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## **The coming of the stranger: asylum seekers, trust and hospitality in a British city**

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## Introduction

All men are entitled to present themselves in the society of others by virtue of their communal possession of the earth's surface...they cannot disperse themselves over an infinite area, but must necessarily tolerate one another's company.

Immanuel Kant

There is perhaps no more important question to be answered than how we as inhabitants of one earth can, as Kant puts it, live successfully 'in the society of others'.<sup>1</sup> Definitions of successful coexistence may vary, but how we achieve it is a core problem of an increasingly globalized world. We may find it comparatively easy to coexist with people like ourselves, but increasingly forced migration and other movements of people around the world make it more likely that we will find ourselves living alongside 'others', in the sense of people very unlike ourselves.

According to Martin and Zurcher (2008), there were over 120 million migrants living in industrialised countries in 2005. Modern communications, improved and less expensive transport links, and an improving human rights environment, all make migration easier generally, and continuing conflict and extreme poverty continue to make the seeking of asylum and worldwide movement of refugees a pressing issue. Therefore, the issues of discrimination towards marginalized groups, and how society deals with difference, are currently important problems facing governments and communities.

Central to this issue is the interaction between host populations and new arrivals in communities changed by forced migration (Gigauri, 2006). Zygmund Bauman declared that "all societies produce strangers, but each society produces its own kind of stranger" (Bauman, 1997 p.46). It could be argued that asylum seekers and refugees are the current 'strangers' for many communities in Britain.

Over the past decade many writers have pointed to an apparent dichotomy in public policy and discourse on this issue, identifying both clearly stated aims for social cohesion, integration of refugees, and racial and ethnic harmony, and on the other hand stringently enforced policies on asylum and immigration (see for example Berkeley et al, 2006; Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Gardner, 2006; Gigauri, 2006; Dwyer, 2006; Zetter et al, 2005).

Zetter et al have pointed to a sharp distinction in public policy and discourse between long-standing immigrants and black and Asian people born in Britain, who are perceived as 'citizens' with all the rights that implies, whilst those newly arrived, particularly those seeking asylum, are often portrayed as 'alien' and 'other' (see also Temple and Moran, 2005). Craig (2007) called this stance 'Janus faced', supported by a 'strident media'.

Negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and other new arrivals are not limited to the white British members of host communities, or defined by colour or ethnic

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background; many researchers have documented hostility against asylum seekers and other newly arrived people from within a range of ethnic communities in diverse British locations (see for example Craig and Wilkinson, 2005; Lemos, 2005; Faulkner, 2004; O'Neill et al, 2003). Additionally, issues of asylum, immigration, race, religion, extremism and terrorism have all recently become completely enmeshed in the public mind, which only serves to enhance tensions and foster discrimination and intolerance (ICAAR, 2007).

A public and political discourse of negativity and even hostility towards asylum seekers has been reinforced by the media, and has resulted in such negative attitudes being perceived as more socially acceptable than other forms of racism and prejudice (Squire, 2009; Lewis, 2006; European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, 2005; Faulkner, 2004).

In addition, the economic crisis from 2008 onwards has increased both actual and perceived competition for resources. This is a real and serious issue; British society is becoming increasingly fractured and resentful in the face of massive proposed cuts in public spending, and ready to identify almost any group as a threat.

Additionally, negative attitudes from host communities can engender mistrust and a lack of willingness to integrate and build bridges in the new arrival communities. Being seen as the 'out group' by their hosts naturally impels new arrivals to bond more closely with others from their own communities, thus creating a cycle of segregation and mistrust (Spicer, 2008; Hynes, 2009). This is particularly the case when new arrivals find so much to adjust to in their new circumstances (Hynes and Thu, 2008).

All these things together point to a real need to understand how relations between host communities and new arrivals in Britain might be improved. Essentially it is a problem of difference and threat, and lessons learned from an attempt to understand how such relations can be improved may also be very important in understanding dealing with differences more broadly.

This paper attempts to make a robust and theoretically based contribution to this problem. It discusses extensive research carried out for a doctoral thesis between 2004 and 2007 (Goodall, 2007) and brings the subject up to date by reviewing both theoretical and policy and practice developments since the completion of the thesis. The paper uses trust theory to explore relationships in communities, and identifies a major new research strand developed internationally since 2007 which contributes strongly to this issue.

It revisits the city of Stoke on Trent, the location of the original research and looks at relevant developments in the city in politics and public policy. To add to this gathering of new information, interviews have been conducted with key respondents from the original research and new interviewees who have important insights to contribute. The paper also examines a growing new social movement in Britain aimed at fostering hospitality and welcome in cities and towns receiving asylum seekers and refugees. It concludes by drawing all this together and making some suggestions for moving forward to more welcoming communities.

## **Why are host communities important?**

The research discussed in this paper was aimed, as outlined above, to contribute to an understanding of how welcome and hospitality towards asylum seekers and other new arrivals can be promoted. It is necessary to examine the types of research, and common themes, already existing in the literature in order to explain the approach taken in this particular piece of research.

The original literature review carried out focused only on the UK context, and was confined to work that in some way examined the relationship between host communities and new arrivals, and did not include other work related to asylum, refugees or immigration.

Although there has been a great deal of research on refugee experiences, the work of refugee community organisations, integration programmes and so on, (for example Ager and Strang, 2005; Temple and Moran, 2005), the review highlighted a clear paucity of research on discrimination and hostility towards asylum seekers in asylum dispersal sites from the point of view of the experience of host communities.

There is a body of research focusing on the demographic characteristics likely to contribute to prejudice against new arrivals, and minorities more generally, and the influence of the media on public attitudes. For example Drea and Sagar (2001) found that people who were older, poor and lived in the north of England were more likely to be prejudiced against refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, and that such prejudice was not necessarily based on colour (they found more hostility towards Rumanian people than Chinese people). Lewis (2006) found a similar relation with older age in Scotland, arguing that older people found it more difficult to adjust to change.

It is apparent from examining other studies of public attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers in the UK carried out subsequent to the completion of the original thesis, that things have not improved, and myths still persist. In 2009 the Red Cross published a survey which showed that the British public vastly over-estimated the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers entering the country annually, and disappointingly, young people aged 18 to 24 were those most likely to express negative attitudes.

Unfortunately it is clear that there still remains a 'social acceptability' of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees that is not viewed as racist. As Goodman and Burke (2010) point out, there is a social norm in Britain against racism, but expression of negative views towards refugees and asylum seekers is not deemed to violate this norm. They point to the number of statements that start with "I am not prejudiced/racist but.....".

Crawley (2009) also points to the fact that attitudes in the UK have not improved. Crawley points out that attitudes are important for a number of reasons, but importantly the results of surveys on public attitudes feed into policy making, and hence can create a circle of hostility.

There have been many studies on the negative effects of the media, particularly but not exclusively newspapers, on public attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers, including Berkely et al (2006), Morrison (2004), Buchanan et al (2003), and Griffith and Chan-Kam (2002).

Other related studies focus on the power of myths about asylum seekers in the formation of negative attitudes, for example, Greenslade (2005) highlights gross exaggeration, and in some cases the most blatant untruths, in media stories about asylum seekers.

Again it would seem that little has changed in this respect in the intervening period since the original literature review. In fact Kenyon (2010) is of the opinion that negative reporting in the newspapers of stories about asylum seekers has increased and amounts to “wilful misreporting”. According to Kenyon, otherwise good journalists seem to alter their standards when it comes to reporting on migration issues, employing the type of inflammatory language and vague, misleading terminology that they would never normally use. Kenyon says that the welfare benefits and other advantages that asylum seekers are supposed to receive have “passed into national folklore”, and cites an article from the Daily Mail where asylum seekers are described as “illegal immigrants”.

A number of authors have set out to ‘myth bust’ by providing an account of common myths alongside actual facts in order to counter the myths and educate public opinion. One such document was produced around the time of the commencement of the original research in Stoke on Trent on which this paper is based (Emms, 2003). A recent similar approach by Finney and Simpson (2009) would seem to indicate that nothing much has changed in the intervening six years between the publications in the nature and power of myths in respect of asylum seekers.

Another recent study by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Rutter and Latorre, 2009) highlights myths about asylum seekers and other migrants causing a shortage in social housing, whereas as the authors point out, only 2% of social housing was at the time housing people who had come to Britain in the previous five years.

However, although such an approach can be useful, it does not go very far to suggest what can be done to combat such attitudes, or what more complex social, economic and cultural factors account for these attitudes in the first place. What gaps did the literature review reveal in explorations of relationships between host communities and new arrivals? The gap can perhaps be best summed up by referring back to research on attitudes to ethnic minorities (Robinson, 1987) which analysed large scale demographic data in order to attempt to understand intolerance, but also crucially examined salient structural conditions in the various communities he studied.

Robinson recognised that social, economic and cultural factors made an important contribution to the formation of attitudes. He understood that the interplay between national and local structures and prevailing norms and political climates was crucial in the formation of attitudes of intolerance towards minorities. Robinson asserts that:

“It is only by looking at how micro and macro level forces are played out in specific localities with their unique characteristics can a full explanation (of intolerance) be arrived at” (p.185)

The literature review identified a gap in relation to the deeper levels of causation of intolerance referred to by Robinson. Castles et al (2002) specifically called for “investigation of local and community level experiences in order to develop understanding of causes of the persistent racism and intergroup conflict in some areas”, and that “policy models and outcomes need to be set in the context of broader social and economic problems in some areas” (p.86).

Castles and colleagues point out that much more focus should be placed on receiving communities, and how they experience and deal with change, and how the barriers to integration of new arrivals are erected. O’Neill et al (2003) also make the point that the experiences and perceptions of receiving communities are extremely important for future research.

The same point was strongly made by Medrano and Koenig (2005), who identify a big gap in the literature when it comes to seeking the views of ordinary members of the public on integration and community relations, instead focusing on the agendas of political elites and policy makers (p.86).

Therefore the thesis was based on this premise, that receiving host community perceptions, and wider environmental factors, including economics, history, and societal norms and values, needed to be explored in order to be able to suggest how communities might become more welcoming and hospitable. Before going on to explain the theoretical framework that was selected, there follows a discussion on the framing of tolerance for the purpose of the study.

