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The Neighbourhood Effects of New Immigration

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, global migration flows have become larger in scale and more varied in form. In the UK, controversy has surrounded this new phase of migration and it has often been assumed to be having a detrimental affect on the well-being of settled residents. Yet, there is dearth of information about the impacts of new immigration and what evidence does exist is curiously placeless, making it difficult to say anything about local effects. This paper seeks to fill this gap in understanding by outlining a framework to support the exploration of neighbourhood effects of new immigration. At its heart lies a commitment to three types of explanation for geographical variations in local experiences of new immigration: the individuals living in a place; the opportunity structures apparent in the local environment; and the socio-cultural features of local communities.

Introduction

Migration is global in scale. Large numbers of people are moving between a diverse range of localities scattered across the globe, from sparsely populated rural locations through to world cities. Since the 1990s, these flows have become larger in volume, more varied in form and increasingly complex in nature as a result of various transformations in political, economic and social structures (Timur, 2002). In Europe during the 1990s, for example, the post-cold war era heralded political and economic changes that resulted in increasing migratory flows within, into and out of Central

and Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, governments in Western Europe encouraged labour migration in a bid to increase economic flexibility and efficiency. There was also a sharp increase in the number of people fleeing violence and persecution and seeking asylum in Europe. The result was a rise in net migration to Europe to in excess of 1.5 million people per year during the 1990s (Commission of the European Communities, 2007). Even countries with a long history of population outflows (such as Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece) became countries of immigration (Massey, 2003).

In the UK, the spatialisation of these flows has been characterised as 'the new migration' (Vertovec, 2006) and the people involved described as 'the new immigrants' (Robinson and Reeve, 2006). This break with the past has been explained through reference to the marked rise in foreign nationals arriving into the UK since the early 1990s, the wide range of countries of origin from which these new immigrants have been drawn and the proliferation of migration channels and legal statuses to which they are allocated. Added to this, a new geography of settlement has emerged, with many new immigrants moving beyond London and the metropolitan centres that have traditionally served as reception points for immigrants to the UK, and settling in locations with little history of accommodating diversity and difference. The result is a situation of increasing social and demographic complexity – or super diversity - that surpasses anything previously experienced in the UK (Vertovec, 2006).

Across Europe and North America, controversy has surrounded this new phase of immigration. Well worn debates have been replayed about immigrants representing

a threat to economic and social well-being, national identity and security (Chebel d'Appollinia and Reich, 2008). In the UK, the proportion of the population considering immigration to be the most worrying issue facing the UK rose from less than five per cent in the mid-1990s to 44 per cent in 2006 (Ipsos MORI, 2006) and opinion polls have consistently revealed immigration to be a major concern to the British public (Ipsos MORI, 2007). Public debate, however, has tended to rely on anecdote and presumption, rooted in deep-seated notions about cultural and material loss presumed to inevitably be associated with immigration to the UK (Berkley et al., 2006). The result has been a simplistic narrative in which the presumed motives and actions of new immigrants are perceived to inevitably result in settled residents paying a heavy price for new immigration (Ninney and Simpson, 2009; Robinson, 2010). In reality, the situation is far more complex and variegated and, consequently, less clear cut.

Available evidence paints an ambiguous and contradictory picture regarding the impacts and consequences of new immigration. New immigration has been concluded to have only a small impact on national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to suppress wages at the lower end of the wage scale, but at the same time it has been argued that new immigrants create new business and jobs, fill labour market gaps and encourage growth in average wages (Dustmann et al., 2007; Finney and Simpson, 2009; Glover et al., 2001; Rowthorn, 2008; House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2008; Reed and Latorre, 2009). In some instances, evidence suggests that new immigration can exacerbate deprivation and further concentrate poverty, but in other cases it has been reported to serve as a driver of neighbourhood regeneration and renewal (Robinson and Reeve, 2006).

New immigrants are utilising public services, but evidence suggests rarely in the numbers or with the consequences presumed in popular debate (Robinson, 2007; Thorp, 2008). Harassment appears common in the lives of many new immigrants, but tensions and conflict between new and settled residents are not an inevitability (CLG Committee, 2008; Hickman et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2004). It is true that population change and increasing diversity has, in some instances, caused major resource and planning problems for service providers, but it is also reported that many agencies have adapted with relative ease to change (Audit Commission, 2007; ICOCO, 2007; Thorp, 2008). This paper contends that these ambiguities and contradictions are, in part, a consequence of the fact that place matters when it comes to understanding and explaining the effects of new immigration, resulting in a variable geography of experiences, impacts and consequences across the UK.

