers of people seeking and granted asylum (Casey *et al.*, 2004). The cluster areas designated by the Home Office for the dispersal of people seeking asylum also correspond closely with the 88 local authority districts identified by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit as having the highest levels of social exclusion (CIH, 2003). These settlement patterns have negative consequences for both new immigrants and existing populations, reinforcing existing geographies of deprivation and exclusion.

A clear correlation exists between living in areas of exclusion and disadvantage and a person's life chances; as Atkinson and Kintrea (2001, 2002) put it, it is worse to be poor in a poor area than in an area that is more socially mixed. Physically and socially deprived neighbourhoods foster additional forms of social exclusion, including restricted access to the labour market and limited civic participation, in turn perpetuating disadvantage, economic disparities and housing differentials (Ratcliffe, 1996a, 1997; Somerville, 1998; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001, 2002; Buck and Gordon, 2004). As Phillips (1998) points out when discussing post-war immigration, clustering can reinforce the perceived marginality of immigrant groups within society, an image that can prove difficult to dispel and can provide a legacy of disadvantage for immigrant populations in terms of housing and employment for years to come. The clustering of new immigrant households in such neighbourhoods can also serve to exacerbate existing problems. Somali immigrants, for example, have been found to

be clustering in areas of existing Somali settlement that are physically deprived and characterised by an ageing housing stock in an increasing state of disrepair. The result is localised pockets of high demand and housing scarcity (even in cities with low-demand problems), compounding overcrowding, poor housing conditions and homelessness (Cole and Robinson, 2003).

Evidence also suggests that the potential stability that can stem from the settlement of new immigrants in a neighbourhood (as discussed in the following section) can be undercut by extreme poverty, which can serve to degrade any sense of 'home' or 'belonging' and subsequent commitment that migrants might develop for the neighbourhood and town where they settle. In Glasgow, for example, it has been suggested that the poor quality of the neighbourhoods in which many people seeking asylum have been accommodated explains why half of people surveyed reported not feeling 'at home' in the city (Buck, 2001).

Of course, the restricted spatial choices of new immigrant households, in part, reflect their income and labour market position, and there is little reason to doubt that new immigrants will follow in the footsteps of previous immigration streams into the UK and achieve greater locational flexibility as they gain access to the resources required to buy into the opportunities provided by the owner-occupied sector. Notable improvements in the housing conditions of previous immigrant populations have also been wrought by local initiatives designed to open up the social rented sector to minority ethnic groups (Phillips, 1998; Phillips and Unsworth, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2004). In Rochdale, for example, a community induction project has increased the housing opportunities available to the local South Asian population by opening up neighbourhoods previously considered 'out of bounds' (Robinson *et al.*, 2004). This has involved targeted marketing of these neighbourhoods to prospective tenants, the escorted viewing of properties, the introduction of new tenants to neighbours and local service providers, as well as more organised attempts to facilitate engagement between new and existing tenants, and actively tackling harassment and anti-social behaviour as and when it occurs. New opportunities have also been provided through the activities of minority ethnic housing associations and through the targeted development of new housing, supported by the Housing Corporation (Robinson *et al.*, 2002). Increasing the supply of housing within popular neighbourhoods and opening up new opportunities in alternative neighbourhoods is a slow and resource-hungry process, however. The examples from Rochdale, Leicester and Bradford discussed by Robinson *et al.* (2004) all required a major commitment of resources and staff time to secure even the most modest gains.

Many landlords are unlikely to be able and willing to make such a commitment and survey evidence suggests that opening up minority ethnic choices is not on the

agenda of most social landlords, despite formal commitments to choice-based lettings and emphasis within the community cohesion agenda on the role to be played by the allocations and lettings policies of social landlords to promote residential integration (Phillips and Unsworth, 2002; Fotheringham and Perry, 2003; Robinson, 2005). There is some evidence to suggest that the introduction of choice-based lettings can result in an increase in the number of minority ethnic households registering with social landlords, although a lack of local monitoring data limits the insights that can currently be gained from such systems (Marsh *et al.*, 2004). However, translating increasing numbers of registrations into increasing numbers of lettings and successful housing outcomes demands reform across the full range of housing management activities and beyond. Furthermore, receiving populations need to be prepared for the change about to take place in their neighbourhood; community development activities with both incoming and receiving populations are required to facilitate engagement, foster dialogue and minimise tensions; and intensive policing is required to manage minor problems and prevent their escalation into major conflicts between groups.

