

## Resilience and the neighbourhood effects of 'new' immigration

**Supervisors: Dr Simon Pemberton (lead supervisor) and Dr Johanna Waters**

**Abstract:** The resilience of places and individuals in response to uncertain, volatile and rapid change has increasingly emerged as a key focus of academic and policy attention (Cutter *et al*, 2008). However, there has arguably been less attention to date on the complex inter-relations between processes of international migration, 'place effects' and the resilience of both migrants and the 'established' population (Robinson, 2010). Consequently, the proposed research seeks to explore how the *compositional, contextual* and *collective* features of 'place' (Macintyre, 1997) impinge on the resilience of both the 'established' population and international labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) who have recently moved to the United Kingdom (UK), and their respective neighbourhoods. In particular, a detailed consideration of the characteristics of both groups – for example, in terms of their socio-economic circumstances and associated rights and opportunities – is required in order to explore how this influences their resilience. However, the PhD will also consider the opportunity structures in the local environment, including the extent and targeting of locally available resources and opportunities for interaction, as well as how these may be mediated by state and non-state actors, and issues of resilience therein. In addition, a focus on the socio-cultural features of urban communities will be required in order to investigate the community / collective dimensions of place and the extent to which difference and diversity is accommodated, and how this may impinge on the resilience of CEE migrants and the established population, as well as their respective neighbourhoods. Within this context, the overall intention of the PhD is to generate a better understanding of the impact of the varying inter-relations between processes of international labour migration and 'place' effects, and the subsequent implications for community planning, community cohesion and the socio-economic resilience of immigrant and 'established' communities alike.

**Background and context:** Issues of 'resilience' are becoming increasingly prominent in debates around globalisation, climate change, demographic pressures and the socio-economic re-composition of communities (Wilson, 2010). But whilst there has been an increasing interest in issues of resilience and the capabilities and capacities of urban communities to withstand change, there has been less research focused on the complex inter-relations between processes of international migration, 'place effects' and the resilience of both migrants and the 'established' population (Robinson, 2010). In this respect, it is important to consider how different groups of individuals – migrants and the 'established' population alike - adopt both formal and informal coping strategies in the face of 'place' effects and broader economic, social, cultural and political influences.

Consequently, the proposed research seeks to explore how three key features of 'place' impinge on the resilience of the 'established' population and international labour CEE migrants who have moved in significant numbers to the UK since 2004 (it is estimated that over 500,000 remain; see Mulley, 2010), and associated debates over the costs and benefits of such movement on particular localities.

*i) Individuals Living in a Place (Compositional features)* – an initial focus relates to 'who lives' in a place in respect of the characteristics of the 'established' population and the CEE migrant population. An investigation is therefore required of the socio-economic circumstances and personal resources of both groups, their respective identities (in ethnic and cultural terms), their legal status and associated rights and opportunities, the extent of state involvement in shaping such rights for CEE migrants, and the relative size of the CEE population compared to the overall population. In so doing, we can then explore how these issues impinge on the resilience of CEE migrants, the 'established' population and their respective neighbourhoods.

ii) *The Opportunity Structures in the Local Environment (Contextual features)* - here the emphasis is around 'what' is in a place, such as material conditions and aspects of neighbourhood deprivation and disadvantage; the nature, extent 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; the opportunities for interaction; the types of social networks and support and assistance available; and local opportunities for 'voice'. Again, the availability / actions of public, private, and third sector bodies in responding to the arrival of CEE migrants and mediating the local challenges that might arise are also important, and as such their actions will be important in shaping the neighbourhood experiences of CEE immigration and ultimately the resilience of such individuals / their neighbourhoods.

iii) *The Socio-cultural features of local communities (Collective features)* - finally, we also need to consider the community / collective dimensions of place. This may include the history of norms and values associated with shared identities; the extent to which there has been an historical accommodation of cultural differences and diversity; the extent to which shared understandings and practices have emerged; the amount of contact and interaction between different groups; and media and political representations of CEE migration in a particular area. Once more, such issues will impinge on the resilience of CEE migrants, the 'established' population and their respective neighbourhoods.

**Research questions and methods:** The fundamental aim will be to explore how immigration and 'place effects' inter-relate with each other and the extent to which there is variation in respect of their relative impact on the resilience of CEE migrants and the 'established' population, as well as their respective neighbourhoods. Potentially, this will need to be teased out through the development of a new typology of the effects of CEE immigration. This will help to inform the selection of two in-depth case studies, and which are likely to be focused on areas that have both a long history/little experience of immigration. Interviews will be conducted with CEE migrants themselves (approx. 30 in each area), 'established' residents (approx. 20-30), and with relevant policy makers/delivery agencies (10 per case study). The successful PhD candidate will have an undergraduate degree in geography or cognate discipline (2:1/1) and Master's degree with research-methods training. Prior knowledge is not essential, although experience of qualitative methods is preferred. Candidates will apply for this PhD, but will be expected to shape the research in significant ways.

Key contacts: Dr. Simon Pemberton ([S.Pemberton@bham.ac.uk](mailto:S.Pemberton@bham.ac.uk)) or Dr. Johanna Waters ([J.L.Waters@bham.ac.uk](mailto:J.L.Waters@bham.ac.uk)).

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