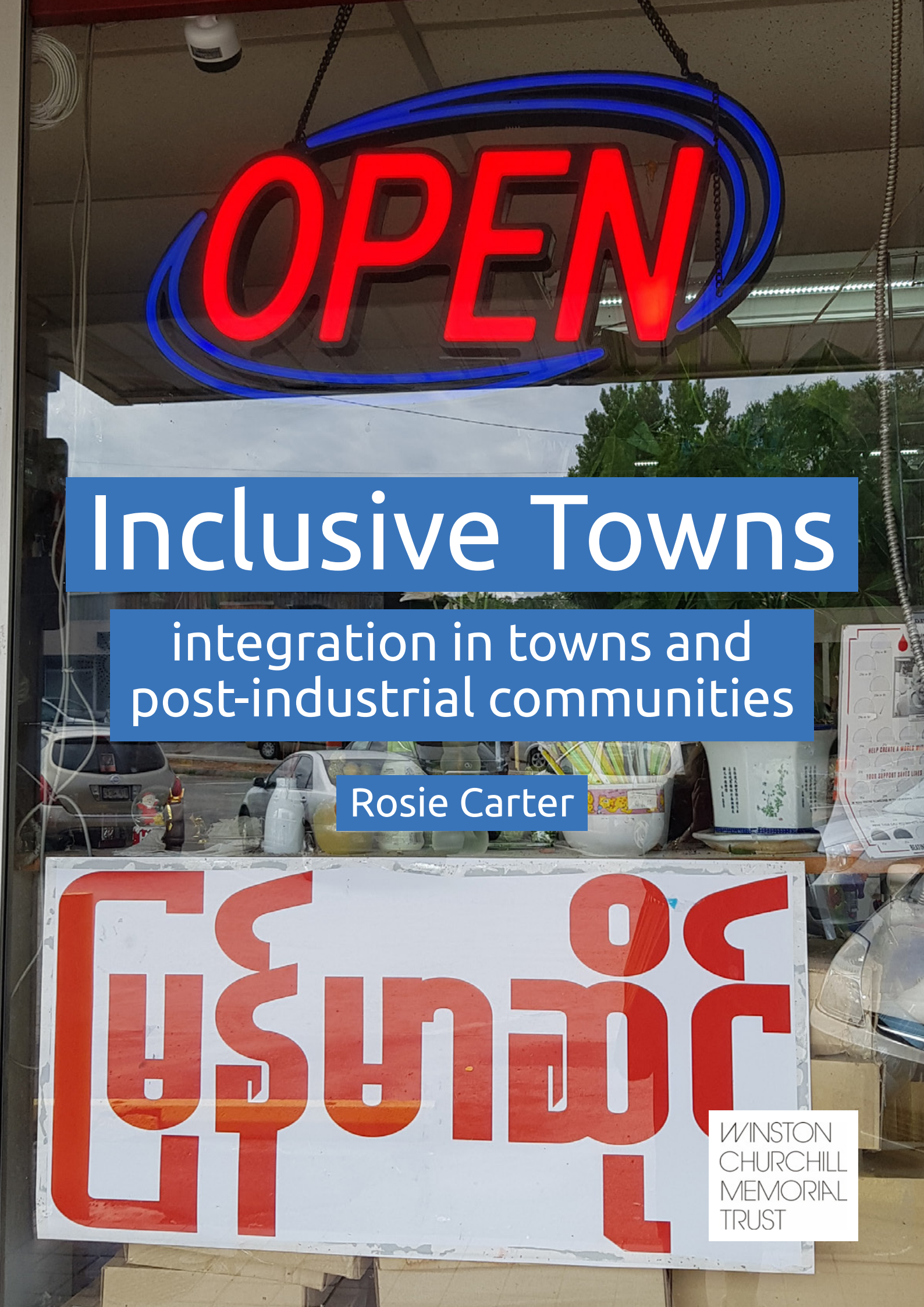


Inclusive Towns

integration in towns and post-industrial communities

Rosie Carter

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

Introduction

Migration is seen as a predominantly urban process, and it is true that the majority of international migrants settle in big cities, drawn to the opportunities they offer. Diverse urban centres like New York, London, Singapore and Toronto have long attracted people from all over the world and have flourished as a result of having large foreign-born populations.

However, the debate around immigration has often taken place elsewhere. Anxieties about immigration tend to be most profound among settled populations in places where there is less diversity and where people have little meaningful contact with others of different backgrounds to themselves.