### **Tolerance or hospitality?**

“Oh my soul, be prepared for the coming of the stranger; be prepared for the one who asks questions” (Eliott, 1969 and cited in Dikec, 2002)

As Eliott’s admonition implies, the coming of strangers into a community has always posed questions, and therefore problems, for those within whose spheres the strangers arrive. In order to answer these questions, and solve these problems, for both new arrivals and host communities, society seeks to foster an open, tolerant relationship; but how do we define this good relationship and what do we mean by good community relations and a tolerant society?

There are a number of definitions of tolerance in the literature. For Vertovec (1997) it must be more than mere grudging acceptance, whilst Briggs (2004 p. 314) defines it as a situation where “difference is recognised and permitted, or even respected”. A useful model of the meaning of tolerance in the context of the experience of new arrivals is provided by Ager and Strang (2004), where they present a continuum with, at one end, simply the absence of violence or open hostility, to, at the other end of the continuum, having friends within the host community and experiencing welcome and belonging.

The quotation from Kant at the beginning of this paper would seem to imply that tolerance is no more than the permitting of 'others' (strangers) to reside in one's company, and this has been used as a definition by many modern authors (for example see Shapiro, 1998); but is the absence of open hostility and a mere permission to exist what we are aiming for?

Dikec (2002, p.236) argues that "recognition is more affirmative than tolerance as a stance towards people and groups that one finds different from oneself". He finds that hospitality as a concept implies such recognition; hospitality implies an understanding that we are not all the same, but that we respect the differences of others, and enables us to retain our own unique differences whilst opening up a space for the 'stranger'. Our boundaries are loosened without being destroyed.

Hospitality as a concept has received attention by philosophers across many centuries. The modern French philosopher Jacques Derrida famously wrote on the vital place of hospitality across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries (for example Derrida, 1999; 2002), whilst the 18<sup>th</sup> century legal philosopher de Vattel reminds us of the timeless importance of hospitality to those from outside our borders, and its moral dimension: "Hospitality was a great honour among the ancients...those savage nations that treated strangers ill were universally held in abhorrence" (de Vattel, 1758 book 2 s. 104). This quotation from Plato makes a similar point: "to refuse all admission to the foreigner might earn a state a reputation for barbarism and inhumanity" (Plato, Book XII, cited in Gigauri, 2006).

We are warned in the literature that we should not equate tolerance with treating everyone as being the same, as this can result in a very bounded tolerance. This is often expressed as 'well we are all human beings after all, we're not any different really'.

The problem with this approach is that it denies fundamental differences that are core to an individual's identity. Fish (1997) argues that it is a mistake to think that the most important thing is our common humanity, and that differences between people are incidental, when in fact they may be fundamental. If we start from this point we may be tolerant of others, but only up to that point where we don't find things about them challenging or difficult. In the context of community relations, Fish labels this approach 'boutique multiculturalism':

"Boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving of other cultures at a point where some value at their centre generates an act that offends against the 'canons of civilised decency' as they have either been declared or assumed" (p.1)

Fish illustrates his arguments on this matter by referring back to the writings of Charles Taylor (1992) who differentiates between a 'politics of equal dignity' and a 'politics of difference': The politics of equal dignity focuses on what is the same in all' and regards particularity as icing on an otherwise homogeneous cake. The politics of difference asks us to 'recognise and even foster particularity as a first principle' (p.43)



Many other authors and commentators have warned against this form of tolerance. Hage (1998) argues that in so-called tolerant multi-cultural societies, minorities can be objectified, and people can become “constructed, manageable objects over which others have management” (p.48) and to be “moved around at will by the dominant culture” (p.18). Hage does not imply that hostility is present in such interactions, but rather that minority communities are reduced to a market place where the majority “swan around” picking out what it likes and discarding what it does not (p.117).

Hage’s ideas of spatial management of the ‘other’ are continued by Dunn (2003), who contrasts discourses of legitimate citizenry with those of the spatially managed ‘other’ to be contained or excluded. The objectification of minorities is also a focus for Werbner (2005) who writes of ‘museumising’ other cultures as interesting curiosities, masking racism and discrimination, and Kundnani (2001) writes about middle class ‘lip service’ to tolerance which still finds prejudice and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees socially acceptable. Lewis (2005a and 2005b) also describes an espoused middle class multiculturalism whereby people state their happiness to eat in different restaurants and experience diversity on that level, but would balk at having a refugee family living next door.

We can see from the above discussion that hospitality is a more appropriate aim to strive for in relationships between new arrivals and host communities than is tolerance. That is not to say that tolerance is not a worthwhile aim, but it could be viewed as a flawed second best if not accompanied by welcome. Welcome and hospitality are central to the new social movement emerging from the City of Sanctuary programme which began in Sheffield, South Yorkshire and is spreading to other British towns and cities, and will be discussed in much more detail later in this paper (see Darling, 2010).

But how can such an environment of welcome and hospitality be fostered? A report by the Centre for Social Justice (2009) says that the welcome offered today to asylum seekers in Britain falls far short of ‘our traditional standards’, characterised by an unfair bureaucracy that leaves people destitute, rather than reasonableness and humanity (p.4).

Whilst reform of the legal system on asylum would, in the view of the report, greatly improve the situation, improving relations in communities where people are dispersed to is also of vital importance. An examination of the literature points to the concept of societal trust as an important factor. Dee (2004) sees trust as a crucial factor in the building of healthy relationships between communities. He writes of a “congealed distrust that indicates political failure” and “settled patterns of mutual disdain” (p.3). Again in a United States context, Bach (1993) considered that:

“What is required is examination of established populations and how immigration has changed the composition and relations between groups in urban communities. This represents one of the most innovative and fruitful areas for policy related research, tracing the contours of trust, which are formed or stifled within social fields” (para. 3.1)

The point was also made by Dees (2004), who argued that “if people cannot trust each other at all then they cannot form even the most distant relationship that mere

tolerance demands” (p.32). This is echoed by Uslaner and Badescu (2002) who state that “Trust is an ideal that leads us to believe that people who are different from us are part of our moral community, trust makes us more willing to deal with people different to ourselves” (p.1). Indeed the Independent Review Team set up to investigate the disturbances in British northern towns in 2001 (Community Cohesion Unit, 2003) drew attention to the need for trust in building improved community relations.

Investigation of the trust literature in the early stages of the doctoral research highlighted a strand of thinking on trust which pointed to an understanding of the particular importance of trust in strengthening relationships between people and communities very different to each other, but also crucially how such trust originated and could be fostered. It was this body of work (Uslaner, 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2004a; 2004b) that formed the basis of the theoretical framework for the original doctoral thesis on which this paper is based.

Before going on to provide a more detailed examination of Uslaner’s work, it is necessary to give an outline of trust research and thinking more generally, in order to set the current discussion in a broader context.

### **Trust definitions and debates**

It has almost become a cliché, when writing about trust, to start by stating that trust is a contested concept with a multiplicity of definitions and proposed theoretical forms. However, despite its reiteration, this statement is in fact correct and needs to be made. Writers on trust vary between those for whom there is no clear definition (for example Hudson, 2004), and those who claim to have the one true definition. Barbalet (2005) has described trust variously as ‘peculiar’, ‘problematic’ and ‘exasperating’, (p.1 and p.10). Similarly Kimbrough (2005) has described trust as ‘a problem’, ‘a puzzle’ and ‘a paradox’ (p.3). Colquitt et al (2007) also point to the complexity of trust as a concept, and the wide differences between authors and researchers as to how trust is conceptualised.

One way of distinguishing between various conceptions of trust is to ask whether the trust under discussion is between individuals, of strangers, within organisations or of institutions, although these can be linked and have effects on each other (Khodyakov, 2007). A second central consideration is to what degree trust is conceptualised as calculative or not. This is the most fundamental distinction when conceptualising trust. A classic often cited definition of trust is that from Rousseau et al (1998, p.395): “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon the positive expectation of the intentions or behaviour of others”. The balance between the two elements in this definition, i.e. acceptance of vulnerability and positive expectations, forms the basis of the debate.

Positions in this debate range along a continuum from seeing trust as a clearly worked out rational choice based on cost/benefit analysis, through a mid point where a certain amount of risk and vulnerability are accepted, to the position where trusting is conceptualised as a ‘leap of faith’, where calculation, experience or prior knowledge do not play a part.

Trust conceptualised as rational calculation is based, its proponents argue, on reciprocity and cooperation; achieving a desired outcome by cooperating with another who may also achieve a desired outcome of their own. Herreros and Criado (2008) argue that trust can be encouraged by the state, through providing mechanisms to enforce agreements between parties. Trust in this model is almost reduced to a mathematical calculation, and it could be argued that, with this level of calculation, and minimisation of risk, what is under discussion is not actually trust at all. Mollering (2005) argues that a rational approach to trust makes the entire concept obsolete; if all our actions and relationships are calculative then why would we require trust?

For Mollering, trust requires a leap of faith; in order to trust we make ourselves vulnerable to risk and suspend our doubts. Mollering's argument is not that we should never entertain doubt or suspicion about our fellow social actors, but that we should consider it and then proceed as if the doubt had been favourably resolved.

Mollering is by no means the only writer subscribing to this non-rational conception of trust, but as Cvetkovich and Earle (1995) note, writers and researchers subscribing to this 'non rational' story of trust are in a severe minority, and the approach is uncommon amongst social scientists. For them, risk and vulnerability are at the very centre of trust (pp.19, 107, 108). Eldred (2004) also subscribes to the non rational approach trust, arguing that we cannot possibly calculate the future actions of other social actors, and therefore must always accept risk and vulnerability (s.5.6).

### **Trust as a bridge builder**

So how can trust be used in the understanding of how different communities can interact successfully with one another, and build an open and tolerant society? It is clear that trust based upon calculation and prior knowledge, or trust between groups or individuals that know each other well, are not helpful concepts in this regard. It is more useful to envisage the idea of building a trusting culture, where openness to difference and hospitality can be built and fostered. To conceptualise such a trusting culture, it is important to consider the ideas of particularised and generalised trust.

Particularised trust is that which we might have for those like ourselves, people we know well or have something in common with. Generalised trust is about trust of people in general, people whom we do not know personally, people who might be very unlike us. Particularised trust is quite easy to develop; it is after all easy to trust people when we know them, when they are very similar to ourselves. It is much more challenging to trust strangers, or those with whom we have little or nothing in common, those whom we find very different to ourselves.

