Dispersal outcomes for asylum seekers across the UK: comparing ethnic patterns of onward migration and integration

Panel session
Onward migration within the EU and North America: a transatlantic perspective
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Dispersed refugees in UK

Apply for Asylum

NASS support (housing and subsistence)

↓

1999 Immigration and Asylum Act

'No choice' housing (dispersal region)

↓

Refugee status

↓

2004 Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act

LA Housing determined by 'local connection' (but not within Scotland)

Research questions

- 1. Has UK dispersal policy been effective in encouraging refugees to remain in dispersal sites?

- 2. Does onward migration of refugees vary by nationality?

Background

- UK resettlement schemes (Robinson 2003)

- Onward migration as problematic for policy-makers/service providers vs. adjustment strategy for refugees

- Onward migration 'counters a conceptualization of refugees as passive, helpless actors who would be content in any community' (Ott 2011, 5)

- Immobility – structural constraints and individual preferences

- Pre-existing ethnic communities: role of social networks and community connections in settlement and refugee integration

Methods

- Quantitative data analysis
  - Home Office Longitudinal Survey of New Refugees (SNR)
- *Qualitative data analysis*
  - In-depth interviews with refugees (target of 80)
  - Peripheral and metropolitan areas
  - Glasgow, Cardiff, Manchester and London

Quantitative data analysis: migration variables

1. Survey of New Refugees: 5678 cases in baseline survey, 1826 cases in 8 month follow-up, 1173 cases in 15 month follow-up, 867 cases in 21 month follow-up (2005-2009)

Dispersed refugees: 45% of sample living in NASS accommodation at baseline survey (proxy variable for dispersal)

Variables: Region; number of times moved to different town/city since grant (8 month); last 6 months (15 months)

Do refugees remain in dispersal sites?

- Survey of New Refugees (SNR)
- Levels of mobility: number of times moved town/city since grant (8 months) and in the past 6 months (15 months)

	8 month survey		15 month survey	
	Total sample (n=1529)	Dispersed refugees (n= 692)	Total sample (n=900)	Dispersed refugees (n=469)
Non-migrant	877 (57%)	302 (44%)	720 (80%)	365 (78%)
Migrant	652 (43%)	390 (56%)	180 (20%)	104 (22%)
Missing	297	123	273	263

Do refugees remain in dispersal sites?

- Survey of New Refugees (SNR) – Total number of moves (8&15 months)

	Dispersed refugees (n=428)	Rest of SNR sample (n=327)
No moves	147 (34%)	188 (58%)
One move	139 (33%)	73 (22%)
2+ moves	142 (33%)	66 (20%)

Do refugees remain in dispersal sites?

- Survey of New Refugees (SNR) – Migrant 'types' (8&15 months)

	Dispersed refugees (n=428)	Rest of SNR sample (n=327)
Non-mover	147 (34%)	188 (58%)
Early mover	187 (44%)	92 (28%)
Late mover	40 (9%)	30 (9%)
Multiple mover	54 (13%)	17 (5%)

What factors predict the onward migration of refugees?

- Key determinants of onward migration drawn from literature review: economic, social/cultural, place, individual and structure factors
- Role of nationality and ethnic communities

Socio-demographics of dispersed refugees: Accommodation recorded at baseline by country of origin (SNR)

Country of origin	NASS accommodation	With friends/family	Other
Eritrea	843 (90%)	43 (5%)	47 (5%)
Somalia	331 (40%)	411 (50%)	82 (10%)
Iraq	167 (35%)	228 (48%)	84 (17%)
Iran	239 (58%)	124 (30%)	48 (12%)
Zimbabwe	109 (27%)	215 (54%)	78 (19%)
Other	837 (37%)	923 (40%)	527 (23%)

Chi square: 1018.493, p=0.000, df=10

Country of origin and mobility at 8 and 15 months (dispersed refugees)

Country of origin	8 months		15 months	
	Not move town/city	Move town/city	Not move town/city	Move town/city
Eritrea	85 (35%)	157 (65%)	154 (81%)	36 (19%)
Somalia	44 (53%)	39 (47%)	56 (68%)	26 (32%)
Iraq	17 (45%)	21 (55%)	19 (73%)	7 (27%)
Iran	20 (41%)	29 (59%)	19 (83%)	4 (17%)
Zimbabwe	23 (68%)	11 (32%)	9 (82%)	2 (18%)
Other	112 (46%)	133 (54%)	106 (79%)	28 (21%)

Chi square: 18.679, p=0.002, df=5 (8 months)
Chi square: 6.351, p=0.274, df=5 (15 months)

