

Making space for dialogue and critical reflection through work with diverse stakeholders on migration



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The research

- 4-year ESRC funded research project to study perspectives and experiences of 'social security' amongst migrants from CEE/FSU in Scotland
- 'Social security' = ways in which migrants able to make themselves socially, economically, personally and culturally secure in their new environment.
- Project will explore link between experiences and perspectives on 'social security' and longer term intentions regarding settlement in Scotland.
- Qualitative approach, including 'Participatory Action Research' to provide framework for migrant/policy maker/practitioner participation
- Project team: Rebecca Kay/Moya Flynn (Glasgow University) and Sergei Shubin (Swansea University)
- Diverse range of partners/participants with no single discursive or strategic approach to migration and settlement in Scotland

Presentation presents the background to and plans for a research project to study perspectives and experiences of 'social security' amongst migrants from CEE and FUS in Scotland: therefore it is not reflective of ongoing or completed research, but provides an overview of the proposal, its aims and objectives, theoretical grounding, methodology and suggestions for practical and policy applications.

Central to the research proposal is a focus on the connection between the social security of migrants and the possibilities of long-term settlement. By social security, which I will expand on later on, we mean the ways in which migrants are able to make themselves socially, economically, personally and culturally secure in their new environment. We plan to adopt a qualitative approach in the research, with a key method we are using being 'Participatory Action Research' – this has been consciously chosen so as to enable/facilitate migrant/policy maker/practitioner involvement in the research, and to hopefully lead to practical, long-term outcomes from the project which reach beyond the academic sphere.

Project partners/ participants (local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, migrant organisations and groups ...) who do not share a singular discursive or strategic approach to questions surrounding migration and settlement in Scotland.



Background and Policy Context

- Migration movements to UK/Scotland from CEE (2004/2007 EU accession) and FSU
- Existing research: focus on England/the South East; larger groups of migrants (e.g. Polish communities); policy focussed/smaller scale studies in Scotland
- Scotland: an interesting case
- What is needed: understanding of migrants' experience, aspirations, longer-term intentions, and experience of and interaction with service provision
- Diversity: amongst the migrant communities and across different locations (in terms of context and geographical scale)

Familiar to you all: Patterns of migration changing dramatically over last 20 years, opening up of the 'iron curtain' has meant there has been increased freedom of movement for people from CEE/FSU. UK and Scotland seen migrants coming from CEE countries which joined EU 2004/2007, and also from countries of the FSU.

Research has been done: a lot concerned with England, particularly the South East. Also much of the research has concentrated on migrants who are part of larger migration flows, e.g. from Poland/Baltic States. Little on, for example, Bulgarians/Romanians/those from outside new EU. Scotland: number of policy oriented/locally based studies, but not a great deal of theorised, longitudinal, cross-regional research.

Scotland: an interesting case: arrival of migrants to number of Scottish regions; political discussion of need for migration due to economic/demographic priorities; migration as a non-devolved issue, but still responsibility in terms of social services/community integration lying at the Scottish level. Striking to us in developing the project was the level of interest, enthusiasm and openness to collaboration from the various local authorities involved. This was based on a variety of needs and experiences but a more generalised focus on encouraging migration to and settlement in their areas.

What is needed: existing policy reports/academic studies: called for more in-depth qualitative research to better understand migrants' experience/aspirations/longer term intentions, interactions with service providers, issues of integration and cohesion with local communities. Through this can reflect back on the adequacy of existing service provision.

To achieve this, diversity of the CEE/FSU migrant population must be taken into account: e.g. along linguistic, ethnic, religious, gender, class lines. Also in terms of legal status and resultant access to social services. Also diversity due to the location to which the migrants arrive, i.e. city; industrial centre, town, smaller more rural and remote regions, and the ways in which location can impact upon migrant experience, levels of service provision, local community interaction.

Proposed research aims to meet some of these needs.