Cvetkovich and Earle (1995) make the same point, naming their two conceptions of trust 'pluralistic' and 'cosmopolitan'. For them, pluralistic social trust is 'rigid, defensive...rooted in the past, and an in-group phenomenon', whilst cosmopolitan social trust is 'fluid, inclusive...created in the emergence of new combinations of persons' (pp.102, 125). It is cosmopolitan social trust that is required to promote tolerance, openness to difference and hospitality.

It is clear then, that if we are to employ trust as a way of understanding how to build bridges between communities and promote hospitality, we must use a model of trust that is general rather than particularised, and promotes bridging of differences rather than close ties or bonds between those who are very alike. It is this type of conceptualisation of trust that has been developed by Eric Uslaner, referred to at the start of this discussion on trust, and used as the theoretical framework for the doctoral thesis on which this paper is based.

Uslaner's research is based on extensive analysis of survey data both from the United States and internationally, an analysis that employed data on levels of generalised trust in a wide range of countries as measured by the World Values Survey. Uslaner found links between levels of generalised trust and other key variables. He used a range of other survey data to gather evidence on key indicators, in order to find relationships that might explain high or low levels of generalised trust (Uslaner, 2004 Ch.4).

The basis of the model of trust proposed by Uslaner as a result of his research is that generalised trust of strangers is not based on prior experience, i.e. is not calculative. He calls his model 'moralistic trust'; moralistic trusters see the best in people, rationalise away negative experiences and place trust in others even though they might risk disappointment. They are not blind to the possibility of being let down, but trust others in spite of this possibility. Uslaner argues that this form of trust enables people to be open and tolerant towards minority groups and those whose life experience or culture are very unlike their own. This type of trust requires the 'leap of faith' discussed earlier in this paper.

Uslaner does test his own assertion that this form of trust is not based on experience, and his view is backed up by other authors (for example Arneil, 2006; Earle, 2006; Earle and Siegrist, 2006; Twyman et al, 2006; Earl, Siegrist and Gutscher, 2005; Luhmann, 2000). Common themes are that trust is differentiated from confidence, and is not based upon prior experience but rather on one's 'world view' and the idea that we all have a shared future.

### **The building blocks of trust**

So if direct personal experience is not relevant for this form of trust, what environmental or other factors can help generate it, and what can assist people to form positive assessments of those they do not know, and take the 'leap of faith' discussed above? Uslaner argues that this form of trust is built upon personal autonomy, a sense of control over one's own life, optimism and an environment of equality.

His theory is that, in order to reach out to others unlike ourselves, we need to both believe that the future will be better than the past, and that we have the power to make it so. Therefore we require personal autonomy and some control over our own circumstances. This gives us the assurance to reach out to others and to withstand disappointment.

Equality promotes the idea of a shared fate, and fosters optimism by making the idea of a better future seem more possible. It makes optimism and an upbeat worldview more rational, and builds bridges between people rather than dividing them. Clearly equality has many interpretations, but Uslaner uses it in the sense of economic and material equality. According to Uslaner, if society is fundamentally unequal, we are less likely to be optimistic in our worldview. We are not going to imagine being able to improve our situation or that of others in the world if the divisions between people are so strong. Additionally, equality builds bonds between people, whereas inequality divides, and does not promote the idea of a shared fate.

So we could say that personal autonomy, hope and optimism, and equality and fairness are the building blocks through which trusting societies can be built. Support for this conception can be found in the work of many other authors. Optimism and hope as a prerequisite for generalised trust, and the negative effect of fear, are noted by Barbalet (2005), Taylor-Goobie (2005), Dees (2004), Weckert (2002), Patterson (1999), Jiing-Lih et al (1997) and Cvetkovich and Earle (1995), and Kawachi et al (1997) support the role of equality.

In addition to optimism and equality, power (or rather a lack of powerlessness), and personal autonomy are the third building block of this model. Unless we have some perception of control over our circumstances, we do not have the resilience to take the leap of faith, and trust others in situations where we might invite risk or vulnerability. Powerlessness breeds resignation and suspicion (see Fleming and Spicer, 2007).

In a study of relations between host communities and new arrivals in Coventry, McDowell et al (2008) found that feelings of powerlessness had a strong negative effect on community relationships. They also found that host communities perceptions of unfairness in respect of the allocation of local resources impacted strongly on relationships between host communities and new arrivals.

Some recent studies on trust indicate that governments and institutional structures can play an important part in building more trusting communities, by encouraging empowerment through meaningful participation (see for example Freitag and Buhlmann, 2009). Blake et al (2008) however point out that although meaningful engagement of local communities can undoubtedly promote cohesion and trust, it can involve a great deal of work and is particularly difficult when populations are more transient, and new arrivals can find institutional structures for engagement confusing or lack the initial trust to engage in the first place.

Additionally, as Brodie et al (2009) point out, participatory mechanisms may be used to give the impression of empowerment whilst still reinforcing local power structures, and participative mechanisms can also bring people together around negative issues. Foot (2009) reminds us that community empowerment and social cohesion should be seen as part of the same agenda, not distinct areas of public life.

### **Building a framework for researching community relations**

So how does the above discussion on trust, and specifically Uslaner's model of moralistic trust, help us to build a theoretical framework for studying relationships

between host communities and new arrivals? We have seen that trust is important for good relations between individuals, in organisations, communities and institutions. For improved relations between groups very unlike each other, it is clear that we need to employ a model of trust that is general, not just trust of those very like ourselves, trust that builds bridges, rather than bonds, between people.

Also, it seems clear that, in a situation where a community is acting as a host for asylum seekers and other new arrivals from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, trust based on knowledge and prior experience may not be very helpful. A model of trust based on building a trusting culture, and a willingness to trust with little or no prior experience, would seem to be the most appropriate.

Therefore Uslander's model would appear to be useful to use as a theoretical framework of trust when studying community relations between host communities and new arrivals. This view is reinforced by other work proposing the strong links between tolerance and openness to difference and the identified 'building blocks' of optimism, equality and empowerment (see for example John et al, 2006; Power Inquiry, 2006; Gadd et al, 2005; Amin, 2002). Uslander's model of trust was therefore selected as the most robust one to form the theoretical framework for the original doctoral research.

### **Stoke on Trent: the research context**

Having set out the theoretical framework that was employed for the original research, it is necessary, prior to describing the research methodology, to provide some background information about the research location.

Stoke on Trent is a city in England situated roughly half way between Birmingham and Manchester, in the north west corner of the county of Staffordshire, close to the borders with Cheshire, Shropshire and Derbyshire. At the 2001 Census the population of Stoke on Trent was 240,636. At this date the population was 94.8% white, with the largest ethnic minority group being Pakistani (2.6%).

The settled ethnic minority community live in concentrated areas, and most council wards are around 98% white (Simpson, 2005). 96% of the population were born in the UK. 11% are recorded as migrants, but more than 7% of this figure relates to people who have moved within the city (ONS, 2004). Stoke on Trent has not historically experienced much inward migration, either from abroad or from the rest of the UK (Gadd et al, 2005; Mountford, 1994).

It is generally recognised that the residents of Stoke on Trent most readily identify with their own particular local community, rather than the city as a whole (see Gadd et al, 2005). There are some apparently rational reasons for this localised identification. Although Stoke on Trent is indeed a city, and its local authority a unitary one, it has a unique structure for a city.

The city is linear in design, rather than spreading out in a roughly circular shape from a central hub as most cities do. This makes distances between places seem greater, and travel more difficult. Additionally, Stoke on Trent, unlike most cities, is made up

of a number of small towns and village settlements, with some parts lying within the city boundary being quite rural. When combined with a somewhat unreliable and infrequent public transport system, this again makes travel around the city more problematic.

Both the structure and transport of the city are fundamentally affected by its industrial heritage. The major industries of the city were, until recently, coal mining and the ceramics industry, referred to locally as 'pits and pots'. These two industries had linked developments; the existence of a plentiful supply of coal to fire up the pottery kilns at a time when most other potteries relied on timber to fire them.

Due to the prominence of coal mining, with its inherent problems of subsidence, building has always been 'low rise', hence the spread out nature of the city. The road system was largely constructed by pottery owners to carry their goods. The builders of the roads wished to recoup their expenditure, and installed toll gates at various points around the city (see Mountford, 1994). This made it expensive and difficult for the population to move freely around the city, and a tendency to remain in one's own local area has persisted to this day.

These once thriving traditional industries of mining and potteries provided the majority of employment in the city for many years, but recently have gone into sharp decline, and in the case of mining ceased altogether, problems shared with other northern towns in England suffering industrial decline (see Stephenson and Wray, 2005; Waddington et al, 2001). Under-employment, low pay, and a marked prevalence of low skilled routine work, have for some time been causes for concern. In 2010 the unemployment rate is around 20% of the working population.

In 2005 during the conduct of the original research, the city was 70th out of 376 local authority areas in England and Wales ranked on the rate of unemployment, and 26th in the proportion of the population economically inactive due to disability or long term health problems (70% higher than the national average)(Stoke on Trent Knowledge Management, 2005). The city had the lowest proportion of professional and management jobs of any urban or metropolitan area in England or Wales, and the third highest proportion of the population working in 'routine' jobs. 42 out of the 49 'natural' neighbourhoods in the city had, in 2005, no person living there who had an income higher than the national average. One neighbourhood had 57% of households without a working adult.

Educational attainment in the city is also problematic. Historically, employment for most in the mining industry or potteries was assured, and education was not seen as a priority. However, these employment opportunities are no longer available, but skills and qualifications have not developed to meet the demands of other types of employment. At the time of the original research, Stoke on Trent had the 6th highest rate in England and Wales of people with no educational qualifications.

Nearly 43% of those between the ages of 16 and 74 had no educational qualifications, (over 60% in one neighbourhood), and 10th lowest for the number of people with higher educational qualifications (Stoke on Trent Knowledge Unit, 2005). However, since the original research, educational standards have been improving, at least as measured by results at GCSE level, where although still below the national average by

some way, Stoke on Trent was the most improved local authority in England when compared with other similar local authorities.

Additionally, the city has a very high rate of teenage pregnancy, and a high incidence of people who are disabled or have long term limiting health conditions. In 2006 the life expectancy in Stoke was falling and the gap between life expectancy and the national average widening. There is a significantly higher incidence of obesity in the adult population than the national average, and deaths from stroke, cancer and heart disease are also significantly higher. High infant mortality, poor dental health, mental health problems and drug misuse were also significant problems highlighted by the Department of Health (2006).