Place is a social and material setting and 'meaningful location' (Agnew, 1987). It represents the context within which new immigrants and settled residents come together and possesses the potential to inform variations in both the impacts of new immigration and how people and institutions make sense of these consequences for the local area and their own well-being. This is not to deny that the differential package of rights and opportunities associated with different immigration pathways represent an important determinant of the arrival experiences of new immigrants. Nor is to neglect the fact that new immigrants can prove resourceful and exercise agency even within the most constrained of circumstances. The point is that the experiences and impacts of new immigration cannot be fully appreciated without the application of a geographical perspective on place. This paper argues that analysis of the impacts and consequences of new immigration has largely failed to

acknowledge this fact. In response a conceptual route-map to guide efforts to comprehend the mechanisms through which place informs and is informed by experiences of new immigration is outlined. Drawing on lessons to emerge from the recent re-engagement with 'place' across the social sciences and associated efforts to comprehend the role of contextual factors in creating and maintaining variations in individual and collective experience and outcomes, and using the UK as a case study, this approach draws attention to the relational nature between three dimensions of place: the people who live there (settled residents and new arrivals); the physical and social environment; and collective identities and cultures.

Discussion begins with a summary of new immigration into the UK, which provides an overview of the scale, diversity and settlement patterns of the new immigrant population. Attention then turns to consider the impacts of new immigration and the extent to which the experiences and outcomes of new immigration have been observed to be playing out in different ways in different places. Discussion then turns to consider how an appreciation of place can help us better understand these local effects of new immigration. Throughout the paper, new immigration is the term used to refer to the new phase of migration since the early 1990s, a period that witnessed population flows more varied in form and larger in scale than anything that has gone before, and new immigrant is the catch-all term used to refer to people arriving into the UK during this period, including people moving to the UK to take up permanent residence and people arriving with the intention of staying on a temporary basis. Where relevant, distinctions are drawn between different types of migrant (such as asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers).

New Immigration in the UK

A total of 591,000 people were recorded as entering the UK in 2006, a record high at the time. The vast majority (86 per cent) of these people were non-UK citizens. The same year, the number of people leaving the UK was also at a record high. The result was net migration of 191,000 people into the country (ONS, 2006). Asylum and labour migration were the twin engines driving this new phase of immigration. A total of 368,155 people applied for asylum in the UK between 2000 and 2006 and 188,460 people were granted leave to remain (Bennett et al., 2007). During the same period, 2.5 million foreign nationals – 1.2. million from within and 1.3 million nationals from beyond the European Union (EU) - entered the UK and were allocated a National Insurance number (NINo), a requirement to work in the formal labour market (DWP, 2008).

In the post-war years, immigration to the UK was dominated by flows of people from countries of origin with long-standing links to the UK – in particular, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent (Phillips, 1998). People have continued to arrive into the UK from these countries, but in recent years the increasing numbers of new immigrants and migrants have been drawn from a wider range of countries of origin. The profile of people granted asylum has been diverse and ever-changing, reflecting the shifting global geography of conflict and oppression. In 2000, the highest number of asylum applications in the UK were received from nationals of Iraq, Sri Lanka, the former republic of Yugoslavia, Iran and Afghanistan. In 2007, the highest number of applications were from nationals of Afghanistan, Iran, China, Iraq and Eritrea. Migrant labour is also being drawn to the UK from across the globe,

although foreign nationals from the EU and states with long-standing ties to the UK tend to dominate. In 2007/08, the top ten nationalities seeking a NINo registration were Polish, Indian, Slovakian, Pakistani, Australian, Romanian, French, Lithuanian, German and Italian (DWP, 2008). These immigration streams have added to the already complex array of transnational networks linking the UK with locations around the globe and involving the flow of individuals and family members back and forth between the UK and numerous other states.

A distinctive geography of settlement appears to be associated with this new phase of immigration. Locations that have long served as destination points for new immigrants and migrant workers - including London, Birmingham and other metropolitan centres - remain popular destinations, with chain migration sustaining clusters of immigrants of similar local and regional origin in particular towns and cities (Dorling and Thomas, 2004; Simpson, 2004). Eight of the top ten local authority districts with the highest volume of international migration per 1,000 population between 2001 and 2006, for example, where London Boroughs (ICOCO, 2007). In recent years, however, increasing numbers of new immigrants have also settled in regions, cities, districts and towns with little recent history of inward migration (Audit Commission, 2007; Bauere et al., 2007). For example, 13 of the top 50 local authorities in England for National Insurance Number registrations (NINO) to overseas nationals in 2006/07 were not in the top 50 local authorities in terms of percentage size of minority ethnic population (ICOCO, 2007). Similar analysis focusing on the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS), under which citizens from the 2004 European Union accession states can legally work in the UK, reveals that 37 of the top 50 local authorities for WRS applicants between 2004 and 2007 were not in

the top 50 local authorities for minority ethnic residents (ICOCO, 2007). As a result, although London and the South East of England remain popular destinations for new immigrants, more than half all foreign nationals arriving into the UK are now destined for other parts of the UK. Areas witnessing relatively large proportional increases in the number of international migrants have included the North East and East of England and Scotland (ONS, 2009a).