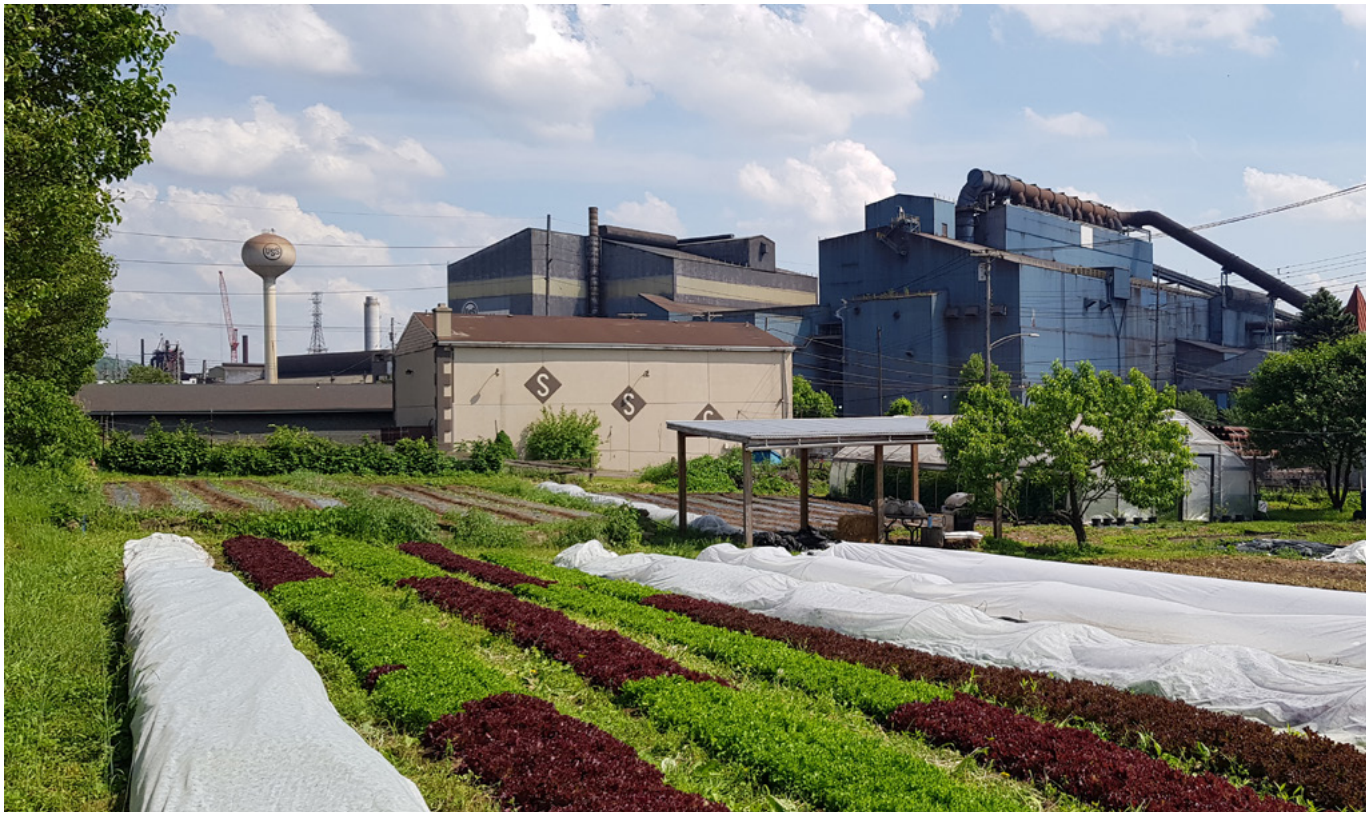
The decline of towns is a familiar story across Europe and the U.S. where immigration alongside globalisation and redistribution of wealth has led to tension and division. Depopulation, unemployment, substance dependency and the closure of high streets haunts towns, coastal and post-industrial areas, feeding resentment and frustration, increasingly manifested though anti-migrant sentiment.

At the same time, the nature of immigration in Europe and North America is changing, with more and more migrants settling in non-urban areas to work in growing industries of food production, logistics and warehouse work, with new migration flows settling in market towns and rural areas. In areas which have had little previous experience of immigration, have experienced rapid population change, or have insufficient infrastructure to support new populations, immigration has frequently been met with public concern and opposition.

This Fellowship focusses on what can be done to foster more inclusive and integrated communities in towns and post-industrial contexts. Of course, not all towns are the same, and 'post-industrial' is an often-loaded term that can refer to an incredibly diverse set of places, each with very different issues. More specifically, this Fellowship attempts to understand how to stem the tide of anti-immigrant sentiment in places struggling with decline of population and capital or experiencing rapid diversity; how to shape the debate and challenge prejudice, while supporting newcomers in their new home in places where resources for doing so are scarce.

These are huge, and highly politicised, questions, and it is almost impossible to set out a one-size-fits-all blue print for how this can be achieved. Moreover, measuring change in this area, understanding when a community is welcoming and when it is not, is a challenge in itself.

This report summarises my experiences through this Fellowship, but it also intends to be an invitation for an ongoing conversation for issues that really are global. I met hundreds of inspiring people through this Fellowship taking many different approaches in similar situations to the challenges we face in the UK. I hope this report reflects the respect I hold for each of you and your work, and most of all, that we can continue the conversation.



Braddock Steelworks, PA

Context

The UK

Although international migration has always been a feature of life in the UK, both immigration and emigration have increased since the early 1990s. While 52% of all the UK's overseas born population live in London and the South East[1], increased flows of asylum seekers and the expansion of the EU saw immigration to the UK's towns grow.

Since the late 1990s asylum-seekers who need housing have been dispersed throughout the UK. There has also been a shift to market towns and rural areas, with some EU migrants – many from Eastern Europe – settling in rural shire counties, where they have often found jobs in intensive agriculture, the food processing sector or hospitality. EU migration has been highly politicised in the UK, and played a central role in the 2016 vote to leave the EU.

There has never been a formal integration policy in the UK, and there has been an ongoing and highly politicised conversation about what integration or inclusion actually mean, with some proponents taking a multiculturalist perspective while others have adopted a more culturally assimilationist view based on 'British values'. Much integration and inclusion work in the UK is led by civil society. The first government strategy published as a green paper in 2018, states that integrated communities are those "where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities."[2]

The USA

The U.S.A. is known as a country of immigration, with more immigrants than any other country in the world. As of 2017, more than 40 million people living in the U.S. were born in another country, accounting for about one-fifth of the world's migrants. The U.S. migrant population is incredibly diverse, but Hispanics remain the largest group, with 25% of migrants arriving from Mexico[3].

It is estimated that undocumented migrants make up around a quarter of the U.S. foreign born population[4], which has been at the forefront of the U.S. political debate around immigration. Irregular migration was weaponised through the 2016 election of Donald Trump, which fuelled further polarisation in the US immigration debate.

In 2017, it was estimated that 65% of the nation's total migrant population lived in just 20 major metropolitan areas, with the largest populations in New York, Los Angeles and Miami[5]. Nonetheless, there has been increased migration to smaller cities and towns across the U.S. including places that had historically stable, majoritively white populations.

Integration and inclusion in the U.S. have largely taken an economic focus, most often measured through employment, income, and education. There has been very little in the way of formal policy intervention in the U.S. and relatively little federal funding, relying instead primarily on a strong labour market and public education[6].

Germany

Almost a quarter of the German population has a migration background, around 19.3 million people[7]. The largest migrant, and second generation, group in Germany is from Turkey, a migration that began in the 1960s in efforts to rebuild post-war West Germany. So-called Guest workers arrived intending to remain in Germany for just two years, however, the recruitment treaty was changed in 1964 so that many became permanent residents. It is now estimated that the refugee population in Germany stands at around 1.4 million people in total.

Integration has become a political priority in Germany over the last few years following the decision to accept large numbers of refugees from 2015 in response to the Syrian crisis. Germany has both a national integration plan and a national action plan for integration and is one of the few countries that has passed an integration law to protect the rights of migrants and assist labour market inclusion[8].

