Communities Up Close: Neighbourhood Change and Migration in Yorkshire and Humber

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Aims

Communities up Close was a Migration Yorkshire project funded by the Controlling Migration Fund, which aimed to understand how different neighbourhoods experienced and responded to recent migration. This report shares the findings of the qualitative research which the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) was commissioned to undertake as part of the project.

Methodology

- The research took place in ten neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber that had experienced recent population change as a result of migration.
- In most of the ten research sites, there were five focus groups. Four were with members of the ‘host’ community, who were British or had lived in the UK for 20 years or more. The other group was with people who had migrated to the UK. In total there were almost 250 focus group participants.
- The first two focus groups in each research site focused on participants’ experiences of living there and the impact of recent migration. The third and fourth focus groups took a ‘deliberative inquiry’ approach and were solutions-focused.
- Almost 60% of participants were women. About 80% of the participants taking part in the focus groups for long-standing residents were white British. Participants with extreme views about migration were screened out at recruitment stage.

80 professional stakeholders participated via interviews.

Key issues

The report authors identified a number of key findings from the research:

- To understand a neighbourhood’s response to recent change, insight is needed into its identity – for example its industrial heritage, or long-term history of migration.

- Local responses to migration are influenced by an area's economic wellbeing – residents may be working long hours and lack time and energy to engage with the community, and there may be little local funding available for community activities.
- Participants' concerns about neighbourhood issues such as declining town centres, housing issues and anti-social behaviour, were in some cases linked with their perceptions of migration.
- Participants were generally keen to have more opportunities to interact with newcomers, despite mixed views about increased local diversity.
- Migrants voiced similar concerns to the host community, but faced additional challenges, for example related to restrictions within the asylum system, and to hostility, which for some had worsened following the EU referendum.

The authors developed a neighbourhood typology, which can be used to categorise places based on their response to migration-related population change. The intention is to help local areas compare experiences with similar places, thus aiding development and sharing of good practice. Five neighbourhood types were identified:

- Cosmopolitan Centres: city centre areas with a long history of migration, with newcomers arriving to study and work.
- Super-Diverse Districts: highly diverse neighbourhoods with a long-established history of migration, in inner-city areas.
- Diverse Suburbs: in comparison with Super-Diverse Districts, a smaller number of ethnic groups is likely to be

found in these neighbourhoods, in the suburbs of highly diverse cities.
- Dynamic Districts: areas of transition in cities or large towns, with less previous history of migration than the first three types.
- Tight-Knit Towns: neighbourhoods in smaller towns, with low levels of diversity, and with ‘a strong sense of community and a rich industrial heritage’.

Recommendations

The authors made the following recommendations for local policy-makers:

- Local authorities should take steps to increase English language learning provision for recent migrants.
- There should be engagement with local employers to support integration.
- Local authorities should work in partnership with others to provide opportunities for meaningful social interaction between long-standing residents and more recent arrivals.
- Consultation should take place to ensure local residents are involved in decision-making about funding allocation at a community level.
- Partnership work is needed to address community tensions, and ‘anti-rumour’ campaigns to tackle ‘fake news’.

The authors also made several national policy recommendations:

- Investment in public spaces, as part of work to strengthen local economies.
- Labour market reform, to help improve scope for integration.
- Increased investment in provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) including in the workplace.
- Reforms to the immigration system to help facilitate integration.

Web Link
https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/communities-close
Topic
Community and society
Community cohesion
Integration
Migration
Public perceptions
Place
Yorkshire & Humber - region-wide
Year
2020
Month
7
Resource Type
Report

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