

## **East European immigration and community cohesion**

*Eugenia Markova and Richard Black*

**This report explores the experiences of East European immigrants who have moved to the UK since 1989, and considers the impact of this new immigration on community cohesion.**

This research explored the characteristics and experiences of new European immigrants to the UK including their interaction with local long-term residents, and in relation to issues of community cohesion. Despite high levels of education, immigrants were generally in low-skilled jobs, especially in hotels and restaurants, cleaning, and construction.

Focusing on three localities in South-East England, the report highlights positive features of this new immigration, and explores how the presence of these new immigrants (from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine) affects community cohesion.

The study aims to contribute to public debate on 'community cohesion'. It draws on nearly 400 interviews with new immigrants conducted in late 2005, and a similar number of interviews with long-term residents in Brighton & Hove, Hackney and Harrow. Interviews were conducted in the immigrants' own language by a team of immigrant researchers.



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**Eugenia Markova and Richard Black**

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Needless to say, the authors alone take full responsibility for any errors in this report.

# Executive summary

- 1 The rise of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe has attracted major media and policy attention in recent years, especially in the wake of EU enlargement in 2004. However, relatively little attention has been paid to those originating in countries outside the EU. This study is concerned with ‘new’ immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro (which has since become an independent state) and Ukraine who have arrived in the UK since 1989.
- 2 The main objectives of the study were (a) to collect new empirical data on immigrants’ personal characteristics, educational background, decisions to emigrate, choice of Britain, and living and working conditions in Britain; (b) to ascertain immigrants’ and long-term residents’ perspectives towards neighbourhoods, ethnic diversity and community involvement; (c) to explore the expectations, coping mechanisms and understanding among both groups of what constitutes a cohesive community; and (d) to establish how new immigrants interact with the host population.
- 3 Community cohesion is defined for the purpose of this study in terms of the Home Office understanding of a ‘cohesive community’, which is one in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging; where the diversity of people’s backgrounds is appreciated and positively valued; and where those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.

## Methodology

- 4 A quantitative survey was administered to a sample of 388 ‘new’ immigrants and 402 long-term residents between July and November 2005. Interviews were conducted with roughly equal numbers of men and women, stratified by age group, and living in the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow, and in the City of Brighton & Hove. A snowball sample using multiple entry points was used to identify both immigrants and long-term residents living in the same neighbourhoods. This was not a representative sample and so findings are only suggestive of the wider population. The surveys contained 94 questions and were administered in immigrants’ own language by a team of immigrant researchers.
- 5 In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with 21 immigrant workers and eight long-term residents in the selected localities, while researchers were encouraged to keep field diaries recording systematic observations, anecdotal details and other relevant information.



## Profile of new immigrants

- 6 Over two-thirds of the new immigrants surveyed were married or co-habiting, similar to the overall proportion in each of the localities studied. Over three-quarters of all immigrants' partners were also living in the UK, although around one-fifth of Bulgarians interviewed had partners in the country of origin, while around one-fifth of Ukrainians interviewed had partners in a third country.
- 7 Only a minority of immigrants had dependent children, although this proportion was substantially higher than the UK average. Of those with dependent children, most had the children living with them, although over half of Ukrainians with children said their children lived with their partner in a third country, while over 40 per cent of Bulgarians with children said the children lived with their partner in Bulgaria.
- 8 More than half of the immigrants interviewed had been in the UK for more than five years, with the peak years of arrival being 1999 and 2003. Serbians and Albanians had been in the UK the longest, while Bulgarians and Ukrainians were the most recent arrivals.
- 9 The majority of Serbians, Russians and Albanians interviewed had achieved permanent resident status by the time of interview, whereas Bulgarians were more likely to have a temporary status with the right to work. Ukrainians were the most likely to be undocumented.

## Migration histories

- 10 The largest proportion of immigrants interviewed had left their country for economic reasons, although a significant number of Serbians and Albanians – many of whom had claimed refugee status – cited political reasons for leaving. Family reasons, marriage and education were other reasons cited, while many mentioned more than one reason for their decision. Most had entered the UK legally.
- 11 Despite the significance of economic reasons in the decision to leave, the choice of the UK as a destination was overwhelmingly influenced either by the presence of family and friends or the availability of (or lack of need for) a visa. Only two immigrants surveyed mentioned the availability of welfare benefits as their reason for choosing the UK, whereas a number cited the tolerant, democratic or multicultural nature of Britain as a factor in their decision.

12 Around half of the immigrants interviewed had moved straight to their current place of residence, but the remainder had spent time elsewhere – with those living in London more likely to have spent time in another locality and those in Brighton more likely to have moved straight to the city. Those who had changed locality did so mainly for employment and housing-related reasons, whereas long-term residents who had moved within the UK cited a wider range of reasons for their mobility.

### Education and housing

13 The immigrants interviewed were relatively well educated, with 54 per cent having completed at least secondary education or college and a further 40 per cent having a university degree. Nearly half of the women immigrants interviewed had university degrees, compared to a third of men. The Albanians interviewed were the least educated, while the Bulgarians and Russians were the most educated. With the exception of Serbians, many of whom had arrived as refugees, most had completed their education before arriving in the UK.

14 More than two-thirds of the immigrants interviewed reported their level of English language proficiency on arrival as ‘none’ or ‘basic’, with 70 per cent of Albanians reporting no English at all, and English competence among men lower than that among women. However, by the time of interview, English proficiency had improved significantly among all groups, with nearly 80 per cent of Albanians, for example, now describing their English as ‘fluent’ or ‘adequate’ and men reporting higher levels of fluency than women.

15 More than half of the immigrants interviewed were living in private rented housing, although some Serbians and Albanians in particular had secured council accommodation. Serbians were also the most likely to have bought a house.

### Employment

16 Just over a quarter of the immigrants interviewed had been students before coming to the UK, while another 10 per cent were not in the labour market. Of the remainder, the majority reported being in a managerial, professional or associate professional position before leaving their country of origin, although spread across a wide range of industries. Just under a quarter of immigrants interviewed had worked in another foreign country before entering the UK.

- 17 Over half of all immigrants interviewed had entered the UK labour market either in the hotel and restaurant sector (men and women), construction (men) or 'other services' – mainly cleaning (women). The largest proportion had found employment through co-nationals, although advertisements, agencies and personal requests to employers were also significant ways of finding a first job. However, relatively few had been employed by co-nationals, with two-thirds reporting that their first employer was white British. A similar proportion had a white British employer now.
- 18 Employment rates were extremely high among the immigrants interviewed, with just 3.6 per cent unemployed. Around 60 per cent were in full-time employment, with relatively few self-employed or in casual work. The majority of those immigrants who were working were doing so legally. However, some 64 individuals who were interviewed were working illegally in the UK – two-thirds of them from Ukraine or Albania. This group were more likely to be working in the construction sector.
- 19 Reflecting their work in hospitality, construction and cleaning, immigrants were significantly more likely to be employed in low-skill jobs, whether compared to their own situation prior to departure, to long-term residents interviewed, or to the population as a whole in the localities studied.
- 20 There has also been very limited upward mobility for immigrants since arrival in the UK, with some movement out of the hotels and restaurants sector, and a small increase in the proportion finding work in public services such as education and health. The proportion in the construction sector had also grown, with one-third of immigrant men employed in this sector at the time of interview.
- 21 A total of 57 immigrants (around one in five of those in employment) reported earning below £5 an hour – around the current level of the National Minimum Wage. Two-thirds of those earning below £5 an hour were women, while the majority were working in the hospitality or 'other services' sectors; such low wages were most common in Hackney and least common in Brighton.
- 22 Although some immigrants were working long hours in order to achieve decent monthly incomes, they were not found to be working significantly longer hours than long-term residents. Legal status also appeared to have little effect on hours worked or on monthly incomes, with similar proportions of documented and undocumented immigrants reporting working over 45 hours a week or earning monthly incomes below £1,000.
- 23 Very few immigrants interviewed were members of a trade union.

## Sense of belonging

- 24 Among our sample of new immigrants, only half as many expressed a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood as among long-term residents and the population as a whole in the 2005 Citizenship Survey. This appears to be a specific 'neighbourhood effect', since nearly twice as many said they *did* feel they belong to Britain – roughly equal to the proportion among long-term residents and roughly equal to the proportion saying they belong to their home country.
- 25 Differences in the sense of belonging reported by immigrants appear to be explained in part by the period of time that they had spent in their neighbourhood or in the UK. Those who felt they belonged strongly to their neighbourhood had lived there on average 18 months longer than those who said they did not belong; while those who felt they belong strongly in the UK had been in the country on average three years longer than those who felt they did not belong.
- 26 Those with children living with them in the UK were also more likely to say they belonged, as were men, those with less education and those living in council accommodation.

## Valuing diversity

- 27 Both immigrants and long-term residents agreed that the neighbourhoods they were living in are places where different people get on well together – more so than the population as a whole in the 2005 Citizenship Survey. Albanians and Bulgarians were more likely than the other immigrant groups to agree that people get on well in their neighbourhood.
- 28 However, very few immigrants – only around 20 per cent – agreed that their neighbourhoods are places where people help each other, with Albanians and Ukrainians in particular much more likely to say that people 'go their own way'.
- 29 Immigrants were also less likely than long-term residents to say that they talked frequently to their neighbours, although at least half of both groups reported talking to a neighbour at least once a week. Ukrainians were the least likely to report talking to their neighbours, reflecting perhaps the higher proportion of undocumented immigrants in this group.
- 30 Rather more positively, both immigrant and long-term resident respondents reported quite high levels of social interaction with people from other ethnic

groups, and contact with each other. Levels of co-operation with work colleagues from other ethnic backgrounds were also high, with the vast majority of those working in ethnically diverse workplaces reporting that people at their workplace respect each other.

## **Expectations of life opportunities**

- 31 Around half of the immigrants surveyed reported that they wish to return to their home country at some stage, with Bulgarians and Ukrainians more likely to wish to return. However, few felt this return was imminent – just eight individuals had fixed a date. Ukrainians were the most likely to have a definite plan to return.
- 32 Among those who intended to return, earning enough money in the UK was the most significant factor identified by individuals as determining the date of return, followed by family and personal reasons, and an improvement in economic conditions at home. However, overall, those in the UK for a shorter period of time (less than three years), those who had come for economic reasons and those working in low-skilled occupations were more likely to state that they intend to return within the next three years.

## **Community participation**

- 33 Under a quarter of the immigrants interviewed felt that they could influence decisions at a local level, much lower than among long-term residents or for the UK population as a whole. Albanians were the most positive and Serbians the most negative about their ability to influence decisions.
- 34 Immigrants were less than half as likely as long-term residents or the UK population as a whole to report undertaking an action in the last 12 months to solve a local problem, and only half as likely to have volunteered locally in the last 12 months or to have given money to charity.
- 35 Although similar proportions of immigrants and long-term residents reported being involved in a group, club or organisation, immigrants were more likely to be involved in sports clubs, whereas long-term residents were more likely to be members of social clubs. Very few immigrants reported being politically active and only 6 per cent were members of ethnic community organisations.

36 As with sense of belonging, levels of community participation increased among immigrants with the time they had spent in the UK. Also important were accommodation status and language ability, with owner-occupiers who had entered the UK more than five years ago and/or who spoke better English more likely to report higher levels of community participation.

### **Emerging issues: what constitutes a cohesive community?**

37 Evidence from this study suggests that relations between immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine, and long-term residents in neighbourhoods in Hackney, Harrow and Brighton were fairly positive, showing some signs of a 'cohesive community'. This is particularly true in terms of patterns of social interaction and respect for diversity.

38 However, other elements of community cohesion, such as sense of belonging, certain forms of community participation and access to better-paid employment, were less positive, with many immigrants living in neighbourhoods they do not feel they belong to, working in low-paid and low-skilled employment, and not feeling that they can change things through their own actions.

39 Although levels of education, housing and employment do appear to be related to variations in certain aspects of community cohesion, another key factor is the amount of time immigrants have spent in the UK; moreover, those who have been in the UK longer are also less likely to be planning to go back to their home country; they have more secure housing and residence status; and they speak better English. Yet it is not enough simply to hope that community cohesion will increase over time, since the circumstances of arrival and the countries from which people are coming have also changed over time.

40 In part, the nature of experience of these different groups calls into question official definitions of 'community cohesion' – notably because some groups have apparently unproblematic social interactions within their neighbourhoods, even without 'strongly' identifying with them or forming 'strong' relationships. Public policy should pay attention to the 'transitory' nature of some forms of new immigration and not simply assume that all immigrants share the goal of integration over the longer term.

41 Not all immigrants wish to participate in community activities. Nonetheless, there is scope for broadening community cohesion policies to involve a wider range of institutions, including workplaces and schools, since relatively few East European immigrants are currently engaged with the community associations on which policy has focused.





# 1 Introduction

## **New European immigration from beyond the EU**

The rise of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe has attracted considerable public and policy attention in recent months, with EU enlargements in May 2004 and January 2007 in particular generating interest from both the media and the research community. Home Office figures suggest that a cumulative total of 510,000 East Europeans from the eight countries that joined the EU in 2004 had come to work in Britain by the end of September 2006,<sup>1</sup> although many of these may have already been living in the UK as workers, tourists, students or illegally prior to that date, or may have returned home. A recent study has already identified powerful benefits to Britain's economy due to this immigration.<sup>2</sup>

An unknown additional number have also come during this time from states outside the borders of the EU, including the two newest entrants, Bulgaria and Romania. Initially, this arrival of non-EU East European nationals to work in the UK received little policy or academic attention, even if some individuals – of whom Roman Abramovich, the owner of Chelsea Football Club, is the most well-known example – have enjoyed the media spotlight.<sup>3</sup> Yet, as Romanian and Bulgarian accession approached, a rather harder policy stance has emerged, culminating in 2006 in rules that limit access of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to the UK labour market even after EU accession. In turn, the Government's Managed Migration strategy has also sought to limit immigration from other non-EU states, particularly of low-skilled workers, based on the assumption that nationals of accession states are likely to fill the majority of low-skilled jobs for the foreseeable future.<sup>4</sup>

This report is not concerned directly with the rights and wrongs of these decisions. However, whatever immigration rules are developed in the future, the fact remains that in recent years there has already been substantial movement from non-EU East European countries to the UK, both legally and illegally. For example, since 1994, nationals of Bulgaria and Romania have been able to obtain self-employment visas under the European Community Association Agreement (ECAA), with thousands taking the opportunity to do so. Opportunities have also existed under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) and, from 2002, the Sector-based Scheme (SBS). In 2005, SAWS work permits were issued to 5,035 Ukrainian nationals, 2,867 Bulgarians, 2,487 Russians, 105 Albanians and 60 Serbians, while, in 2004, 1,654 Ukrainians, 1,424 Bulgarians, 301 Russians and 11 Albanians were issued SBS work permits.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, it has also been possible for highly skilled people to enter Britain through regular work permits as well as programmes such as the Highly

Skilled Migration Programme (HSMP) and the Scheme for Innovators – with over 1,500 permits being granted to Russians in 2002 alone. HSMP applications approved to Bulgarians increased from just six in 2002 when the scheme commenced<sup>6</sup> to 40 in 2005.

Yet knowledge of the aspirations, experiences and strategies of these new immigrants, as well as their interaction with existing immigrant communities and long-term residents, remains relatively limited. Some research of comparative value is available on immigrants from EU accession states. For example, the Department for Work and Pensions has recently published a major report that analyses, not only the profile of accession state nationals, but also their impact on labour markets, wages and unemployment.<sup>7</sup> The report, based on analysis of the Labour Force Survey and the Worker Registration Scheme, suggests that the immigrants, over half of whom have filled jobs in distribution, hotels, restaurants and manufacturing, have had little impact on domestic unemployment levels. Another recent report suggests that new arrivals since 2004 are to be found less in big cities of Britain than in smaller towns and rural areas, marking a departure from earlier waves of migration, which were mainly to urban areas.<sup>8</sup> The flow to more rural counties was explained by labour and skill shortages in industries such as hospitality, agriculture and food processing. Meanwhile, a study on immigrant labour population in Tayside showed that the majority of the new immigrant workers since 2004 had come from the new EU members such as Poland and the Czech Republic.<sup>9</sup> Employers were taking them on because of under-supply of certain skills locally and because they felt that immigrant workers were more flexible and productive. The overall economic and demographic impact of immigrant labour was found to be positive.

While this new immigration can be seen as at least benign and perhaps positive for the UK in terms of filling labour market shortages, a note of caution should be sounded. For example, a recent report by Bridget Anderson and Ben Rogaly for the TUC<sup>10</sup> identifies the existence of forced labour among accession state nationals, while further research co-ordinated by COMPAS<sup>11</sup> has also highlighted the difficult circumstances of immigrants who are trapped in low-wage occupations in agriculture, construction, and the hospitality and care sectors. Thus, while 59 per cent of accession state nationals interviewed in the latter study felt that it was easier to find work since enlargement, and 28 per cent reported that working conditions had improved, many interviewees still commented on instability at work and problematic contracts.

Moreover, despite this research attention to nationals from EU accession countries, immigrants from other Central and Eastern European states outside the EU have remained relatively invisible and ignored by researchers, with a few exceptions.<sup>12</sup>

One study of Ukrainian immigrants conducted a few months prior to enlargement in May 2004<sup>13</sup> suggests that, although many Ukrainians come to the UK legitimately on the SAWS or SBS, they could end up paying bribes of a thousand pounds or more to agencies to get onto these schemes or to 'buy' their visitors' visas to get to the UK. Interviews with Ukrainian workers also revealed the poor living conditions when on SAWS, even for people working legally on the scheme. Work has also been conducted by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research in relation to Bulgarian<sup>14</sup> and Albanian<sup>15</sup> immigrants, as well as a range of national groups held in UK detention centres,<sup>16</sup> although all of these studies were based on quite small samples.

Evidence on the growing role of East Europeans in sectors of the UK labour market is also provided by other studies on low-wage employment in general – although the effect of recent changes in government policy on new arrivals from countries outside the EU remains to be seen. For example, a recent study of the contract cleaning, hospitality and catering, home care and food processing sectors in London identified the vast majority of workers in these sectors to be immigrants,<sup>17</sup> of whom around 10 per cent originated from Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, Poland and Lithuania. People born in Serbia-Montenegro in particular were found in some of the lowest-paid occupational groups. Earlier research estimated that some 46 per cent of London's 'elementary' jobs (labourers, postal workers, catering staff and cleaners) were filled by immigrants. Meanwhile, a recent study by the Institute for Employment Studies of 124 employers across five major sectors in London, East Anglia and the North East shows the growing importance of immigrant workers, not only to fill labour shortages, but also because of their perceived work ethic and general attitude.<sup>18</sup>

## **Immigration and community cohesion: a key relationship**

This report is concerned with the experience of new immigrants to the UK, including both their experience in the labour market, and their broader interaction within local communities, and specifically with the issue of community cohesion. Our focus on community cohesion reflects the growing significance of this topic in public discourse, but also the distinctive effects that 'new' immigration is likely to have on it. For example, as Zetter *et al.* (2006) have noted, building good community relations between settled and immigrant communities has long been an important policy objective of successive UK governments, but the emergence of what they describe as a 'radically new era of migration' poses important challenges for existing policy frameworks. Vertovec (2006) has gone so far as to talk of a new era of 'super-diversity', which is not simply a question of the existence of more groups, from more distinct countries of origin, with different ethnic identities, languages and religions. There are arguably many additional immigrant characteristics that affect everyday

interactions and the processes of community cohesion. For example, new immigrants compared with those from earlier waves have come to the UK for a greater variety of reasons, using a wider set of channels and have subsequently acquired a greater diversity of legal statuses (Vertovec, 2006).