These new settlement patterns reflect, in part, the shifting nature and geography of employment opportunities in the UK. While London remains a prime destination for migrant workers, opportunities in the agricultural and food processing industries, for example, have drawn relatively large numbers of migrant workers to rural locations, such as Aberdeenshire in Scotland and East Anglia in England (Audit Commission, 2007; Bauere et al., 2007; TUC, 2004). The rural district of Boston in Lincolnshire, for example, was 248th in the ranking of local authorities in England on the basis of proportion of minority ethnic residents in 2001, but recorded the 16th highest number of NINOs as a percentage of population between 2004 and 2007 and the second highest number of WRS registrations relative to the total population (ICOCO, 2007). Opportunities in the hospitality and catering industry, meanwhile, appear to have drawn migrant workers to more remote rural locations, such as the Lake District in England and the Highlands of Scotland (Audit Commission, 2007; Bauere et al., 2007). In addition, government policy has actively sought to disperse people seeking asylum to locations beyond London and the South East of England (Hynes, 2006). Designated dispersal destinations have often been determined by the availability of unpopular or vacant housing, and have included towns and cities in the industrial heartlands of Scotland, Wales and England with little recent history of

accommodating new immigrants, such as Hartlepool, Darlington and Sunderland in the North East of England, Glasgow in Scotland, and Swansea in Wales (Filkin, 2002; Pemberton, 2009).

The Local Impacts of New Immigration: Insights from the Evidence Base

Heated public debate has surrounded this new phase of immigration in the UK. Opinion has coalesced around the view that new immigration is having a major impact on settled residents in effected locations, with common themes including the threat that immigration poses to cohesion by diluting the values, habits and qualities that people have in common and thereby weakening the sense of community; the burden new immigrants place on public services; and the assertion that settled residents are loosing out to new immigrants in the competition for scare public resources and employment opportunities (CIC, 2007; Home Office, 2008; ICOCO, 2007; Thorp, 2008; House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2008; Robinson, 2010). It is difficult to test the validity of these claims. Discussion of the impacts of new immigration has been largely placeless, resulting in a deficity in understanding of how new immigration is playing out in different ways in different places. What evidence does exist tends to focus either on the national context at the expense of local geographies of change (Stenning and Dawley, 2009), or is aspatial in nature and fails to consider how consequences might be manifest and managed in different ways in different contexts (ICOCO, 2007; Thorp, 2008). Meanwhile, considerable research interest has been shown in the situations and experiences of different population groups arriving into the UK through different immigration pathways. The material deprivation experienced by many new immigrants has been

spotlighted, problems of health and well-being have been revealed, harassment has been found to be a common experience and difficulties accessing key services have been frequently reported. However, as Robinson and Reeve (2006) point out in their early review of this evidence base, analysis of local experiences has rarely ventured beyond description to consider the social and physical environments within which these experiences are rooted or how new immigrants are understanding and negotiating the opportunity structures apparent within the places they reside.

The lack of attention to the local impacts of new immigration is a curious failing. As discussed above, new immigrants are settling in very different landscapes across the UK where their arrival has the potential to affect change in a variety of ways. The result is a void in understanding which has been filled by exaggeration and distortion that has tapped into deep seated notions about the motives and actions of new immigrants and the loss inevitably experienced by the resident population (John et al., 2005; 2006; Robinson, 2010), themes that have come to the fore whenever immigration has been discussed in the UK over the last 60 years (Berkley et al., 2006). There are a small number of studies, however, that have sought to fill this gap in understanding, by attempting to situate local experiences of new immigration within the particular places that new immigrants and settled residents live and interact. Fragmentary glimpses into two particular aspects of the place effects of new immigration have been provided: the links between new immigration and poverty and deprivation; and the cohesion challenges associated with new immigration.