The city had strong connections with the Fascist movement in the 1930s. The founder of the Union of British Fascists movement, Oswald Mosley, was born in Staffordshire and lived for some time as a child just outside the city at Apedale. His New Party, later the British Union of Fascists, enjoyed a high degree of support in Stoke on Trent in the 1930s, and was the party's primary regional base, being the strongest centre of support outside London. Poverty and high rates of unemployment helped to ensure this support (Cooke, 2006; BBC Radio 4, 2006).

In the late 20th and early 21st century, this has transferred into a significant level of support for the British National Party (BNP). At the time of the original research, post the May 2005 local council elections, the BNP held 5 of the available 60 seats on the council. After the elections of May 2008 this rose to 9 seats.

The city had, at the time of the original research, an Elected Mayor, one of the few cities in England to have such a system. The first Elected Mayor was voted into office following a referendum in 2002. The City had a unique 'mayor and manager' system which meant that all the executive functions were vested in the Elected Mayor and a Council Manager, and the ward councillors had a scrutiny role only.

There was considerable dissatisfaction with this system both amongst councillors and the general public, with councillors feeling in many cases disempowered and unable to influence decisions (see James and Cox, 2007). The second Mayor was elected in 2005 on the understanding that another referendum would be held to determine whether the City still wanted an Elected Mayor.

However, difficulties continued, and in 2006 the government was so dissatisfied with the functioning of Children's Services in the City that it had them outsourced, and in 2007 the Council was rated the worst local authority in England by the Audit Commission. The Government, through the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Regions, appointed a Governance Commission, chaired by Professor Michael Clarke from Birmingham University, to look into the functioning of the Council and make recommendations for reform.

In its report, published in 2008, the Commission stated that they were:

...dismayed by the repeated stories of missed opportunities, the apparent breakdown of conventional politics in the City, the fragmentation of the main parties and, we believe, the



consequential rise in extremist politics. We have also been saddened by the apparent unwillingness of able and engaged people to stand for elected office and take part in this aspect of the City's life. We have probably not found anything in Stoke on Trent that would not be found somewhere else in local government in the UK. It is the coincidence of factors and their intensity that make the City distinctive" (Governance Commission, 2008 p5)

The Commission found that there was in the Council "in-fighting, self interest and lack of action" (Governance Commission, 2008 p.16), and that the frustration of local people was "tangible". The recommendations made by the Commission, and subsequent proposed changes to the Council structure, will be discussed more fully later in the paper.

Finally, an important factor in respect of this research is the situation of Stoke on Trent as an asylum dispersal area, and its history in relation to migration. When more workers were required for the mining and pottery industries during the Industrial Revolution, they tended to come from elsewhere in Staffordshire, or neighbouring counties, and were therefore of little difference to the existing population (Mokyr, 1993).

In the 1950s and 60s, when many Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani people came to the UK for work, few settled in Stoke on Trent, those that came to the Midlands or North West preferring instead mill towns such as Nottingham, Derby or Blackburn (see Ballard, 2003; Hiro, 1992). Consequently, similar sized cities and towns in the North West and Midlands received much larger ethnic minority populations at this time than Stoke on Trent.

Against this background, Stoke on Trent was selected as an asylum dispersal area following the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, and the first asylum seekers arrived in Stoke late in 2000. There was an informal quota of one asylum seeker to every 200 of the population (Emms, 2003). According to the Mayor's Report into asylum in the city (Emms, 2003), at that time there were approximately 1200 asylum seekers housed in the city, in five broad localities where housing was cheap and where private landlords had purchased properties for the purpose of contracting with the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

City Council statistics for the period show that more than 50% of the accommodated asylum seekers were aged between 18 and 30, and men outnumbered women by ten to one. The local authority was directly housing 83 asylum seekers, the majority were housed by one of five private landlords. They originated from a total of 64 different countries, but the majority were from Iraq or sub-Saharan Africa, although subsequently there have been many from Afghanistan and Iran.

According to expert sources consulted during the research, it has remained very difficult to ascertain definitive numbers of asylum seekers resident within the city. Many failed asylum seekers stay on in the area undocumented, and many people granted refugee status stay on with little or no resettlement support after having to leave NASS accommodation. According to Stoke on Trent City Council, in 2010 there are estimated to be approximately 700 asylum seekers resident in the city, with

about 10 being under the age of 18. No council accommodation is currently used, and all are now housed in private accommodation.

The Mayor's Report of 2003 (Emms, 2003) detailed a number of myths about asylum seekers that were by that time circulating within the local host community, for example that asylum seekers were being provided with luxurious accommodation, cars, mobile phones, expensive household items and large sums in cash. Examination of local media, and indeed the findings of the original research, found little evidence that such myths had diminished, although some of their focus had transferred more recently to migrants from Eastern Europe. There was also evidence during the research that asylum seekers were particularly vulnerable to being victims of racially motivated violence and harassment (Staffordshire Police, 2006; Victim Support, 2006).

Concurrent with the arrival of asylum seekers in the city, in 2001 there were disturbances in Stoke on Trent of a similar nature to those taking place in other northern towns, although receiving less publicity (Interdepartmental Ministerial Group, 2001). Racism, and violence related to racism, was becoming more of a problem in the area. The Ministerial Group, in their report blamed lack of local political leadership and vision, stating that this was required to counteract perceptions of unfairness within the local white community in deprived areas. They argued that indicators of deprivation in BME communities masked similar situations in white communities, which were often perceived as being ignored.

This still appeared to be the case in 2003, when Jude Hawes from Stoke on Trent Citizens Bureau gave an address to the Conference of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Refugee Council (CRE/Refugee Council, 2003).

Addressing the issue of racism towards asylum seekers and refugees in Stoke on Trent, Ms Hawes stated that residents of Stoke on Trent had "been left to rot", and that she considered that asylum seekers were a "convenient scapegoat", rather than any substantial threat.

She pointed to the declining manufacturing base in the city, poor levels of post-16 education and low levels of skills as issues fostering problems in community relations. She also blamed the shifting nature of local politics and lack of leadership and direction referred to earlier in this paper. She argued that dealing with the problems of racism and poor relations between host communities and new arrivals was dependent on dealing with the concerns and anxieties of local people.

It is just such anxieties that the research that this paper is based upon set out to investigate, using the model of trust outlined above to look for indicators in the local community, its history and environment, that might explain attitudes towards new arrivals, and how such a community might come to terms with, and offer hospitality to, their 'strangers'. The next section of the paper will briefly outline the methodology used for the original research.

## **Methodology**

The main method of data collection for the study was a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews with both individuals and groups, including a cross section of the local community, new arrivals and 'key actors'. The main focus was on the settled host community, as the purpose of the research was to understand the factors that influence tolerance, acceptance of difference and openness to change and 'otherness'.

The purpose of the interviews was to investigate factors existing in the community that could explain intolerance and attitudes to difference, and help to propose how a more hospitable and welcoming environment could be fostered, using the model of trust already outlined above.

The advantages of qualitative research for enabling the voices of participants to be clearly heard, and for answering not only 'what' questions but also 'how' and 'why' questions, are well documented, and will not be further elaborated on here (see for example Alcock and Scott, 2005). However, the real importance of the use of a qualitative methodology in this particular research is that qualitative community research on trust is rare.

Most research on trust is conducted through surveys or analysis of large scale datasets that incorporate trust questions, or those that can be used as proxies, within them. Therefore the use of qualitative research to investigate the components of social trust within a community was a significant contribution of this study.

In addition to individual and group interviews with local people, and with 'key actors', a number of visits were made which, whilst not comprising formal interviews, added both context and valuable additional information. These visits included a meeting of the North Staffordshire Asylum Support Group, a local high school, a voluntary organisation that supported young new arrivals, two refugee projects, Stoke on Trent City Council offices, a community centre and a local homelessness project.

### *Sampling*

It was necessary first to collect some quantitative and factual data in order to construct a suitable sampling framework. Consequently, information related to the various wards of the city, their demographic makeup, social and economic conditions, health, education and housing, political representation and voting patterns, was collected at the outset.

This information was used to inform the sampling regime. The first task was to define the population to be used, and it was decided after careful consideration to use the boundary of the City Council local authority area as the defining locality for the research. This provided a clear stopping point, without which the field research may have become unwieldy and unclear. Again, after careful consideration of the context and consultation of relevant literature (for example Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Blakie, 2000) it was decided to employ non-probability purposive sampling, with snowball sampling to fill gaps in representativeness.

Stoke on Trent City Council has twenty wards, and it would have been practically very difficult to research in all of these. Therefore it was necessary to select areas of the city in which to interview members of the general public, making sure that as far as possible the sample was representative of the whole population. The work of Wilson (2003) in Chicago was used as a model to inform the process of selecting representative wards using census data, electoral information and assistance from the Knowledge Management Unit of the City Council, who had done work on dividing up the city into 49 'natural neighbourhoods' (City of Stoke on Trent Neighbourhood Profiles; Census, 2001; City of Stoke on Trent Electoral Results 2004, 2006).

Information was also collected on where asylum seekers had been placed in the city (Staffordshire Police NASS Client Statistics 2004). Support for the British National Party (BNP) was taken as a proxy for community tensions around race, ethnicity and immigration. In order to select sample wards with a balance between levels of such support, a sample of twelve wards were chosen from the twenty, six having visible BNP support and six not. The wards with visible support had levels of voting for the BNP in 2004 of between 24% and 36% of the total vote. The six wards with no visible BNP support were chosen to reflect as broad a range of social, economic and demographic characteristics as possible.

New arrivals were difficult to access and were selected on a purposive 'extreme case' basis. New arrivals were essential for the research so random sampling was not appropriate. Visits were made to two refugee organisations for informal data collection, and more structured interviews were carried out with new arrivals accessed through their attendance at a local college for English classes. In all, 17 new arrivals who had been in the UK for less than five years, and had varying immigration status, were interviewed. Seven were female and ten male, and they were aged between 16 and 55, and originated from ten different countries.

Eighteen of the original respondents were 'key actors'; these comprised nine local councillors (representing Labour, Conservative and Independent groups on the City Council), both Elected Mayors (there were two during the conduct of the research), an M.P., a senior police officer, a local historian, a local authority officer, two managers in the voluntary sector, and someone with close links with the local media.