Picking up on the notion that 'new' immigration poses significant new challenges, Robinson and Reeve (2006) highlight a number of key features of this new immigration that are particularly salient. For example, they stress the clustering and subsequent dispersal of new immigrant populations, which together with distinctive existing local geographies ensures that a 'neighbourhood effect' is of key importance in influencing immigrant–host relations. They argue that community tensions can arise from the encounter between new immigrants and established populations, in specific types of location – in particular, deprived neighbourhoods with little previous history of minority ethnic settlement – but that these tensions are not an inevitable consequence of immigration and can be averted by timely public policy interventions. Robinson and Reeve (2006) suggest that there is a 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. They warn, however, of the unforeseen impact of policy and practice on the experiences and consequences of new immigration, and identify intangibles such as the media portrayal of immigrants as being important determinants of outcomes in terms of cohesion at the local community level. For appropriate policy responses to be developed and implemented, they argue, there is still an urgent need to fill a number of gaps in knowledge and understanding regarding the situations and experiences of new immigrants.

Interestingly, East European immigrants have been slow to emerge in the Government's agenda to increase race equality and community cohesion.<sup>19</sup> Rather, the Home Office still emphasises minority ethnic communities as the core building block of diversity policies, even though it recognises the presence of new immigrants in the country and addresses the integration of refugees. It should be noted that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was created in May 2006 and community cohesion became one of its main priority areas. However, the emphasis on community cohesion remains linked to race equality, with the risk that some new immigrant communities are ignored.

## **Objectives of this study**

This study is about the experiences and perceptions of life in Britain of new immigrant groups from Central and Eastern Europe, and how their presence in selected localities affects community cohesion. The study covers new immigrants from Bulgaria, which joined the EU in January 2007, and Albania, Russia, Serbia-Montenegro and Ukraine, which remain outside the EU. The study also explores the experiences of long-term residents, including settled immigrant communities, living within the same localities. The geographical focus is on the two London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow, and the City of Brighton & Hove.

The main objectives of the study are to:

- collect new empirical data on immigrant personal characteristics, educational background, factors that affected the decision to emigrate and factors that determined their choice of Britain as a country of destination, as well as living and working conditions in Britain
- ascertain new immigrants' and long-term residents' perspectives towards their neighbourhoods, ethnic diversity, community involvement and associated constraints and opportunities, and explore underlying values and experiences
- explore new immigrants' and long-term residents' expectations for themselves, their families and their neighbourhood, and investigate their understanding of what constitutes a cohesive community
- establish how new immigrants and their families cope with living and working in Britain and the role played by social networks, and relate these factors to new immigrants' aspirations, perceptions and strategies
- establish how new immigrants interact with the host population, including other immigrants from similar and different backgrounds, in key institutions and sites such as the workplace, schools, surgeries, police stations and within neighbourhoods, and how these interactions relate to community cohesion.

## **Definitions**

In this report, we define immigrants as those who are foreign born. In turn, 'new immigrants' are defined as those foreign born who arrived in the UK after 1989,

reflecting the distinctive nature of post-Cold War migrations from Eastern to Western Europe. For example, 1989 was the year when passport regulations were liberalised and exit visa requirements were abolished for nationals of the former socialist bloc countries. Naturally, this started reshaping international migration patterns. From around the same time, the UK also began experiencing an increase in net immigration, a rise in asylum migration and diversification in immigrant inflows, with immigrants increasingly coming from countries outside the EU and the Commonwealth.

In contrast, 'long-term residents' were defined for the purposes of this study as anyone living in the localities under study who had been present in the UK since before 1989. This definition includes some 'immigrants' or foreign-born populations, as well as people born in the localities under study.

Our working definition of 'cohesion' is the one used by the Home Office (2003, p. 7) in its guide on *Building a Picture of Community Cohesion*. The definition states that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

In operationalising this definition, the Department of Communities and Local Government highlights housing, employment, safety and order, and regeneration as key areas that help to determine the level of community cohesion. In turn, the Government's strategy to improve community cohesion also highlights education and health as key factors influencing community cohesion. Here, we focus in particular on three key contextual factors – employment, education and housing – while also exploring a range of other elements of immigrants' own backgrounds and experiences that might impact on their specific experience of cohesion. Meanwhile, community cohesion itself is measured in terms of whether immigrants report that they 'belong' in their neighbourhoods and in the UK, the extent to which diversity is respected, their expectations for the future and the extent of their participation in community activities.

## **Structure of this report**

The remainder of this report is structured into five substantive chapters, followed by a concluding chapter that seeks to bring together various strands. The next chapter (Chapter 2) sets out a brief introduction to the choice of field area and study groups, the field techniques used, as well as how the concept of ‘community cohesion’ was operationalised within our sample questionnaire. Following on from that, three chapters draw on this empirical data to provide a profile of new immigration from Central and Eastern Europe, focusing respectively on how and why those interviewed had come to live in the UK, and specifically in Brighton & Hove, Hackney and Harrow (Chapter 3); their social circumstances, with a specific focus on education and housing (Chapter 4); and their experiences in the labour market (Chapter 5). Building on this, Chapter 6 then explores patterns of community cohesion, focusing on links between immigrants and long-term residents in the three study localities. Finally, in Chapter 7, we address the question of what shapes a ‘cohesive community’, and how new immigration from Central and Eastern Europe has influenced such cohesion.

## 2 Researching new immigrant communities

Understanding the experiences and aspirations of immigrant communities is never straightforward, a problem compounded in situations where a proportion of immigrants are either living or working illegally, or are working in difficult or exploitative conditions. Reflecting the anticipated difficulties of reaching our target population, a multi-method approach to field research was adopted, including both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. However, at the same time, one of the key elements missing in a number of existing studies of immigrant workers – especially those from Eastern European states outside the EU – has been robust quantitative evidence. In this context, a core element of the study was the administration of a quantitative survey of new immigrants from five countries in the three localities of Brighton & Hove, Hackney and Harrow.

### Countries of origin

The new immigrants under study originated from five former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe with very different emigration policies and patterns during the Cold War period. Of all those countries, *Albania* was the most isolated and highly controlled; emigration was virtually non-existent and any attempt to cross the border was punished by imprisonment or even death. *Bulgaria* and the former Soviet countries of *Russia* and *Ukraine* shared similar migration experiences before 1989; during the socialist period, labour migration in these countries was entirely controlled by the State. Labour supply was regulated by bilateral agreements, either with other Warsaw Pact countries, or with countries in the Arab world that followed policies sympathetic to the Communist regime. From 1945 until the beginning of the 1960s, Yugoslavia was also a closed country and special permits were needed by anyone who wanted to travel abroad. However, in 1963, the restrictive passport system was abandoned and emigration was accepted and encouraged by the Government as a necessary economic strategy. As a result, large numbers of Yugoslav workers – including workers from *Serbia and Montenegro* – were employed in the industrialised centres in Western Europe, although relatively few came to the UK.

The fall of the Iron Curtain at the end of the 1980s triggered the changes in all of the countries under study, leading to substantial out-migration, including migration to the UK. These changes were most dramatic in Albania, leading to a mass exodus from the country, which by 2001 had led to one-sixth, possibly even one-fifth, of the



country's population living abroad. People initially left by sea to Italy and over the mountains to Greece, but over time increasing numbers started to move to other European destinations, including the UK.<sup>1</sup> This was especially true in the aftermath of the 'pyramid' financial crisis in the country in 1997, when there was widespread political unrest, and the Kosovo war in 1999. By 2000, Albanian migration scholar Kosta Barjaba (2000) estimated the stock of Albanian immigrants in the UK at 5,000, although the 2001 UK Census registered just 2,238 Albanians in England and Wales (36 per cent in London). In the case of Serbia and Montenegro, political unrest in the form of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia was also significant in bringing immigrants to the UK, many of them as political refugees. According to the 2001 Census, 19,665 people born in Serbia and Montenegro were residing in England and Wales (with 67 per cent of these living in London).

In contrast, movement from Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine has developed more slowly over time, and cannot be related directly to political conflict. Thus the number of Bulgarians in the UK has been gradually increasing over the past half century, becoming more significant in the second half of the 1990s when Bulgarians started making use of ECAA visas that allowed them entry into UK as self-employed businessmen and women. Some 5,154 Bulgarian-born were registered in England and Wales by the 2001 Census (59 per cent in London) while the OECD database on immigration and expatriates<sup>2</sup> points to 5,350 Bulgarians in the UK in 2001. Meanwhile, the 2001 Census counted 14,637 people in England and Wales who were born in Russia and Mongolia (with 44 per cent of these living in London), and 11,448 born in Ukraine (28 per cent of whom lived in London).

## **Study localities**

The three localities of Brighton & Hove, Harrow and Hackney were selected as study localities to represent three distinctive social contexts in which emerging immigrant diversity is being experienced and responded to. Perhaps the most obvious choice was the London Borough of *Hackney*, an inner-city borough with a population of just over 200,000 long noted for its phenomenal ethnic diversity. According to the GLA Ethnicity Index, it is the third most diverse local authority in the UK, after Brent and Newham. Hackney has a particularly large proportion of the population in the category 'Other White' (Table 1), which includes the East Europeans of concern in this study – although it also includes 'White Irish' (3 per cent), and many West Europeans, North Americans and Australasians.

**Table 1 Ethnic diversity in study localities (per cent)**

	Brighton & Hove	Hackney	Harrow	England
White British	88.0	44.1	49.9	87.0
Other White	6.2	15.3	8.9	4.0
Mixed	1.9	4.2	2.8	1.3
Asian or Asian British	1.8	8.6	29.7	4.6
Black or Black British	0.8	24.7	6.1	2.3
Chinese or Other	1.2	3.2	2.6	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2001 Census.

In contrast, *Harrow* is an outer-London borough, again with just over 200,000 residents, but not so well recognised as a destination for immigrants. Yet, in recent years, it too has experienced growing ethnic diversity and the arrival of a wide range of immigrant groups. Indeed, Harrow ranks fifth nationally in terms of the proportion of non-white residents and has the second highest proportion of Indian-origin residents in England (22 per cent), after Leicester. Harrow is also the ninth most ethnically diverse local authority in England and Wales, with 41 ethnic groups with 200 people or more. The number of people from different ethnic groups varies substantially across the borough, with Kenton East having the highest proportion of ethnic minorities (71 per cent) and Pinner the least (31 per cent). The 2001 Census recorded that a third of all residents were born abroad, coming from 137 different countries. The two largest groups of immigrants were those born in India (12,400) and Kenya (10,250); some 2,040 were born in Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, the City of *Brighton & Hove* was selected as a locality with a relatively low rate of ethnic diversity and predominantly white population, but in which new immigrant communities are now becoming established. For example, the number of residents born in the former Yugoslavia who live in Brighton & Hove grew by 80 per cent from 1991 to 2001, albeit on a very low base. There is anecdotal evidence of the growing presence of East Europeans working in the city's hotels and restaurants, and attending the city's one Greek Orthodox Church. The city has a population of just under a quarter of a million.

The three study localities show a range, not only of ethnic diversity, but also of economic circumstances and social conditions. Thus unemployment – especially male unemployment – is much higher in Hackney, where nearly a quarter of the adult population has no educational qualifications (Table 2). In contrast, wages are much higher in Harrow. Nonetheless, all three localities have unemployment rates above the national average, in spite of all having a larger share of managers and professionals, and a larger share of the workforce with tertiary education. In turn, all three localities have wages above the national average, reflecting the higher cost of living in London and the South East. It is worth noting that only in Harrow are both

male and female wages significantly higher than the UK average – rather, it is higher rates of wages paid to women that account for higher wages overall.

**Table 2 Selected economic indicators in study localities**

	Brighton & Hove	Hackney	Harrow	UK
<i>Unemployment rate, April 2005–March 2006 (%)</i>				
All workers	6.5	10.7	7.0	5.0
Male	7.1	13.1	7.6	5.5
Female	5.9	7.3	6.3	4.4
<i>Occupations (%)</i>				
Managers, professionals and associate professionals	51.8	52.2	51.6	41.9
Administrative and skilled trades	19.7	16.2	23.7	23.4
Personal service and sales	12.8	13.7	13.3	15.6
Process, plant and elementary	15.5	16.5	11.0	18.9
<i>Education (%)</i>				
Higher education completed	29.5	27.5	32.1	26.5
No qualifications	10.1	24.8	8.6	14.3
<i>Gross weekly pay (£)</i>				
Full-time workers	462.20	489.50	538.30	449.60
Male	491.30	490.80	588.90	490.50
Female	442.90	486.80	507.60	387.60

Source: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>.

Turning to social conditions, the three localities also all show relatively youthful populations compared to the average for England, with a smaller share of the population above retirement age (Table 3). However, housing tenure varies dramatically between the three localities. Thus Hackney has a relatively high share of council housing, but only one-third of households are owner-occupied, the third lowest proportion in England and Wales. In contrast, Harrow is characterised by a higher than average rate of owner-occupation, while Brighton & Hove is characterised by a very sizeable private rented sector.

**Table 3 Selected social indicators in study localities**

	Brighton & Hove	Hackney	Harrow	England
<i>Age structure (%)</i>				
16–44	47.6	51.6	43.1	40.4
45 to retirement	18.5	15.1	20.5	21.5
Retirement age	17.6	10.5	16.6	18.4
<i>Housing tenure (%)</i>				
Owner-occupied	61.7	32.1	75.1	68.7
Council or other social rented	14.7	50.8	11.1	19.3
Private rented	20.4	14.7	10.5	8.8
Rented from another household	3.2	2.5	3.2	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2001 Census.

Within Brighton, Hackney and Harrow, interviews were concentrated in specific areas where larger numbers of new immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe appeared to congregate, although this included a number of different wards in each locality. Thus, in Brighton & Hove, interviews were conducted in Brunswick and Adelaide, Central Hove, Goldsmid, Hangleton and Knoll, Hanover and Elm Grove, Queen’s Park, Preston Park, Regency, St Peter’s and North Laine, and South Portslade wards; in Harrow, interviews were conducted in Canons, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Harrow Weald, Pinner, Roxeth, Stanmore Park, Wealdstone and West Harrow wards; while, in Hackney, interviews were conducted in Clissold, Dalston, Hackney Central, Hackney Downs, Hoxton, Stoke Newington, Victoria and Wick wards.

## Field methods

### Quantitative survey of new immigrants and long-term residents

The core of this study was a questionnaire survey administered to a total of 388 new immigrants, and 402 long-term residents, between June and November 2005. The purpose of this survey was to provide a baseline of employment and living conditions in the selected localities, as well as to analyse a number of key issues facing these groups in terms of social interactions, participation in community activities and indicators of cohesion. Interviews were conducted with both men and women, and with individuals from a variety of age groups, based on age and gender quotas established for each group prior to the initiation of fieldwork. In principle, 27 individuals from each of the five immigrant groups under study were to be interviewed in each locality, along with 133 long-term residents. Table 4 shows that these targets were broadly met.<sup>3</sup> Overall, the sample population was predominantly young and included slightly more women than men, albeit with some variation between groups (Table 5).

**Table 4 Distribution of sample population by immigrant group and locality (number of respondents)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	All immigrants	Long-term residents
Brighton	27	29	28	26	25	135	136
Hackney	27	29	27	26	27	136	133
Harrow	27	27	27	9	27	117	133
Total	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

**Table 5 Age categories and gender of sampled population (number of respondents)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	All immigrants	Long-term residents
16–19	5	3	5	3	3	19	26
20–29	38	30	25	17	30	140	127
30–39	26	20	24	25	21	116	86
40–49	6	26	17	8	22	79	75
50–59	5	5	7	5	3	25	48
Over 60	1	1	4	3	0	9	40
Male	49	39	29	23	41	181	196
Female	32	46	53	38	38	207	206
Total	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

As noted above, accessing immigrant communities is often problematic. In this context, ‘snowballing’ was considered the only possible and ethically acceptable technique. Access to immigrants was facilitated through personal contacts and through introductions from key contacts in the immigrant community, especially through owners of ethnic shops/businesses or representatives of immigrant associations. Researchers were also able to secure access themselves, without ‘mediators’, either through personal contacts or through talking to people they met who spoke their native language.

Most of the immigrants and long-term residents interviewed in the three localities were complete strangers to the researchers and they were interviewed on the spot, without any prior arrangements. One of the most successful access strategies, particularly in Brighton & Hove, was to approach people on the beach and in local green spaces as well as at local community festivals (e.g. the Brunswick Community Festival and the Seven Dials Age Concern Festival in the summer). Some people were approached in public launderettes, local shops and community libraries. Other people, in Harrow and Hackney, were approached in shopping areas and community centres.

More than half of the long-term residents interviewed in the three localities self-identified as ‘White British’ (Table 6). However, in line with ethnic diversity of the three localities noted above, a significant proportion of interviewees were also ‘Other White’, or from mixed, black, Asian or Chinese groups. In general, the ethnic share in our sample of long-term residents mirrored that in the 2001 Census, with the exception of an under-sampling of black respondents in Hackney (and a corresponding over-sampling of ‘Other White’). Almost a quarter of the long-term residents surveyed were born outside the UK.

**Table 6 Ethnic group of long-term residents interviewed (per cent)**

	Brighton	Hackney	Harrow	Total
White British	80.1	34.6	45.9	53.7
Other White	5.1	23.3	11.3	13.2
Mixed	5.1	9.8	3.0	6.0
Asian or Asian British	4.4	9.0	28.6	13.9
Black or Black British	1.5	14.3	9.8	8.5
Chinese or other	3.7	9.1	1.5	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	136	133	133	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

It is acknowledged that the sampling procedure was unlikely to produce a random sample of responses. In order to compensate to some degree for the non-randomness of the sample, a ‘tree’ or a snowballing diagram was kept on the way each interviewee was recruited (see Appendix 1 for an example of such a ‘tree’). Nonetheless, the selection of both immigrants and long-term residents was, to some degree, related to their visibility and those who are more socially active were more likely to be selected for the interview.

The long-term resident group in particular proved to have a higher than average educational status compared to the localities in which they lived; 45 per cent of long-term residents interviewed had completed university-level education or above, compared to a population average of 29 per cent in Brighton & Hove and Harrow, and 33 per cent in Hackney, suggesting potential bias in the measurements of interest to us in the analysis of community cohesion. One possible explanation for this lies in the fact that long-term residents sampled were also much less likely to be owner-occupiers than the general population – especially in Brighton & Hove where over half of those interviewed were in private rented accommodation. This may reflect the neighbourhoods in which interviews took place, as immigrants were more likely to be in rented accommodation (see Chapter 4 of this report) and so long-term residents were also interviewed in neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of rented housing. Nonetheless, the over-representation of professionals among the long-term resident sample led us to downplay analysis of this group and seek where possible comparative information from other nationally representative sample surveys.

The survey questionnaire contained a total of 94 questions (74 for long-term residents), and each interview took between 30 minutes (long-term residents) and over one hour (some immigrants). Questionnaires were translated from English into Albanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian, and were completed in face-to-face-interviews either in English or in the respondent’s native language as requested. Immigrant respondents were offered cash or vouchers of £5, food or cosmetics in

recognition of their time input, a factor that greatly affected the success rate of the questionnaires, especially in the case of jobless people. For example, a Russian shop-owner in Harrow agreed to help our research team in accessing Russian and Ukrainian immigrants only when they dropped £5 in a charity box placed in the shop.

### Qualitative research methods

Parallel to the survey phase, a total of 29 additional in-depth interviews were conducted with immigrant workers from the study countries and with long-term residents (Table 7). These interviews sought to explore in greater detail attitudes towards localities and the way in which they have changed; access to health, education and police services within the locality; safety and crime; and the nature of social interactions with different ethnic and national groups. In addition, in order to explore the policy context, interviews were conducted with council officials from the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow and from the City of Brighton & Hove.