New Immigration, Poverty and Deprivation

The residential situations of new immigrants reflect the interplay of individual preferences, personal resources, differential rights associated with immigration status and the opportunity fields within the locations where new immigrants settle. Migrant workers have no recourse to welfare benefits upon first arriving in the UK. Restricted eligibility to social housing and the financial prerogative to minimise costs and maximise capital accumulation directs most to the lower end of the private rented sector and to poor quality housing in neighbourhoods characterised by high turnover and turbulence (Spencer et al., 2007). Polish migrant workers in Sheffield, for example, reported that maximising disposable income was their key concern and securing cheap accommodation was an important part of this strategy, while residential location was rarely a priority; if accommodation was available and affordable then it was suitable (Robinson et al., 2007). In some locations, the need of migrant workers for cheap, short-term private rented accommodation has combined with interest in the potential of housing as an investment commodity to drive a growth in the buy-to-let market (Robinson et al., 2007). In some cases, the result has been a deterioration in housing conditions, as a result of the failure of some private landlords to maintain their properties (Audit Commission, 2007). Overcrowding has also resulted from the tendency of some migrants to sub-let in order to reduce the rent they are paying (Spencer et al., 2007). Meanwhile, the opportunities for settled residents to buy their own home in the neighbourhood have been reduced, as house prices have been inflated by the demand for buy-to-let properties (Sprigings, 2008). The increase in the number of people living within a neighbourhood associated with the conversion of properties into shared accommodation is also reported to have raised problems, ranging from car parking

problems and waste disposal issues, through to tensions around life-styles and noise issues (Audit Commission, 2007; Hickman et al., 2008).

Employment provides some migrant workers with the financial resources to affect a move to a more ‘desirable' residential location, a decision that often coincides with people making the commitment to remain in the UK on a longer term basis and also appears to reflect an expression of class consciousness among some Eastern European migrant workers (Hickman et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2007; Spencer et al. 2007). In contrast, it can take asylum seekers many years to accumulate the rights and resources required to exercise choice in the housing system (Robinson et al., 2007). Upon arriving in the UK, people seeking asylum have limited recourse to welfare benefits and are barred from work. Most therefore approach the UK Border Agency for accommodation and assistance while awaiting a decision on their application for asylum. Asylum seekers are subsequently dispersed across the UK to cluster areas that correspond closely with the 88 local authority districts identified by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit as having the highest levels of social exclusion (CIH, 2003). In these towns and cities, they are frequently housed in temporary accommodation provided by private contractors located in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods (Casey et al., 2004). The result is exposure to poverty, which is reported to undermine any sense of ‘home’ or ‘belonging’ and the commitment that people might otherwise develop for the neighbourhood and town where they settle. Research in Glasgow, for example, has suggested that the poor quality of the neighbourhoods in which many people seeking asylum have been accommodated explains why half of the people surveyed reported not feeling ‘at home’ in the city (Buck, 2001).

On being granted leave to remain in the UK, a process which can take many months, asylum seekers are required to vacate their temporary accommodation within 28 days. Common practice is for UK Border Agency staff and their agents to advise people to approach the local authority as homeless, given their new legal status conveys the right to access welfare benefits (Phillips, 2006; Robinson et al, 2007). There is no guarantee that they will receive a tenancy offer. Demand for social housing outstrips supply in many locations and local authorities often direct applicants into private rented housing, a sector beset by major problems with disrepair and in which almost half of all properties fail to meet government decency standards (CLG, 2009). Evidence suggests that some refugees struggle to make this transition and become homeless (Kofman et al., 2007; Robinson, 2010). Even refugees deemed to be in priority need of housing by the local authority can wait many months in temporary accommodation for a tenancy offer, before being allocated housing typically located in less popular parts of the social rented stock – deprived estates in low-demand areas, characterised by poverty, community tensions and crime (Carter and El-Hassan,2003; D'Onofrio and Munk, 2003; Phillips, 2006; Hickman et al, 2008; Robinson, 2010).

In summary, therefore, new immigrants, regardless of legal status, are often living in disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods, characterised by poor quality housing, high levels of unemployment, restricted service provision and limited local amenities (Harrison and Phillips, 2003; Hickman et al., 2008; Markova and Black, 2007; Phillips, 2006; Robinson et al., 2007; Spencer et al., 2007; Zetter and Pearl, 2002). These residential situations are likely to have a long-term impact on life experiences, given

the enduring relationship between residential neighbourhood and the structuring of life chances (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). The arrival of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers is also likely to impact on local residents. The high levels of unemployment among refugees (Bloch, 2002) and the low incomes of migrant workers (Jayaweera and Anderson, 2008) might reinforce existing geographies of deprivation and exclusion and undermine targeted initiatives intended to tackle deprivation and regenerate neighbourhoods (Casey et al., 2004). Additional forms of social exclusion associated with living in physically and socially deprived neighbourhoods, such as barriers to labour market engagement and civic participation, might also be intensified, particularly by the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees into an area, perpetuating the disadvantages experienced by all residents (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Buck and Gordon, 2004; Ratcliffe, 1997). Strain might also be put on overstretched services, with new arrivals placing additional demands, for example, on scarce resources in local schools that are already under considerable pressure, resulting in tensions among parents and pupils (Hickman et al., 2008).