Key actors were added to the sample of interviewees to add depth and a different perspective to the research, following Bauer and Arts (2000). Key actors were not selected on a geographical basis, but rather on the particular insights that they might be able to offer. Some were approached directly and some were interviewed as a result of snowball sampling.

### *Interview framework*

When constructing the interview framework, note was taken of the advice of Brickson (2003) against influencing the data by asking 'leading questions'. 'Leading questions' in this context are taken to mean questions directly related to the main topic, or using the vocabulary of the research. For example, respondents were not asked directly about their views on immigration or asylum, or about trust. Sturgis and Smith (2008)

in their study on the use of questioning in social trust research, reinforce this view, showing that when people are asked about trust, they generally only focus on people they know really well, even when explicitly asked to think more generally.

Instead, an interview framework was constructed that was designed to encourage the respondents to talk about their lives and communities in a way that would draw out themes related to the key concepts in the model of trust being employed: personal autonomy and control, optimism, fairness, equity and so on. People were asked about how much control they felt they had over things that affected their lives, how optimistic or otherwise they felt about the future, how they considered their lives and their communities had changed, their opinions on the services they received and the distribution of resources locally.

Questions also included issues related to the identity of the city, how people considered the city was perceived from outside, whether or not they identified with a particular part of the city, what they felt about moving around the city and about transport. Interviews were structured enough to ensure the drawing out of the major themes, while remaining loose enough to allow for the respondent to develop themes important to them.

Questions to key actors were similar, although tailored to their particular sphere of work or practice, and the reason why the respondent had been included in the sample. For example, local politicians were also asked about the major concerns of residents of their wards, about voting patterns, and their perceptions of the reasons for these. Immigration and asylum were not introduced specifically as topics unless respondents introduced them themselves. Again, it was important not to lead the discussion but to gauge major concerns rather than suggesting them.

## **Original findings**

The qualitative data collected, once analysed, provided considerable evidence of distrust, antagonism, resentment and sometimes open hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees living within the city, and a distrust of 'foreigners' more generally. 'Foreigners' were blamed for many of the ills of the city, and crime, violence and anti-social behaviour that people had heard about via the media.

Immersion in the community over the three years of the study also provided many examples of prejudice, negative stereotyping and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees, and members of the settled Asian community. These attitudes extended to other spheres of difference such as sexuality and disability. There was certainly social acceptability of what might generally be regarded as offensive language towards minority groups, although there was wariness on the part of some respondents of expressing hostility towards 'outsiders' publicly, certainly in a formal interview setting.

So, given that the research found distrust of 'foreigners' and others considered different in some way, was there also evidence that the components of the model of generalised trust building were missing or lacking in the community in Stoke on Trent?

Firstly, it was demonstrated above that autonomy and personal control are central components for the promotion of social trust. There were themes related to these components running throughout the data. It became clear during the research that it is not possible to consider these issues in relation to the community in Stoke on Trent without reference to its industrial, social and economic history.

Almost everyone used to be employed either in the potteries or in mining. There was a very small managerial elite, and many families were entirely dependent on one employer, who had great power. Conditions of employment were often difficult and dangerous and pay low, and people worked very hard for a small return. A culture developed where employees would express deference towards employers to their faces, whilst voicing strong dissatisfaction in private.

There was evidence from the research that this culture has remained today, expressed in a reluctance to take responsibility, engage in decision making and consultation or cooperation. This point was made by a number of respondents during the research, who considered that many people had no interest in participation in traditional empowerment strategies, but rather that residents wanted those that they had placed in authority to make good decisions on their behalf, and deliver the things they needed.

A great deal of distrust and cynicism was expressed about local mechanisms of participation. The suggestion from key actors was that, rather than people wanting to be in control, they wanted to feel that their environment was under control, and that those charged with dealing with the issues important to them had control over events. Rapid change, without evidence of such control, was unsettling and difficult.

A great deal of dissatisfaction was also expressed with the City Council, office of Elected Mayor, and local politicians. People considered that the Mayor and Council had been elected to deal effectively with all the important things that affected their lives, and there were many expressions of frustration by local residents at a seeming inability to get issues dealt with satisfactorily.

Residents often expressed the opinion that, rather than efficiently providing public services, the Council and Mayor were wasting money on useless schemes and constructing mechanisms of 'bogus' participation, in order to appear to be consulting the community (see Ciulla, 2004). There were many tales of meaningless consultations and pointless meetings, perceived as 'tick box' exercises designed to give the impression of inclusion without actually achieving anything (see Yang and Callahan, 2007). Politicians were considered complacent, and many residents felt impotent and taken for granted.

In their turn, politicians and other key actors expressed frustration at the low turn out in elections, and the fact that this had allowed a significant presence of the British National Party in the area. It was felt that people voted this way because of feelings of neglect, of being powerless and ignored. People wanted to make their dissatisfaction public and visible and noticed by the Labour Party, by whom they felt let down.

Supporting far Right parties for such reasons is quite a frequent motivation (see Betz, 1994; John et al, 2006). However it is naïve to suggest that people vote for such

parties without any sympathy at all to anti-immigration or racist views (Celep, 2005; van der Brug et al, 2000).

Some local politicians blamed residents for being either apathetic or cynical. Others suggested that residents did not feel that they had any power to change anything, therefore it was pointless to attempt it. Lack of knowledge of the political system was also blamed; people were not able to make the link between politics, which they often considered remote or irrelevant, and the things that actually happened to them. This impression was reflected in the contributions of many respondents in the general population, who often expressed the view that politics, particularly national politics, were things over which they had no control, and little interest in.

There was also a great deal of frustration about lack of employment and low pay in the city. People felt that the new types of employment that were appearing to replace some of the traditional industries (for example warehousing, call centres and retail parks) gave local people little opportunity or incentive to use initiative or skills. There was a strong sense of a lack of self-efficacy in the community. The opinion, expressed by one local politician, that “the people of Stoke on Trent have the absolute conviction that failure lies at the end of the road” was expressed in similar terms by many.

This links to the second component of the trust building model, that of optimism. Many residents found it difficult to find positive things to say about living in the city. This was not related to the age of the respondents. Many people expressed worries about drugs, crime, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, heavy drinking, litter and vandalism in their neighbourhoods.

A few people cited the central geographical position of Stoke on Trent as a good thing about living there, being able to get to the countryside, seaside or other larger cities such as Manchester quite quickly, but these were people with significantly greater resources and their own transport. Also, this positive point was about leaving the city, not what it had to offer in itself. Overall, there was a less than positive view of the city from its residents.

Despite this however most people expressed the view that they would not want to live anywhere else. When people spoke of moving, this was generally about moving short distances within the city itself. There appeared to be two factors connected to this apparent contradiction. Firstly people placed great value on living near their extended family, and the support they provided. This was often of a practical nature, as many people did not have their own transport and relied on family members with cars for shopping trips, visits to doctors and hospital etc. or sharing transport to work. This was by no means restricted to the older residents, as public transport in the city is not good, and many areas within the city boundary are quite rural, with few facilities close by.

Secondly people tended to feel more secure in neighbourhoods they knew well, amongst people that they knew and who knew them. People were not comfortable with change or uncertainty. Sometimes respondents displayed an air of resignation, or the impression that they could not imagine any other situation than the one that they were currently in, or a different future for themselves.

When discussing the future, respondents often found such considerations quite difficult. It was clear that planning for the future was not something that many people thought a lot about. The future was often regarded as predictable and inevitable, almost pre-ordained. When some young people in a group interview were asked about how they saw their futures and what plans they had, they found this question quite difficult, even perplexing, making comments such as “I just go from day to day”. They appeared to view the future as something that happened to them, rather than something they had any influence over. This mindset was alluded to often by many of the key actor respondents.

As with other issues, some respondents traced this back to the social and industrial history of the city. Employment was usually in a small range of occupations following the traditions of one’s family members. Formal education was therefore not considered a priority for most people, as employment was readily available and life was relatively certain and predictable, although of course the mining industry brought with it some dangerous conditions and risk of accident or prolonged ill health, even death. Travel was difficult and expensive and there was little inward migration, even from other parts of England. Therefore an outward looking, confident and future orientated outlook was not likely to develop.

Many respondents said that those who wanted to take risks, do ‘something different’ or to achieve, generally left the city for elsewhere. Additionally, a poor level of educational attainment in the city must certainly contribute to a lack of optimism and self-efficacy. The inability to visualise a better future is symbolised in Stoke on Trent by a statue that stands outside the main railway station. It depicts a man standing poised on a rock as if about to take off in flight. Below the figure is an inscription that reads “man cannot fly”. During the research the first Elected Mayor was asked whether he considered that the statue was a suitable message for the city, standing in such a prominent position. His response was:

In a sense ‘man can’t fly’ is an almost Stokey response to everything, but actually I think the statue is ironic because he is actually about to fly, so he’s chiding us as Stokeys ever so slightly by saying well you think it won’t happen, but what’s that flying overhead, oh my goodness, it’s a bunch of men in an aeroplane.

When asked if he felt that the residents of Stoke would appreciate the irony, he responded that there would always be those who thought that the “glass was half empty”, and that if they thought this there was no changing them or any point in trying (which comment in itself demonstrates the point).

The third main component for trust building investigated in the study was that of equality, and the linked concept of fairness. Equality of income and equality of opportunity are both important as they make an optimistic worldview rational and promote the idea of a shared fate. Much of the story of inequality related to Stoke on Trent can again be traced back to its history.

Pottery and mine managers and owners exerted a great deal of power over employees. There was a stark contrast between that class and the rest of society, with almost no



middle class. This historical context, together with the need to adjust to rapid change, both in the decline of traditional industries and the rapid demographic changes brought about by asylum dispersal and other immigration, and the experience of poverty, unemployment and poor services, all serve to make the residents of Stoke on Trent particularly sensitive to issues of fairness.

Such issues were raised in the research in relation to asylum seekers and other immigrants. Asylum seekers were accused of ‘scrounging’, of taking benefits to which they were not entitled, and of depriving local people of housing, health care and other services. Some residents blamed asylum seekers and refugees for higher prices, higher taxes and poor services. This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote from a new arrival interview participant:

“A guy said to me ‘why are you coming here? Why are you all coming here?’ and I said to him ‘I am coming for freedom, I am looking for asylum’, and he said to me ‘if there were no refugees here, my taxes are coming down, when no refugees here everything much cheaper, when refugees come here, the chicken in the market six quid, when no refugees here the chicken a couple of quid”

A general sense of injustice was also expressed about the low rates of pay in relation to other parts of the country, and people were outraged that their hard work was not apparently valued by employers. There were many stories of lower rates of pay in Stoke on Trent than were being paid for the same job in other cities and towns, and residents questioned why their rates of pay should be lower when food and other essential items cost the same?