**Table 7 Distribution of in-depth interviewees by immigrant group and locality (number of respondents)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	All immigrants	Long-term residents
Brighton	2	2	2	3	2	11	4
Hackney	0	2	0	2	1	5	3
Harrow	1	1	2	0	1	5	1
Total	3	5	4	5	4	21	8

Source: in-depth interviews, 2005.

Researchers were also asked to keep detailed notes at the end of the questionnaire, as well as a field diary that recorded systematic observations, anecdotal details and other relevant information. A record of those who refused to be interviewed was also kept there with the number of refusals together with the age/gender category they fell into. The field diaries contained valuable information on different aspects of the interviewing and general research process, as well as people's reactions towards the migration and cohesion topic, and reactions towards the research assistants themselves. For example, one research assistant recorded in her field diary a conversation with the owner of a coffee shop in South Harrow:

As soon as I mentioned immigration, she [*the coffee-shop owner*] went on a rampage. She began by the usual barrage of how horrible those immigrants are, stealing jobs, living off benefits, driving off her customers (the café was really empty, not surprising as it smelled and was disgustingly dirty). Of course in hindsight, I should not have entered in

the first place. The hate speech continued until what must have been her husband spoke from a cloud of cigarette smoke by pointing to me 'oh you are not from around here either, are you?' At which point I made some excuse and started from the door. The woman called out after me that if I did not want to hear this kind of truth about British feelings of immigration, then I was in for a big surprise. It was horrible! I hated this moment and started to get a very negative gloomy feeling about Harrow. Perhaps there is no cohesion and no regard or respect for ethnic diversity. It certainly felt that way.

On another occasion, two research assistants had quite an unsettling experience at a social club in Harrow:

I went in, asked the man at front desk and he agreed to talk. When my colleague came [*who is British of minority ethnic origin*] and I mentioned again immigrants, he looked at my colleague and very curtly barked 'no'. She was upset and I felt really bad for even putting us in that situation. Needless to say, I did not have a very good impression of reception to newcomers by long-term Harrow residents at that point.

Such comments are interesting in themselves; they also point to areas of possible sample bias, since there may have been an understandable tendency to avoid interviewing long-term residents around these locations, even if these were places that immigrants were living.

### **The research team**

A key feature of the current study was the involvement of immigrant researchers in the research process. In May 2005, 13 part-time research assistants were recruited to work with the new immigrant communities under study. They were all selected to have good command of one of the new immigrant languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian and/or another relevant language) as well as English; good communication skills; and experience, knowledge or a certain degree of integration into one of the communities under study. In addition, six part-time research assistants were recruited to work with long-term residents. Appendix 2 contains information on the distribution of the research assistants by locality and the group they were studying.

The researchers included university students as well as others from a variety of sectors in the community. Among them were a self-employed Bulgarian woman



running a telecommunication business, a shop assistant, two Russian interpreters, a musician and an accountant. An attempt to recruit one community researcher failed as her immigration status in the UK would not allow her to undertake employment.

Before embarking on the survey, the researchers were offered training, and participated in the development of a specific access and sampling strategy for the interviews in the communities under study. This included ensuring the inclusion of a great variety of people in the sample, such as people not already known to the researchers, 'invisible' populations such as undocumented workers, people not involved in associations/community groups (e.g. housewives), wealthier and less wealthy individuals where appropriate, people with different employment statuses (employees, self-employed and employers, even students) and people in the UK for a range of time periods – those who came in the beginning of the 1990s and those who came after 2000.

Then, during a pilot phase, researchers were asked to 'profile' the community they had to access and produce a one-page summary, including any personal contacts, identifying any influential people in the community, immigrant community or other relevant associations, as well as any ideas about places where potential interviewees could be found.

## **Operationalising community cohesion**

A cohesive community was defined along the lines of the Home Office/DCLG definition on cohesion. As noted in the section on 'Definitions' in Chapter 1, it is one where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and, strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and in the neighbourhoods.

Part of the survey questionnaire was designed to elicit 'factual' information about the respondents' personal characteristics, education, employment and, where appropriate, migration histories. However, a key purpose was also to operationalise the notion of 'community cohesion', in order to draw some wider conclusions about the factors that influence community cohesion within localities. With this in mind, and building primarily on the definition of cohesion outlined above, we developed questions on respondents' attitudes towards their neighbourhood, their participation in local issues, their social networks and sources of social support, and their involvement in groups, clubs and organisations.

Specific questions in the survey were derived from two main sources. First, some questions were included that were designed to be directly comparable with the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey, a nationally representative sample survey that deals with 'community cohesion', as well as racial prejudice, volunteering and community participation. For example, respondents were asked whether they felt that their neighbourhood was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, how strongly they felt they 'belonged' to their neighbourhood and whether they felt they could influence decisions in their local area. At the same time, additional questions were included that referred specifically to the interaction between long-term residents and new immigrants from Eastern Europe, and that sought to explore the nature, location and frequency of such contacts. These questions were refined during the training of interviewers and during a pilot research phase in which the overall questionnaire was tested.

### **Comparative method: comparing populations and localities**

In terms of design, two central elements of this study were the attempt to compare the experience of new immigrants and long-term residents, and to explore the nature of interaction and cohesion between these communities across three different localities. This section briefly justifies these comparisons.

It is a common problem in migration research that the experiences of immigrants are taken somewhat out of context of the wider experience of society, either within the place of origin or in the place of destination. We sought to counter this difficulty through a two-pronged approach. First, by interviewing long-term residents in exactly the same neighbourhoods as the immigrants we were interviewing, we sought to introduce a 'control' element against which the immigrants could be compared, although it needs to be borne in mind that the long-term resident sample was no more statistically 'representative' of the wider population than the immigrant sample. At the same time, we also sought additional comparative material from existing data, including the Labour Force Survey, the Home Office Citizenship Survey mentioned above and the 2001 Census.

However, in addition, our focus on long-term residents reflected a desire to explore the *interactions* between immigrants and established residents, and not simply to understand one side of this relationship. In this respect, 'traditional' approaches to immigrant incorporation or integration have often placed stress on the extent to which immigrants adapt – or fail to adapt – to the attitudes, practices and norms of host societies and communities. Yet, in exploring the changing nature of community

cohesion in our selected localities, we were more concerned to see this process of adaptation and interaction as a two-way or indeed multidirectional process. We felt that more interesting insights would come from also exploring the practices and attitudes of those long-term residents alongside whom immigrants are living, rather than simply focusing on immigrants themselves.

## **Summary**

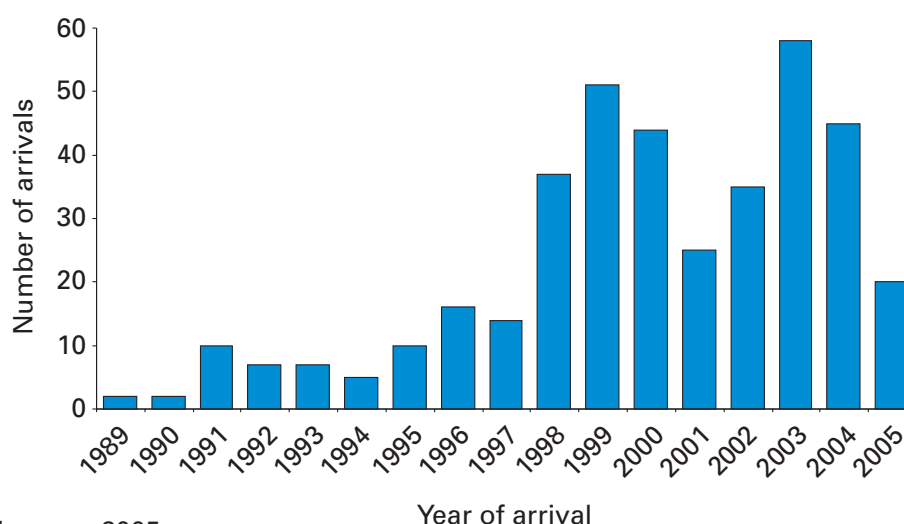
This chapter has set out a justification for the focus of this study on immigrants from five Central and Eastern European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine) in two London boroughs (Hackney and Harrow) and the City of Brighton & Hove. The five countries, and three localities within the UK, have experienced varied patterns of migration, both historically and over the last decade and a half, and in certain respects – notably the availability of different types of accommodation – they have rather different profiles. However, the three study localities also all share the paradox of having both higher than average unemployment and a relatively well-educated workforce with higher wages (especially female wages) and more professionals and managers than the UK average.

Insights were sought on patterns of settlement, the living and working conditions of immigrants, and the interactions between new immigrants and long-term residents through a quantitative survey of around 400 new immigrants and a similar number of long-term residents living in the same localities, which was carried out in the latter part of 2005. Although the findings of this survey cannot easily be generalised to the wider English or British context, it is hoped that they provide some insight into the nature of immigrant experience for a relatively understudied group – East Europeans from beyond the borders of the EU – as well as highlighting some of the major issues with regard to community cohesion in areas affected by such immigration.

### 3 East Europeans coming to the UK

A casual reading of the UK press could easily give the impression that East European immigration to the UK started largely after the accession of new EU member states in 2004. However, our study suggests a more nuanced picture, with two peaks of arrivals in 1999 and 2003 (Figure 1) – the former corresponding to arrivals from Serbia and Albania following the war in Kosovo and a ‘financial pyramid’ scandal in Albania, and the latter corresponding to arrivals from Ukraine and Bulgaria in the period immediately before EU enlargement in 2004. The peak year for arrival of Russians in the sample was 2000.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1 Year of arrival in the UK of immigrants interviewed**



Source: field survey, 2005.

Contrary to expectations, much of this immigration appears to have been of couples rather than single men (or women). Thus more than two-thirds of the immigrants interviewed were married or had a partner, about the same as the UK average of 61 per cent, with 84 per cent of these partners residing in the UK. Most of these partners were from the immigrants’ countries of origin, the only exception being Russians, over half of whom had married outside their national group.<sup>2</sup> However, some had come to the UK without their partners, especially among the more recently arrived Bulgarians and Ukrainians – a little over one in five Bulgarians had left their partners in Bulgaria, while the partners of one in five Ukrainians were living outside the UK in a third country (20 per cent).

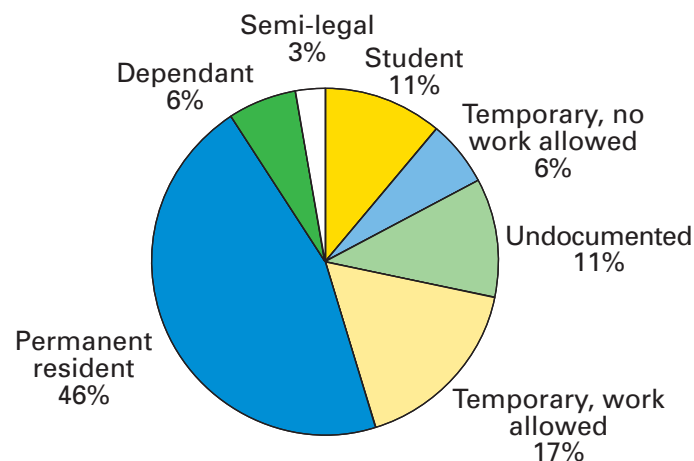
Just under half of the immigrants surveyed (45 per cent) also had dependent children, somewhat more than among the UK population as a whole (29 per cent). The vast majority of these children (80 per cent) were living in the UK, except among

Bulgarians and Ukrainians whose partners had stayed at home or were living in a third country.

## Legal status

There was a great variety of self-reported legal status. The largest group of immigrants surveyed said they were permanent residents,<sup>3</sup> followed by ‘temporary, with a right to work’<sup>4</sup> and an equal percentage who were ‘undocumented’<sup>5</sup> or students (Figure 2). The relatively low proportion of undocumented migrants may reflect an unwillingness among this group to participate in the study, for fear of being identified by the authorities.

**Figure 2 Current legal status of immigrants interviewed**



Source: field survey, 2005.

There were, however, significant variations between groups, which again reflect date of arrival (Table 8). Thus the majority of Serbians, Russians and Albanians interviewed, most of whom have resided in the UK for more than five years, reported that they were permanent residents. In contrast, among the two more recently arrived nationalities, more Bulgarians held temporary visas that allowed them the right to work, consistent with the increased issuance of temporary visas to Bulgarians and Romanians in the run-up to the most recent EU enlargement in January 2007,<sup>6</sup> while more Ukrainians were undocumented or were students.

**Table 8 Current legal status by country of origin (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Permanent residence	51.9	16.5	64.6	68.9	32.9	45.6
Temporary, with a right to work	9.9	42.4	8.5	13.1	7.6	16.8
Temporary, not working	17.3	4.7	3.7	4.9	0.0	6.2
Temporary, working without permission	1.2	8.2	2.4	0.0	1.3	2.8
Undocumented	9.9	4.7	4.9	1.6	32.9	11.1
Student	4.9	5.9	12.2	11.5	21.5	11.1
Dependant	4.9	17.6	3.7	0.0	3.8	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

## Reasons for coming to the UK

The largest proportion of those interviewed had left their country of origin primarily for economic reasons: they were not earning enough (16 per cent); they were unemployed (9 per cent); they wanted to meet their professional goals (5 per cent); they could not see any prospects for improvement of the economic conditions (6 per cent); they wanted a better future for their children (5 per cent); or because of economic uncertainty (4 per cent). This contrasts with the results of a recent survey on the mobility of EU citizens, which suggested that Europeans move more for quality of life reasons and do so either to study or to work in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors.<sup>7</sup>

However, this again masks some variation between groups. For example, Serbians and Albanians were much more likely to report political instability as their primary reason for leaving (Table 9); in turn, among other reasons, joining a family member or getting married was more significant for Bulgarians and Russians than for the other groups interviewed. It also appeared that more women than men had left their countries of origin because of family reasons or marriage (26 per cent of women had left for these reasons, compared to just 12 per cent of men), consistent with the notion that men had migrated first and that their partners had followed. In addition, there is some evidence of mixed motivations – for example, 58 per cent of those who cited political uncertainty as their primary reason to leave gave an economic motivation as a secondary motivation, while 18 per cent of those who gave economic reasons cited political uncertainty as a secondary reason, such that, in total, 16 per cent of all respondents cited mixed economic and political motives. For example, two Russians of Roma origin said they had left their country because of racial discrimination – nobody would employ them because of the colour of their skin and prejudice against Roma. They felt that, in the UK, skin colour would not affect their chances of finding a job.

**Table 9 First-ranked reason for leaving the country of origin (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Economic	45.7	52.9	40.2	24.6	51.9	44.1
Political	28.4	0.0	3.7	37.7	6.3	13.9
Education	8.6	12.9	12.2	14.8	15.2	12.6
Family/marriage	13.6	23.5	24.4	16.4	17.7	19.3
Other	3.7	10.6	19.5	6.6	8.9	10.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	81	85	82	61	79	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

Despite the dominance of economic reasons for leaving the country of origin, it seems that, for all groups, family, friends or marriage played the key role in the choice of UK as a destination, rather than economic factors (Table 10). For Bulgarians, Russians and Ukrainians, ease of entry (e.g. ‘able to obtain an entry visa’) was a significant factor, while, for Albanians, the pull of employment (e.g. ‘heard that it was easy to find a job here’) was also significant, while some 10 percent of Russians and 9 percent of Ukrainians interviewed moved to the UK because of a marriage to a British citizen.

**Table 10 First-ranked reason for choosing the UK as a destination country (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Family, friends or marriage	42.0	36.5	42.7	49.2	40.5	41.8
Ease of entry	23.5	44.7	29.3	19.7	35.4	31.2
Economic	23.5	9.4	15.9	4.9	8.9	12.9
Education	7.4	9.4	11.0	26.2	13.9	12.9
Other	3.7	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.3	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	81	85	82	61	79	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

In spite of the prominence of media stories about immigration ‘scams’ designed to allow immigrants to access welfare, it is worth mentioning that only two immigrants in the sample (1 per cent) chose to come to the UK because of welfare benefits. Among the ‘other’ reasons for choosing the UK, individual immigrants interviewed mentioned ‘an interesting country’, ‘not racist, tolerant society’, ‘democratic country’, ‘rich country’ and ‘multicultural environment’. Three people mentioned that they were smuggled here and had no control over the destination.

The mode of entry to the UK varied significantly between the different groups. On the one hand, 83 per cent of Albanians interviewed entered the country clandestinely and/or claimed asylum on arrival, whereas these modes of entry were not significant

for any of the other groups. In contrast, for the other groups, a range of modes of entry were found, including the use of tourist and student visas – and, in the case of the Bulgarians interviewed, entry through the SAWS – as self-employed businessmen,<sup>8</sup> or as dependants.

## Mobility within the UK

Around half of the immigrants interviewed had moved straight to the locality of study on their arrival, but the remainder had spent time elsewhere. Some interesting variations between localities were observed. Thus, whereas 65 per cent of the immigrants interviewed in Brighton & Hove had moved straight to the city on their arrival in the UK, this was true of only 42 per cent of those interviewed in Hackney and 40 per cent in Harrow. It is unclear why this should have been the case. Albanians were the most likely (62 per cent) to have moved directly to their current locality, followed by Ukrainians (58 per cent), Russians (54 per cent) and Bulgarians (41 per cent), while Serbians (28 per cent) were the least likely – indeed, in this respect, they mirrored the long-term resident population, 72 per cent of whom had also lived elsewhere in the UK.

Reflecting their relatively recent arrival in the UK, around 70 per cent of Bulgarians and Ukrainians had moved into their current locality within the past three years (Table 11). However, in spite of the long time they had spent in the UK, over two-thirds of Serbians had also arrived in their current locality only within the last five years, reflecting greater internal mobility within the UK. In contrast, Albanians were more established in their respective localities, with more than half living in their current locality for more than five years.

**Table 11 Length of time living in the locality (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	All immigrants	Long-term residents
Less than 1 year	4.9	20.0	18.3	8.2	22.8	15.2	4.0
1–3 years	23.5	52.9	37.8	34.4	51.9	40.5	14.9
3–5 years	17.3	17.6	13.4	21.3	7.6	15.2	12.4
5–10 years	53.1	8.2	25.6	23.0	8.9	23.7	10.9
10–15 years	1.2	1.2	4.9	13.1	8.9	5.4	10.0
15–20 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.2
20–40 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.6
Over 40 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.



The reasons given by both immigrants and long-term residents for leaving their previous place of residence in the UK were highly varied (Table 12). Four major groups of ‘push’ factors included employment (answers were formulated as ‘unemployment’, ‘lack of job prospects’, ‘low wages’, ‘to be closer to work’, ‘found a new job’); housing (‘unaffordable low-quality housing’, ‘bought/sold house’, ‘was given council accommodation’); the desire to join family or friends; and education (‘unsatisfactory educational facilities’, ‘went to study in another place’).

**Table 12 First-ranked reason for leaving the previous locality in UK (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	All immigrants	Long-term residents
Employment	29.0	36.0	31.6	13.6	48.5	31.1	21.3
Housing	19.4	32.0	36.8	43.2	12.1	30.1	19.2
Education	0.0	4.0	10.5	15.9	0.0	6.6	15.8
Join family/friends	16.1	14.0	10.5	13.6	15.2	13.8	18.2
Change in personal circumstances	9.7	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	7.2
Better quality of life	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	6.9
High levels of crime	12.9	0.0	0.0	6.8	9.1	5.1	3.1
Better future for my children	6.5	4.0	0.0	4.5	3.0	3.6	2.4
Other	6.5	4.0	10.5	2.3	9.1	6.1	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	31	50	38	44	33	196	291

Note: includes only respondents who have changed locality in the UK.  
Source: field survey, 2005.