Analytical frameworks

- Social Security
- Structural Inequalities
- Transnationalism

Although PAR is a crucial element of the project, this is firmly grounded first on a close engagement with theory and existing research and secondly through a phased approach, starting from an initial phase of fairly standard ethnographic and qualitative research involving the full range of partners/participants

Proposed research, in its attempt to explore the relationship between migration, social security and settlement, adopts an inter-disciplinary approach, drawing on theorisations of social security/migration in the disciplines of social anthropology, human geography, sociology and area studies.

We have identified three analytical frameworks, which closely relate to and interact with one another. These are:

We'll talk about Social Security in a little more detail as most clearly linked to our empirical and methodological approach, including the use of PAR.



Key Analytical Frameworks: Social Security

- Anthropological approaches bring attention to way people draw upon public and private, formal and informal, and state and non-state resources to 'produce' securities
- Post-Socialist studies: importance of historical/contemporary contexts, informal networks/personal resources in understanding and creation of 'security'
- Question rigid boundaries between formal and informal; public and private in creating 'security'
- 'Existential' (emotions, affects, memories) aspects of social security

1) Social Security: Anthropological theorisations of social security draw attention to diverse/complex ways in which people produce securities [social, economic, personal, cultural] and mitigate risk through combination of private/public resources, formal/informal networks, and state/non-state structures. The attention paid in this theoretical work to the diversity of resources, structures and networks helped us both to develop our research questions and to identify the range of partners/participants we wanted to work with.

Post-socialist studies, drawing on these theoretical insights, reveal how historically and culturally informed attitudes affect people's expectations regarding state provision, and also the centrality of informal networks/personal resources in the negotiation of security – relevant for understanding CEE/FSU migrants experience in Scotland.

Such theorisations help to break down rigid boundaries between formal/informal; state/non-state; public/private. Also help us to achieve a holistic understanding of what security means – i.e. inclusion of existential aspects of social security, alongside the material aspects.

Will use these insights to explore relationship between how securities [emotional and material] produced through these different means, and settlement; onward migration; possible return.



Key Analytical Frameworks: Structural Inequalities

- Studies of welfare in geography and sociology > ongoing relevance of structural inequalities and ways intersecting social, economic and cultural divisions impact upon access to and experiences of social security
- Proposed study: diversity of opportunity, access and experiences of 'security' amongst East European migrants will be key focus

2) Structural Inequalities

Within sociology/human geography: studies of welfare demonstrate the ongoing relevance of structural inequalities, and ways intersecting social, economic and cultural divisions impact upon access to and experience of social security.

In this study, this is crucial, in that we will explore the diversity of opportunity, access and experience of security across the migrant groups being looked at.



Key Analytical Frameworks: Transnationalism and migration studies

- Recognition that migrants operate within multiple contexts and frames of reference
- Recognition that social, economic, political and cultural affiliations, identities, and practices transcend national boundaries
- Our holistic approach to 'social security', in combination with insights from transnationalism, enable link to be made between different domains (economic, social, cultural), and geographical scales, of migration

3) Transnationalism and migration studies

Recognition that migrants operate within multiple contexts and frames of reference point to importance of theories of transnationalism and wider migration studies to the study. E.g. role of social networks, which span home and host societies, in framing migration and settlement, long noted in migration studies.

Recent developments in the study of the concept of transnationalism: emphasise that social networks are not merely transitory, and also that migration is not a unilinear process, but that social, economic, political, and cultural affinities, identities, practices transcend national boundaries.

Our holistic approach to 'social security', in combination with insights from transnationalism, enable link to be made between different domains (economic, social, cultural) of migration and the different geographical scales of migration



Research Questions (I)

- What is the range and combination of state and non-state structures and informal networks, public and private resources which migrants draw upon in order to mitigate risk and produce forms of 'social security'?
- To what extent are migrant experiences and strategies relating to 'social security' shaped by emotional as well as material aspects of security and how do these relate to longer-term intentions regarding settlement?
- How are migrant experiences and strategies relating to 'social security' and longer term intentions regarding settlement shaped by location and geographical scale?

The research questions reflect our analytical frameworks and our efforts to explore issues of social security and the relationship with long-term settlement through an incremental, phased approach including both a range of qualitative methods and the gradual development of increasingly participatory and action focused research [PAR] .