The sense of injustice was heightened by the fact that historically work in Stoke had been hard, dangerous and dirty. Also people felt that their city was often publicly humiliated because there were many stories in the national media highlighting discrepancies in wages and poor quality of life in Stoke compared with elsewhere (see Jackson and Pugh, 2005).

Many respondents considered that the local media contributed to discourses of unfairness by constantly highlighting issues which stoked up envy and comparison between rival groups. Some politicians claimed that appeals to a sense of injustice and unfairness lay behind the success in the city of the British National Party.

Additionally the often declared objections to the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan that were expressed were made at least in part on unfairness grounds: why should large sums of money be spent fighting wars abroad when cities like Stoke desperately needed investment and resources? It was also the view of some respondents that these opinions fuelled additional resentment towards asylum seekers, as those from Iraq and Afghanistan were living and visible reminders of these conflicts and the money being spent on them.

Many residents complained that their neighbourhood did not receive a ‘fair deal’ in relation to a variety of resources and facilities, including the provision of Surestart schemes for children under five, schools, rubbish disposal, policing, post offices and transport. There were also many complaints about perceived high levels of public

expenditure, particularly council officials salaries and expenditure on what were seen as wasteful high profile building schemes.

So we can see that the research drew a picture of Stoke on Trent as a city whose citizens have experienced, and continue to experience, a considerable level of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, low levels of educational attainment and poor health. The historical, social and economic environment, together with a variety of changes that the population have had to adjust to, have generated feelings of frustration and powerlessness, dissatisfaction with elected officials, disillusionment with participatory structures and perceptions of unfairness in the distribution of resources. The city has a lack of optimism, a fatalistic attitude and a crisis of confidence about the possibility of success.

So how does this picture relate to the model of trust used for the theoretical framework of the research? It is clear from the above discussion that autonomy and control, optimism, and both actual equality and perceived fairness, were not readily identifiable characteristics of the community in Stoke on Trent. In fact there were clear indications that they were all seriously lacking. One could say with some confidence at the conclusion of the original research that the building blocks for the model of trust that builds an open, tolerant, welcoming and hospitable society were clearly lacking in Stoke on Trent.

Additionally there were conditions that might be said to actively foster the type of trust that we have described earlier in this paper as ‘particularised’, that which draws together people very like each other and creates suspicion of ‘outsiders’. Firstly the fact that people in the city tended to live in close knit small communities where most people knew each other and with extended family close by, is in itself likely to build bonds, rather than bridges, between people.

Secondly it is well documented in the literature that if a group considers that they are perceived negatively from outside, they are more likely to bond closely together and react against those seen as ‘others’, seeking alternative groups to compare themselves with in order to put their own group in a favourable light (see for example Elsbach and Kramer, 1996).

There was clear evidence from the data that the people of Stoke on Trent felt that their city was viewed negatively from outside. They were very aware of newspaper and other media reports detailing the poor quality of life in the city, poor educational attainment, low pay, poor health outcomes and social problems experienced in the city. People felt that Stoke was considered irrelevant and ‘not worth bothering about’, and passed by in the distribution of resources. This attitude is aptly summed up in the following old journalistic maxim: “If a dog bites a man in Bond Street it is news; if a man bites a dog in Chorlton cum Hardy or Stoke on Trent it is only to be expected” (Hopkins, 1957 p.12 and quoted in Taylor, 2001)

Stigmatising of neighbourhoods and negative public portrayals in the media can have a powerful effect on communities (see Gourlay, 2007). It is therefore not difficult to see how such defensiveness in the face of negative portrayals from outside can cause people to bond more closely together, creating the type of particularised trust that

strengthens itself through differentiation from outsiders and the rejection of the 'other'.

So it was possible to clearly show that the conditions conducive to a trusting, open and hospitable society were not present, and the answer would seem to be that in order to build such a society, the conditions discussed need to be fostered. However, although this is true to a certain extent, the actual position is more complex, and this recommendation alone would be too simplistic. The discussion below will outline what actions might be required in order for this environment to be encouraged.

However, before going on to such a discussion, the paper will now review new research evidence that has become available since the completion of the original thesis, an important new social movement relevant to this study, and new information about the political and social environment in Stoke on Trent.

### **Trust: a new debate**

What have been the major developments in the thinking and research around trust since the thesis was completed? In fact, the completion of the thesis ironically coincided with the beginning of a whole new major debate around trust and ethnic and racial diversity, a debate hotly contested both in the academic sphere and through the columns of newspapers and other popular media. Similarly, a whole new argument around the role of equality in society entered the public arena, again both in academia and popular media. Both these issues are highly relevant to the themes of the original thesis and this paper, and therefore are discussed below in some detail.

Before discussing the new work on trust and diversity, it is important to point out here that, following the completion of the original research in 2007, it was possible to detect a much greater interest in the study of generalised social trust at a local level (see Rahn et al, 2009). Previously there was a concentration on trust research in organisational settings, trust on a national level researched through vast datasets, and trust between individuals, often researched through psychological experiments, or even mathematical calculations. It was hard to find much focus on generalised social trust of strangers, and certainly not work on the relationship between this form of trust and community cohesion, tolerance and ethnic diversity.

The new 'trust and diversity' stream of work was largely prompted by the publication in 2007 of a new study by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 2007), whose 'Bowling Alone' (2000) had previously been so influential in building the profile of social capital as a sphere of academic study and popular debate.

Putnam's 2007 'E Pluribus Anum', which was based on large scale survey data in the United States, stated that there was clear evidence that ethnic diversity produced low levels of social trust and social capital. Putnam refuted the earlier findings of Hoog et al (2006), who carried out a study of trust and ethnic diversity in 21 European countries.

Hoog and colleagues found that the wider social and economic context within which communities are located, and such issues as poor education, unemployment and

poverty, were the most powerful factors in predicting levels of trust, and not ethnic diversity. Where immigration was a factor, it was the rate of change that a community had to deal with, rather than the ethnicity of other people in the community, that was the main factor.

Putnam argued that the Hoog et al study was too broad, being done on a country level. However, a study by Letki (2007) was based on over 800 local neighbourhoods in England and found similar results to Hoog, in that social and economic factors, particularly equality, were central to good community relations.

The publication of Putnam's work, and its message, was seized upon by the media to prove that what many had been saying for some time was true, i.e. that ethnic diversity in communities was a 'bad thing'. The article by Michael Jonas in the Boston Globe newspaper (Jonas, 2007) sparked numerous others, and brought the issue right into the public arena. Putnam's work also galvanised numerous other scholars and researchers into action, and a flurry of publications followed, both supporting and refuting Putnam's findings.

Some of these took the basic premise and examined it in other communities outside the United States. Stole et al (2008) examined Canadian society and broadly came to the same conclusion as Putnam, although they found that the 'low trust' effect was mediated by the strength of social ties. However, in the same year Phan (2008) carried out a meta-analysis of studies on trust and ethnic diversity in Canada, focusing down to a local level, and concluded that diversity did not lower levels of social trust, rather again concluding that inequality, poverty and real and perceived unfair distribution of resources were the cause.

Lancee and Dronkers (2008) set out to replicate Putnam's study in the Netherlands, again supporting his thesis. They stated that those who refuted Putnam's findings looked too much at a national rather than a local level, and that such influences as politics, history and the media distort the data at a national level. However it could be argued that these factors are also very important in influencing the levels of social trust in a local community, requiring inclusion in any analysis of trust causation. Tolsma et al (2009) also carried out a study in the Netherlands, again at a local level. Again, they found that, rather than levels of diversity, it was inequality, poverty, poor education and other related factors that influenced levels of social trust and tolerance.

Boeck and colleagues (2007) published a small scale study in Leicestershire, England around the same time as Putnam's work arrived, which concluded that people in low trust areas of the county were more likely to be happy to live in ethnically diverse communities and get involved in community activities than those in high trust areas. However, the 'high trust' areas identified were mainly those in small rural communities with strong bonds amongst people very like each other, so building a 'particularised' type of trust that can reject outsiders and have a negative effect on generalised trust of strangers (see the discussion of particularised trust earlier in this paper and see Uslaner, 2006).

Eric Uslaner, whose work on trust formed the main theoretical framework for the original research on which this paper is based, has roundly refuted Putnam's thesis, and has been one of the strongest critics of the 2007 publication (Uslaner, 2009;

2010a; 2010b). In Uslaner's view, Putnam's study sparked a "general syndrome for the negative effects of diversity" (Uslaner, 2009, p.5), leading to "pessimism about the effects of diversity" (p.6).

In Uslaner's view, mirroring his earlier work, the central issue is equality. When societies are unequal and communities are poor, isolated from diversity and segregated, this "leads to reinforcement of in group trust" and thus low levels of generalised social trust of strangers and those that are different (p.6). This view, and critique of Putnam, is repeated by Rothwell (2010, and similar themes are to be found in Glanville and Paxton (2007), and in Pettigrew et al (2010), who conducted research in communities in Germany with immigrant populations.

Gesthuizen et al (2008) set out to test Putnam's thesis, and competing ones, through a study using data from 28 European countries. They came to the conclusion that Putnam's thesis must be refuted in Europe. Again they are of the view that economic inequality in societies, rather than ethnic diversity, is the main cause of low levels of social trust. The claim that Putnam's theory was not valid in Europe was echoed by Hoog and colleagues (2008), in a follow up publication to their 2006 paper which had been so criticised by Putnam himself.

Gerritsen and Lubbers (2010) carried out a large scale study in Europe, specifically looking at attitudes of communities to people from other countries. They researched in 20 countries, seeking views about people originating from a total of 27 countries. They looked at what particular characteristics of those regarded as 'others' affected the formation of social trust.

The findings of this study are quite complex, but the authors explicitly refute Putnam's 2007 findings, and state that the ethnic diversity of where someone lives does not have a negative effect on the formation of social trust. Returning to Putnam's own research location, the United States, Rahn et al (2009) carried out research on the origins of social trust in 49 American towns and cities. They found that, after controlling for economic disadvantage, diversity in communities was a predictor of higher levels of social trust, rather than lower.