However, here there were some interesting variations between the reasons given for moving within the UK by immigrants and long-term residents. Thus, while some 60 per cent of the immigrants reported moving from their previous locality because of employment or housing, the range of factors affecting long-term residents’ decision to move were more varied. Almost 7 per cent of long-term residents who changed locality did so in search of a better quality of life, but this was the main reason for just two of the immigrants interviewed. Only long-term residents mentioned high levels of traffic congestion as a reason to move. In contrast, just three immigrants, and none of the long-term residents interviewed, reported that they changed locality because of deteriorating race relations. Some variations between the immigrant groups were also observed. For example, more Serbians reported moving because of housing – often to move into council accommodation – while more Ukrainians reported moving because of employment. More Albanians and Ukrainians changed locality to join family or friends while more Serbians did so for studies.

### Summary

This chapter has shown how not all 'new immigration' from Central and Eastern Europe has occurred in the last five years – rather, East Europeans started arriving in the UK in the early 1990s, with significant peaks in 1999 and 2003. The majority of these immigrants are living legally in the UK, although some are working without permission and others, particularly Ukrainians, have no documents at all. Many of these immigrants have left their country of origin for economic reasons, but they also include a significant number who cited political reasons for leaving Serbia and Albania, and a number – especially Russians – who came to the UK to join family members or to get married.

However, East European immigrants' reasons for choosing the UK as a destination are not necessarily the same as their reasons for leaving their country of origin, with the presence of family or friends taking on a much more prominent role. Meanwhile, like long-term residents in the UK, new immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe have moved from one location to another since they arrived, with this tendency being strongest among Serbians who have been in the country for some time. This mobility relates partly to employment, but also to housing, which is considered alongside education in the next chapter.

## 4 Education and housing

As noted above, education and housing are two key social factors that underpin community cohesion, at least in theory. Britain has a relatively well-educated workforce, and aspires to be a 'knowledge-based society' in which educational achievement is prized; at the same time, however, it has a residual section of the population with low qualifications that also suffers from economic and social exclusion. In turn, housing has long been regarded as a key factor in social integration, with segregation of some immigrant minorities in low-quality housing as well as competition for public housing between immigrants and other low-income communities. Yet the Cantle Report, which highlighted the causes of disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, commented that 'the impact of housing policies on community cohesion seems to have escaped serious consideration to date'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter explores the educational backgrounds and housing tenure of new immigrants in our three study localities to consider whether there is a basis for social exclusion and a lack of community cohesion based on either of these factors.

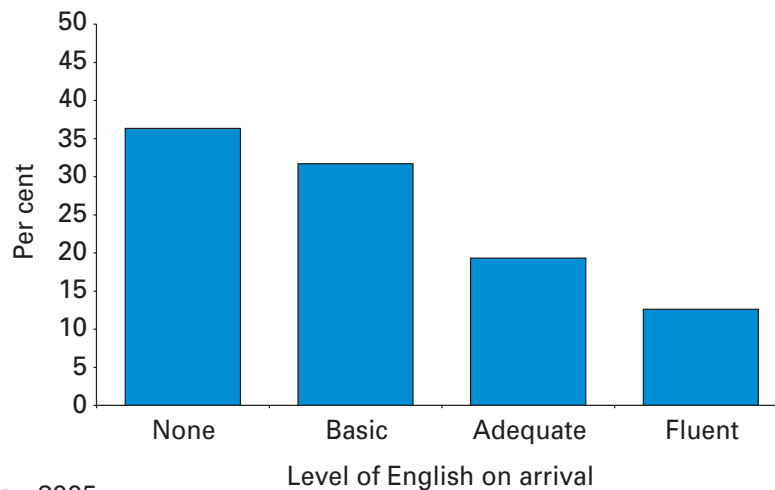
### **Educational background and language skills**

In terms of education, the immigrants sampled were relatively well educated, with 54 per cent having completed at least secondary education (on average, 13 years of formal schooling), 40 per cent (33 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women) having university education or above and just 6 per cent having no qualifications. This is considerably higher than the levels of education among the population of the whole in the three localities noted in the section on 'Field methods' in Chapter 2, although, as with our long-term resident sample, this may reflect sample bias. Among the immigrants interviewed, Albanians were the least educated, with 16 per cent having only primary education, while Bulgarians and Russians were the best educated, with around half of these groups having completed university education or postgraduate studies. Most of the immigrants interviewed had completed their education in their country of origin, although 18 per cent completed their education after arrival in the UK, with this being most common for Serbians.

Overall, this suggests little cause for concern, although it does not necessarily mean that these qualifications are well matched to the UK context or that people are being employed at levels commensurate with their qualifications. Of more concern were the relatively low levels of language competence that immigrants reported at the time of their arrival. Thus more than two-thirds of the immigrants interviewed described their level of English on arrival as 'none' or 'basic' (Figure 3). The lowest level of English-

speaking proficiency on arrival was also reported by Albanians – 70 per cent of them spoke no English at all. A similar percentage of Bulgarians, Russians and Ukrainians said that, when they arrived in the UK, their level of spoken English was none or basic only.

**Figure 3 Immigrants' level of English on arrival**

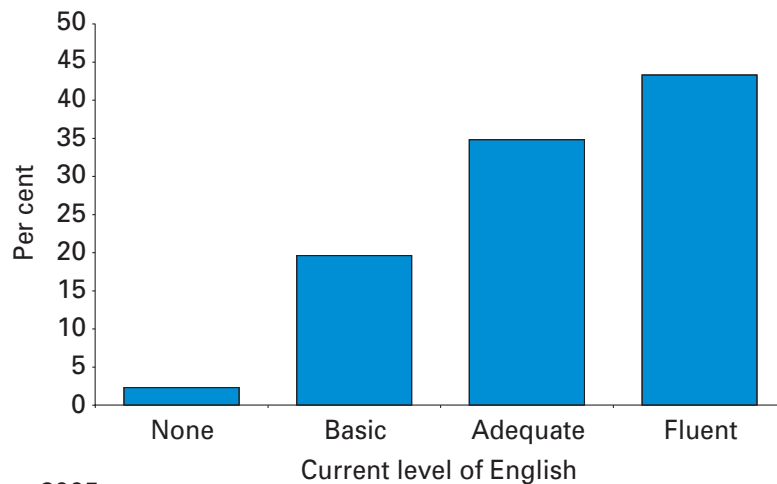


Source: field survey, 2005.

A Ukrainian mother in her late 40s, living in Brighton, spoke about the difficulties that immigrant children experience in the UK if they do not know English when they first start school. She said:

At the very beginning my son could not speak a word of English at school. Kids started bullying him. He was psychologically traumatised adapting at school. The teacher then explained to the class that it was not that he was stupid but he just did not speak the language and it helped. They stopped bullying him. I know also other Russian and East European kids at the schools of Brighton & Hove that had been mercilessly bullied by their classmates. Kids form groups at school according to their common language.

However, a quite remarkable improvement in English language skills was reported since arrival, with more than three-quarters of the immigrants describing their current level of English at the time of interview as 'fluent' or 'adequate' (Figure 4). The highest level of English was reported by Serbians (95 per cent fluent or adequate) and Albanians (78 per cent fluent or adequate), the earliest arrivals in the UK, while the lowest level of English was reported by Ukrainians (70 per cent fluent or adequate). It should be noted that these are self-reported levels of English competence, expressed in interviews that did not themselves take place in English.

**Figure 4 Immigrants' current level of English**

Source: field survey, 2005.

Interestingly, slightly more immigrant women (35 per cent) than men (28 per cent) described their level of English on arrival in the UK as 'fluent' or 'adequate', but this gender gap had reversed by the time of interview, with 76 per cent of immigrant women reporting 'fluent' or 'adequate' English, compared to 81 per cent of men. Some immigrant women who came later to the UK to join their partners said that they had attended English classes at home before emigration.

Of course, not all of the immigrants surveyed reported that they had made progress with English. Thus two Albanian and one Ukrainian men, all with secondary education, described their current level of English as 'none' even though they had all resided in the UK for more than five years. All three also reported that they work in the UK only with other Albanians/Ukrainians, which may partially explain their situation.

## Housing

While there might be little basis for social exclusion arising from the educational status of East European immigrants, the same is not true of housing, where the dominant form of tenure was private rented housing, often associated with poorer conditions. Indeed, more than half of all immigrants interviewed reported living in private rented housing in all three localities (Table 13), in spite of the significant variation in housing types between these localities more generally. In common with the data on housing in the three localities presented in Table 3 in Chapter 2 of this report, immigrants in Hackney were more likely to be living in council or other social housing than the other localities, while those in Brighton & Hove were more likely to

be owner-occupiers. However, the big discrepancy is Harrow, where more immigrants were found in private rented housing than in either of the other localities, in spite of this borough having the smallest stock of private rented housing of any of the localities studied.

**Table 13 Housing tenure by locality (per cent)**

	Brighton	Hackney	Harrow	Total
Owner-occupied	21.5	11.0	7.7	13.7
Council or other social rented	8.1	23.5	15.4	15.7
Private rented from landlord	37.8	34.6	46.2	39.2
Private rented from letting agent	17.0	19.1	18.8	18.3
Family or friend provided accommodation	11.1	11.0	9.4	10.6
Employer provided accommodation	4.4	0.7	2.6	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	135	136	117	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

Meanwhile, there were significant variations in housing tenure between immigrants from the five countries studied (Table 14). Thus, while Ukrainians and Bulgarians appeared heavily reliant on the private rented sector, this was less so for Albanians and Serbians. A significant proportion of Albanians had found council or other social housing, while almost half of the Serbians interviewed were either owner-occupiers or living in a council house.

**Table 14 Housing tenure by immigrant group (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Owner-occupied	8.6	11.8	17.1	23.0	10.1	13.7
Council or other social rented	33.3	1.2	13.4	26.2	7.6	15.7
Private rented from landlord	38.3	50.6	26.8	19.7	55.7	39.2
Private rented from letting agent	9.9	23.5	23.2	16.4	17.7	18.3
Family or friend provided accommodation	9.9	9.4	15.9	9.8	7.6	10.6
Employer provided accommodation	0.0	3.5	3.7	4.9	1.3	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	81	85	82	61	79	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

Of the 27 Albanians living in council accommodation, more than half (15) were permanent residents who had arrived at the end of the 1990s and received accommodation after being granted refugee status. Seven more were awaiting decision on asylum applications, while three surprisingly reported that they had no documents at all.<sup>2</sup> Almost all Serbian owner-occupiers interviewed were permanent residents, whereas those in council housing were both permanent and

temporary residents, the latter equally distributed between those with the right to work and those awaiting asylum decisions. Half of the Russians interviewed were in private rented accommodation, while some 17 per cent were owner-occupiers. A small fraction of Bulgarians, Russians and Serbians were reliant on employer-provided accommodation, while around 10–15 per cent of all groups reported living in accommodation that was owned or rented by family or friends rather than themselves.

Although interpretation of the latter statistic is not straightforward, it is noticeable that a significant proportion of the immigrants interviewed – including over 80 per cent of Ukrainians and around three-quarters of Albanians and Russians – reported living with non-family members, compared to just one-third of the long-term residents interviewed. This provides some evidence of overcrowding, although other indicators of housing quality, such as the presence of central heating in the property, showed no difference between immigrants and long-term residents.

Immigrants reported finding their accommodation through a variety of routes, although the most common was the use of letting agencies (for private rented accommodation), followed by support or assistance from family and partners. This pattern was reflected among the long-term resident population interviewed, and did not vary greatly between localities or immigrant groups – except in terms of reliance on council referrals, where Albanians and Serbians were more likely to have found council accommodation. It is interesting to note that most immigrants who were owner-occupiers have resided in the UK for more than ten years. In contrast, most of those relying on employer-provided accommodation were recent arrivals who came to the UK in the last three years.

## **Summary**

This chapter has considered whether levels of education, or patterns of housing tenure, present any evidence of social exclusion among the immigrant groups studied. It has shown how the immigrants interviewed were relatively well educated on arrival and that, although they had weak English language skills, many reported significantly improving their English since they arrived. However, in terms of housing, there was strong reliance on the private rented sector for accommodation among all groups, and especially among Bulgarians and Ukrainians who are more recently arrived in the UK.

One key point here in relation to both housing and education is that there appears to be evidence of improvement in status over time – in the sense both that those

who arrived earlier are more likely to be in better housing and that individuals who reported little command of the English language on arrival reported improving their English over time. However, perhaps not too much should be read into this. For example, the possibility of buying a house or obtaining council accommodation was perhaps greater five to ten years ago, with rising house prices and tighter rules on social housing making it more difficult for recent arrivals to become owner-occupiers or council tenants. It is important to note that someone's belief that their English has improved is not the same as it actually improving.



## 5 Experiences in the UK labour market

Social factors such as education and housing have an important influence on patterns of immigrant integration and community cohesion, but of critical concern, both to academics and policymakers, is the economic experience of immigrants. Getting a job to earn money is not only a major purpose of migrating – as noted in Chapter 3, it is also a powerful indicator of success and a potential basis for harmonious social interaction. Yet immigrants can also become trapped in lower-paid jobs with poor working conditions – the so-called ‘3D jobs’ (dirty, dangerous and difficult), or become isolated in ethnic labour markets where there are few opportunities for social interaction with UK natives or other long-term residents.

This chapter explores immigrants’ experience in the UK labour market, considering how this relates to their education and labour market experiences at home, as well as the extent of occupational mobility within the UK. It includes analysis of patterns of employment when people first came to the UK, how these jobs were found and whether there is any evidence of the ‘ghettoisation’ of East European employment, either through limited job mobility or through working for or with only other East Europeans. It also considers wages and conditions, involvement in trade unions and the extent of ‘multiple working’ – undertaking more than one job or working excessive hours in order to make ends meet.

### Employment prior to reaching the UK

Of those who were working prior to leaving their country of origin, more than half reported being in a managerial, professional or associate professional position, with this being particularly the case for Russians. Relatively few of any nationality were working in elementary occupations (Table 15). Not all of the new immigrants surveyed had been employed before arriving in the UK; just over a quarter had been students, while a further 10 per cent were not in the labour market. A much higher proportion of Serbians had been students prior to arriving in the UK, while over half of the Albanians were not previously in the labour market.

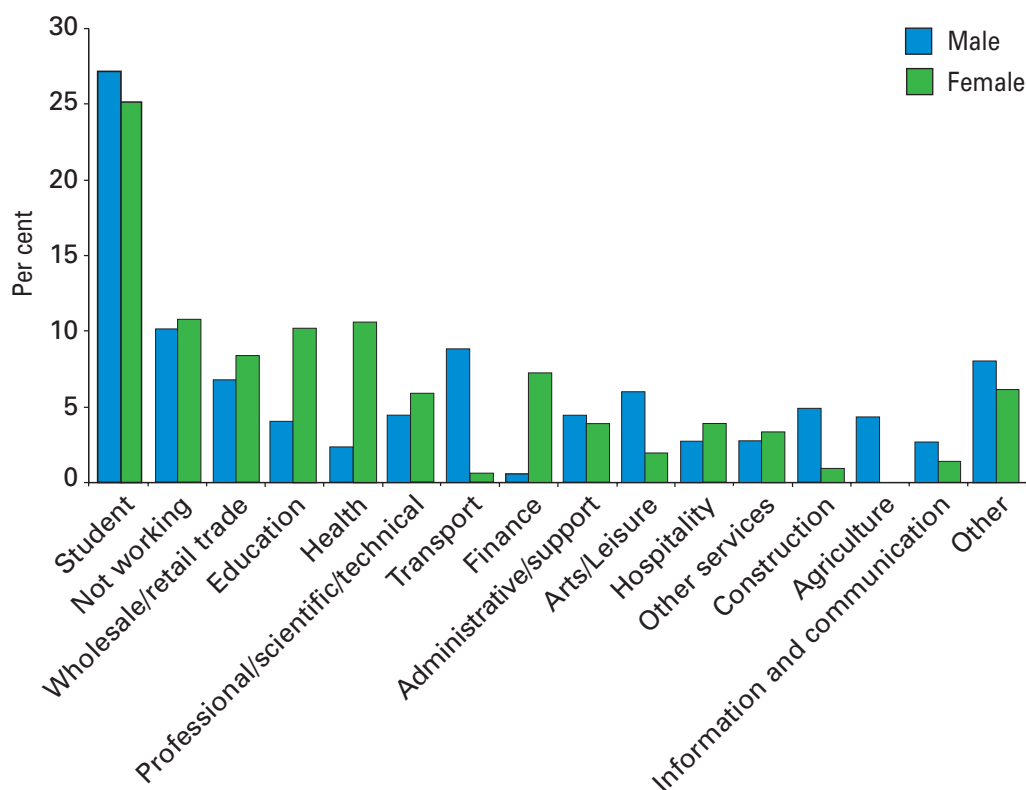
**Table 15 Employment category in country of origin, by immigrant group (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Managers, professionals and associate professionals	24.7	37.6	56.1	34.4	38.0	38.4
Administrative and skilled trades	13.6	7.1	11.0	3.3	12.7	9.8
Personal service and sales	4.9	11.8	6.1	9.8	11.4	8.8
Process, plant and elementary	4.9	11.8	4.9	3.3	7.6	6.7
Education	30.9	28.2	14.6	44.3	16.5	26.0
Not working	21.0	3.5	7.3	4.9	13.9	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388

Source: field survey, 2005.

Meanwhile, those who had worked prior to coming to the UK had done so in quite a wide range of industries and sectors (Figure 5). Women were relatively well represented in education (10 per cent), health (10 per cent) and finance (7 per cent), but no one industry accounted for more than 10 per cent of men. In turn, although Bulgarians (15 per cent) and Serbians (13 per cent) were relatively well represented in wholesale and retail trade, there were no other concentrations of particular immigrant groups in particular industries.

**Figure 5 Industry of employment in the country of origin**



Migrant employment by industry in the country of origin

Source: field survey, 2005.

Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of the immigrants in the sample reported that they had also worked in another foreign country before arriving in the UK. A higher proportion of Ukrainians (29 per cent) and Albanians (27 per cent) had previously worked in a foreign country, compared to the other groups. While Albanians had mainly worked in Greece or Italy, and Serbians had mainly worked in Germany, immigrants from the other three countries had worked in a total of 16 different countries, including the US, Israel and Libya.

## Immigrants' first employment in the UK

When they first arrived in the UK, the immigrants interviewed obtained employment in a range of sectors (Table 16), the most significant being construction (for men), 'other services' – principally domestic cleaning (for women) and the hotel and restaurant sector (for both men and women). Just over 13 per cent said they had not worked since they arrived, with women almost twice as likely not to have worked than men.<sup>1</sup> A first interesting point to note is that these sectors are not at all the same as those in which immigrants had worked before arrival, with only around one in five of those currently working in the same sector as they had before coming to the UK. In turn, these sectors are not, on the whole, ones where immigrants' relatively high qualifications would be particularly useful, as much of the employment obtained in the construction, cleaning and hospitality industries was either unskilled or involved basic levels of skill only.

