Muslims and community cohesion in Bradford

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12
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Aims

The report is an additional output from a larger study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on ‘Immigration, faith and cohesion: evidence from local areas with significant Muslim populations'. The aim of the report was to investigate the factors that either enhanced or undermined community cohesion in two local wards in Bradford, United Kingdom, where there were established Muslim communities and where Muslim migrants had recently arrived.

Methodology

The research took place in 2 wards within Bradford, chosen due to a range of criteria including: ethnic and religious diversity; migration history; socio-economic deprivation indicators; the structure of the Muslim communities; and local media coverage of Muslim issues within Bradford. A combination of a purposive,

quota-based sampling strategy together with snowball sampling was used to identify a sample of 117 participants consisting of: 52 recently arrived [less than 5 years residence] Muslims; 15 recently arrived non-Muslims; 35 established [10 years of residence] Muslim residents; and 15 UK-born non-Muslim residents. Half the respondents were male: 49% were in the age range 25-44; 68% were Pakistani; and 74% were foreign born. A panel of locally-based trained interviewers with the appropriate gender and ethnic mix conducted the interviews. In addition, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the participants. Interviews were also conducted with 10 local policy makers and service providers.

Key issues

In terms of spaces and interactions the research found that the established Muslim community [more so than recent arrivals] have greater interactions and live in neighbourhoods with different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Established Muslims were also more likely to use friendship networks than recent Muslim arrivals who tended to use kinship networks. The former also tended to have the highest rate of participation of any sample group in national and local elections. Transnational contact for all participants was weak, limited to sending small sums of money, reading newspapers or use of the telephone. Visits to their country of origin were infrequent. Among the policy makers and service providers interviewed there was little consensus on the meaning of cohesion with deprivation and marginalisation seen to be the main issues. Concerns often

focused around housing and education and how to overcome the resistance of the white working class to mixing with the dominant Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] group, Pakistanis.

Conclusions

Established communities were found to be more integrated than recent arrivals and while deprivation, marginalisation, especially unemployment and low skills, over-crowding and lack of financial well-being affected all the groups, this was more acute for recent arrivals. Established as opposed to recent arrivals share a deep sense of attachment and belonging to their locality, have a high turnout in electoral politics and are more informed of issues. The research identified the need for policy makers and community organisations to engage with the white working class and make them more receptive to notions of diversity and harmony. It also noted that media representation and presentation is important: Bradford is often the focus of anti-Muslim media reporting. Other issues identified which need attention include: managing community representation more effectively; bringing the white working class into the remit of community cohesion policy; and ensuring that housing and education are more ethnically mixed.

Web Link
Muslims and community cohesion in Bradford [link to external website]
Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
EU migrants

Non-EU migrants
Topic
Community and society
Community cohesion
Integration
Pakistani
Place
Bradford
Year
2010
Resource Type
Report
Contact Name
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Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/research-entry/muslims-and-community-cohesion-bradford*