Given these situations and experiences, it is perhaps not surprising that settled residents commonly perceive migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees - who are commonly bundled into the collective grouping of 'immigrants' - as unwanted outsiders adding to the burden of deprivation and contributing nothing (Hickman et al., 2008). There is, however, an important counterweight to this tale of woe; in some locations, in particular less popular residential neighbourhoods characterised by population decline in the post industrial cities of Northern England and Scotland, it appears that the arrival of new immigrants can serve to underpin neighbourhood

stability and promote sustainability. Migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees have, in some locations, filled voids in the housing system, in accommodation and locations left behind or avoided by others (Robinson et al., 2007). In more extreme cases of low demand in the North and Midlands of England, for example, new immigration, in all its various forms, has helped tackle the blight of vacant properties and led to improvements in environmental conditions (Cameron and Field, 2000; Casey et al., 2004; Pemberton, 2009). In particular, the tendency of some refugees, whose lives have often been characterised by insecurity and transience for many years, to 'hunker-down' and forge a home once they finally access secure accommodation can provide a settled population in neighbourhoods more typically characterised by high turnover (Robinson et al., 2007). The ethnic and cultural identity that a new population might share can also provide the 'social cement' required to build a more stable and secure neighbourhood in situations where sustainability has proved otherwise unachievable (Cameron and Field, 2000). The arrival of some migrant workers into certain deprived neighbourhoods has also been reported to raise the educational and skill levels within the local population, although the level of qualifications among migrant workers can vary. The viability of local services, amenities and facilities in neighbourhoods suffering population decline, including schools with falling rolls (Hickman et al., 2008), can be underpinned, while it has also been suggested that the extra investment for immigrant pupils and their achievement ethos can raise the quality of education for all children at a school (Thorp, 2008).

New Immigration and Cohesion

Available evidence suggests that immigration can damage cohesion in deprived communities that have limited experience of diversity and whose residents tend to regard immigration as a disruption of everyday life and a challenge to bounded, place-specific identities. Hickman et al. (2008), for example, reveal how the dispersal of asylum seekers into deprived areas of Glasgow initially produced considerable hostility from local residents who had lived in isolated and bounded communities for a long time and who were given little forewarning or support to manage the reshaping of their community (Hickman et al., 2008). Such places appear less able to capitalise on the possibilities presented by new immigration, particularly when unsupported by social interventions aimed at mediating the challenges raised by this process of change, although there are examples of (statutory and third sector) mediating agencies working to temper such problems (Robinson et al., 2004). Cohesion can be further undermined by competition over scarce resources. In particular, the availability of housing has emerged as a contentious issue with the potential to promote conflict between new arrivals and settled residents, to promote racist sentiments and undermine community well-being, particularly in 'tight' housing markets, such as London, where demand far outstrips supply (John et al., 2005; Robinson, 2010).

Many of these factors were revealed to be informing the daily experiences, interactions and well-being of Liberian and Somali refugees interviewed in a Sheffield based study (Robinson et al., 2007). Stories of neighbourliness and positive interactions with fellow residents were virtually absent from the settlement stories of these new immigrants, who had arrived in the UK as refugees or asylum seekers and upon being granted leave to remain in the UK had been allocated to

social housing on peripheral estates. Respondents talked about having few friends living nearby, of little contact with neighbours and feeling alone and out of place, a sense of isolation that was compounded by the corrosive affect of harassment – verbal abuse and graffiti, attacks to property and in some instances physical violence by neighbours and other local residents – which was reported to be commonplace in and around the home. These experiences were reported to have had an alienating affect, leaving people fearing for their safety and feeling unwelcome in their local neighbourhood, the city and the UK more generally, a finding that chimes with studies in other towns and cities (Buck, 2001; Chahal and Julienne, 1999; Craig et al., 2004).

In locations where the majority of settled residents acknowledge the intrinsic diversity of the local community, there is a reported tendency for local attitudes, identities, interactions and activities to favour more positive social relations and to provide greater opportunity to capitalise on new immigration, both socially and economically (Hickman et al., 2008). This finding appears to be borne out by the experiences of the Polish migrant workers and Pakistani migrant workers and new arrivals who had entered the UK on spouse visas who were interviewed by Robinson et al (2007). In contrast to the Liberian and Somali refugees, these new immigrants were living in cosmopolitan landscapes around Sheffield city centre, which had a long history of accommodating diversity and difference. Pakistani respondents talked about the invaluable advice and assistance received from family and friends and community-led services, such as a local Muslim community centre, that helped them negotiate their way through various bureaucratic procedures and access key services such as health care. Polish migrant workers insisted that where they lived was not a major

concern and that they did not actively gravitate to areas where other Polish migrant workers were living, but, nevertheless, pointed to benefits associated with living close to other Polish new immigrants, including the help and assistance they received from other Polish people finding work and accommodation and the informal information sharing, for example through adverts in a Polish shop. Living in ethnically mixed communities also seemed to foster positive interaction between new immigrants and the White British community, new immigrants in these situations speaking positively about their White British neighbours in a way that respondents living in neighbourhoods with little history of accommodating diversity and difference rarely did (Robinson et al., 2007).