**Table 16 Sector of first employment in the UK, by gender (per cent)**

	Men	Women	Total
Hotels and restaurants	23.2	25.1	24.2
Other services (including cleaning)	9.9	28.5	19.8
Construction	26.5	0.0	12.4
Wholesale, retail and repair	6.6	10.1	8.5
Manufacturing	6.1	1.9	3.9
Professional/scientific/technical	2.8	4.8	3.9
Agriculture	3.3	2.4	2.8
Education	1.7	3.9	2.6
Administration/support	1.1	3.9	2.6
Other	9.4	2.4	5.7
Never worked in UK	9.4	16.9	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	181	207	388

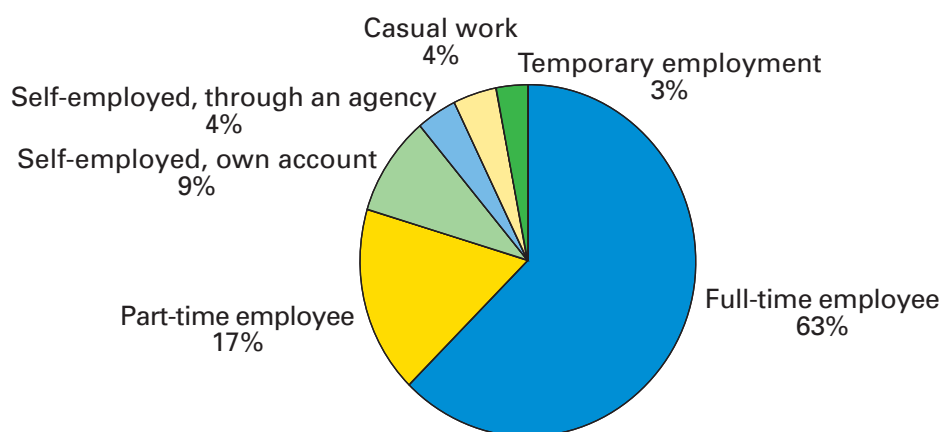
Source: field survey, 2005.

Some variations were observed between the immigrant groups studied. Thus, while the hotel and restaurant sector was important across all five nationalities, Albanians were more likely than other national groups to have found their first job in manufacturing, while Serbians were relatively over-represented in retail and business activities. Ukrainian and Bulgarian men were the most likely to have found their first job in construction, while Russian women were the most likely to have worked first in the 'other services' sector. This may reflect the periods during which different groups came to the UK – for example, recently arrived Ukrainians and Bulgarians came to the UK during a period of critical labour shortages in the construction industry – or the form of visas issued, with many Bulgarians, for example, obtaining ECAA self-employment visas specifically for the construction sector.

### Current employment

Levels of current employment were found to be very high among the immigrants interviewed, with only 3.6 per cent unemployed, compared to 5.0 per cent among the long-term residents interviewed – itself about the same as the national average. Exactly half of the unemployed immigrants interviewed were men. Of those who were working, the majority were in full-time employment (Figure 6), although more men (67 per cent) than women (58 per cent) were full-time employees.

**Figure 6 Employment status of working immigrants**



Source: field survey, 2005.  
Note: N = 299.

Self-employment was more common among Bulgarians (some of whom had come to the UK on self-employment visas) and Serbians (who had been in the UK a relatively long time); it was also more common in Brighton & Hove, where 18 per

cent of immigrants interviewed were self-employed. In contrast, part-time work was more common among Russians and Ukrainians. Most of those who were working were doing so legally. However, some 64 individuals were found who were working illegally, 40 of them people who were in any case in the UK illegally and 24 who were working in breach of their immigration conditions. Indeed, those with insecure legal status (undocumented or with temporary residence) were more likely to be working than those with permanent residence, and were also more likely to be employed full time. Two-thirds of those working illegally were Ukrainian or Albanian, although all national groups included at least a handful of individuals working illegally.

Overall, the working immigrants interviewed were involved at a wide range of skill levels, from management and professional occupations to elementary jobs (Table 17). However, the proportion in management and professional occupations remains well below that for the population as a whole in the three study localities reported in the section on 'Study localities' in Chapter 1; meanwhile, in comparison with their situation prior to migration noted in the previous section of this chapter, there also appears to have been a considerable level of 'deskilling' among those interviewed. Thus, of the 147 immigrants who reported their last job at home as being managerial or professional, only 24 per cent were working in this category now, with 21 per cent working instead in the personal service and sales sector, and 37 per cent in elementary occupations. In contrast, only three respondents had 'stepped up' from a service, sales or elementary occupation to a managerial/professional position.

**Table 17 Current employment category, by immigrant group (per cent)**

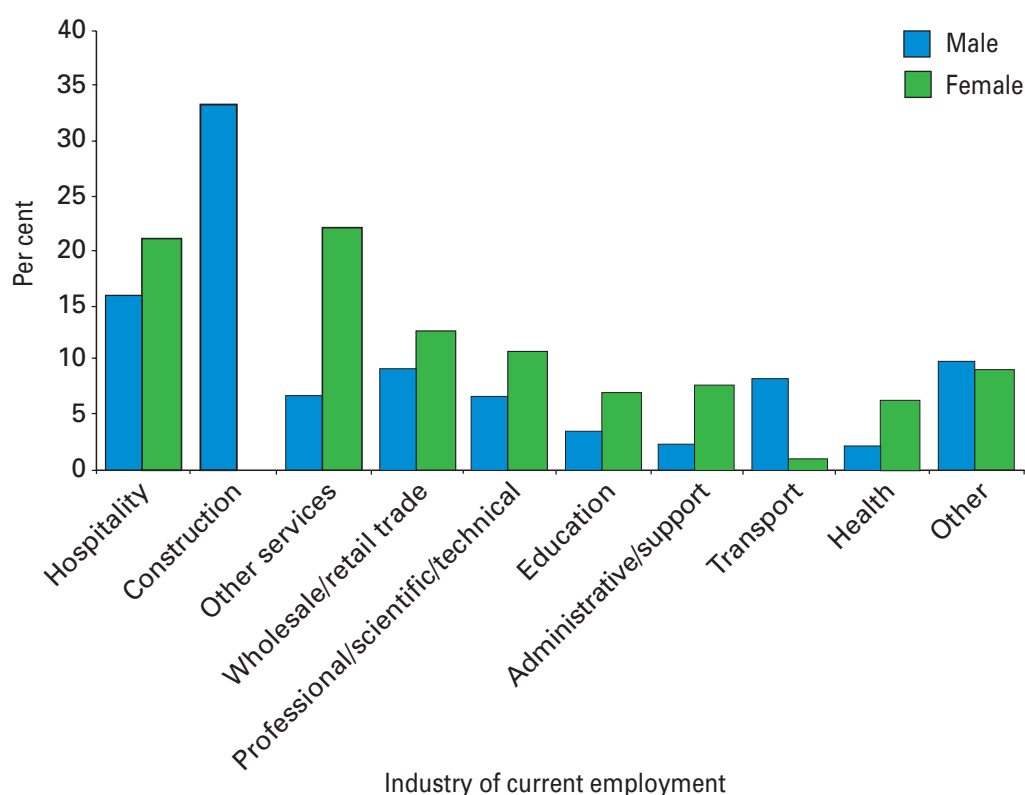
	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Managers, professionals and associate professionals	19.6	19.7	27.3	42.2	17.9	24.1
Administrative and skilled trades	30.4	15.8	16.4	26.7	6.0	18.1
Personal service and sales	17.9	14.5	29.1	11.1	29.9	20.7
Process, plant and elementary	32.1	50.0	27.3	15.6	46.3	36.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N</i>	56	76	55	43	67	299

Source: field survey, 2005.

It is also perhaps worth mentioning that just 14 out of 24 immigrants who had worked as nurses continued their employment in the health and social work sector in the UK and, even here, examples of deskilling within the profession would not be picked up by these figures. The Serbians interviewed were the most likely to be professionals, whereas more Bulgarians and Ukrainians were in elementary occupations, again reflecting their more recent arrival.

As shown in Figure 7, those interviewed were also still concentrated in three sectors of employment – hotels and restaurants, construction and ‘other services’ – again mainly cleaning, although the proportion in the hospitality sector had declined, and there had been some diversification into other sectors, including health and education. The proportion of men working in construction had risen from 26 per cent to 33 per cent. Looking at specific immigrant groups, the two that arrived more recently, Bulgarians<sup>2</sup> and Ukrainians, were more concentrated in construction and ‘other services’, whereas Serbians and Russians, who have been in the UK longer, were working in a more diverse range of sectors.

**Figure 7 Industry of current/most recent employment**



Source: field survey, 2005.

### Finding and changing employment

Table 18 shows how members of each immigrant group found their first job in the UK. The most important way was ‘through people from own ethnic group’, especially for Albanians. In contrast, more Serbians than any other nationality had responded to an advertisement, mostly in the newspaper, while more Bulgarians than any other group had used an agency, mostly in the UK, but occasionally in Bulgaria. The same question was asked as to how immigrants found their current or most recent job with, on average, a similar range of responses, and a similar breakdown by nationality

and gender, although the strategies used by individual respondents had sometimes changed from first to current job. This suggests some substance to the notion that East European immigrants may be ‘trapped’ in ethnic employment ghettos.

**Table 18 How immigrants found their first job in the UK (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
People from my ethnic group	48.5	32.5	25.4	24.5	36.0	33.8
Newspaper, internet, noticeboard	6.1	13.5	22.4	32.7	21.3	18.4
Agency in the UK	16.7	28.8	13.4	10.2	5.3	15.4
Went myself, asking different employers	18.2	5.0	10.4	14.3	16.0	12.5
British friends	3.0	2.5	9.0	4.1	4.0	4.5
Agency at home	0.0	8.8	3.0	2.0	0.0	3.0
Other	7.6	8.8	16.4	12.2	17.3	12.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	66	80	67	49	75	337

Source: field survey, 2005.

Note: excludes those who never worked in the UK.

However, just under two-thirds of the working immigrants interviewed had a white British employer at their current or most recent job, almost identical to the proportion whose first employer was white British and very similar to the proportion of long-term residents who reported having a white British employer. This masks some changes for individual national groups, with Albanians becoming more likely to work for an Albanian employer, but Serbians less so; nonetheless, this hardly represents an ethnic enclave.

Nor were immigrants found to have a particularly low level of occupational mobility in general, at least compared to the long-term residents interviewed. Thus no significant differences were observed between the two groups in terms of the number of jobs they had held in the last two years prior to the survey. More than half of the working respondents in the two groups stayed in the same job (57 and 55 per cent respectively); around 26 per cent of each group changed job only once. Around 30 per cent of both immigrants and long-term residents who had changed jobs did so mainly because the job was seasonal or temporary, while just over 20 per cent of each group did so in search of better employment conditions or status.<sup>3</sup> Immigrants were, however, more likely to report that they had changed jobs because of ‘unbearable working conditions’ or ‘low wages’ than long-term residents, with the former being highlighted in particular by those who were undocumented. In contrast, long-term residents were much more likely than immigrants to report changing jobs because they were made redundant.

## Wages

Information was collected where possible on wages and, in total, 187 immigrants and 74 long-term residents reported their gross hourly wage rate, while 254 and 207 of each group respectively estimated their monthly income.<sup>4</sup> In addition, information was collected on non-wage benefits. Looking first at hourly wages, a total of 57 immigrants, 39 women and 18 men (19 per cent of those in employment), reported earning under £5 an hour, which in principle is below the National Minimum Wage.<sup>5</sup> Immigrant women who were paid under £5 an hour outnumbered immigrant men by more than two to one. Moreover, no men, either immigrants or long-term residents, were working for less than £4 an hour, while some 14 women reported working at this rate – 11 of them immigrants.<sup>6</sup> The Russians interviewed appeared slightly more likely to report hourly wage rates below £5 an hour, although very few Albanians reported their income in hourly wage terms, making comparison difficult. Meanwhile, a higher proportion of those working in Hackney (28 per cent) reported working at below £5 an hour, while a lower proportion in Brighton & Hove (14 per cent) did so.

Turning to monthly incomes, slightly higher levels of income were reported compared to what might be expected from hourly earnings, reflecting the fact that respondents often worked long hours (though see the section on ‘Membership of a trade union’ later in this chapter). On average, Russians again reported the lowest incomes, and Serbians the highest, although Bulgarians were least likely to be trapped in jobs with very low monthly incomes, below £600 per month (Table 19). Similarly, a range of fringe benefits were reported by immigrants, including 26 per cent who received meals as part of their job and 13 per cent who received bonuses. However, both of these can be interpreted as characteristic of the type of employment undertaken by immigrants – the ‘bonuses’ received were more likely to be the equivalent of piecework in agriculture than the large bonuses received by very wealthy workers in the City of London. This is reinforced by the fact that some 42 per cent of working immigrants reported receiving no fringe benefits at all – not even paid holidays.

**Table 19 Monthly wages, by immigrant group (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Total
Less than £600	11.3	6.8	38.5	27.0	15.8	18.5
£601–£1,000	30.2	24.3	28.8	13.5	28.9	25.6
£1,001–£1,500	41.5	45.9	19.2	21.6	42.1	35.4
£1,501–£2,000	13.2	21.6	9.6	18.9	7.9	15.0
More than £2,000	3.8	1.4	3.8	18.9	5.3	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	53	74	52	37	38	254

Source: field survey, 2005.



Direct comparison with official statistics on average wage rates in the three localities is not possible, as hourly and monthly wages were recorded only in categories, rather than absolute amounts, in order to increase the likelihood of immigrants responding to the question. However, just 22 long-term residents interviewed (30 per cent) – seven men and 15 women of whom 14 were under 22 years old – reported wages below £5 an hour.<sup>7</sup> Interpretation of this difference requires some caution, as the long-term resident sample cannot be considered representative of the localities studied. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the long-term resident sample included relatively few people working for very low wages, even though it included a lower proportion of people in professional or managerial employment than each locality as a whole, and a higher proportion of people living in private rented accommodation – in which lower-paid workers are often concentrated. Meanwhile, the difference between Hackney and Brighton & Hove in terms of wage rates held for both immigrants and long-term residents – in spite of the fact that average wage rates are somewhat higher in the former locality (see the section on ‘Study localities’ in Chapter 2).

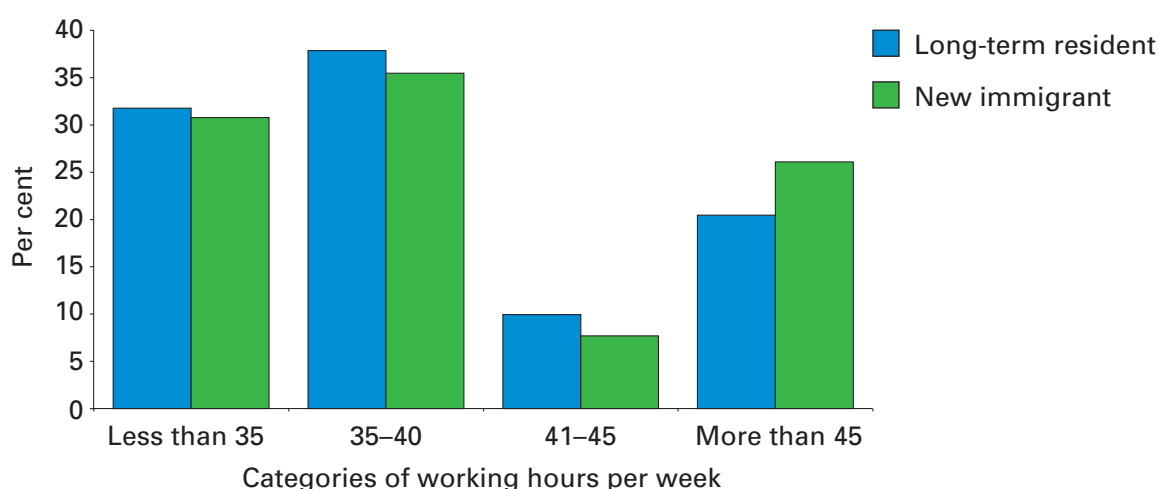
It is not unreasonable to assume that immigrants’ wages are affected by legal status – in other words, undocumented immigrants or those without a right to work are likely to earn less. Some evidence of this is found from the fact that, whereas 42 per cent of those working illegally received under £5 an hour, this was true for just 30 per cent of those working legally. However, the bulk of this difference was made up of those earning just under £5 an hour, with exactly the same proportion (16 per cent) of those working legally and illegally earning under £4.50 an hour. Meanwhile, if monthly wages are analysed, a similar percentage of those working legally (47 per cent) and illegally (45 per cent) reported monthly earnings below £1,000. On average, those working illegally reported slightly higher incomes, perhaps reflecting the fact that this group of workers would not be paying income tax.

## **Working hours**

As noted in the previous section, one strategy of immigrant workers is to work long hours in order to translate low hourly wages into reasonable monthly incomes. As Figure 8 shows, the immigrants interviewed were somewhat more likely than long-term residents to be working over 45 hours per week, with this being particularly true for immigrant men. Russians were more likely than other groups to be working part time (under 35 hours), helping to explain their lower monthly incomes noted above; in contrast, Bulgarians were significantly more likely to be working over 45 hours per week. Nonetheless, among both immigrants and long-term residents, some individuals were working up to 100 hours a week, while others worked only

part time. Moreover, working long hours only partly reflects a desire to maximise income; for example, 15 per cent of immigrants working over 45 hours per week were professionals or managers, who were perhaps influenced by the UK’s culture of long hours among professionals. In turn, it was long-term residents who were most represented in the group working excessive hours; 26 (9 per cent) of the 288 long-term resident workers reported a working week between 60 and 100 hours, compared to only 17 (6 per cent) of all immigrants who were working.

**Figure 8 Immigrants’ and long-term residents’ weekly working hours**



Source: field survey, 2005.

Nor were clandestine immigrants or those without a legal right to work found to be working longer hours than those with permanent residence or the right to work (Table 20). Indeed, the two respondents in the sample who reported working 100 hours per week had very similar profiles; both were women, legally allowed to work, both were 29 years of age, with no partner or children. They differed only in their ethnic background and the jobs they were doing. One was a Ukrainian sales assistant in Hackney, while the other one was an English national working as a teacher in Brighton.

**Table 20 Weekly working hours by work status (per cent)**

	Allowed to work	Student	Working illegally	Dependant	Total
Less than 35 hours	25.0	73.1	21.3	30.8	28.9
35–40 hours	35.6	23.1	44.3	30.8	36.1
41–45 hours	10.6	0.0	4.9	0.0	7.9
More than 45 hours	28.9	3.8	29.5	38.5	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	180	26	61	13	280

Source: field survey, 2005.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that new immigrants are often likely to hold more than one job at the same time, again to maximise incomes. Some 22 per cent of Serbians and 20 per cent of economically active Russians in the survey were indeed found to be doing more than one job, compared to just 11 per cent of the long-term residents interviewed. However, Albanians and Bulgarians were actually less likely than long-term residents to have more than one job. No significant gender differences were observed among both immigrants and long-term residents in terms of the number of jobs they were doing.

### **Membership of a trade union**

Just a small fraction of immigrants were members of a trade union (4 per cent) compared to around a quarter of the UK workforce nationally and 23 per cent of the long-term residents interviewed. Nonetheless, all of the immigrant groups interviewed, except the Bulgarians, included a few trade union members, with Serbians and Ukrainians being the most active (9 per cent and 6 per cent respectively). Of the 12 immigrants interviewed who were members of a trade union, eight were women and seven of them lived in Brighton. Some respondents explained this low rate of trade union participation with the fact that they had been organised for too long during the communist era in their home countries and so had lost interest in joining any type of organisations. This might also partially explain the lack of strong immigrant organisations among these groups.

### **Summary**

This chapter has explored the labour market experiences of new East European immigrants living in Brighton & Hove, Hackney and Harrow. Although levels of employment found were quite high, data presented in the chapter provide some evidence for the notion that this group has experienced a degree of 'deskilling' since arrival in the UK, with a much lower proportion working in managerial or professional positions compared to their country of origin, once full-time students and those who had not yet entered the labour market are excluded from the figures. Moreover, there has been a significant concentration in the type of work undertaken by immigrants compared to their home country, with movement from a wide range of business, trade and public service occupations to the 'classic' immigrant sectors of construction, cleaning and hospitality.