New immigrants can serve as an engine for regeneration

Discussion regarding the impact and consequences of new migration has a tendency to dwell on the negative: the deprivation, exclusion and persecution encountered by new immigrants; the risk that immigration will stoke the fires of prejudice and foster community tensions and conflict; and more extreme discourses that seek to pathologise new immigrants as deviant, conniving scroungers out to abuse the goodwill of the British people and *their* institutions. This focus on problems and challenges serves to buttress popular stereotypes of immigrants as either (passive) victims or a social problem. A small and growing literature, however, contradicts this representation and points to the ways in which new immigrants are making a positive contribution to the local and national economy, the cultural and social fabric of Britain and, in some situations, the regeneration and revitalisation of declining neighbourhoods (Refugee Council, 2002; Carter and El-Hassan, 2003; Thomas, 2003; Casey *et al.*, 2004; Kidd, 2004; Sriskandarajah *et al.*, 2005).

As already noted in the previous section, new immigration can serve to reinforce existing patterns of deprivation and disadvantage. It can also, however, promote social cohesion and foster neighbourhood stability and sustainability. The reliance of new immigrants on the resources available in established minority ethnic clusters to manage the challenges of establishing a position within British society, meet basic material needs and engage with key service providers, for example, serves to ensure the viability of specialist shops and cultural facilities that might be threatened by the

gradual dispersal of existing residents (JRF, 1999). Social organisation can be fostered, co-operation facilitated and a sense of solidarity and mutual support promoted within these neighbourhoods. These close ties, social contacts and networks are reported to be commonplace in clusters of different minority ethnic groups in towns and cities across England (van Kempen and Ozuekren, 1998; Cameron and Field, 2000; Silburn, 2003; Thomas, 2003). Although an anathema to the principles and priorities of the community cohesion agenda (Robinson, 2005), these ties represent the very essence of the social cohesion that urban managers aspire to generate in deprived neighbourhoods in an attempt to foster sustainability (Goodchild and Cole, 2001). In addition, the mediating community organisations that emerge from these social ties and are used by excluded communities to provide alternative solutions can also provide a bridge into local participative and representative democratic networks and structures, challenging the assumption inherent within the community cohesion agenda that strong local communities promote isolation (Cameron and Field, 2000; Thomas, 2003).

The arrival of new immigrants into a neighbourhood with limited previous history of immigration or minority ethnic settlement has the potential to act as a stabilising force in neighbourhoods otherwise characterised by high turnover and transience (JRF, 1999; Cameron and Field, 2000; Cole *et al.*, 2000; Silburn, 2003). Ethnic and cultural identity can provide the 'social cement' on which more stable and secure neighbourhoods can be built in situations where sustainability has proved otherwise unachievable (Cameron and Field, 2000). Housing managers have recognised and are utilising this potential (Robinson *et al.*, 2004) in a move that mirrors the emphasis in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada on minority ethnic enclaves as a positive societal feature that should be supported rather than problematised (Johnston *et al.*, 2002). New immigration, for example, has been recognised as providing a solution to low demand for housing in locations as diverse as Newcastle, Derby, Middlesbrough, Boston and Doncaster, and supportive of efforts to improve environmental conditions, by leading to a reduction in empty and boarded-up properties (Cameron and Field, 2000; Beveridge, 2003; Casey *et al.*, 2004; Kidd, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2004). This potential has not been lost on Government. Indeed, the dispersal programme represents, in part, a response to the need to relieve pressure on the housing stock and local services in high-demand areas and fill voids in low-demand neighbourhoods, with knock-on effects including increased demand for ailing local businesses, facilities and services, although there remains the risk of overburdening local provision, as pointed out on page 18.