So, from the above discussion we can see that the new literature on trust and diversity since Putnam (2007) can broadly be divided into two opposing views: one that supports Putnam's thesis that ethnic diversity drives down levels of social trust, and the other that not only finds against this, but agrees over a considerable number of studies that the main factors affecting levels of social trust are inequality, poverty, disadvantage, low levels of education, feelings of powerlessness and actual and perceived unfairness in respect of distribution of resources.

This second view was reinforced by Laurence and Heath (2008) who carried out multi-level analysis using the 2005 UK Citizenship Survey, and found that again disadvantage and inequality that were the main factors influencing low levels of community cohesion, and that feeling unable to influence decisions and feelings of being treated unfairly were important negative indicators.

Proponents of Putnam's thesis state that other work is too focused on national, rather than local or community level analysis. However it has been shown above that

community level studies, even when replicated in large numbers of communities, or in different countries, support the view that inequality, disadvantage, disempowerment and unfairness are key factors. All these studies strongly support Uslaner's original pre 2007 work on the conditions required for generalised social trust and its effect on how we relate to people different from ourselves, and retrospectively add strength to the validity of the original research.

### **Equality: another new debate**

Following this upsurge of interest in the relationship between social trust and ethnic diversity, which pointed to a central role for equality in trust building, a book was published that created an even sharper focus on equality. This book was 'The Spirit Level' by Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) described by Hassan (2010) as being comparable in its social significance to George Orwell's '1984' or Will Hutton's 'The State We're In'.

The book was quoted by numerous UK and European politicians, was the subject of a debate at the Royal Academy, and sparked the creation of a new social policy 'think tank'. The book made the claim that economic equality improves almost everything in society, not only promoting trust but delivering lower crime rates, greater life expectancy, higher levels of educational attainment, better health and greater social mobility. The book used data from more than 20 countries to make the analysis, and made a case that, as we discussed earlier in this paper, had previously been made in different ways by many researchers in various disciplines.

However, much like Putnam in 2007, the book was followed by a large number of counter theses that vehemently denounced the book's findings, dissected its methodology and questioned its rigour (Sanandaji et al (2010); Sanandaji et al and Snowdon, 2010; Saunders, 2010; Snowdon, 2010). Saunders (2010) described the book as 'deeply flawed, weak and superficial'.

However, Hassan (2010) argues that the reason that the book received so much negative criticism after initial acclaim, is that, in the current UK political climate of stringent cuts in public spending, with accompanying unemployment and reductions in welfare benefits, it is not comfortable for government to focus on an agenda that proposes economic equality. Hassan argues that no matter how robust the evidence in 'The Spirit Level', there is currently too much counter dogma and ideology in public policy to allow for a real focus on combating inequality, and the Guardian Editorial on the subject (Guardian, 2010) calls the message of the book an 'inconvenient truth'.

This idea is reiterated in two recent publications by Daniel Dorling on a similar theme (Dorling, 2010a; 2010b). Dorling argues that in developed countries there are currently enough resources to be shared around, but that it is adherence by those in power to a certain set of beliefs that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Dorling likens these to modern day versions of Beveridge's 'five giants': Dorling's equivalents are elitism, exclusion, prejudice, greed and despair.

The current mantra, he argues, is that elitism is efficient, exclusion is necessary, prejudice is natural, greed is good and despair is inevitable (Dorling, 2010a). These tenets are promoted by the media through a constant focus on ‘benefits scroungers’, ‘illegal immigrants’, ‘bogus asylum seekers’ and differentiating between the ‘deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’, encouraging people to constantly compare themselves with others and decide that they require more than those they identify as ‘other’.

### **Cities of Sanctuary: a way forward for hospitality?**

In addition to new research and thinking about trust and diversity, and about inequality, since the completion of the original research a new social movement has grown up in Britain which is extremely relevant to the current discussion, and can throw light on how local leadership can help to build a community ready to welcome new arrivals. This movement, ‘Cities of Sanctuary’, is a movement whose aim is to encourage cities to be proud of their status as potential sanctuaries for people from other countries who require shelter and support (Darling et al, 2010; Darling et al, 2010; Squire, 2009). The key to the movement is the concept of hospitality, echoing the theme for the original research that forms the basis of this paper.

The movement began in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, in 2005. The idea was to promote welcome and hospitality in the city for new arrivals, and to challenge the negative public discourse on asylum was framed. The first activists began with a series of community meetings, bringing together local business people, voluntary organisations and community groups. Supporters were asked to sign up to a resolution stating that they welcomed asylum seekers and refugees. By 2007 the movement had crucially achieved the support of the Sheffield City Council, and an official manifesto setting out key areas for concern and action was produced in early 2009. By the end of 2009 100 organisations in Sheffield had signed up to the manifesto.

As Darling et al (2010) admit, the programme involved in the Sheffield City of Sanctuary initiative has not been entirely tangible, but made up of a number of strands aimed at fostering a welcoming community. Businesses and other organisations were encouraged to display signs that announced them as welcoming of asylum seekers, which both showed new arrivals that they could have confidence in them and acted as a catalyst for others in the city to rethink their attitudes.

The movement emphasises both the contribution that new arrivals can make to their host city, and the important role of acting as host, encouraging pride in offering welcome and hospitality. The movement has now spread to a number of localities, with cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol at various stages of moving towards City of Sanctuary status, with even the Welsh Assembly Government considering the possibility of a ‘Nation of Sanctuary’. Swansea recently became the second locality after Sheffield to have reached full ‘City of Sanctuary’ status.

It is acknowledged that the movement cannot be successful everywhere. Some cities, for example Leeds and Bolton, despite being asylum dispersal areas, have considered and rejected the idea of moving towards being a City of Sanctuary (Darling et al,

2010). However this is an important initiative which gives encouragement to anyone seeking to build more hospitable and welcoming communities.

### **Stoke on Trent: building a current picture**

Having looked at relevant new research, new policy debates and a new social movement, before bringing everything together in a discussion on the possible way forward, the paper will now briefly examine the current political situation in Stoke on Trent, and some new insights into life in the City since the original research was completed.

#### *Governance and democracy*

As outlined earlier in the paper, the governance of the city had long been problematic and fraught with controversy. The original research found enormous dissatisfaction with the City Council and office of Elected Mayor on the part of members of the public, and factionalism and disillusionment amongst councillors. In 2002 a cross party group aimed at obtaining better local democracy for the area had been formed, although it had not been at that time very active. However, with the appointment of the Governance Commission for Stoke on Trent as outlined above, the Democracy for Stoke grouping and others were alarmed at the apparent unrepresentativeness of the members of the Commission and an apparent focus on governance rather than democracy (Williams, 2010; Lathom, 2010).

The Commission reported in 2008, as outlined previously in this paper (Governance Commission, 2008). The main recommendation of the Commission was that there should be reform of council wards and ward boundaries, with a resultant smaller total number of councillors. They also recommended all out elections to the council every four years from 2011. They also recommended a number of measures which chime very much with the original findings of this research.

The Commission found a great deal of disempowerment, lack of vision and fractionalisation. They recommended more local accountability, for example through devolution of budgets, and more real engagement of the electorate, particularly young people and new communities. They also pointed to the need for much stronger and focused leadership, with the aim of improving the collective morale of the city and enabling people to see a more positive future, raising self-esteem and civic pride.

“We have heard countless stories of the absence of leadership in the city, of low levels of aspiration and attainment, of parochialism and an unwillingness to learn from other places...if we were allowed a collective wish it would be that the positive flourished and became the hallmark of a new Stoke on Trent rather than the negative perceptions that so often seem to dominate” (Governance Commission, p.6)

In October 2008 a second referendum was held on the future of the Elected Mayoral system, with the Democracy for Stoke grouping campaigning vigorously against continuing with an Elected Mayor. The electorate voted to abolish the system,



although the turnout was only 19.2%, and a Transition Board was set up to monitor the implementation of the Governance Commission recommendations.

In October 2010 the Boundary Commission for England published its decision on the reform of the ward boundaries in Stoke on Trent, which, if approved by Parliament, will apply in the all out elections to be held in May 2011. The decision has been for a total of 44 councillors instead of the present 60, but there has been some local objection to the way the spread has been allocated, with one ward with 3 councillors, five with two and 31 with one. The City Council had made a recommendation for 44 single member wards.

Evidence on this issue in the local media would seem to suggest that local people are less than content with this proposed arrangement, and don't see it as the answer to the City's problems. The following are a selection of representative comments from the local newspaper online edition and Pits and Pots, an influential local online news site:

"Pity we can't lose a few more (councillors), they would not be missed"

"Huge sections of the city are left for Labour and the BNP to squabble over as the sensible parties of democratic government don't waste their time and money"

"I hope our MPs would fight the suggested reduction in our councillors"

"I would not like to see the number of councillors reduced, just replace some of the worst ones with better ones"

"Political parties 44 All others 0, a swizz so grand that no-one will spot the crime"

"What's the difference between 44 incompetents and 60 incompetents?"

Other postings on the Pits and Pots site talk of apathy, incompetence, scandal, and inaction in relation to the City Council. Bill Cawley, in an emotively titled article (Cawley, 2010) on the site suggests that the issue is not solvable and that "it is time for the curtain to come down on the City as an entity", and for a larger local authority for North Staffordshire to be constituted instead. This issue is still very dynamic and the conclusion still uncertain, but it seems that it may be unlikely that the local community's sense of disempowerment can be reduced without a great deal more work and change.

### **Update from key actors**

In order to attempt to gauge whether or not the main themes found during the initial research remained relevant in the intervening 3 years, some key actors were interviewed during the summer of 2010. Some were respondents for the original research and some were additional interviewees. The broad themes from the initial research were reflected by the subsequent interviewees, which included representation from politics, education, the voluntary sector, and the police.

The lack of employment opportunities and low educational attainment and expectations were highlighted several times. A Stoke on Trent MP echoed previous concerns about the local representativeness of the Governance Commission, commenting that local regeneration initiatives were too often in the control of those from outside the City, and that “the local people were not trusted to make their own future”.

The fact that there was still almost no professional middle class living in Stoke on Trent was still a problem. The people who did hold these positions tended to prefer to live outside the City and travel in, also educating their children elsewhere. Those local people who did go to university often ended up leaving in order to obtain suitable employment.