When immigrants' first and current jobs are compared, there is little evidence of occupational mobility within the UK, despite some movement out of work in hotels and restaurants. Moreover, while around two-thirds of the immigrants interviewed were employed by white British employers, the majority had found employment through friends or relatives from the same national group, which may be a factor in limiting options.

Finally, consistent with the wider literature on immigration, immigrants' wages were found to be low, with a significant group being paid at wages that appear to be below the National Minimum Wage. Immigrants were also found to work on average longer hours than the long-term residents interviewed. Very low wages appeared roughly equally to affect all of the immigrant groups studied, regardless of immigration status, although they appeared more prevalent in Hackney and less so in Brighton & Hove.

## 6 Immigration and cohesion in diverse communities

The previous three chapters have provided a profile of the five new immigrant groups of concern to this study, encompassing their journeys to the UK, their educational background and housing patterns, and their experiences in the labour market. These chapters show how the experiences of the different immigrant groups have been quite diverse, defying simple description and in some cases challenging common stereotypes. However, a further key objective of this study is to consider, not only these groups' experiences, but also their broader perspectives towards, and expectations of, their neighbourhoods, ethnic diversity and community involvement, with a view to exploring what constitutes a cohesive community in an increasingly diverse Britain.

This chapter turns to this task, considering also how new immigrants and long-term residents interact. It is divided into sections on residents' sense of 'belonging', their valuing of diversity, their expectations for life opportunities and the actions they had taken in their communities. This is in line with the working definition of community cohesion outlined in the section on 'Definitions' in Chapter 1, where a cohesive community is defined as the one where there is a sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

### **Sense of 'belonging'**

Turning first to immigrants' sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, Table 21 shows that, from our sample, only 35 per cent responded that they felt they belonged 'very strongly' or 'fairly strongly' to their neighbourhood, compared to 72 per cent of long-term residents interviewed, and 75 per cent of respondents in the Home Office 2005 Citizenship Survey. There is no reason to believe this is a product of sample bias – given that the long-term resident sample was selected in the same way as the immigrant sample; rather, this appears to reflect a real lack of identification among the new immigrants interviewed with the neighbourhoods in which they were living.

**Table 21 Sense of belonging to neighbourhood (per cent)**

	Immigrants <sup>a</sup>	Long-term residents <sup>a</sup>	UK <sup>b</sup>
Very strongly	7	25	32
Fairly strongly	27	45	43
Not very strongly	39	19	20
Not at all strongly	27	11	6
Total	100	100	100
N	361	394	9,628

Source: (a) field survey, 2005; (b) Home Office Citizenship Survey, 2005.

A number of factors might explain why immigrants were less likely to express a sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods than long-term residents or the UK population as a whole. Most obviously, immigrants might be expected to express less belonging in Britain because they still feel they belong in their home country. However, when asked specifically if they felt they belong to the UK (Table 22), a much higher proportion said they did, either strongly or fairly strongly (63 per cent), with this figure almost as high as the proportion of immigrants expressing a sense of belonging to their home country (67 per cent), even if the sense of belonging to the home country was stronger overall. Interestingly, immigrants also reported a higher sense of belonging to their borough of residence (Brighton, Hackney or Harrow) than their neighbourhood. This suggests that the problem of lack of belonging is one that exists at a neighbourhood level, rather than more generally.

**Table 22 Sense of belonging to borough, UK and home country (per cent)**

	Brighton/Hackney/Harrow		UK		Home country
	Immigrants	Long-term residents	Immigrants	Long-term residents	Immigrants
Very strongly	16	47	20	42	43
Fairly strongly	41	37	43	36	24
Not very strongly	32	12	25	18	21
Not at all strongly	12	4	12	4	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	375	399	371	394	378

Source: field survey, 2005.

Another possible explanation is that immigrants live in more deprived neighbourhoods; yet this is not consistent with the fact that long-term residents living in the *same* neighbourhoods had a much greater sense of belonging; that the reported sense of belonging to neighbourhood was lowest in Brighton & Hove, the least deprived of the three localities; and that in any case, in the UK as a whole, the level of deprivation of a neighbourhood appears not to affect whether people say they feel they belong to it.

Some immigrants commented at length on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life in their localities, which is revealing, but does not provide a clear picture about what might be an 'overall' view of neighbourhood belonging. For example, in Harrow, comments were often quite positive:

Harrow is a nice place to live. There are different facilities, shops. It is safe.

(Russian, Harrow, 24, F)

I am quite satisfied with Harrow as a place to live. People from different backgrounds get on well together. I have not heard of any big racial conflicts here.

(Albanian, Harrow, 30, M)

In contrast, respondents' views on life in Hackney appeared to be more class determined. Better-off immigrants who were professionals and had the means to choose location appeared to feel safer and more satisfied with their locality, in contrast to those on welfare benefits and in council accommodation who had no say on where they were allocated to live and had more vulnerable socio-economic as well as immigration status:

I feel that there is a lot of ethnical segregation in Hackney. People are doing stuff and communicating only in their way and in their own language. This is sometimes counterproductive, especially as I am trying to reach out to them as a community medical officer.

(Serbian, Hackney, 27, F)

I'm relatively dissatisfied because there is too much crime, but I guess that's becoming a growing tendency in London as a whole. The poor quality of schools in Hackney is also worrying, as is the poor quality of local council services, there are too many problematic, poorly qualified people who work there. However, one good aspect of Hackney is that there is some quite nice housing in certain areas; for example, I'm very happy with the *[council]* house we live in here.

(Serbian, Hackney, 28, F)

It feels that those who hate Hackney are actually those making it worse. I love Hackney for its diversity. And resent the fact that some people just gamble and accept benefits for ten years without learning the language, and I am referring especially to other Serbians here.

(Serbian, Hackney, 23, F)

In particular, crime, drug-dealing, teenage gangs and street prostitution were areas of concern for those interviewed in Hackney. For example, a Serbian woman commented:

What needs improving in Hackney? Breaking up crime on estates would help a lot, as there's a lot of car break-ins, drug-dealing and prostitution that go on there. The dangerous teenagers also need to be dealt with, as they're often in gangs – I think having better and more community support officers would help with this.

(Serbian, Hackney, 28, F)

In Brighton, one Serbian respondent mirrored complaints made about Hackney:

I am not very pleased with living in Brighton. There is a lot of crime, drug, alcohol users and hooligans. Traffic congestion is also a problem. One of my first jobs involved pizza delivery during the evenings. What I saw was not at all nice.

(Serbian, 48, M)

However, more generally, the issues raised were less to do with crime and more associated with general quality of life, as encompassed by this list of complaints from a recent Albanian immigrant:

... rubbish collection, lack of parking space and expensive parking, high living and accommodation costs.

(Albanian, Brighton, 29, M)

Others talked about the need for better public schools and better-paid jobs, especially for professionals:

There are no places for young people to go out and do sports. That's why they go to the parks and drink. There are very few places (almost none) for kids from 15–18 years.

(Serbian, Brighton, 46, F)

More playgrounds are needed here where young people can do sports. Playgrounds from Brighton were moved to Saltdean and Peacehaven but there are no children to use them. Nothing is organised. There are some football clubs and that is it. When I look back at my childhood in Belgrade we were outside all the time playing but here children do not go outside to play as there is nowhere to go.

(Serbian, Brighton, 48, M)



Some in Brighton also touched directly on the question of immigration. For example, one Ukrainian-born immigrant reported:

Brighton is becoming a more expensive place, more populated, more shops, influx of immigrants. It is becoming more like London but with more drugs, more difficult to find parking spaces.

(Ukrainian, Brighton, 23, M)

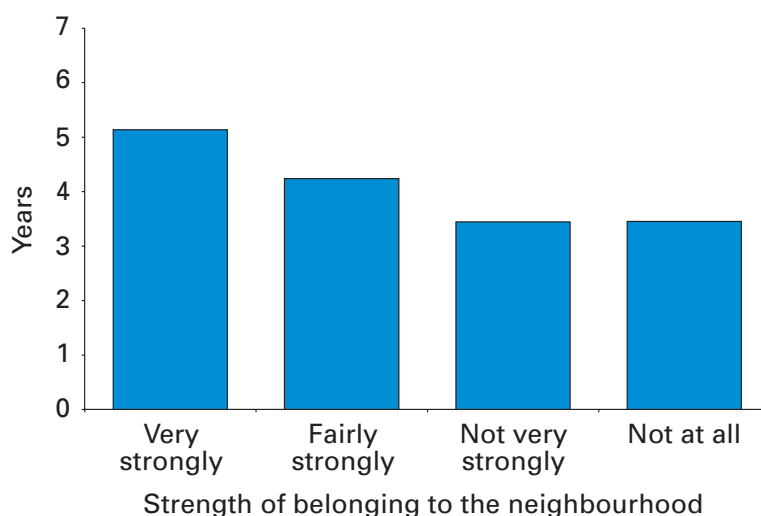
However, not all those who mentioned immigration as a factor in their view of the local area were negative about its consequences. Meanwhile, the comments of others suggested a more positive attitude:

I find Brighton very pleasant and there are a lot of nice people here. It is a beautiful town, with many places to go out and, most importantly, it is on the sea. I have the feeling that people from different backgrounds get on well together in Brighton and that is one of the reasons why I like it here. The atmosphere is international. I don't have the feeling that anybody is discriminated.

(Serbian, Brighton, 46, F)

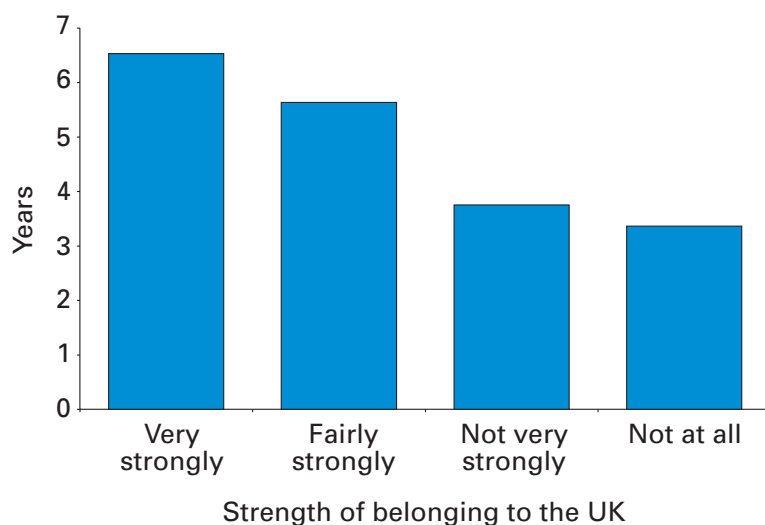
Rather clearer evidence is available, however, to suggest that immigrants' sense of belonging – whether to their neighbourhood, borough or to the UK – increases over time. Thus those who felt they belonged 'very strongly' to their neighbourhood had been in that neighbourhood on average for about 18 months longer than those who felt they did not belong to the neighbourhood at all (Figure 9), while those who felt they 'very strongly' belonged to the UK had been in the UK on average for three years longer than those who felt they did not belong in the UK at all (Figure 10). In contrast, immigrants' sense of belonging to their home countries was unrelated to the amount of time they had spent in the UK.

**Figure 9 Average length of stay in neighbourhood by strength of belonging to neighbourhood (years)**



Source: field survey, 2005.

**Figure 10 Average length of stay in UK by strength of belonging to the UK (years)**



Source: field survey, 2005.

Some other factors were found to be associated with a higher sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, notably whether the immigrants planned to return to their home country soon (just 15 per cent of those with return plans in the next three years said they belonged, compared to 57 per cent of those without such plans); whether individuals had children with them in the UK (46 per cent expressed a strong sense of belonging, compared to 30 per cent for those without children or whose children were living elsewhere); their type of accommodation (with 48 per cent of council tenants expressing a strong sense of belonging, compared to 39 per cent of owner-

occupiers, but just 32 per cent of private tenants); education (with only 31 per cent of university-educated immigrants expressing a sense of belonging, compared to 38 per cent of those without a university education); and gender (40 per cent of men, compared to 30 per cent of women expressing a sense of belonging). Type of accommodation, education and gender were also associated with sense of belonging among long-term residents, although, interestingly, among long-term residents it was women (74 per cent) who were more likely to express a sense of belonging than men (67 per cent). Meanwhile, a number of other factors were not associated with individuals' sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, including age, language ability, occupation and legal status.

## **Valuing diversity**

Community cohesion is not simply about whether people feel they belong, it is also about whether people from diverse backgrounds get on with each other and diversity is valued and appreciated. For example, a white British respondent in Brighton, who had previously lived in London, talked about the lack of ethnic diversity in the city. He missed the diversity of some areas in London like Lewisham and Brixton. When he first moved to Brighton in 1990, he said he was shocked to have all white British colleagues and neighbours. This has meant that his pool of friends was much less diverse than before. Most of his non-British friends were from London.

Three initial measures were used to explore whether diversity was valued: first, whether individuals believed that their neighbourhoods are places where people get on well together; second, whether they felt that their neighbourhoods are places where people help each other; and, third, the frequency with which people reported talking to their neighbours, including those from other ethnic or national backgrounds. The first two questions were chosen to be comparable with findings from the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey, while the latter reflects concerns – set out, for example, in the Cantle Report – that different immigrant and ethnic groups are living 'parallel lives', which 'do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap or promote any meaningful exchanges'.<sup>1</sup>

Both immigrants and long-term residents agreed that the neighbourhoods they are living in are places where different people got on well together, with 87 per cent of each group definitely agreeing or tending to agree with this proposition (Table 23). This compares to 79 per cent of white respondents and 82 per cent of minority ethnic respondents who were asked the same question in the 2005 Citizenship Survey. Both immigrants and long-term residents in Brighton were more likely to agree with this proposition than respondents in London. For example, while in Brighton

around 97 per cent of all respondents agreed, this figure fell to just 80–85 per cent in Harrow and Hackney. Among the immigrants interviewed, Albanians and Bulgarians were more likely than the other groups to agree that people got on well in their neighbourhood.

**Table 23 ‘The neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together’ (per cent)**

	Brighton	Hackney	Harrow	Total
<i>Long-term residents</i>				
Definitely agree	43.3	41.9	51.2	45.6
Tend to agree	54.2	37.9	34.1	41.8
Tend to disagree	1.7	14.5	10.9	9.1
Definitely disagree	0.8	5.6	3.9	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	120	124	129	373
<i>New immigrants</i>				
Definitely agree	54.3	27.9	32.7	38.2
Tend to agree	42.9	55.0	49.5	49.2
Tend to disagree	2.9	9.0	7.9	6.6
Definitely disagree	0.0	8.1	9.9	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	105	111	101	317

Source: field survey, 2005.

However, despite this general level of respect for diversity in their neighbourhoods, when asked whether people help each other in their neighbourhoods, both immigrants and long-term residents were much more negative, with only around one in five of each group agreeing that this was definitely the case (Table 24). This compares to 88 per cent in the 2005 Citizenship Survey who felt that ‘people in the neighbourhood are willing to help their neighbours’. In contrast, nearly half of immigrants felt that people ‘go their own way’, with this view held most strongly in Hackney.<sup>2</sup> Albanians and Ukrainians in particular responded that people ‘go their own way’; only Bulgarians had a more positive view on average than long-term residents.

**Table 24 ‘The neighbourhood is a place where people help each other’ (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Immigrants	Long-term residents
Help each other	12.3	27.1	18.3	11.5	11.4	16.5	22.1
Go own way	74.1	8.2	50.0	32.8	68.4	46.9	36.6
Mixture	11.1	47.1	25.6	42.6	16.5	28.1	38.6
Don’t know	2.5	17.6	6.1	13.1	3.8	8.5	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

Overall, the immigrants interviewed were also less likely than long-term residents to report that they talked to their neighbours frequently, although at least half of both groups reported talking to their neighbours at least once a week (Table 25). Albanians and Ukrainians were the most likely to report talking to their neighbours on a daily basis, although Ukrainians were also the immigrant group most likely to report that they never talked to their neighbours. Those immigrants with children who live with them were also more likely to talk to their neighbours at least once a week (61 per cent) compared to those without children (46 per cent).

**Table 25 Frequency of talking to neighbours (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Immigrants	Long-term residents
On most days	30.9	18.8	15.9	21.3	25.3	22.4	39.1
Once or twice a week	27.2	25.9	29.3	34.4	22.8	27.6	29.1
Once or twice a month	13.6	23.5	14.6	21.3	12.7	17.0	13.9
Less often than once a month	13.6	5.9	23.2	11.5	12.7	13.4	8.5
Never	12.3	20.0	15.9	8.2	26.6	17.0	8.0
Don't know	2.5	5.9	1.2	3.3	0.0	2.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

However, statistical responses to the survey conceal what is often a more complex reality. For example, one Russian woman explained her relationship with neighbours:

I have nice relations with my neighbours. I do not see them very often and almost do not talk to them, except maybe sometimes – I could say 'Hi' to one who is next door to my flat. I wish that neighbours here were like those we had back home: lively and friendly. You could go and borrow some sugar from them sometimes.  
(Russian, 24, F)

Interestingly, both groups also reported in similar proportions that they talked to each other – so just over half of the immigrants interviewed said they spoke to local people at least once a week, while slightly less than half of the long-term residents interviewed reported that they spoke to East Europeans at least once a week. Only 9 per cent of the immigrants interviewed reported that they never spoke to local people, with the largest proportion being Serbians. In contrast, three times as many (26 per cent) long-term residents reported that they never talked to East Europeans. Levels of interaction were lower in Brighton and Hackney, and higher in Harrow.

Among the immigrant groups interviewed, Ukrainians and Albanians were again the most likely to report speaking to local people at least once a week.

For immigrants, contact with local people was mainly reported as being in local shops, whereas long-term residents reported interacting with East Europeans in a much wider range of locations, including at work, in shops, restaurants and bars, at a place of study and more generally in their neighbourhood. In Brighton, in-depth interviews suggested that long-term residents sometimes had contact with East Europeans without really realising it – for example, when probed, it emerged that they had work colleagues from Poland or the Czech Republic. Local people reported positive attitudes towards East Europeans, but few close friendships were reported.

Although the evidence above suggests some problems in terms of community cohesion in our study localities, a rather more positive picture emerges when we turn to social and family networks, and the extent to which these are 'diverse'. At one extreme in terms of interaction between immigrants and long-term residents is the possibility of marriage or co-habitation. Most long-term residents who were married (54 per cent) were married to a white British partner, while two-thirds of immigrants were married to another non-EU East European. Yet 15 per cent of the immigrants interviewed were married to white British partners, while 13 per cent were married to other Europeans from within the EU, suggesting some degree of 'intermixing' between the study group and others, including the native British population. This was particularly true for the Russians, Ukrainians and Serbians interviewed – in contrast Albanians and Bulgarians were much more likely to have married Albanian or Bulgarian partners respectively.

Quite high levels of mixing between people from different ethnic or national backgrounds were also revealed in terms of friendships, with around 85 per cent of the long-term residents and 72 per cent of the immigrants interviewed saying they had friends from different ethnic groups to them. This compares to 66 per cent of the respondents asked the same question in the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey. Serbians were most likely (92 per cent) and Russians the least likely (60 per cent) to have friends from a different ethnic group. Indeed, it is worth noting that some respondents in both groups felt uncomfortable when they were asked to distinguish between friends of the same and different ethnicity:

I am a single mother; live on my own. I don't like (can't afford even) to distinguish between friends of different ethnicity. They are all my friends. Ethnicity cannot be an issue.  
(LTR, Brighton, 31, F)

Some of the long-term residents interviewed in Brighton even felt very anxious not to appear racist during the interview, especially when asked to distinguish between friends from different ethnic groups:

I am not prejudiced and not having friends from other ethnic groups is more about circumstances than choice. I and my wife interact with people from many different races and countries at local shops, especially Tesco's, which has a very diverse workforce. These workers are very nice and friendly.