The migrant population in Germany is more widely distributed than in much of Western Europe, largely as a result of the country's decentralised economic distribution, with industry spread across a number of mid-sized cities and towns. Guest workers initially settled in industrial centres, such as the Rhine-Ruhr region, where people of migrant backgrounds have remained despite the decline in industry. However, East-West divisions remain. East Germany, then still part of the Soviet Union, did not experience immigration at the same scale, and is far less diverse today. There has been greater resistance to contemporary migration flows in East Germany, where the far-right party AfD have made significant gains[9].

Integration in Germany holds a focus on inclusion in the labour market, democratic participation and language acquisition, with compulsory integration courses for all new arrivals and integration law enacted in some states. There is less of a focus on cultural assimilation than on practicalities of life in Germany.

Towns or cities?

The terms 'town' and 'city' mean different things in the UK and the U.S. In the UK, the monarch of the United Kingdom grants city status, while towns are sometimes even larger but are not granted city status. The Centre for Towns[10] has developed a place typology, more fitting with colloquial use, which defines twelve core cities and place types according to population size.

Type	Definition	Number
Villages (less than 5,000)	Places with less than 5,000 residents	5,568
Communities (5-10k)	Places with between 5,000 and 10,000 residents	567
Small towns (10k-30k)	Towns with between 10,000 and 30,000 residents	550
Medium towns (30k – 75k)	Towns with between 30,000 and 75,000 residents	242
Large towns (over 75k)	Towns with over 75,000 residents	102
Core Cities	Core cities as defined by Pike et al (2016)	12

In the United States, an incorporated city is a legally defined government entity while the definition of "town" varies widely from state to state. The term 'small town' is used frequently in popular culture but has no standardised meaning. In Germany, there is no real distinction between towns and cities, who both use the term *Stadt*. In this report, I use the term 'town' in the U.K. sense, but also use the term city where it relates to local governance in the U.S.

Moreover, towns do not function in isolation from cities, and it is important to not only account for the interactions within places but also between them. During this fellowship, I spent time in towns, cities, suburban and rural area.

Whose inclusion?

Integration, inclusion and cohesion are contested terms, often used interchangeably but can describe different processes. In this report, the focus on inclusion and integration is about how everyone in communities can live well together and access opportunities.

If integration is about everyone, then everyone must be part of the process. Often the focus of integration efforts is towards new migrants, often including settled migrant communities and BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) groups. But who counts as a migrant is also extremely loose, and there is no one type of migrant. Usually used to refer to foreign born, the terms 'migrant' or 'immigrant' often conflate issues of immigration status, race, ethnicity and asylum. It is important to acknowledge that many new migrants have specific needs for integration to be successful, but a focus on migrants and minorities means that settled communities, especially white groups, tend to go under the radar as agents of integration.

Moreover, white nationalism and far right populism are on the rise in North America and Europe, emboldening prejudice and mainstreaming anti-immigrant rhetoric. As immigration is such a politicised and polarising issue, there is a need to challenge hostility in order to build inclusion, and to address broader factors that create fertile territory for hateful narratives to take hold.

For this Fellowship, I understand inclusion to be a responsibility of every resident to ensure communities live well together and that everyone can be supported in order to access opportunities.

About Me

My work with Hope not Hate, an anti-racist and anti-fascist campaign group, began with community organising in towns across the Black Country in the West Midlands. Working from the premise that hope is the best antidote to hate, I spent the majority of my time in areas that were once strongholds of the far-right British National Party.

I went on to do a masters in migration studies at the University of Oxford, and spent some time working on migration issues in Europe and the UK before returning to Hope not Hate, where I co-led the National Conversation on Immigration. This was the largest ever public engagement on immigration, where we heard from over 20,000 people. I spent 18 months travelling over 16,000 miles across the country to hold conversations about immigration with ordinary people, to better understand if, and how, we can meet a consensus on immigration post-Brexit, to see if we could move the 'immigration debate' to a more open and welcoming conversation.

These conversations were about immigration, but were often about so much more. Particularly where people held the strongest attitudes to immigration, people spoke about it in a way that was intertwined with other frustrations; the distance they felt from Westminster, the precarious nature of work, cuts to public services, the decline of industry, boarded up high streets, future prospects for their kids. A sense of place and personal circumstance more broadly also shaped this.