These experiences appear to reflect the capacity and infrastructure that can exist in established areas of minority ethnic settlement and explain why these areas have more to offer new arrivals than many other deprived neighbourhoods. This point was made by asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers in South Kilburn in London, interviewed by Hickman et al. (2008), who talked about valuing the multicultural ethos of the area and the broad acceptance of newcomers that it supported, which was reported to more than compensate for other social problems in the area.

Explaining Local Experiences of New Immigration

The emerging evidence base of local experiences and impacts of new immigration hints at the some of the ways in which the particulars of the place into which new immigrants arrive and settle – the composition of the new and settled population, the material context, local resources and the institutional infrastructure - can be

important determinants of the local impacts of new immigration. This is not to suggest that individual resources, dispositions, opportunities and actions of new arrivals and settled residents are not important determinants of individual experiences and local consequences of new immigration, but to recognise that human action and experience is mediated by social structures that contain many of the same features from place to place, but can produce different outcomes in different places (Agnew, 1989). Some authors have explicitly acknowledged this fact and pointed to ways in which the affects of new immigration are emerging in different ways and at different rates in different landscapes of migration. Hickman et al. (2008), for example, point to aspects of the social and physical environment and collective cultures that inform the cohesion consequences of new immigration, concluding that relations between the arrival of new immigrants in deprived neighbourhoods and cohesion are specific to place. Such observations, however, have rarely been followed up by any attempt to venture beyond the acknowledgement that place matters and to conceptualise and analyse the place-specific determinants of the experiences and effects of new immigration. Faced with this lacuna and confronted with the challenge of explaining the place specific experiences and outcomes of new immigration revealed by their study of the housing pathways of new immigrants, Robinson et al. (2007) employed the idea of the 'contact zone'. According to Pratt (1991), contact zones are social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of imbalanced power relations. Robinson et al. (2007) insert an appreciation of place into this conceptualisation and identify two extreme types of contact zones of new immigration.

The first is the established contact zone of immigration, which they characterise as locations of established minority ethnic settlement - typically inner city areas in major towns and cities - which have served as reception localities or move-on locations for previous immigrant streams. They possess a history of different cultures meeting, colliding and negotiating a social settlement. They can therefore represent places of safety and security for new immigrants. This is particularly likely to be the case when new arrivals share national, ethnic or cultural identities with the established population. The accumulated benefits of collective action, including community-led services and targeted statutory provision, can be available. The cosmopolitan nature of such areas can foster greater interaction between new immigrants and established residents of different ethnicities. However, new immigration can serve to reinforce material disadvantage and housing problems, including overcrowding, and rapid population change can unsettle established populations.

The second extreme is the new contact zone of immigration. In the context of their study in city of Sheffield, Robinson et al. (2007) characterise such places as relatively stable, White British, working class neighbourhoods, dominated by social housing. However, they suggest other archetypes might include small towns and rural areas, which have traditionally been associated with the white, middle class norms and values of rurality (Cloke, 1995), but have more recently been the destination for migrant workers employed in the agricultural and food processing industries. These locations are characterised as having a limited recent history of minority ethnic settlement and it is suggested that residents are more likely to be uncomfortable accommodating diversity and difference and local service provision might prove insensitive to emerging diversity. The ‘othering’ of difference, on the

grounds of class, ethnic, cultural and religious identity, is common, limiting interaction between new immigrants and established residents and underpinning harassment and persecution.

The contact zone represents a useful organising device. It recognises place as a material form which contains physical resources and social relations and is rich in meanings and values that can be contested and challenged. Building on this understanding, it points to some of the ways in which geography matters for the experiences and impacts of new immigration. However, it only takes us so far in understanding the place effects of new immigration. Its limitations are evidenced by the difficulties encountered when trying to understand and explain experiences and outcomes in places that fall between the two archetypes outlined by Robinson et al. (2007). The concept of the contact zone acknowledges that different aspects or dimensions of place shape local experiences and outcomes, but provides little insight into the specifics of these different dimensions, their interconnectivity and relative significance as determinants of local experiences and outcomes. Analysis tells us, for example, that locations with a history of accommodating diversity and difference are often better equipped to manage the challenges posed by new immigration. But these areas might be, and in many instances are, deprived neighbourhoods, a characteristic that analysis suggests is a negative influence on local experiences of new immigration. How are we to unpick the interplay between these two explanatory variables? The concept of the contact zone is of little help. It is a descriptive, rather than an analytical tool, that provides little guidance about how we should engage with the complexity of context and explore the mutuality inferred by the well-worn geographical truism that people make places and places make

people (Smith and Easterlow, 2005). It leaves us wanting for a conceptualisation of place and place effects that will guide the exploration of the variable geography of new immigration. This is the challenge to which we now turn.