(White British, Brighton, 77, M)

Social networks are important for a number of reasons, not least because they provide a source of support to individuals and families when they are in difficulties. However, when they were asked who they would turn to when they needed support, immigrants were more likely than long-term residents to report that they would turn first to their spouse (51 per cent reported that they would turn to their spouse in the case of a personal problem, compared to 42 per cent of long-term residents). In contrast, whereas 21 per cent of long-term residents said they could turn to other relatives, this was true for only 9 per cent of immigrants, who listed a number of other people they might turn to instead. More encouragingly, just six immigrants (2 per cent) and only one long-term resident said that there was no one to help at all.

Similar responses were received when people were asked who they would turn to if they were ill in bed, with 52 per cent of immigrants saying their spouse, but just 41 per cent of long-term residents, although the answers to both questions may simply reflect the fact that 68 per cent of immigrants reported having a partner, compared to just 48 per cent of long-term residents. Around 5 per cent of respondents in both groups had no one to ask for help if they were ill in bed.

Levels of co-operation with work colleagues were also quite high. When asked whether people at their workplace respected each other, only around 5 per cent of either immigrants or long-term residents said they did not. The figure excludes those who said they did not know, those who worked alone and those whose work colleagues were all from the same ethnic group. Some 3 per cent of immigrants and 5 per cent of long-term residents worked with people from the same ethnic group as themselves.

In turn, around two-thirds to three-quarters of both groups reported that they had friends from work, with only minor differences between groups. The 'friendliest' sector for long-term residents was construction and for immigrants was education (100 per cent and 90 per cent respectively said they had friends from work). However, when

asked to whom they could turn if they had a problem of work, fewer immigrants than long-term residents said they could turn to their employer (31 per cent, compared to 44 per cent), or to co-workers (12 per cent, compared to 16 per cent). In contrast, more immigrants said they would turn to relatives (22 per cent, compared to 15 per cent) or to other members of their own ethnic community (19 per cent, compared to 9 per cent).

### Expectations of life opportunities

Linked to the issue of community cohesion are the expectations and plans that individuals and groups have for their future – and whether they see this future as being in the neighbourhood where they are living. Age, family status, educational background, length of stay in the country and intentions for repatriation were all significant factors shaping immigrants' expectations of future life opportunities in Britain. What surfaced as most important during in-depth interviews was a stable job that would pay enough for a decent life. Young people also often wanted to get good education and improve their English language qualifications:

I want to get a better education.  
(Albanian, Harrow, 25, M)

I don't know what I expect of life here. But when I first came here I wanted to try something new and see how people live here, and how everything works for them. Britain is considered to be a very nice country to live well. And, of course, I want to improve my English and finish my studies at college.  
(Russian, Harrow, 28, F)

In contrast, older people and those with children were often striving to settle down, buy their own house, get a good job, educate their children and for the children to settle in the UK and find good jobs.

I expect to improve and stabilise my financial situation, get a degree, buy a house and start a family.  
(Albanian, Brighton, 29, M)

For myself, I expect one day to work in the field I worked at home [*a manager*] and not to do hard jobs that only immigrants would do. For my children, I want them to finish school and settle here.  
(Serbian, Brighton, 48, M)



However, some specific considerations arise for immigrants in terms of their expectations of return to their home country, and these are addressed here.

Asking immigrants whether they intend to return home is a notoriously difficult area, since evidence suggests that they overwhelmingly respond that they *do* intend to return, even if in reality that return is very unlikely. Nonetheless, we did ask whether immigrants intended to return home. In all, around half of the immigrants interviewed reported that they intended to repatriate to their home country at some stage, with this intention being rather higher among Bulgarians (73 per cent) and Ukrainians (57 per cent) than the other three groups (all around 40 per cent). Bulgarians living in Brighton were more likely to wish to return than their compatriots in London; in contrast, Ukrainians in Hackney were more likely to wish to return than their fellow citizens elsewhere.

Yet any view that return is imminent needs to be qualified. For example, people with young children and partners in the UK sometimes reported that they plan to settle in the UK at least until their children graduate from school and find jobs. Meanwhile, of those who reported that they do intend to return, few felt that this return was imminent – just eight individuals from all five national groups had already fixed a date, while another 5 per cent expected to return within the next year, whereas 26 per cent said they did not know when and another 5 per cent anticipated that they would not return until they retired. Those from Ukraine were the most likely to have a definite plan to return.

Among those who did have a definite plan to return, earning enough money in the UK was the most significant factor given by immigrants themselves to explain their plan to return (27 per cent), followed by family and personal reasons (25 per cent) and an improvement in economic conditions at home (19 per cent). However, if we compare those who planned to return within the next three years (around 16 per cent of all immigrants) with those who either did not plan to go home or didn't know if they would or not, it is noticeable that those in the UK for a shorter period of time, who had come for economic reasons and were working in low-skilled occupations, were more likely to have a concrete plan of return. Thus 30 per cent of those who had been in the UK for under three years had a plan to return, compared to 14 per cent of those in the UK between three and five years, and just 6 per cent of those in the UK for more than five years. Similarly, 23 per cent of those who had come for economic reasons said they planned to return within three years, compared to 18 per cent of those who came for education, 12 per cent of those who came to get married and just 4 per cent of those who came for political reasons. Similarly, 27 per cent of those in process, plant or elementary occupations intended to return in the next three years, compared to 16 per cent of those in professional or managerial positions.

Those with a concrete plan of return were also more likely to say they did not feel they belonged to the neighbourhood, borough or the UK.

### Community participation

Another element of community cohesion is whether people feel they can influence decisions at a local level, and the actions they take to participate in local life. When asked if they agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, just over a quarter (27 per cent) of immigrants interviewed said they definitely agreed, or tended to agree, with Albanians adopting the most positive stance and Serbians the most negative. This contrasts with 42 per cent of long-term residents who said they felt they could influence local decisions and 39 per cent of respondents who responded in the same way to this question in the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey.

Similarly, around 43 per cent of the long-term residents in the sample had undertaken an action in the last 12 months in an attempt to solve a local problem, compared to 38 per cent of respondents asked the same question in the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey. However, only around one in five of the immigrants interviewed had taken civic action in this way (Table 26). Of those who had taken civic actions, long-term residents were more likely than immigrants to report contacting the local media, or having attended a tenants' or local residents' group. In contrast, the small number of immigrants who had taken action were more likely to report attending a protest meeting or joining an action group, organising a petition, or simply 'contacting the appropriate organisation'. Length of stay in the UK and legal status appeared not to influence either whether immigrants felt they could affect local decisions or the likelihood of them taking action to do so, although those immigrants who were owner-occupiers were slightly more likely to have taken actions such as contacting a newspaper, organising a petition or attending a meeting.

Equally striking is that immigrants were only half as likely as long-term residents to report that they had volunteered (formally or informally) in the last 12 months or given money to charity. Thus, while just 23 per cent of the immigrants interviewed reported that they had given unpaid help, this compared to 52 per cent of long-term residents interviewed (Table 27) and a similar proportion of respondents in England who were asked the same question in the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey. In turn, while 24 per cent of the long-term residents interviewed reported that they had raised or given money to charity in the last 12 months, just 12 per cent of immigrants said that they had done so. Bulgarians were the least likely (3 per cent) to have volunteered, but even Ukrainians and Serbians who were most likely (around 30 per cent each) still had levels of participation well below long-term residents on average.

**Table 26 Participation in civic actions taken in the last 12 months to solve a local problem (per cent)**

	Immigrants	Long-term residents
Contacted a local radio station, television station or newspaper	1.8	6.2
Contacted the appropriate organisation to deal with the problem	9.0	15.7
Contacted a local councillor or MP	2.8	5.7
Attended a public meeting or neighbourhood forum to discuss the problem	2.6	6.0
Attended a tenants' or local residents' group	0.8	5.2
Attended a protest meeting or joined an action group	1.5	2.0
Helped organise a petition on local issue	1.3	2.0
No local problems	10.6	18.2
No action undertaken	65.5	38.1
Don't know	4.1	1.0
Total	100	100
N	399	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

**Table 27 Volunteering in the last 12 months (per cent)**

	Albanian	Bulgarian	Russian	Serbian	Ukrainian	Immigrants	Long-term residents
Volunteered	25.9	3.5	26.8	29.5	30.4	22.7	52.0
Did not volunteer	74.1	96.5	73.2	70.5	69.6	77.3	48.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	81	85	82	61	79	388	402

Source: field survey, 2005.

Some of the Russians and Ukrainians interviewed reported providing help to the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. Serbians in London were also providing help to their Orthodox Church, while some Serbians in Brighton expressed their regret there was no such church there. In contrast, Bulgarians were not involved in many community or voluntary activities and, unlike Serbians, Russians and Ukrainians, were not related to their church either. Some Albanians reported active voluntary participation in their communities. One interviewed Albanian had taken part in a local community activity, protesting against a bus lane going through their neighbourhood; another Albanian in Harrow reported volunteering as a youth and community worker; an Albanian in Brighton said he volunteered representing people in court as a translator. Some Albanians reported giving money to charities but not actively participating in voluntary activities. However, they participated regularly in sports and were members of sport clubs.

The low participation rate by immigrants in community activities was often explained during in-depth interviews by lack of any free time. Three typical comments were:

I am not involved in any community activities. And, nobody has ever invited me in any way to take part in something in the local area. Actually, I don't have time, I barely have time for my own kids.

(Serbian, Brighton, 46, F)

I am not involved in any local activities or voluntary job because I work so many hours and, besides, my English is not that good.

(Russian, Hackney, 22, F)

I am not interested in volunteering. I have other things to do. I am renting and it is a landlord's job to be involved in the activities of the local community.

(Russian, Harrow, 28, M)

In contrast, some older people who have less of a time constraint reported greater commitment to their neighbourhoods, eagerness to communicate with other people and also higher participation in community activities, a factor that shows up among our long-term resident sample. As one reported:

It's all about time. If you work all day, there is not much time left for friends, let alone the family.

(Serbian, Brighton, 42, F)

However, among our immigrant sample, age was not found to be related to levels of involvement in community activities – whether in terms of volunteering, taking actions to solve a local problem or believing that such actions have influence – and nor were the number of hours that immigrants reported working.

Some interviewees had other opinions about what influenced community participation. A Ukrainian woman in her late 40s who came to UK some 15 years ago attributed the difficulties in having solid friendships with English people to differences in expressing emotions:

To me, English people are somewhat like machines: very good at organising things but I doubt they put much emotions in whatever they organise. They can easily replace you. During such events that they organise I feel rather bored than relaxed: again, there are no feelings, no

passions; I do not even feel comfortable to express my emotions in front of them. Maybe we are so different in this. Here *[in the UK]* what I find is individualism; people rarely stick together. But this is capitalism. I do not know how it is in Ukraine now.

A Polish woman, 52 years old, who has lived in Britain for 27 years, 20 of them in Brighton, said when she was asked what needed improvement in her neighbourhood:

It's basically the people in the neighbourhood – we hardly know each other; we do not communicate, apart from 'hello'. I do not see them, as most of them are commuters. We live in a perfect location, close to both Hove and Brighton stations. Also, houses change hands very often. So, you can't get close with people in the neighbourhood. People can't be bothered and make an effort to know their neighbours when they know they are going to leave soon, maybe somewhere closer to London. We are just three people in the neighbourhood that spend more time here and the two of them are retired, elderly people.

Meanwhile, an Iranian man, in his early 60s, who has lived in the UK for almost 30 years, said:

It is more about mentality or better say cultural values. We are so different. Take the Iranians and the English people. We understand friendship differently. In Iran, friends would do anything for each other; they are there when you are happy or sad, need money or help. In England, you go for a drink with someone and have a good time but the next day if you ask for help, they are not there.

Some immigrants who had lived and worked during the socialist era in Eastern Europe related community participation and volunteering to those times. A typical comment was that they had had enough of it and were not interested in doing it again. A similar view was expressed by a long-term resident in Brighton:

I do not believe in voluntary work. We are not a socialist society here, are we?

(White British, Brighton, 35, M)

However, if the three elements of community participation above are taken together, as with a sense of belonging, it was the length of time people had been in the UK, their return plans and their accommodation status that stood out as consistently associated with higher levels of participation (Table 28), although, in contrast

to belonging, language ability was also associated with all three measures of participation. Thus those in the UK for more than five years who do not intend to return in the next three years, those who entered with better English and those who are now owner-occupiers were more likely to participate in their community than those in the UK for a shorter period, those who plan to return to their home country soon, those who spoke less English on arrival and those in rented accommodation.

**Table 28 Variation in community participation of immigrants, by key associated variables (per cent)**

	Have taken action on local problem in last 12 months	Agree/tend to agree can influence local decisions	Have volunteered in last 12 months
<i>Time spent in UK</i>			
More than 10 years	26	41	53
5–10 years	24	42	32
3–5 years	17	26	19
1–3 years	19	29	24
Less than 1 year	11	16	16
<i>Plan to return in next three years</i>			
Yes	21	23	12
No/don't know	33	35	40
<i>Accommodation</i>			
Owner-occupied	26	44	43
Council rented	24	31	28
Private rented	20	30	24
<i>English competence on arrival</i>			
Fluent	20	33	35
Adequate	27	29	27
Basic	19	25	15
None	17	24	23
Total	21	34	28
N	375	304	391

Source: field survey, 2005.

In addition, those who were educated to university level were more likely (45 per cent) to have taken action on a local problem than those who were not (37 per cent); while those working in professional and managerial occupations were more likely (36 per cent) to feel they could affect local decisions than those who were not (24 per cent). Meanwhile, not only were managers and professionals educated to university level more likely to volunteer, but so were women, those with children living with them and those with permanent residence status – although none of these factors was associated with the other two measures of participation used.

Despite the relatively low levels of community involvement reported in this section, it is worth noticing that around 60 per cent of the immigrants interviewed, and some 70 per cent of long-term residents, said that they were involved in some sort of group, club or organisation. Among the immigrants interviewed, individuals reported being members of the Polish Catholic Church, a Pharmaceuticals Forum, a children's charity hospital, the British–Serbian Medical Association, the Serbian Writers' Association, an Albanian women's group, an Association of Albanian Academics in the UK and Age Concern. However, more generally, immigrants were more likely to be involved in sports clubs, whereas the long-term residents interviewed were more likely to be members of social clubs. Few immigrants were politically active; among the various groups, Ukrainians showed a higher level of political involvement, with three being members of Ukrainian political parties and two more being members of UK political parties. More surprisingly, only 23 (6 per cent) immigrants said they were members of an ethnic community organisation, although some of the organisations listed above clearly have an ethnic character.

## **Summary**

This chapter has explored levels and types of interaction between new immigrants and long-term residents, focusing on elements that might be seen to characterise community cohesion. The immigrants interviewed were found to have a relatively low sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, although their sense of belonging increased if they were asked about their broader locality (Brighton, Harrow or Hackney), or the UK, to which they felt they belonged almost as much as to their own countries. Meanwhile, although they agreed in all cases that their neighbourhoods were places where people from different backgrounds got on well with each other, very few immigrants felt that their neighbourhoods were places where people helped each other, while they were less likely than long-term residents to talk to their neighbours on a regular basis.

This is partly reflected in patterns of interaction. Thus both immigrants and long-term residents interviewed in this study reported regular contact with each other, and there was evidence of both friendship and marriage/co-habitation between immigrants and long-term residents. However, immigrants still appeared to have fewer people to turn to outside the family if they needed help. Meanwhile, immigrants were found to have relatively low levels of civic engagement, with few feeling that they could influence local decisions. This also extended to quite low levels of participation in community organisations even within their own ethnic and national communities.

In exploring why immigrants have low levels of community participation, factors such as lack of English language skills, lack of time among a group that work very long hours and commitment to the home country among temporary migrants are often mentioned as reasons, including within in-depth interviews in this study. However, although English language competence and the existence of concrete return plans were found to be associated with levels of participation, equally important were the length of time people had spent in the country and whether they were still living in the private rented sector or not.

Several interesting points deserve further attention. The first is that, in so far as there is a problem of cohesion between communities, this is reported more as a 'local' problem, which exists in spite of the fact that the broader society appears more welcoming. It is difficult to unpack what is relevant here: why participation in and belonging to the local community should be seen as problematic, even though immigrants have local friends and meet their neighbours fairly regularly; and why immigrants should identify so strongly with Britain, even though the majority retain a desire to return to their home country. Second, although some problems exist, it is not necessarily the case that these impact negatively on individuals. In particular, existing social and family networks may compensate immigrants for lack of perceived local support; few if any of those interviewed in this study reported that they have nobody to turn to in a crisis. Finally, it is a clear finding that community participation increases over time. However, the way in which time improves community cohesion remains unclear and is one of several matters that is touched on further in the final chapter.



## 7 Conclusion

This report has explored the experience of immigrants from Eastern Europe living in the London Boroughs of Hackney and Harrow, and in the City of Brighton & Hove, focusing on their characteristics, their perspectives on community cohesion, their expectations for the future and their interactions with long-term residents. Although the sample chosen cannot be considered as representative in a statistical sense, it is larger than previous ad hoc surveys of countries such as Albania and Bulgaria, and the first to systematically compare experiences of immigrants from a range of East European countries of origin living in the UK. It is also the first to focus explicitly and empirically on the issue of community cohesion, seen from the viewpoint of this new immigrant group.

The study suggests that a significant proportion of new European immigrants from outside the EU are in the UK to work, and that they have been quite successful in finding employment, even if this is in relatively low-paid and low-skill sectors, with little upward job mobility to date. However, their experience of, and contribution to, community cohesion appears more mixed; on the one hand, quite high levels of interaction were reported between immigrants and long-term residents, while both groups agreed that their neighbourhoods and workplaces are places where diversity is respected. Yet, in terms of their sense of belonging, especially to the neighbourhood, their level of community participation and the extent to which they feel they can change things through their own actions, immigrants were much more negative about life in the UK, compared both to our sample of long-term residents and to participants in the 2005 Citizenship Survey.

### **What makes a ‘cohesive community’?**

At the beginning of this report, we identified three key background factors that are thought to contribute to a ‘cohesive community’: education, housing, employment, each of which has been analysed in some detail. In terms of education, the immigrants interviewed were found to be well educated, with quite high levels of reported competence in English, although this reflected rapid improvement in language skills since arrival, rather than pre-existing command of the language. Yet the influence of education on community cohesion was unclear. In part, this is precisely because immigrants were so well educated, providing too small a sample of those with less than secondary education to draw meaningful comparisons. But it also reflects mixed evidence on the link between university education and community cohesion, with university-educated immigrants more likely to have volunteered, but less likely to say they feel they belong in their neighbourhoods.

In terms of housing, private rented accommodation was confirmed as the most significant source of housing for the new immigrant groups interviewed and, unlike education, this was more clearly linked to levels of community cohesion. Thus those who were in private rented accommodation were less likely to say they felt they belonged to their neighbourhood, or to have participated in community activities, compared to those in council accommodation or owner-occupiers. However, barriers to the ownership of property were far from absolute; in turn, although Bulgarians, Russians and Ukrainians were not significant users of social housing, Albanians and Serbians who had gained refugee status had often been able to get access to council accommodation.