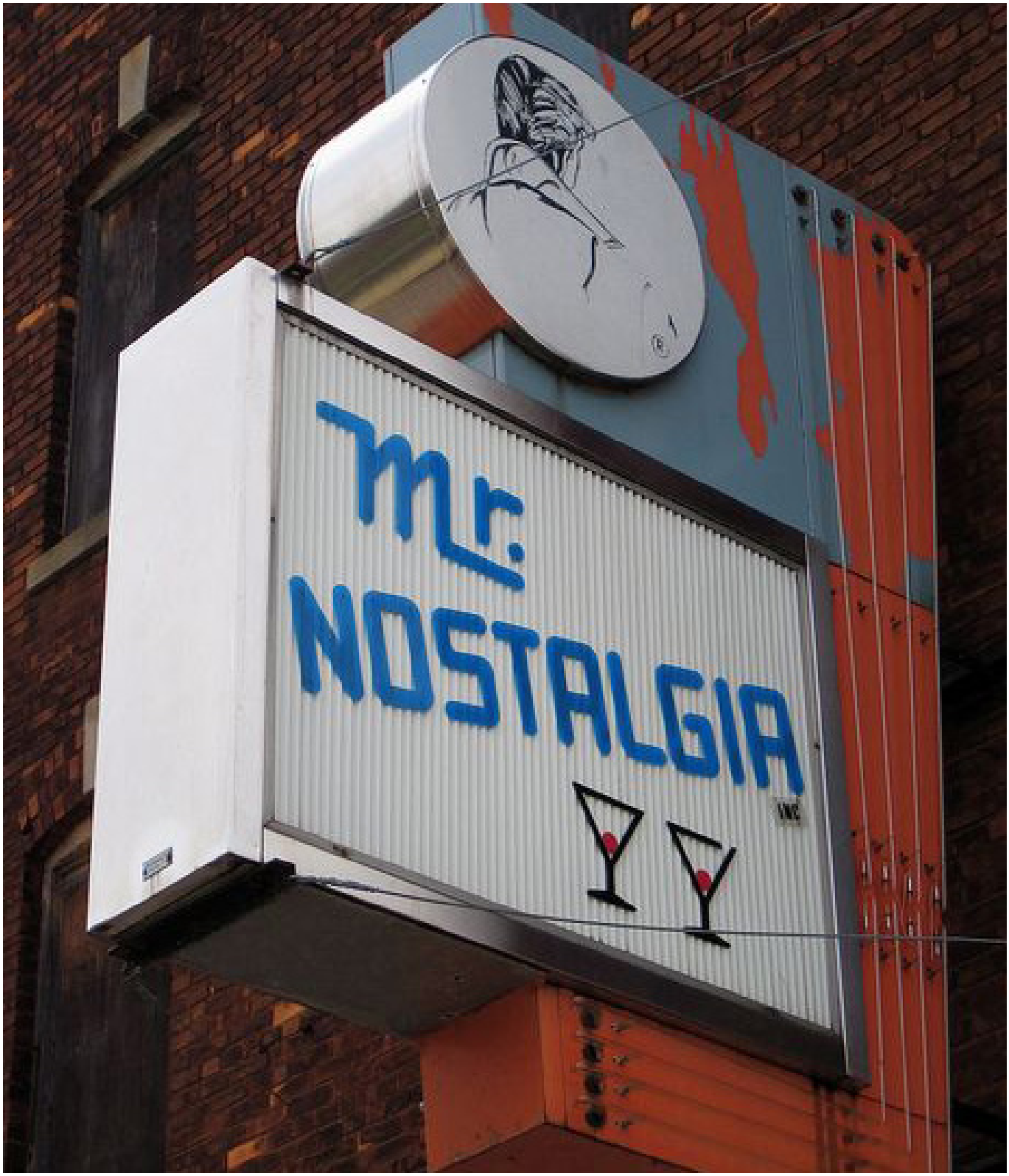
The tone of these conversations was starkly different in areas with greater opportunity, from those that had lost industry and population, which had experienced years of decline. While there were people who confounded the trend, participants who were less confident about their own opportunities in life were more likely to see immigration or multiculturalism as a threat.

We also found that in places that had experienced rapid immigration, small issues could trigger greater divides. Often large migrant populations had moved into areas without the infrastructure or resources to cope with rapid population growth, particularly for migrant groups with specific needs. We often found that anxieties and tensions were confined to just one or two streets of poorly regulated private rental

housing of multiple occupancy, but tensions could spill over to the wider locality.

My research since, on integration, public attitudes, identity and political polarisation, has attempted to better understand some of the factors underpinning this and how to overcome them. It is not that people do not have fears directly linked to immigration, but there are multiple complex and overlaying factors which feed social attitudes. If people don't hope for themselves, how can they be expected to hold hope for others?

Challenging difficult issues and addressing a sense of loss which underlines hostility towards immigration for many, are huge challenges that throw up even huger questions. This Fellowship is the next step in finding solutions.



Closed bar, Utica, NY

1. Addressing town-city divides

For decades, infrastructural investment has been concentrated in core cities, with the hope that some of the wealth that is generated will make its way to nearby towns. But for the most-part, this has not happened, and towns and smaller cities, especially those which have lost industry have seen ageing and declining populations, a hollowing-out of the centre of the labour market, with the loss of secure, skilled manual jobs, emptying high streets and a falling quality of life.

Broader cultural divisions between urban cores and rural areas, towns and smaller cities sometimes become manifest as antagonism. In the U.S. context, Katherine Cramer refers to a deep sense of "redistributive injustice", whereby a feeling that people are not given their fair share of resources or political attention become distilled into an intense resentment towards city residents, who see the benefits of diversity.

In the Coventry study, a major piece of research on the attitudes of American white working class communities, this was found to be a great driver of cultural anxieties. *"Looking back, the community and neighbourhood which they had known had been largely white and working class, containing a social infrastructure of churches, social clubs, bars, and grocery stores that provided common points of reference. The reality was that this had been all but swept away by demographic changes".*

It is not that economics alone drive hostility towards others, but a sense of displacement and loss feeds anxieties, and speaks to pre-existing prejudice, as a sense of power and privilege slipping away can fuel resentment among people who do not feel that diversity is a benefit to themselves.