With regard to local economic development, new immigrants consistently indicate a desire to work (Craig *et al.*, 2004) and can provide much-needed labour and skills, and help to rebalance the demographic profile in areas with shrinking populations

because of outward migration and declining birth rates (CAB, 2004; Wren, 2004). Refugee skills audits reveal many refugee populations to be well educated and highly skilled, although these skills are often underutilised (Carey-Wood *et al.*, 1995; Sargeant and Forma, 2001; Refugee Council, 2002). Migrant workers from EU countries are also reported to be filling important skills shortages in certain industries (CAB, 2004). The children of new immigrants, meanwhile, can help secure the future of schools with declining student numbers, as reported in Glasgow (Wren, 2004).

Community tensions can arise but are not an inevitable consequence of new immigration

Concerns have been raised in policy circles about the segregation of minority ethnic populations into particular neighbourhoods, a trend presumed to be reinforced by new immigration and thought to restrict social interaction, limit common understanding and tolerance, and allow suspicion, prejudice and hostility to emerge between different ethnic populations (Home Office, 2001; Independent Review Team, 2001; Oldham Independent Panel Review, 2001; Burnley Task Force, 2002). Controls on new immigration, meanwhile, are justified by reference to the potential for immigration to serve as a catalyst of intolerance and hate. It is difficult to deny or confirm these assertions, there being little hard evidence regarding the consequences for community relations of the movement into a neighbourhood of new immigrants with cultural norms and behaviours either similar or distinct from the existing population. What little evidence does exist, however, suggests that community tensions appear to be more acute in locations with little or no history of receiving new immigrants (Boswell, 2001; Casey *et al.*, 2004; Wren 2004). There is, however, potential for managing these tensions, evidence suggesting that new immigrants have received a better reception in areas where local residents have been prepared in advance for their arrival (Hewitt and Cwerner, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2004). An ongoing series of initiatives in the Northfields area of Leicester, for example, involving a targeted response to the concerns and priorities of existing residents (crime and anti-social behaviour), myth-busting preparatory work with these residents regarding people seeking and granted asylum, the provision of appropriate support for new residents and the development of shared community resources are reported to have facilitated the relatively trouble-free accommodation of asylum seekers and other minority ethnic households in a difficult-to-let estate that was historically regarded as a 'white' neighbourhood (Robinson *et al.*, 2004). In summary, therefore, it appears that neither ethnic mix nor segregation provides a compelling explanation for failing community relations. As Amin (2002, p. 968) points out, there are many examples of neighbourhoods in which multi-ethnicity has not

resulted in social breakdown, as well as ethnically mixed estates that are 'riddled with racism, interethnic tension and cultural isolation'.

The only conclusion that can be safely drawn from available evidence is that the idea that residential integration can promote social interaction and, in turn, serve to foster mutual understanding and tolerance is, at best, simplistic (van Kempen and Ozuekren, 1998). Analysis of patterns of social interaction in socially mixed neighbourhoods, for example, has revealed little interaction or engagement between people of different social backgrounds, raising obvious questions about why ethnic integration should lead to inter-ethnic interaction (Atkinson and Kintrea, 1998; Cole and Shayer, 1998; Jupp, 1999). It also appears that habitual contact does not guarantee cultural exchange and can even entrench animosities, leading Amin (2002) to conclude that the contact spaces of housing estates and urban public spaces are incapable of fostering inter-ethnic appreciation, not being structured as spaces of interdependence and habitual understanding. Attention should instead focus, he suggests, on venues such as the workplace, schools, colleges, youth centres and other spaces of association, where 'prosaic negotiations' are compulsory (Amin, 2002, p. 969).

Amin's conclusion is supported by examples provided in a report highlighting the gains made by social landlords in breaking down barriers between different ethnic groups (Robinson *et al.*, 2004) and the reported effectiveness of community mediation, conflict resolution and community development projects provided through the Government's Community Facilitation Programme (NRU, 2004). These situations and settings, however, are often closed to people seeking asylum, a fact that, along with media coverage of asylum seekers and assistance and support to people seeking asylum, helps explain the limited contact between asylum seekers and existing residents in certain neighbourhoods and the hostile reception that some asylum seekers receive (Boswell, 2001).