Meanwhile, given the fact that such a significant proportion of new East European immigration to the UK is for work, we might expect employment to be a particularly important factor influencing cohesion. This is recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which notes that:

High levels of unemployment and variations in job opportunities can have a detrimental impact in building cohesion. Disparity in the levels of employment between varying groups can also breed resentment between different communities. Local authorities, learning and skills councils and the Employment Service should be engaged in developing equal access to employment for all sections of the community.<sup>7</sup>

The immigrants interviewed in this study were working across a range of sectors, but, in line with existing literature, there was quite a concentration in areas where wages are relatively low, such as hotels and restaurants, cleaning and construction. There has also been relatively limited upward mobility from these jobs. Yet, like education, occupation was only partly related to community cohesion, with professionals and managers more likely than others to have volunteered, and to feel that they can affect local decisions, but no more likely to feel they belong, or to have actually taken actions to influence a local problem.

Given this mixed picture, it is worth recapitulating what other factors were identified in the study as being linked to community cohesion. As noted in the previous chapter, perhaps the most important of these appears to be time. Whatever the indicator of community cohesion, those who had been in their neighbourhood and/or in the UK for a longer period of time showed up as more engaged in their community, and more positive about this engagement. Time is also related to some other factors that are associated with higher levels of community cohesion, including whether people plan to return imminently, housing tenure, language ability and legal status. Yet a key question remains: does this mean levels of community cohesion simply improve over time, or is this contingent on other, institutional or contextual factors?

In part, the answer to this question depends on multivariate statistical analysis that lies outside the scope of the current report. However, it should also be noted that the different waves of immigration reported in this study occurred in rather different contexts, suggesting that contingent contextual factors certainly should not be ignored. In particular, those who arrived in the UK in the late 1990s, especially those seeking refugee status, were much more likely to have access to council accommodation and were competing in a rather less crowded labour market than those who arrived since 2004, at a time when East European immigration from within the EU has grown substantially. Meanwhile, more recent arrivals are more likely to have arrived on a temporary visa (such as through the SBS or SAWS), with an expectation of return; this may significantly affect outcomes compared to those who aspire to more permanent residence.

## The relevance of place

Although a number of factors that are linked with elements of community cohesion are identified in our sample, one interesting factor that appears not to be consistently linked is the locality in which immigrants were living. This is despite the fact that the low sense of belonging reported by immigrants in this study applies specifically to neighbourhoods and localities, and not to the UK as a whole. A number of reasons might explain this. First, although there was some variation between the three localities in which the study was undertaken, they are perhaps more similar than was first anticipated. For example, although one is an inner-London borough, one an outer-London borough and one a smaller city outside London, all appear to be places of 'transit' in which both immigrants and longer-term residents have relatively high mobility, and therefore perhaps less community cohesion is apparent. Moreover, all are located in the relatively prosperous South East, even if they include areas of relative deprivation.

Nonetheless, in spite of this lack of a clear 'locality effect' in the sense that patterns were significantly different in different localities, interactions did appear to depend somewhat on the character of the individual neighbourhoods in which people were living. All three localities included in this study have both rich and poor neighbourhoods, and the level and type of interactions between new immigrants and long-term residents appeared to vary between them. Moreover, the fact that it is immigrants' *neighbourhoods*, rather than the UK as a whole, they feel they do not belong to suggests that place-specific responses are required if this lack of belonging is to be addressed.

Also important is the place that immigrants had come from – although this is difficult to summarise in terms of quantitative indicators. Thus, in addition to the fact – noted in Chapter 6 – that the different immigrant groups focused on here have had diverse experiences, defying simple description, they have come from countries with widely different recent histories and circumstances that have shaped their migrations. Stereotypes of immigrant Russians as wealthy newcomers interested in football, Albanians as linked to organised crime, or Bulgarians as potential welfare dependants are very wide from the mark; a better image would be of hard-working individuals supporting their families. Yet this does not capture the diversity of experience that characterises just one part of what Vertovec (2006) has labelled the UK's new 'super-diversity'. Nor are the experiences of non-EU East Europeans identical to those of nationals from 'A8' countries,<sup>2</sup> although the current situation of some – such as Serbians and Albanians who have now obtained permanent residence – might be closer than that of others, such as Ukrainians, who remain in a highly vulnerable position.

### **Definitions of 'community cohesion'**

Given this diversity, two key questions immediately pose themselves: first, does this level of diversity call into question what we understand as 'community cohesion'; and, second, how should policy on community cohesion respond to such diversity and the apparent mixture of levels of community participation displayed by new European immigrants? The first question is particularly pertinent in the context of the work of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, established in 2006 with a remit to review what cohesion means to different communities, as well as how it can be promoted.

Taking first the question of whether 'community cohesion' is called into question by new and diverse immigration streams affecting the UK since the late 1990s, the simplest response is that it is too early to judge. Certainly some of those interviewed during the course of this study implicitly rejected a notion of community cohesion based on a 'common vision', given that their medium-term vision was one of return from the UK to their country of origin; in turn, this was reflected in their relative lack of commitment to, and participation in, the neighbourhoods in which they were living. Yet the ambition to return is not the same as saying that people will return, and people's relative commitment to return on the one hand and their neighbourhood on the other may well change over time. Moreover, many responded simultaneously that they belong both to the UK and to their home country, a sense of belonging reflected perhaps in their relatively high level of respect for others whose objectives and backgrounds are different.

Moreover, although this study does not go so far as to demonstrate 'strong and positive relationships' between new immigrants and long-term residents, there is evidence of social interaction between the two communities that is a long way from the 'parallel lives' reported by the Cattle Report,<sup>3</sup> even if this interaction is based on relatively weak ties. In this sense, it could be argued that 'community cohesion' should be defined more in terms of mutual respect and regular interaction between neighbours, rather than aspiring to a level of shared goals and strong ties of mutual support that may never be achievable in the increasingly transient societies characteristic of high levels of national and international mobility. It might also be that East European immigration is simply less problematic in terms of community cohesion, given its recent emergence, the lack of entrenched unemployment and the absence of a 'race factor'.

### **Looking forward: policy perspectives**

The second question noted above was whether the findings of this study – and indeed the phenomenon of increasing diversity of immigrant groups in general – a 'radically new era of migration' as Zetter *et al.* (2006) puts it – poses broader challenges for existing policy frameworks on community cohesion. Should the Government, and civil society, pay more attention to East European immigration? This again is certainly a timely question, particularly given the changing circumstances of a second round of EU enlargement in January 2007, ongoing negotiations towards eventual EU entry for some other countries in the region and the development of an 'EU Neighbourhood' policy towards those countries not expected to join the EU.

In this context, the most obvious way in which the UK Government, and more especially the UK press, *is* paying attention to East European migration is by highlighting its illegal nature – and by implication the threats to border control and the rule of law associated with such illegal movements. Moreover, as noted above, steps have also been taken to limit labour market access to non-EU nationals from Eastern Europe. Yet relatively few of the sample in this study had arrived in the UK illegally, even if some had broken immigration rules by overstaying on a visa or working in contravention of the terms of their visa. Meanwhile, the study hardly shows heavy competition for jobs among these immigrant groups, or between them and long-term residents. Indeed, if anything, labour shortages appear to remain, with East European immigrants reporting very low levels of unemployment since arrival and long-term residents reporting little antipathy towards these newcomers.

Of course, the relative lack of people entering or working illegally in the sample may in part be because this group were unwilling to talk to the research team – there was some evidence of this among immigrants in the Brighton area in particular, and it is difficult to be certain about how biased our sample was in this respect. The nature of ‘illegality’ also varied from one migrant group to another, with higher rates of illegal entry and work among the Ukrainians interviewed probably reflecting a higher level of undocumented migration from a country in which legal migration channels are very few; in contrast, Bulgarians have had access to legal migration channels through ECAA visas for some time and now have a right to enter the country, even if their labour market access is still limited. Yet, overall, combating illegal entry and illegal work hardly appear to be overwhelming priorities on the basis of this study.

It could also be suggested that little policy action is needed more generally towards new European immigrants, since their objective circumstances, and levels of community cohesion, both appear to improve over time. For example, evidence is presented in the study of significant improvements in English language competence, even though the participants in this study did not qualify on the whole for targeted English language tuition. However, this would be to ignore the fact that patterns of immigration are changing over time; while, even for language tuition, one consequence of the existing ‘laissez-faire’ approach appears to be a situation in which women are losing ground on men, perhaps as a result of their lower involvement in the labour market where English is learned relatively quickly. This suggests at the very least that English language tuition might be targeted at women who achieve permanent resident status – given the significant association between language ability and a range of cohesion indicators.

Meanwhile, there are other areas in which public policy could respond more appropriately to new European immigration in the field of community cohesion. One point that stands out is that existing policies, whether from the Department of Communities and Local Government or at a local level, are very much focused on promoting ‘community leadership’ and the involvement of community organisations in spearheading the cohesion agenda. For example, the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder – which covers Harrow as well as Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon and Hounslow – recently produced a report on ‘Good practice in community cohesion’, which focused on a consultation exercise with 3,000 organisations in the voluntary sector. Similarly, a series of ‘Beacon Community Cohesion Case Studies’ promoted by DCLG also emphasises links with the voluntary sector.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the question can reasonably be asked as to whether this is a satisfactory inclusion strategy for immigrant groups that appear only tangentially linked to community organisations, and in some cases actively avoid such collective activity based on their unhappy historical experience of state socialism. In this context, it is arguably of critical importance to also involve employers and schools in actions and initiatives to promote community cohesion, as these are two areas in which East European immigrants *are* engaged. Similarly, the relatively strong engagement of East Europeans in sports clubs suggests this might be another area for cohesion initiatives to focus on, though the importance of sports is acknowledged in the DCLG strategy, notably in the context of the 2012 London Olympics. Of course there are other existing examples of initiatives involving schools, businesses and sports activities,<sup>5</sup> but scope surely exists for more.

Finally, it is important to stress that, overall, this study is just a start. For example, even constructing a representative profile of the characteristics of new European immigrants to Britain is no easy task and this study should be seen more as a guide towards areas for more detailed exploration than as a definitive statement about either new immigration or community cohesion, even in the specific localities of Brighton, Hackney and Harrow. The fact that elements of community cohesion were found between East Europeans and long-term residents does not mean that there are no problems in this area – however, this does perhaps serve as something of an antidote to some of the more alarmist claims of some observers, especially in the UK press. In turn, the fact that very low wages and low occupational mobility were found among a proportion of our sample of immigrants does not mean that this is the case for all new immigrants. Both phenomena deserve further study, as well as further discussion of policy implications.

# Notes

## Chapter 1

- 1 Based on applications to the Government's Worker Registration Scheme for nationals of these countries.
- 2 Ernst & Young Item Club, 2006, 'EU enlargement – benefits outweigh downsides for UK' (available at [http://www.ey.com/global/Content.nsf/UK/Media\\_-\\_04\\_03\\_03\\_DC\\_-\\_ITEM\\_Club\\_update\\_03\\_04](http://www.ey.com/global/Content.nsf/UK/Media_-_04_03_03_DC_-_ITEM_Club_update_03_04)).
- 3 Anecdotal evidence suggests that, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many wealthy Russians chose London to build their new homes. As the *Washington Post* has noted: 'Russian billionaires, and mere mega millionaires, are dropping tens of millions of dollars for the most opulent houses in town [London]. Jewellery stores and outrageously expensive boutiques are hiring Russian-speaking staff. And purveyors of everything from Bentleys to Beluga caviar are happily riding this wave of Russian affluence in a city some are starting to call "Moscow on the Thames"' (Jordan, 2005).
- 4 Home Office (2006).
- 5 Salt (2005). The SAWS and SBS are due to be restricted to Bulgarians and Romanians by 2008.
- 6 The HSMP started on 1 February 2002 and so data for 2002 are for 1 February to 31 December 2002.
- 7 Gilpin *et al.* (2006).
- 8 TUC (2004a).
- 9 'The Tayside immigrant labour population: scale, impacts and experiences', *Communities Scotland Precis* No. 79, March 2006 (available at [http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/pubcs\\_013101.pdf](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/pubcs_013101.pdf)).
- 10 Anderson and Rogaly (2005).
- 11 Anderson *et al.* (2006).



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- 12 For example, the COMPAS study on low-wage workers following enlargement (Anderson *et al.*, 2006) included Ukrainians and Bulgarians as a control group, while Ukrainian workers were included in the study by Anderson and Rogaly (2005).
  - 13 TUC (2004b).
  - 14 Markova (2004).
  - 15 King *et al.* (2003).
  - 16 Black *et al.* (2005).
  - 17 Evans *et al.* (2005).
  - 18 Dench *et al.* (2006).
  - 19 Home Office (2005).

## Chapter 2

- 1 King *et al.* (2003, p. 14).
- 2 <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/18/23/34792376.xls>.
- 3 It did not prove possible to interview sufficient Serbian immigrants in Harrow because of problems in finding a suitable Serbian interviewer in the borough.

## Chapter 3

- 1 It should be noted that, since interviews took place in the latter part of 2005, no immigrants who had arrived later than May 2005 were interviewed.
- 2 This reflected the presence in the sample of a number of Russian women married to British men.
- 3 Includes 89 individuals with indefinite leave to remain, 43 who had received UK citizenship, 28 spouses of UK/EU nationals, nine individuals holding EU passports and eight refugees.

- 4 Includes work permit holders, those with self-employment visas, those with 'discretionary leave to remain' and dependants of the above.
- 5 Those classified as 'undocumented' are those with neither a valid residence permit nor a work permit. They include individuals who entered the country illegally and others who entered legally but have overstayed their visa.
- 6 ippr (2006).
- 7 *Expatica News* (2006).
- 8 For the period March 2002 to March 2005, 2,422 self-employed ECAA visas were granted to Bulgarians. Following the visa scam at the beginning of 2004, decisions on new applications were suspended, but resumed in February 2005 (ippr, 2006).

## Chapter 4

- 1 Home Office (2001, p. 42).
- 2 It is possible that these three undocumented migrants were living in council accommodation rented by a friend or relative who was entitled to such accommodation.

## Chapter 5

- 1 A number of those who had never worked were female dependants or those with pending asylum applications who did not have the right to work. Our researchers suspected, based on information given in preliminary conversations with them, that some may have been working illegally, but were unwilling to talk about it for the purpose of the survey.
- 2 The finding for Bulgarians is consistent with a recent ippr (2006) report, which showed that Bulgarians tend to favour sectors that are either unskilled or hard to fill and in which many A8 nationals are employed.
- 3 The proportion of long-term residents changing employment because their job was seasonal or temporary is quite high. This may reflect the fact that long-term residents were interviewed in the same neighbourhoods as immigrants

and so included a high proportion of younger people living in private rented accommodation – a population that typically has high occupational mobility.

- 4 Although some respondents reported both hourly and monthly wages, it was not possible to make a simple conversion from one to the other, since this would depend on the number of hours worked each month.
- 5 As of October 2005, the National Minimum Wage was £5.05 an hour. However, it is worth noting that some respondents may have interpreted our questions about wages as referring to *net* rather than *gross* wage rates, which would have the effect of lowering the level of reported hourly wages.
- 6 The three long-term resident women who reported earning below £4 were respectively Southern European, Indian and Chinese.
- 7 Note only 74 long-term residents reported hourly earnings. A lower National Minimum Wage of £4.25 an hour applied to those aged under 22.

## Chapter 6

- 1 Home Office (2001, p. 9).
- 2 Just over half of immigrants interviewed in Hackney said they felt that people ‘go their own way’, compared to under a third in the other two localities. However, it should be noted that over half of long-term residents in Harrow also said they felt that people ‘go their own way’.

## Chapter 7

- 1 Department of Communities and Local Government, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503074>.
- 2 ‘A8’ refers to the eight Central and East European countries that joined the EU in 2004. These are: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- 3 Home Office (2001).

- 4 See <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1000052>.
- 5 One example is the 'Sutton High School citizenship day' held in early 2006. See <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/4421386>.

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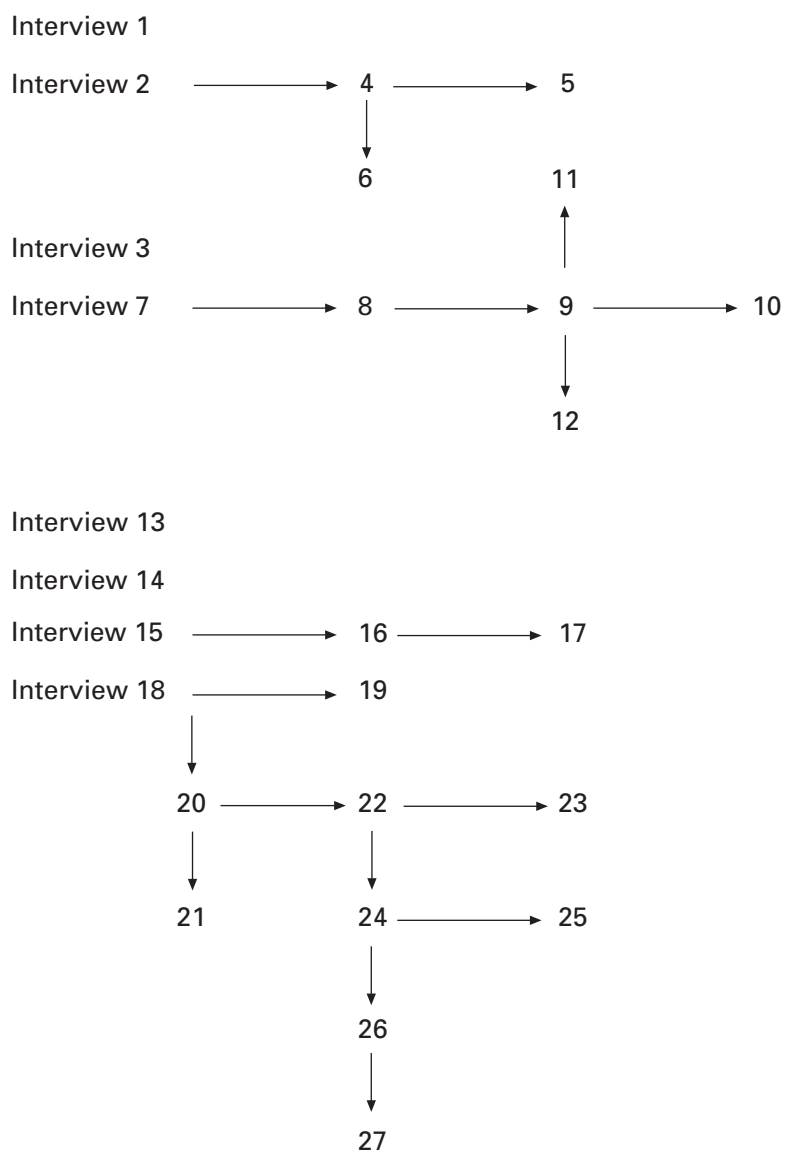
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# Appendix 1: Sample recruitment 'tree'



*N* = 27

Source: Russian immigrants' survey in Hackney.

## Appendix 2: Research assistants

<b>Group</b>	<b>London (Harrow and Hackney)</b>	<b>Brighton</b>
Albanian	■ Olsi Vullnetari ■ Mirela Dalipaj	■ Zana Vathi
Bulgarian	■ Vassi Ralenekova	■ Eugenia Markova ■ Lyubka Savkova
Russian	■ Chynara Rahmatova ■ Inta Snepste	■ Anna Cartwright
Serbian	■ Lidija Mavra ■ Biljana Pavic	■ Jelena Djordjevic
Ukrainian	■ Nataliya Nadtochiy	■ Irina Allen
Long-term residents	■ Jennifer McHugh ■ Kavita Brahmhatt ■ Najwa Zouad ■ Rupal Mistry	■ Esme Peach ■ Dominique Le Touze