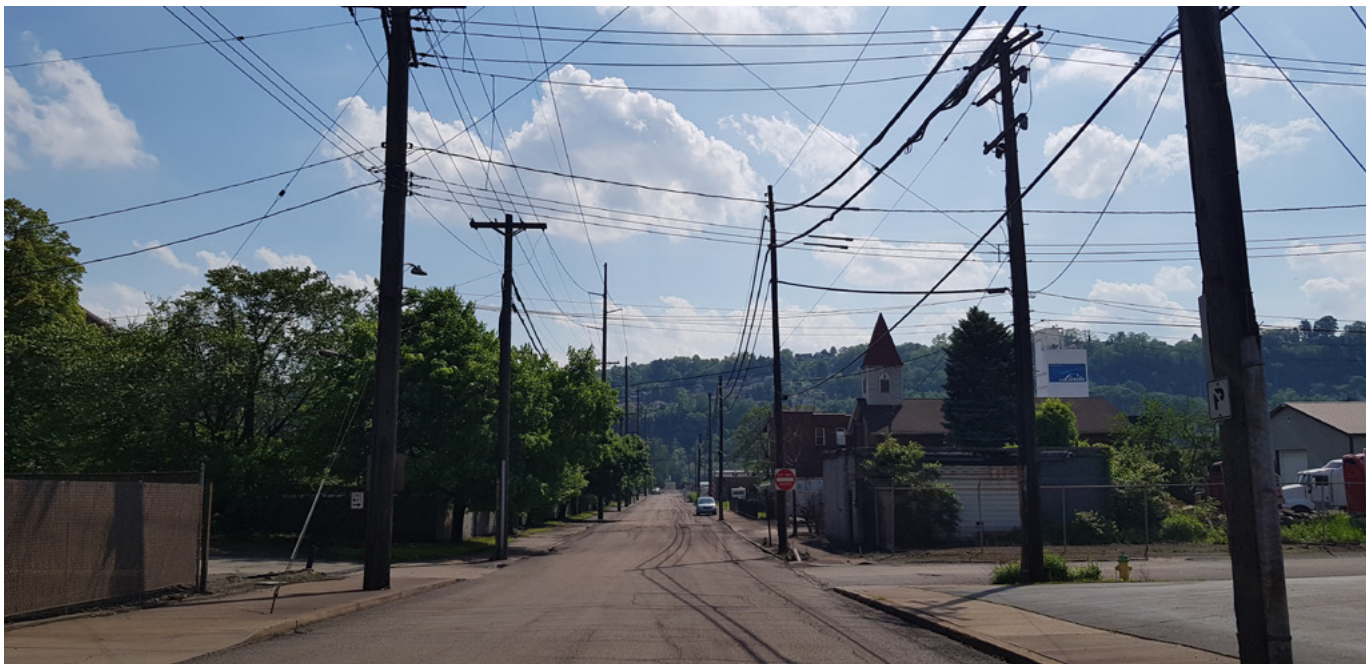
Loss and Lack

People's Action are an organisation campaigning for economic and democratic fairness in the U.S. Shifting the immigration debate is key to their work, but rather than speaking about immigration as a standalone issue, they are shaping a culture of inclusiveness by engaging on broader issues of inequality, reaching out and embedding their method in challenging places.

Together with partner organisations, People's Action are attempting to build a progressive populist movement, focussing on small towns and rural areas. They ran a deep listening campaign on immigration across 15 states, in an attempt to shift the debate through over 10,000 conversations on doorsteps, in churches and community centres, and on the phone.

Adam Kruggel, of the organisation, tells me that through these conversations they found very similar sentiments to those I have heard in the UK. The most common term used by respondents was "lack", with about 40-45% of people blaming immigrants for the issues in their community. But these conversations were not one-dimensional. Kruggel estimates around 80-85% of people they spoke to used a populist frame for their concerns, about a government not working in their interests, captured by a wealthy few.

In Michigan I met Caitlin Homrich-Knieling, a small town organiser for Michigan United, a People's Action member organisation. Caitlin, from a small town in upstate Michigan, worked organising immigrants' rights issues for a long time before this listening campaign was developed, but found that conversations about immigration needed to be about a lot more if they were to stem the tide of anti-immigrant sentiment.



Braddock, PA

The experimental approach she is trialling expands People's Action's conversational work, to hold another 10,000 doorstep conversations. These conversations do not focus explicitly on immigration, but on key local issues, bringing issues like minimum wage levels and Medicare into the conversation. The script is simple: they begin with a 1-10 question. *"Would you vote for Medicare if everyone could access this, including undocumented immigrants?"*. This soft entry point into concerns about immigration then creates space for a conversation about healthcare, adding complexity to the debate but also offering a positive solution.

People's Action work by identifying space for solidarity and shared solutions rather than holding discussions about concerns than inevitably amplify fears and engrain division. Through deep engagement, asking what people need and offering a route map out, they challenge the scapegoating of migrants and build collaborative support for a progressive approach to addressing a sense of lack or loss. As Kruggel tells me, *"a vibrant movement for immigrant rights and immigrant rights needs to be woven into a movement where we're all striving for dignity and respect"*.

People's Action work not just by shifting the narrative through conversation, but then inviting people to join a campaign that offers power to struggling communities, one that not only holds decision makers to account, but is also attempting to identify new leaders and support insurgent electoral candidates.

Actively taking power to these communities helps to build understanding of a shared struggle and to empower a shared vision. The results of this is building a race-conscious movement for change that make meaning of people's suffering, then brings people together to work on changing the system.

This twin track approach – working to hold narrative changing conversations, and ensuring that the political structures can develop the needed change in places that are often neglected – is essential to the work people's Action are doing. As Kruggel puts it, *"You can reduce prejudice towards migrants, but if you don't change the worldview it won't be a durable change"*.

Renewal and Opportunity

The economic focus of integration in the U.S. has seen immigration as a key asset for renewal and opportunity. This approach not only makes the economic case for immigration in aiming to shift public opinion, but taps into migrant potential. Opening up opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship among migrant communities not only helps newcomers to settle, but can renew dying high streets, boost local economies, and if well managed, help to address a sense of loss and decline that drives anti-migrant sentiment.

The Welcoming Economies Global Network is comprised of more than thirty regional economic development initiatives from across the Midwest, working to tap into the economic development opportunities created by immigrants. The network has focussed on smaller cities and cities that have seen population decline and decay in the so called 'rust belt' region, such as St. Louis, Missouri, and Dayton, Ohio.