The Neighbourhood Effects of New Immigration: A Research Agenda

'Place' is a geographic location that has material form and constitutes and contains physical resources and social relations, and is invested with meaning and value (Cresswell, 2004; Taylor, 1999; Tuan, 1975). It is the everyday realm in which people act, in which opportunities and constraints are manifest and identities are forged, problematised, sometimes clash and are frequently reformed (Gieryn, 2000). Different places provide access to different packages of resources, services and facilities. The dominant cultures and identities in a place can serve to offer safety, security and a sense of belonging for some people, while serving to isolate others as distinct and different (Sandercock, 2003) . As such, place is relevant to the production and maintenance of variations in individual and collective attitudes, actions, outcomes and experiences of new immigration. The challenge for research analysing this geography is to recognise and respond to this understanding of place through the development of relevant and appropriate conceptual frameworks. To this end, there are some lessons to be learnt from the resurgence of interest and a proliferation of studies since the early 1990s exploring place effects on individual and collective experiences, attitudes and well-being.

A particularly rich seam of work has focused on the role and contribution of contextual factors to the production and maintenance of health variations (Cummins

et al., 2007). Much of the early work in this field concentrated on whether place actually matters for health variation (Macintyre et al., 2002). Compositional characteristics of the local population (who lives there) and contextual features of the physical and social environment (what is there) were constructed as mutually exclusive and competing explanations. The conclusion to emerge was that where you live matters for health, but probably not as much as who you are (Pickett and Pearl, 2001).

Surveying this analytical landscape, Macintyre et al. (2002) point to various problems with approaches that seek to establish if there is any explanatory role for context after taking population composition into account. In particular, they argue that the distinction between composition and context is not as clear as has been assumed. They also point to the lack of any clear theorising about the mechanisms that might link area of residence and health behaviours; composition and context are often treated as obvious distinctions and underlying causal models are implied, rather than articulated. In response, they sketch out a way forward rooted in the acknowledgement of three types of explanation for geographical variations in health identified by Macintyre (1997), which offers real potential as a starting point for efforts to conceptualise geographical variations in the experiences and impacts of new immigration.

According to Macintyre (1997), compositional explanations draw attention to the characteristics of individuals living in particular places; contextual explanations draw attention to opportunity structures in the local physical and social environment; and collective explanations draw attention to socio-cultural and historical features of

communities. Applying these three types of explanation for geographical variations in health to variations in local experiences and consequences of new immigration currently represents a challenge, given our limited knowledge and understanding regarding the local impacts and outcomes of new immigration. However, reflecting on the evidence base reviewed above, it is possible to begin to populate these three dimensions of place.

The first explanation relates to matter of 'who lives there' and captures dimensions of place relating to both the profile and characteristics of the established population and the newly arriving population. Key elements are likely to include: the socio-economic circumstances and personal resources (financial and social) of (new and settled) residents; ethnic and cultural identities; the legal status and associated rights and opportunities of new immigrants, informed by the role that the state plays in relation to the control and management of migrant groups; and the size of the new immigrant population.

The second explanation relates to the specifics of the local social and physical environment. This explanation captures dimensions of place including: material conditions and aspects of neighbourhood deprivation and disadvantage; the profile and targeting of locally available resources (including services, facilities and housing); the role and function of a place within the wider urban context and associated patterns of mobility and demand; opportunities for interaction; social networks and support and assistance; and local opportunities for voice. The presence and performance of public, private and third sector bodies in facilitating and supporting the arrival of new immigrants and mediating the local challenges that might arise are

also likely to be important aspects of the local environment informing experiences of new immigration.

The third explanation captures the socio-cultural and historical (community or collective) dimension of place. This relates to aspects of collective social functioning, and includes: the history of norms and values associated with shared (ethnic, cultural, religious, class, regional, gendered or national) identities; the history of grappling towards an accommodation of cultural differences and the accommodation of diversity and difference; shared understandings and practices; contact and interaction between different groups; and recognised collectives and political representation. Local media representations and associated local discourses of migration represent another potentially important aspect of this collective dimension of place.