They focus attention on the range of resources and structures which migrants might draw upon to negotiate social security

They explore both material and emotional aspects of security, and how negotiations of these might impact upon long-term settlement.

They look at location and geographical scale (i.e. big city; small town; remote/rural area) to understand the impact of this upon negotiations of social security and plans for longer-term settlement.



Research Questions (II)

- How are migrant experiences and strategies relating to 'social security' and their longer term intentions regarding settlement shaped by socio-economic diversity including the impacts of gender, class, citizenship, ethnicity, country of origin, language, migrant status, age?
- How can collaborations between a range of actors (migrants, policy makers, service providers) lead to improvements in policy responses and forms of service provision at local, regional and national levels in order better to accommodate migrants' social security needs in a range of locations across Scotland?

They focus on migrant diversity in terms of gender, class, citizenship, ethnicity, country of origin, language, migrant status, age, and how this positioning impacts upon experiences of social security, and possibilities for settlement.

Finally and key in terms of the project's participatory elements, they explore how collaboration between the different actors involved in this process, i.e. migrants, policy makers, service providers, might lead to improvements in policy and social provision at different levels to better meet migrants' needs in terms of social security.



Proposed Methodology

- Period of research: 4 years, including 30 months of 3 phases of multi-sited fieldwork
- In addition to PI/COIs, 2 research assistants
- Proposed fieldsites:
 - Cities: Glasgow/Aberdeen
 - Midsized towns: Peterhead/Arbroath
 - Smaller/remote locations: e.g. Mintlaw/factories, Torphins/care homes (Aberdeenshire); farms, tourism (Angus)

The timescale and geographical scope of the project is quite a challenge for the development of a PAR approach, however this design was grounded both on a determination to involve the full range of partners/participants and on a commitment to acknowledge and explore both the particularities of the Scottish context and diversities within it.

Fieldwork sites: range of geographical scales: large urban centres/more remote and rural locations: diversity of location/geographical scale.

Diverse local histories of migration E.g. Glasgow City, long history of migrant settlement from other parts of world, Aberdeen City – destination for shorter term labour migration centred around oil industry and fisheries. Migration to rural sites traditionally been more restricted and local.

Historical experience mirrored today – larger cities attract migrants for longer stays/diverse intensions, small towns and rural areas attract large numbers of seasonal migrant workers.

Fieldwork sites facing diverse demographic/economic challenges/needs. E.g. Glasgow city – migration contributes to favourable demographic position/city council concerned to retain migrant-worker population; Aberdeen city, falling population, desire for settlement of working age migrants, Angus and Aberdeenshire, decreasing ration of working age to total population; local authorities keen to attract/retain migrants with longer term intensions for settlement [COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership 'policy toolkit' 2010].

Fieldsites reflect collaborations between PI/COIs with local authorities, migrant associations and service providers and our involvement in the establishment and ongoing work of GRAMNet (Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network) at the University of Glasgow.

The range of partners/participants, across the case-study locations were involved in consultation during the project's development and have given both



Preparatory Phase and Phase I

Preparatory Phase

- Media, policy and political discourse analysis
- Pilot research
- Website development

Phase I

- Ethnographic observation
- In-depth interviews
- Photo/video diaries
- Expert interviews

The project starts with a relatively standard first phase of ethnographic and qualitative research aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the range of different perspectives, experiences and needs amongst our partners and participants.

Methods were chosen to facilitate a longitudinal study and a multi-faceted approach to understanding migrant experiences of social security and prospects for longer-term settlement.

Provide brief background to each method, then focus on PAR.

Preparatory phase:

•Media, policy, political discourse analysis: to gain understanding of local, regional, national policy and discursive contexts shaping environments to which migrants come to live and work; Period of pilot research at each fieldsite; Setting up of Website/development

Phase I:

•Ethnographic observation: of workplaces, community settings, sites of service provision at each location. Researchers to be immersed in contexts where migrants live, work and socialise so as to build up picture of social security practices, relationships and strategies as part of everyday lives.