5 Conclusions

Introduction

This report has mined a disparate evidence base to piece together what is currently known about the experiences and consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level. The result is a series of inferences and assertions, the tentative nature of which reflects the patchy and incomplete character of the evidence base. This chapter reflects on the principal conclusions that can be drawn from this exercise, both in terms of substantive insights and lessons learnt regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence base. Discussion is organised around consideration of three key questions, summarised below, which the review team were set the task of exploring (see page 2 for more detail).

■ What do we know about the settlement experiences of new immigrants?

■ What factors shape the settlement experiences of new immigrants?

■ What lessons have been learnt regarding the management of change in neighbourhoods experiencing new immigration?

A concluding section reflects on gaps in current understanding and presents suggested priorities for future research.

The settlement experiences of new immigrants: what do we know?

What do we know about the experiences of new immigrants in the UK? The short answer is not very much. Popular debate and political discussion about the rights and wrongs of immigration have become increasingly heated in recent years, yet research has remained relatively silent about new immigrants, their contribution to society and the impact of their arrival on neighbourhoods, towns, cities and the country at large. Drawing on evidence from across a range of disciplines and policy realms, however, it has been possible to piece together a number of very general conclusions.

■ New immigrant households, regardless of status, typically live in poor quality housing in inner-city neighbourhoods often characterised by deprivation and

social exclusion. The challenges raised by living in such locations can be compounded by the problems that some new immigrants encounter accessing the care, support and assistance they require.

■ These neighbourhoods are often home to other immigrant households and established minority ethnic populations, and can be rich in various resources vital to helping new immigrants meet the challenge of satisfying their material needs, coping with hostility and discrimination, engaging with key services and negotiating a place in British society.

■ New immigrants settling in neighbourhoods with a more limited history of minority ethnic settlement are more prone to experience harassment, abuse and violence. Community tensions, however, are not an inevitable consequence of new immigration into a location with little previous history of minority ethnic settlement and new immigrants receive a better reception in areas where local residents have been prepared in advance for their arrival.

■ The settlement of new immigrant households in deprived neighbourhoods can serve to compound their own deprivation and reinforce existing geographies of exclusion and disadvantage. New immigration also has the potential, however, to strengthen social cohesion and promote neighbourhood sustainability.

For as long as the voices of new immigrants and existing residents in the neighbourhoods where they settle are not heard, it is going to be difficult to venture beyond such broad generalisations. These conclusions do hint, however, at diversity within the experiences and consequences of new immigration, and it is to the factors shaping the differential experiences of immigrant households and receiving populations that we now turn.

Factors shaping the settlement experiences of new immigrants

A number of apparent contradictions exist between the broad conclusions generated by the review. For example, new immigration is recognised as compounding neighbourhood deprivation but is also identified as a potential driver of regeneration, while harassment is reported to be common in the lives of new immigrants, although community tensions are not considered an inevitable consequence of new immigration. These ambiguities reflect the extent to which the experiences and consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level can vary depending on a number of contingent factors that have been revealed to include the following.

■ The history of migration into and current ethnic profile of a neighbourhood, more positive experiences (engagement and utilisation of key services, social interaction with other residents, commitment to a neighbourhood, minimal harassment and relatively limited community tensions) being apparent in locations with a longer history of minority ethnic settlement, where new immigrants share aspects of their background or identity with existing residents and where relevant and appropriate provision (formal and informal) is already in place.

■ The actual and perceived ethnic and cultural identity of new immigrants, people from culturally or linguistically distinct groups sometimes experiencing more difficulties negotiating a position within and being accepted into local communities and wider society and people perceived to belong to particular groups (for example, people thought to be Muslim or people matching stereotypical views of who is an asylum seeker) being less readily accepted by existing residents and more likely to be the victim of harassment.

■ The legal status of new immigrants, the material conditions and experiences of people seeking asylum, in particular, being informed by government policy and the actions of local agents.

■ Media portrayals of new immigrants, with national coverage perpetuating stereotypes and popular myths, and local reporting in some instances fuelling animosity and hostility within receiving populations and creating tensions between population groups.

■ The local social and economic context, competition for limited resources and associated opportunities in disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods in some instances serving to raise tensions between existing residents and new immigrants, which have been exploited in certain circumstances by the activities of far-right groups.