Role of ethnic communities

- Employment
    - "One important is work, job, and next one is the weather. And third one is the community we have here, because community we have here is small in Glasgow. So always I prefer to have big community where there are big people. I'm going to move if I find a job, so that's the reason why I'm thinking to move." (GM06, Merhawe, Eritrea, M, Glasgow)
    - "I think about leaving Cardiff because most of my friends are in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds … Also jobs in Cardiff are not good. It is a very bad job market here. There are not many companies in Cardiff and the city is developing, but it's not there yet." (CM06, Dyako, Iran, M, Cardiff)

Role of ethnic communities

- Employment
  - "The experience is that there is more chance working there, jobs. In England, yeah. And there is plus more Eritreans living there, which make me feel more at home. And the way they live there, we can live sharing house. Birmingham, Sheffield, one of my friends is there. Yes, a lot of Eritreans there. If you go where there is a lot of Eritreans .. they can help you and tell you there's a job here, there's something here … The people they show you, there's a lot of people working among us, lots of people they get somebody to show you how to get a job, to show you where to go. But here in Glasgow, we can't just go and find a job. So I've been sitting here and if I go south myself I find a job." (GM06, Merhawe, Eritrea, M, Glasgow)

Role of ethnic communities

- Language
  - "If I can speak the language, it's not important to live with my community. So I can live anywhere. Yes, once I speak English I can live anywhere." (GM05, Birhane, M, Glasgow)
  - "Sometimes I do things in the Kurdish community, like Kurdish celebrations ... It's not important to me. I prefer to be with people whose language is not Persian, Kurdish, because I live here in the UK and need to improve my English. I need English to improve my life. As an example, I had a job interview. My English was not good and I didn't get the job. When I'm with my friends, I speak Persian and it's easy. I must focus on my English to make a better life for myself." (CM06, Dyako, Iran, M, Cardiff)

Role of ethnic communities

- Children
  - "First I used to live in Glasgow and from there I decided to come to Manchester because I had some friends living here and thought it would be a good idea. I wanted to be with my friends. They were also Eritrean." (MF03, Lucia, Eritrea, F, Manchester)
  - "The first thing is that I would love for the house to be near the school where my daughters are ... For me, anywhere is okay but I already know Manchester. I have friends and I need to settle down somewhere for my children. I want to stay in Manchester because my children have school and we have friends here. I'm comfortable in Manchester and know it very well now." (MF03, Lucia, Eritrea, F, Manchester)

Role of ethnic communities

- Maintaining 'distance'/privacy
    - "The main reason is that I don't want other people to know about my life and my problem. See here, Iranian people are limited, so when you go somewhere there is interpreter. That interpreter knows other people, so we don't know if she discusses about my problem and my life with other people. This is why I don't want really to make friends. I don't like to have Iranian friends. I don't know any Iranian people and I don't want to know." (GF01, Lida, Iran, F, Glasgow)
    - "I want have a, private, my private life, I prefer live with my daughter alone. I enjoy my, my life and I spend lots of time with my daughter, you know, it's okay for me, I don't like contact with Iranian people. (CF06, Hiva, Iran, F, Cardiff)

- Ethnic divisions/conflicts

Role of ethnic communities

- Maintaining 'distance'/privacy
  - "I don't want to know, the other people, yes you can want to speak or live with them but then they are always, no, it's better like, staying on my own. I'm a grown up person now, there's no way I can, you know, share with, I want, I need my privacy anyway … give an example of my own people, from my own country, it's really difficult to trust them because you never know what they are talking about you." (MF04, Thelma, Zimbabwe, F, Manchester)
  - "I need to go nearer to my relatives, who are like my brothers (London/Essex) … but as well I don't like being too close as well to my brothers, that's why, hence I moved here (another location)." (LF02, Mudiwawashe, Zimbabwe, F, London)

Role of ethnic communities

- ## Method of entry

  - "She had no friends here, and she would spend time on the phone with her friends who were in London. But I saw another side of living in the north. We knew in London, we were paying 900 pounds a month on a two bedroom flat …. I just put it on the table. These are the benefits of staying here, and these are the negatives of moving. One of the things that was pulling us was that the job was still waiting for her, even [after] that long.   So there's the lure of a job waiting, and the temptation of cheaper accommodation. You can make life here, but there is a job already waiting. So then at the end of the day we decided there might be a job there, but that money will all go to pay rent, council tax, water and all that you have to pay for, and then what? That's why, that's how then we decided to stay in Manchester." (MM02, Rodrick, Zimbabwe, M, Manchester)

Conclusion

- Effectiveness of dispersal policy?
- Variations by nationality
  - Eritreans move to Eritrean community but once there less likely to move on
  - Iranians are not close to community, move a lot and then move a lot again (lack of support, social capital)
  - Zimbabweans are not close to community but previous immigration and experiences means informed decisions and less evidence of multiple movements (entry method)
  - What about other nationalities?

Conclusion

- Onward migration website: www.onwardmigration.com
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