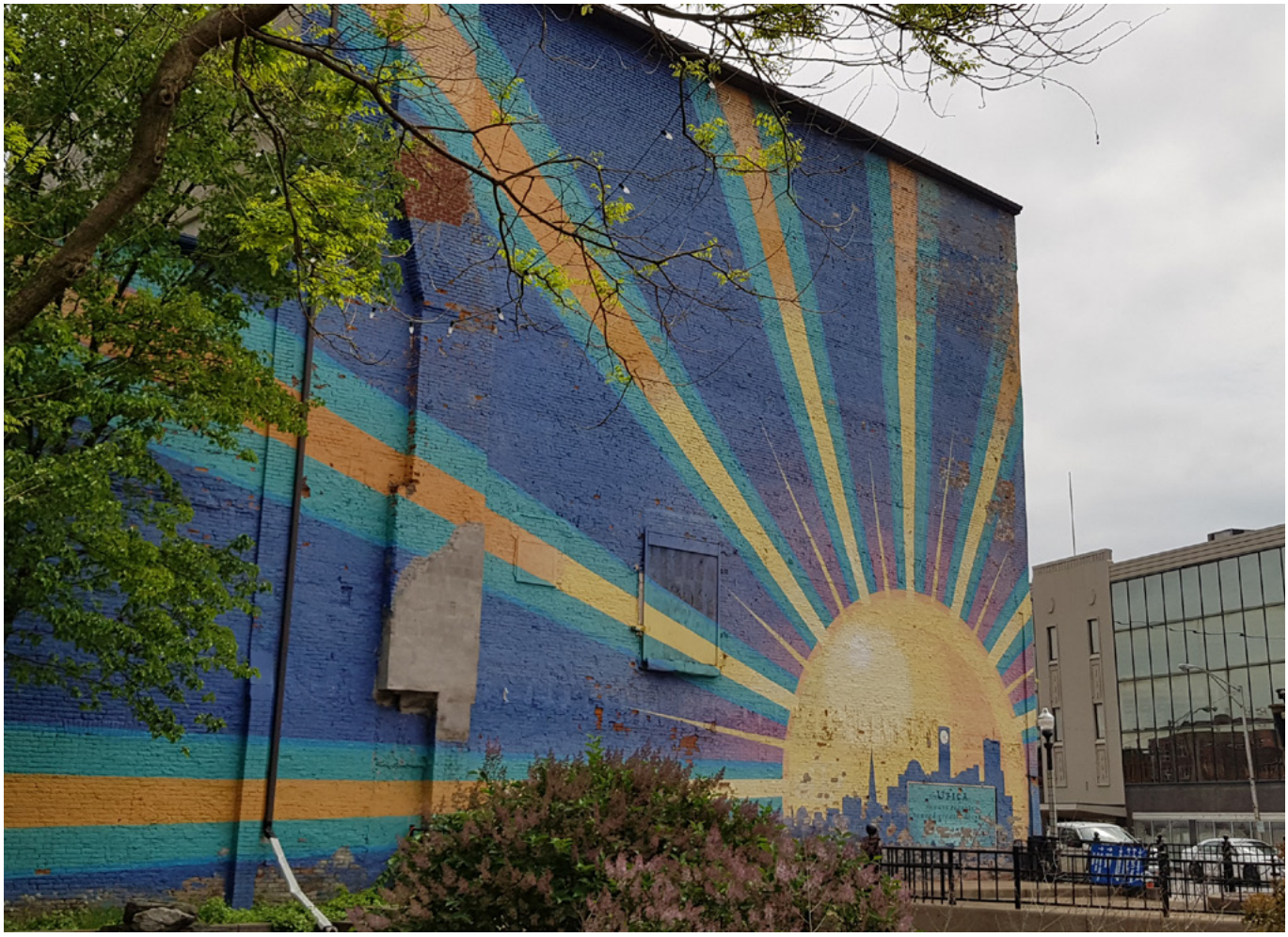
Steve Tobocman, director of Global Detroit and one of the founding partners, tells me *"in our shrinking cities, immigrants are the perfect fit for their woes"*. The organisation started out as a research project housed in the region's chamber of commerce to find a way to link immigration with economic development, attracting talent and repopulating a city that had become famous for its urban decay following the decline of the motor industry.

Global Detroit's regional change mission looks to have a transformational economic impact that moves away from a migration lens towards an economic security lens. They offer micro-loans and training for migrant entrepreneurs, work to support international student retention, and work to attract business in order to revive neighbourhoods in the Detroit region. Steve tells me, *"we're not looking at social inclusion and appealing to that, it's about mainstreaming migration into looking at the economy and society as a whole"*, and in some ways this helps to depoliticise the immigration debate while opening up policy space, by encouraging the business community to be more vocal about the gains of immigration.

New American Economy, another partner of the Welcoming Economies network, aim to highlight the positive impact of migrants on the economy and lobby business to champion more open migration policies. Their 'map the impact' tool shows how much revenue derives from immigrants in each state, research that has helped them to work on advocacy models such as the Texas business coalition, a network of more than 90 businesses and associations speaking out for more open immigration policy.

Refugee resettlement has been utilised by some towns in the U.S. to combat decline with impressive results. I visit Utica, NY, Clarkston, GA and meet with organisations working on economic development with refugee populations in Buffalo, NY, all towns that have seen their shrinking populations and declining economies reversed by refugee resettlement.

This model does not succeed by simply bringing new populations into a shrinking place, but by significant investment for integration and inclusion. For example, the international institute in Buffalo – a city which has shrunk every decade since the 1950s, losing a third of its population between 1960 and 1980 – has naturally embedded immigration in the areas economic development approach to attempt to stem Buffalo's population decline. The Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) set up alongside, offering business training sessions and microloan financing to support small businesses. They established West Side Bazaar, a small business incubator program which offers space in a shopping centre and food court for individuals – largely from the refugee community- to start to grow their businesses.



Utica, NY

Utica, NY

Utica, a town in upstate New York, became a destination for refugee resettlement back in 1981, when the Mohawk Valley Community Resource Centre for Refugees was established.

When refugees first started to arrive in Utica, Shelly Callahan who runs the centre tells me *"the city was on fire"*. Devastated by population decline and economic downfall following the collapse of local industry, many were turning to arson for insurance pay-outs. Businesses had closed and people were leaving as fast as they could. The city was built for 150,000 people, but currently holds just over 60,000 residents. But over time, the arrival of refugees in the 1980s has revived and transformed the town, repopulating the town, opening businesses and buying and renovating homes.

The centre has since resettled over 16,500 refugees from all over the world, with a large Bosnian population among the first to arrive. The centre works extremely closely with local public services, with the police, the mayor's office, and notably the regional economic development centre. The centre provides language classes, assistance with housing, everything from traffic safety and hygiene training, and an ESL to employment support unit that sees 3-4,000 successful job placements each year. The impact around the town is clear. The refugee population contributes hugely to the local economy, and many have established local businesses that not only serve the diaspora but the whole community.

Shelly also tells me how important is has been for them to engage with the broader community. Anyone who walks through the door of MVRC, migrant or not, receives support, and they hold regular town hall meetings where anyone can attend, where things can be explained and any issues that arise can be tackled head on. Migrants are revitalising the town and the majority of local residents see it as such.

The area is not only drawing in resettled refugees, but has become a safe place where refugees can afford to buy houses, to make a home, where the schools are good. Utica is now seeing waves of secondary migrants, including refugees who were once settled in other towns, and is drawing in economic gains from elsewhere. The range of local restaurants and food shops are a draw for a younger crowd from around the region, feeding the local economy. As Shelly says, *"without them [refugees], I really don't know what would happen to us".*

However, with changing national policy and the restriction of the refugee resettlement programme under president Trump, the centre is facing cutbacks and the town is receiving fewer and fewer people. Utica is a success story of hard work, but one that shows how a local model of success can be vulnerable to a national agenda that does not align.

