‘Lost’ voices of hate crime victimisation – the experiences of new migrants and refugees in Leicester.

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What – The Aims

Despite the UK’s attempts to understand racially motivated crime and produce policy that aims to protect victims, there are many voices that are not represented within the debate. The aims of this research are twofold:

- To explore the experiences of targeted hostility encountered by ‘new’ migrants and refugees living in Leicester.
- To identify the support needs of ‘new’ migrants and refugees to help inform policy responses to these victim groups.

Who – The Sample

Racism research has previously focused almost exclusively on the experiences of ‘established’ minority groups and failed to acknowledge that there are vast differences between people associated with these groups such as nationality, religion, socio-economic status and cultural practices. This study has engaged with around 200 individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

- Participants are all ‘new arrivals’ having lived in the UK for 5 years or less
- Originating from Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East with the majority coming from Somalia, Eritrea, Poland, Syria, Turkey and Iraq.

Where – The City of Leicester

Leicester is the UK’s first plural city with over 100,000 immigrants living in the city. Unlike other highly diverse areas of the UK, Leicester has long been praised as a ‘model’ city of harmonious multiculturalism (Cantle, 2001; Bonney and Le Goff, 2007; Popham, 2013). However, despite perceptions of unity and cohesion, research suggests that racial tension remains high (Hardy, 2014) and hate incidents and crimes in Leicester are widespread (Chakraborti, Garland and Hardy, 2014). The social exclusion of new migrant communities is apparent through the division of settlement space in the city.

How – Methods of engagement

The study used a qualitative, flexible approach to data collection.

- Participant observation
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews
- Longitudinal reflections

Impact – What will this research achieve?

- Create a more comprehensive understanding of racially motivated hostility.
- Contribute to a developing model of targeted hostility that ‘fits’ and ‘works’ in the real world.
- Inform policy responses to victims to provide effective and meaningful support to those who are experiencing the harms of hate crime.

Leyla’s Story

Leyla is a single mother originally from Somalia. She came to Europe as a refugee in 1992 fleeing the civil war and lived in the Netherlands until 2012 when she moved to Leicester. In an interview she spoke about her experiences of living in the city.

“A few years ago the council offered me and my kids a house in New Parks. We went to see the house but when we came out we saw four men standing together just staring at us. They just kept looking and I was with my kids...as we were walking away one said ‘go back to your country’. That made me feel bad. We rejected the house and I still live in Highfields. I know lots of people who live eight people in two bedroom house because they are scared to move away from the community. You know, to places where they might get trouble”

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