Managing new immigration at the neighbourhood level: lessons learnt

Few lessons appear to have been learnt about managing the consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level. The situations and experiences of new immigration remain largely hidden from view and little is known about the associated challenges for immigrant and receiving populations. Out of sight and out of mind, national policy has seen little reason to develop a systematic approach to managing

the consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level. Neither does there appear to have been adequate attention paid to the extent that current policy can (often unconsciously) exacerbate problems at the neighbourhood level.

At the local level, there are agencies working to manage the consequences of new immigration. These activities, though, have rarely been the subject of systematic review and evaluation, although the introduction of a 'star rating system' for European Refugee Fund and Challenge Fund projects has provided a welcome benchmark for evaluation of such initiatives. The limits of understanding also make it difficult to attribute cause and effect to the actions (and inaction) of different agencies and institutions, making it difficult to discern what works where. The lessons that can be drawn from current understanding about managing change at the local level are therefore very general in nature.

■ There can be no one solution to the challenge of managing change at the neighbourhood level, the situation varying from one location to another. Any response must therefore be tailored to local circumstances.

■ Evidence suggests that there is real potential for mediating institutions to promote community relations by working to prepare local residents in advance for the arrival of new immigrants in their neighbourhood.

■ Certain challenges – such as the management of tensions between new and established local populations – are more likely to arise in specific types of location, in particular, deprived neighbourhoods with little previous history of minority ethnic settlement.

■ Government agencies, local institutions and service providers need to be mindful of the unforeseen impact of policy and practice on the experiences and consequences of new immigration.

■ Intangibles, such as the media portrayal of new immigrants, are important determinants of the experiences of new immigration at the local level.

■ There is an urgent need to fill a number of gaps in knowledge and understanding regarding the situations and experiences of new immigration, appreciation of the challenge to be met being the starting point for the design, development and implementation of response measures.

Gaps in the evidence base

A persistent theme within this review has been the dearth of explicit evidence regarding the experiences and consequences of new immigration at the neighbourhood level. A number of informative insights have been generated by piecing together data from various sources, but there remain more questions than answers. Particular gaps in the evidence base revealed by the review include the following.

■ *The identities of new immigrants* – the numbers (with status) and demographic profile of new immigrants at the district and neighbourhood level; the skills, training and qualifications of new immigrants and their associated (current and potential) contribution to the local economy; the personal identities of new immigrants from different backgrounds with different settlement stories.

■ *The voices of different new immigrant groups and populations* – material conditions; experiences in the local neighbourhood; relations with other local residents; the problems and challenges they encounter; the factors exacerbating these problems and the assistance that might help minimise such challenges; their requirements and the extent to which these are being met by current provision; the resources they have drawn on and the resources they require; their hopes and aspirations for the future and how these might be realised; gendered analysis of new immigrant experiences.

■ *The settlement patterns of different new immigrant populations and groups* – the neighbourhood situations of new immigrants; the factors shaping these settlement patterns (resources, choices and constraints); changing patterns of settlement; differential experiences and challenges associated with different settlement patterns; residential aspirations.

■ *Interaction and relations between different new immigrant groups and populations and existing residents* – nature and scope of interaction in different neighbourhood situations; factors restricting and facilitating interaction; tensions, harassment and conflict in different situations and settings; the response of statutory agencies (including the police) to incidents of abuse and harassment; the role of mediating agencies in managing relations; the significance of interaction and community relations in shaping settlement patterns and informing neighbourhood change.

■ *Review and evaluation of local initiatives to manage change* – an auditing of local initiatives; a review of intervention options; an assessment of priorities and

objectives; the contribution of different agencies and institutions; analysis of management structures and partnership arrangements; the monitoring and evaluation of impacts and consequences.

■ *The dynamics of change in neighbourhoods affected by new immigration* – displacement and population change in different neighbourhood settings; stability and sustainability in the context of new immigration.

Cutting across this research agenda is an urgent need to differentiate more clearly between the distinct experiences of new immigrants on the basis of different ethnicities, cultural identities, countries of origin and resident status.

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