While these programmes have been hugely successful, there are some risks that come with renewal through immigration. Not all people can be, or want to be, successful business people and it can be dehumanising if migrants and refugees become framed as simply economic pawns. There is also a risk that by focussing on the economic contribution of migrants, we further a good/bad migrant dichotomy, whereby highly educated and skilled or entrepreneurial migrants are celebrated, while 'ordinary' people remain invisible, or inferior. We may also fall foul to 'immigrant exceptionalism', whereby the championing of successful migrants frames them as competition to the wider resident population who also have unmet needs, feeding resentment.

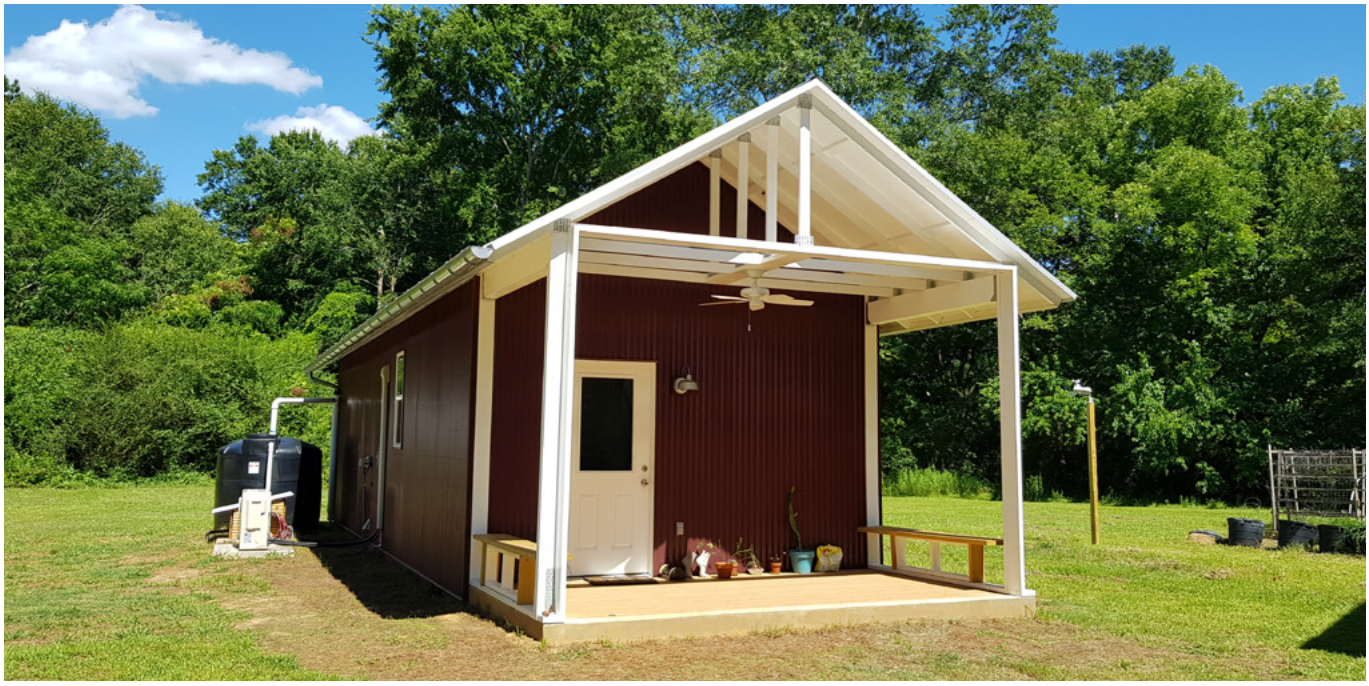
At the same time, these economic approaches are relatively untapped in the UK. Taking opportunities for economic renewal through supporting migrants from day one, and matching that support with engaging the settled local population is clearly one way to create a welcoming narrative, to stem decline, and to help migrants to thrive.

During my travels, I also witnessed a number of projects not directly linked to immigration but making innovative efforts to turn around communities feeling this sense of loss or lack. For example, the Strong Towns network is a communications platform where members connect, self-organize, and share resources on how to create the infrastructure for stronger and more resilient towns.

I visited Rural Studio in Alabama, part of Auburn University that aims to create 'citizen architects' while assisting under-resourced communities of West Alabama's Black Belt. Set in Newburn, a small town in one of America's poorest counties, the studio offers design and architecture students the opportunity to address community needs while building infrastructure in the town on the principle that everyone, rich and poor, deserves good design. The studio's '20k' house project aims to design a market-rate model home that could be built by a contractor, inclusive of materials, labour and profit, at a rate that reflected what a person on social security or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families could comfortably afford to pay each month after other living expenses.

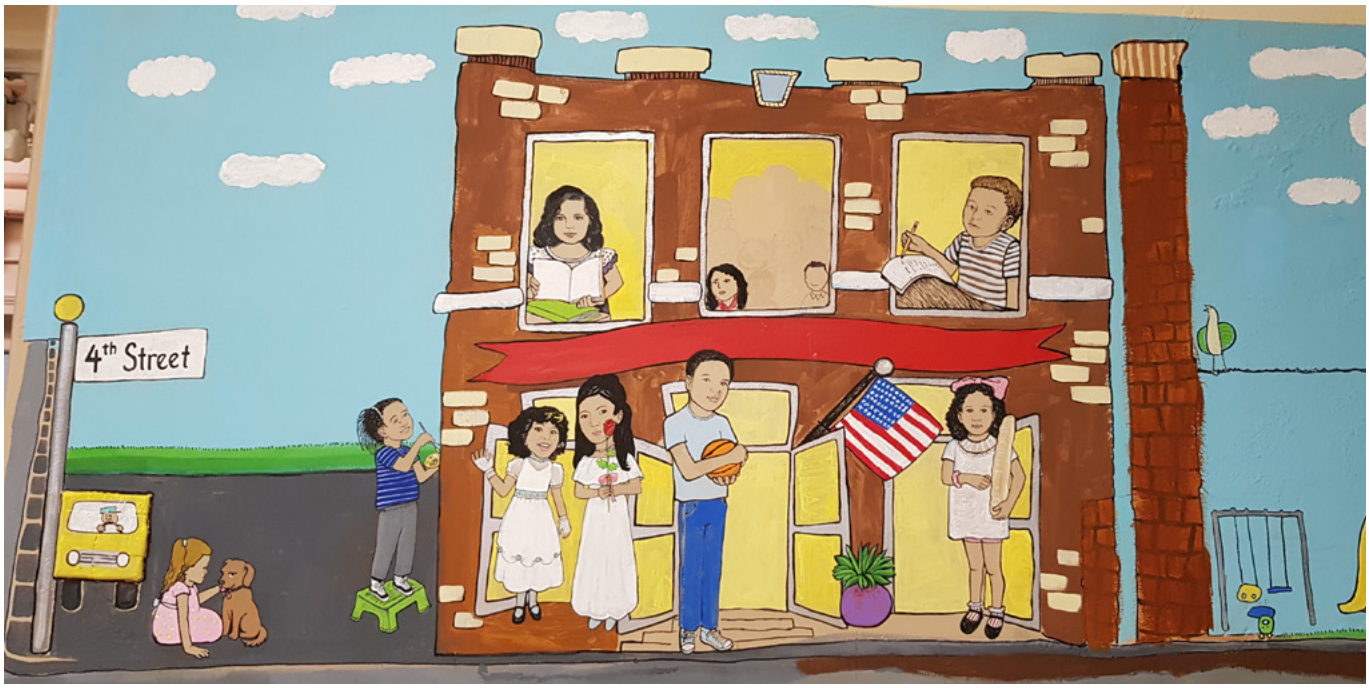
While these initiatives are not directly related to migration, they are all working to create stronger, more resilient communities, and offer the potential to mainstream narratives of inclusion that speak to everyone who lives there.