Having isolated these three types of explanation for geographical variations in the experiences and outcomes of new immigration, it might be assumed that the outstanding challenge is to establish the relative importance of one particular explanation over others. However, this would be to fail to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship that exists between people and places (Taylor, 1999). These three dimensions represent overlapping and inter-related aggregating concepts which only make sense when the relational connectivity between them is recognised and understood. Applying this organising framework therefore involves exploration of the patterns and linkages between the contextual, compositional and collective characteristics of places, rather than privileging one specific line of inquiry over another.

The first step in moving this research agenda forward is the development of conceptual models of causation relating to the pathways through which place informs and is impacted upon by new immigration. These models will need to profile bundles of outcome and influencing or explanatory variables and abstract the potential relationships between them. Currently, it is possible to generate, intuitively, broad typologies of places within which the same general processes of arrival and settlement are likely to result in different outcomes. The white Anglo-Saxon landscape of rural England (Tyler, 2003), for example, into which many migrant workers have ventured, is likely to bear witness to a very different outcome to the metropolitan centres of the UK that throughout the twentieth century served as the destination points for new arrivals. Rural and small town England is a context with only a limited history of accommodating diversity and represents a place in which racism and discrimination is more prevalent, residential choices are more limited, institutional policy and practice less sensitive and responsive to diverse needs, and the opportunities to meet needs and fulfil aspirations are severely curtailed (Reeve and Robinson, 2007). Beyond such broad generalisations, however, a lack of evidence detailing outcomes across the variable landscapes of migration make it difficult to suggest with any confidence how different dimensions of place might be interacting to produce distinct outcomes in different places. Mapping the geography of change associated with new immigration is therefore an urgent priority. This exercise should include quantitative analysis and statistical modelling to provide trend-based analysis of the emerging patterns of change in different places. Activity might also usefully focus on identifying the geography of correlations between the particulars of immigration and trends in contextual measures (for example,

deprivation, employment, access to housing, service demand and utilisation and the incidence of conflict and tension).

The next step will involve constructing causal models based on these analytical foundations. A productive approach might involve paralleling efforts in analysis of the place effects on health to establish the essential characteristics of the healthy neighbourhood. This would require the generation of a typology that captures the characteristics of place commonly found in locations associated with some clearly articulated notion of a more positive or productive experience of new immigration. These characteristics might include: contextual features, such as the physical environment shared by residents, infrastructural resources, the skills and commitment of local agencies, the availability of safe environments at home, work and play and the contextual dynamics that provide the material context for new immigrants and settled residents; collective features of social functioning and practices, including the particulars of place-based and community identities; and compositional features, including reference to the time and speed of settlement and its impact on the profile of the local population. In pursuing this goal, analysis will need to avoid typological thinking that essentialises the three dimensions of place and presumes they can be precisely defined or described. The order placed on the processes and consequences of new immigration by this conceptualisation will never be complete or fixed. A reflexive relationship will inevitably exist between the nature of places and the effects of new immigration, with the experiences and consequences of new immigration varying through time as places and people change.

Once established, the viability of these causal models will need to be tested. Qualitative methods will need to be deployed to explore the interplay of human agency, structures and power relations informing outcomes. Quantitative analysis, meanwhile, could test the applicability of the causal relations inferred. Of particular significance will be efforts to estimate the magnitude of relationships between places, experiences and impacts, which could provide public policy with some options on which to base efforts to manage the affects and associated challenges of new immigration.

Conclusion

In the UK, analysis of the impacts of new immigration has been largely aspatial and placeless. The result is a void in understanding about the neighbourhood effects of new immigration. Meanwhile, public opinion has been quick to coalesce around the view that new immigration is having a detrimental affect on the well-being of settled residents. This paper has drawn on evidence from a small number of studies that situate the experiences of new immigration in the places where they live to argue that new immigration can be a driver of change at the local level, but that the consequences are more complex and variegated than commonly presumed. It has suggested that, if we are to recognise and comprehend this complex and variable geography, analysis will need to do three things. Firstly, engage with geographical perspectives on place. Secondly, develop conceptual pathways regarding the ways through which place informs and is impacted upon by new immigration. Thirdly, engage in empirical research that draws on quantitative and qualitative methods to: map and profile the variable effects of new immigration; substantiate the viability of

proposed causal pathways through which place effects the experiences and consequences of new immigration; and test their applicability.

Finally, it is worth emphasising the enduring significance of this research agenda. The UK government, like many of its European counterparts, has instigated various reforms designed to reduce the number of asylum seekers and migrant workers entering the country, while the economic downturn has dented the enthusiasm of some migrant workers to enter and remain in the UK (ONS, 2009b). However, the scope, scale and nature of the 'new migration' since the 1990s will ensure that it remains a force for change at the local level for many years to come.

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