•In-depth interviews: conducted with 200 migrants across 8 locations: balance re. gender, class, age, country of origin, employment. To explore ways migrants explain social security needs and strategies and resources they draw upon to meet these. Also be asked to discuss intentions regarding settlement and ways these developed over time.

•Photo/Video diaries: after interviews, subset of migrants to be asked to keep photo/video diaries: to allow migrants to explore their feelings about the area; interactions with local people and other migrants, views on local services > to access emotional, affective and physical dimensions of perspectives on social security and settlement

•Expert interviews: with policy makers, service providers, employers, NGO reps. Help us to understand challenges faced by those directly involved in providing social support for migrants with view to encourage long-term settlement. Look for successes/and areas of tension



Phase II: Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- PAR aimed at not only exploring problems and furthering understanding, but also on developing 'solutions' and researching challenges/opportunities involved in putting them into practice
- Prioritises direct and collaborative input from migrants, service providers and policy makers
- Following initial period of research: community consultation workshops to create 'action research sets': identify issue of concern around which a project can be developed and carried through (using KETSO: www.ketso.com)
- Project ideas developed through ongoing collaboration between researchers and action research sets, including reflection on the process of working collaboratively

PHASE II

PAR element incorporated as central to the research in attempt to make needs of migrants, public and third sector organisations central to the course of the research and its outcomes. Through PAR element we are aiming to bring together a range of migrants and other local stakeholders, to develop practical 'solutions' to key issues identified by the participants.

Following phase I of research we will hold community consultation workshops where migrants, policy makers, service providers, reps of NGOs etc, will come together to listen to initial findings of phase 1

Using KETSO, a toolkit for creative and effective engagement, participants will be asked to identify a particular issues of concern around which a project can be developed and carried through. KETSO has been developed by Dr Joanne Tippet (University of Manchester) and used in a wide range of community-based and participatory projects. It is specifically developed to allow space for diverse viewpoints to be contributed and heard, and to counter inequalities and hierarchies in consultation processes. In our project as well as concerns relating to gender, age, ethnicity etc, we recognise that there are clear differences between our partners/participants in terms of their access to resource, power and voice in relation to debates around migration and long-term settlement.

Project ideas coming out of the consultation workshops will be investigated and developed through ongoing collaboration between researchers and members of the Action Research Sets: included in this is a reflective process of the challenges and opportunities which such collaborative work presents.

Projects will also be evaluated, as will their short, medium and long-term outcomes, with view to determining 'best practice' and potential for replication in other local, regional, national contexts.



Phase III: Analysis, Dissemination, Impact

- Large workshop event: input from action research sets [PAR projects]
- Smaller dissemination workshops with range of stakeholders
- Website: Ongoing dissemination for non-academic audiences: grey literature reports; presentations; video reports/clips
- Final project event for widest range of stakeholders/academic experts (Scotland, UK, European): impacts and potential for replication
- Academic outputs: conferences, journals, book

PHASE III

The ethos of participatory action research has also shaped the design of the dissemination phase of the research: Obviously analysis will have been ongoing throughout and will continue through this phase.

At the beginning of PHASE III – a large workshop event will be held which will allow input from each action research set – provide opportunities for reporting on the projects; sharing evaluations of the process, planning for future collaboration – also smaller dissemination workshops for range of stakeholders, e.g. LA, NGOs, service providers, will also be held.

Website: developed early on in the course of the research: will include publicly accessible pages to publicise project findings, publications, activities – facilitate ongoing dissemination particularly for non-academic audiences: grey literature reports, presentations, video reports/clips

Final project event: widest range of stakeholders/academic experts: Scotland/UK/European – for those involved in project, and those interested in its outcomes and potential for replication.

Academic outputs: in which we aim to explore new theoretical insight into and academic understanding of the new migration to Scotland, and also to make significant contributions to broader academic debates about methodology, 'academic objectivity', participatory action research, the impact potential of academic research, as well as understandings of migration, settlement and social security: conference presentations; journal articles; planned book.



Conclusion

- Study aims to provide: longitudinal, in-depth, migrant perspectives on links between social security and settlement
- Study aims to deliver: theoretical and methodological innovation, practical outputs, model for best-practice
- Any comments/questions