All these points were echoed by a local councillor who had been interviewed for the original research. They highlighted the fact that Stoke on Trent had been able to secure funding under the government’s ‘Building Schools for the Future’ programme, and they considered that investment and improvements in educational attainment was crucial if Stoke was not to have a “lost generation”.

The councillor also considered that expectations about education and employment were problematic, and that the community had to understand that previous understandings about these things were no longer tenable in the present situation. A proposal to build a Toyota car plant in the city had not come to fruition because of the lack of a suitably skilled workforce, which was a lost opportunity for the City’s future.

The councillor also repeated concerns regarding the professional middle class, citing the lack of appropriate housing in the City as one reason why people were reluctant to live near their work. The councillor also voiced concerns about the reforms in local government, giving the opinion that a system with some wards being single councillor and some with more than one would be confusing for, and resented by, local people.

Although there were fewer asylum seekers in the City than when the original research was carried out, an interview with someone working very closely with both asylum seekers and refugees in a college setting felt that in many ways the conditions for those who were there were worse than before. Funding for English classes had been drastically cut. Refugees who were working had to pay for classes even when on minimal incomes, and asylum seekers received no help at all for the first six months.

Even after this initial period, it was only English classes that were provided, and no other free courses were available. Asylum seekers were therefore both unable to work and unable to study, leaving many with nothing to do and extremely isolated. This was compounded by the fact that cases were taking so long to be resolved, with the respondent stating that they knew of cases in Stoke on Trent where people had been waiting for up to ten years for their cases to be determined. Added to this, when people were granted refugee status, many people found themselves homeless because of the removal of their housing.

The senior police officer interviewed (not the same officer who took part in the original research) considered that people remained very insular in their outlook, and

generally had “problems with difference”. People were still considered outsiders if they came from anywhere other than the immediate locality. Antagonism against asylum seekers and refugees was partly explained by the fact that “it is easier to spot someone from Somalia than someone from Manchester”, in other words visible and audible differences mark out people more starkly.

The officer stated that race related crimes had not significantly increased over the past three years, but that other hate crimes and harassment related to difference, for example related to disability, sexual orientation and gender re-assignment, had become more prevalent, signifying a general difficulty with the acceptance of difference.

The officer considered that recent changes in the way that people in Stoke on Trent, as elsewhere, access the media, particularly the news, and used social networks to communicate, had meant that negative or extreme views were easier to communicate to others. It was much easier and quicker to post a comment on a news website or social networking site than to write a letter to the local newspaper.

Additionally people had access to a much wider variety of news via the internet, for example the BBC web pages and national newspaper sites, which had meant that people had access to negative views about immigration and minority communities that were expressed elsewhere.

Also local radio stations were now taking news bulletins from syndicated national or regional services rather than being more local as previously. It could be argued that this was healthy as it gives people a broader range of opinions from which to form their own opinions, but it was the view of the respondent that in fact it tended to reinforce negative and prejudiced standpoints already held. Although reports and stories were often quite balanced when read in full, headlines were often extreme in order to catch the attention of readers and listeners, and this was what people tended to remember.

This view was repeated by another respondent working in the housing sector, who was also interviewed for the original research. The media was a powerful force for re-enforcing negative views, and this also related to views of the City Council. This respondent had expressed the view in the original research, which they considered to be still the case, that there was a poor relationship between the local media and the City Council, which helped to cultivate poor relationships between City Council and community.

Respondents were also broadly in agreement that support for the British National Party and extreme right wing views was born out of frustration with local and national politics. The housing sector respondent considered that the community thought that local politicians had become complacent, often regarding the position of councillor as a right to be passed around to the next incumbent irrespective of the electorate, expressed by the respondent as the culture of “it’s your turn now Ethel...”.

On a more optimistic note, the senior police officer considered that, compared with three years ago, there was an improved relationship between the police and the City Council, and with local schools, where they were doing a lot of work to try to improve community cohesion and good relations.

The local councillor stated that, as bad as things might be in local politics, there had in his view been significant improvements since the ending of the Elected Mayor system, and that it was now easier for local politicians to work together. The turn out in the 2010 local elections had been uncharacteristically high at around 60%, which was put down to them being held at the same time as a General Election, but he hoped that this interest and participation would continue to the all out elections in the new wards in 2011. Voting for the British National Party would also be watched with interest.

It is worth mentioning here the voting pattern for the BNP in the May 2010 General Election. The party fielded candidates in all three Stoke on Trent parliamentary constituencies. In Stoke Central and Stoke North they achieved nearly 8% of the total vote, whilst in Stoke South it was over 9%.

### **Conclusion: implications for trust building and hospitality**

The paper has now reviewed the findings of the original research, new developments in trust research related to ethnic diversity and migration, a new focus on equality and fairness, and a new grass roots social movement aimed at promoting hospitality towards asylum seekers and refugees. The paper has also discussed the social, economic and political environment in Stoke on Trent that could be said to contribute to a lack of the building blocks for trust that we have identified as being important for promoting hospitality and welcome.

The main themes to emerge from the empirical data could be summed up as follows: a deep distrust of government, particularly local government, the City Council and the office of Elected Mayor; frustration and feelings of powerlessness about many problems affecting the everyday lives of residents, which the local authority seemed unwilling or unable to solve; a strong desire for these problems to be solved; deep cynicism towards formal mechanisms of participation and citizen involvement; and a lack of communal self efficacy and vision for the future.

We can see that issues of control, optimism and fairness are important in this analysis, but we can also see that the role of institutions must be important here, as political structures seem to be so central to the problems faced by the city, and structures of participation which could help to empower citizens are either inappropriate and ineffective or viewed with deep distrust by residents.

Hence we can see that, in order to promote the conditions required for generalised trust (which could include interventions to give citizens more power and control, action to begin to remedy some of the inequalities that exist, and the promotion of an optimistic and upbeat vision of the future for the city), policy interventions would also need to address the issue of trust in institutions, of political and civic engagement, and leadership.

Leadership as a concept, and particularly transformational leadership, has been much studied in the organisation and management setting, but little applied to communities. However it is a contention of this paper that we might be able to learn something from this organisational research to help promote and foster the building blocks for generalised trust that we have identified, and so promote hospitality and welcome towards those whom we find different.

Colquitt et al (2007) examined through meta analysis various components needed for leaders to be regarded as trustworthy, namely competence, benevolence and integrity. They concluded that integrity was particularly important, including such factors as fairness, justice and fulfilment of promises. Thus we can see a relationship between leaders actions in respect of fairness and justice, leading to trust in leaders, who are then in a position to promote the conditions that build wider generalised trust.

Mesquita (2007) develops this idea with his work on “trust facilitators”. Again his work focuses on organisational settings, but could be easily applied in communities. Mesquita suggests that the approach can be used to “solve situations gridlocked in uncooperativeness”. Trust facilitators do not set out to eliminate distrust, but rather highlight ways in which groups can cooperate to mutual advantage. They act as mediators and encourage joint action. This promotes trust between groups as it means that they can cooperate without appearing weak. They are both relating to an intermediary who is seen to have legitimacy, which is bestowed through their competence, integrity and espousal of fairness and justice. Such “trust facilitators” could be individuals, groups or institutions.

Dewett and Denisi (2007) also researched in an organisational setting, examining the effects of two different forms of ‘regulatory focus’ that individuals may have. Regulatory focus is explained as that which determines whether an individual broadly seeks positive outcomes or seeks to avoid negative ones, whether they seek to achieve ideals and have vision, or whether it is more important to simply avoid pain. They suggest that transformational leaders can be important in influencing the regulatory focus of individuals towards the positive stance (see also Tseng and Kang, 2009). It is interesting to consider whether the regulatory focus of a community such as that in Stoke on Trent, that has been shown to be lacking in communal self confidence and shared vision, could be altered in the same way by the right leadership. This, it is suggested, could be a fruitful avenue for future research.

So how can we relate this directly to the relationship between host communities and new arrivals? One way forward is highlighted in Darling (2010), which discusses the City of Sanctuary movement from the point of view of a human geographer. The paper looks at both the spatial and relational dimensions of a place or community. The key, the paper argues, to promoting hospitality and welcome of those from other countries and backgrounds and circumstances very different from our own, is to focus on the relational dimension, instead of looking at a community as a place with fixed boundaries, or as merely ‘containers’ of social or political interaction.

In a relational account places are formed through their relationship with other places and other times, and are constantly in an ebb and flow of construction. Therefore a place is not simply a fixed and closed entity, but rather one that has linkages across spatial and temporal boundaries. It does not form barriers by contrasting itself as a

community with others from outside. In this way the community can relate to others in a different way and take responsibility for the needs of those from other places, even when they are very different from themselves. This is the 'shared fate' that Uslaner (2002) talks about when building his model of moralistic trust.

Darling points out that this approach is difficult when all the national political agenda around immigration and asylum seems to be firmly bound in a strict protection of territorial rights, a framing of policy around illegality, and with a lack of any choice for asylum seekers as to where they are dispersed, and for host communities as to whether or not they become so. However this approach seems to offer much that could be useful in understanding how hospitality can be fostered, and it is clear that local leaders would need to play an important in this process.

Finally, many of the solutions this paper has suggested have been related to the view a community has of itself in relation to the rest of the world, and its orientation towards optimism and a positive and hopeful future. Harre (2001, p.38) tells us that the role of the leader is to help the community construct a new set of stories out of the old ones, to enable them to see a new future without abandoning what was good from the past. Reich (1990) describes this process as the leader giving voice to both the fears and hopes of the community and embodying them in new and convincing stories.

What is required for the generation of trust is for communities to "unchain themselves from their past and move into uncertain futures" and the role of the leader is to "encourage the discussion of possible futures" (Cvetkovich and Earle, 1995, p.156). If communities like Stoke on Trent are not to become "placid victims of the political and economic forces that reduced their communities to marginality"...remembering the past is crucial to the regeneration of confidence in themselves and hopefully the wider community" (Stephenson and Wray, 2005 p.16).

So this paper argues that leadership which has the vision to assist communities like that in Stoke on Trent to retell their story and create a positive future for themselves in order to facilitate trust building through optimism, self-efficacy and autonomy, and start to eradicate social and economic inequalities, will promote generalised trust and begin to build communities that can extend hospitality to others, no matter from whence they arrive. "All that is holding us back is our stories, and we can make a better set of tales available" (Harre, 2001 p.38).

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