- **Inclusion needs to be about levelling the playing field of opportunity to everyone. We can get there by identifying a shared struggle and developing the infrastructure to fight for that.**
- **Inclusion and integration narratives need to be about the inclusion of everyone, including non-migrants who feel marginalised or excluded. There is space to bring together inclusion work with community economic renewal, as both share aims to opening opportunities and building resilient communities.**
- **Supporting the economic potential of all migrants, whatever their skill level, should feed into economic and industrial strategies at a regional and national level.**
- **Current UK law prevents asylum seekers from working in the UK, which limits the ability of those seeking asylum to integrate, often harms their wellbeing, and limits their economic potential. The Government must allow asylum-seekers to work if their case has not been decided within six months, unconstrained by the Shortage Occupation List.**



Rural Studio 20k house, Newburn, AL

2. Making inclusion about everyone: Engagement, communication and shaping a culture of inclusion



Mural, Hazleton Integration Project, PA

Contact theory, the idea that bringing people together across difference for meaningful contact helps to foster more cohesive communities, drives much integration and inclusion work in the UK and elsewhere. There is a whole body of evidence that supports contact theory. However, in the context of smaller and less diverse areas, meaningful, and positive, social contact is not always possible.

Moreover, proximity to super diversity for those who are anxious about immigration and the pace of change sometimes furthers tension. Not all contact is positive, and encounters with difference can sometimes reinforce prejudice rather than shift it. Making inclusion about everyone means thinking beyond contact. If it is not possible to bring people together, what does inclusion or integration for everyone look like, and how can we get there?

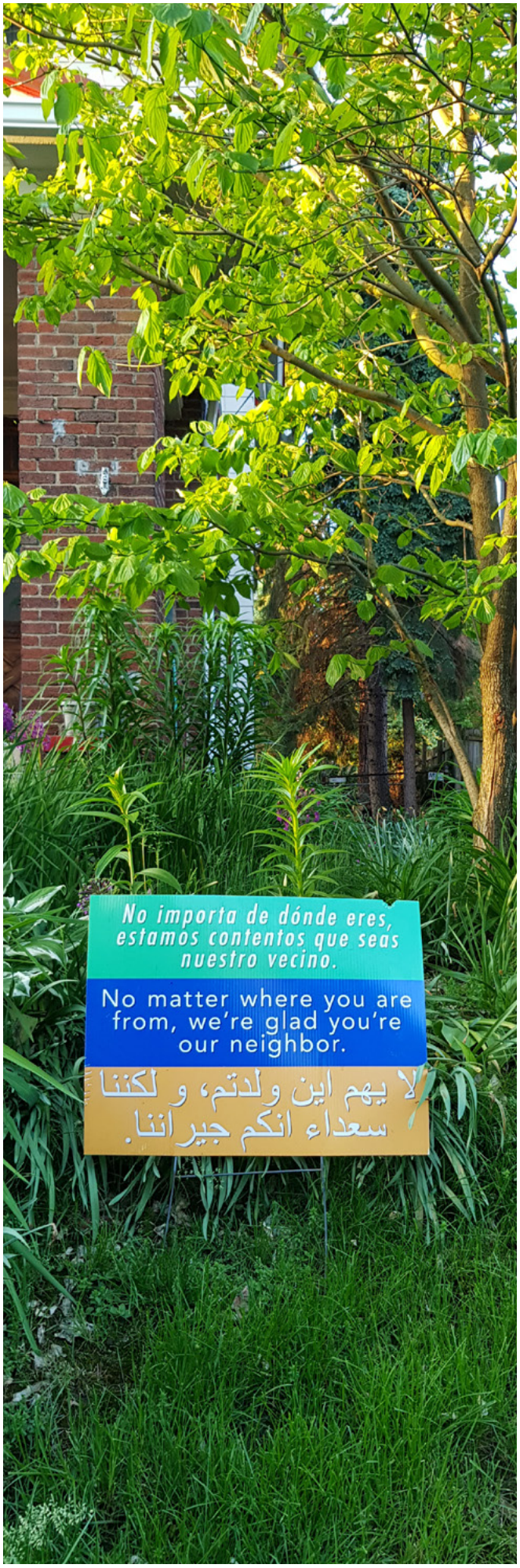
Narrative

Shifting the immigration debate is critical to creating more inclusive communities, a process that demands mobilising support but also speaking to those who may not share the same views. Creating a more open and welcoming debate not only eases the process for newcomers and helps to stem hatred but creates space for progressive policy change on migration, and sets the parameters for political responses. Getting the narrative right requires understanding and targeting the right audience. Welcoming America focus on creating 'middle ground' language in mid-sized cities, playing on local identities to create a shared local story of inclusion.

During my time in the U.S. I often heard the term 'neighbourly' used, often attempting to draw on Christian values in more isolated conservative communities. Natalie Ringsmuth, who runs Unite St Cloud in Minnesota, is from a conservative Christian community which has seen large-scale refugee resettlement, predominantly from Somalia. Following a racist incident at a local school, Natalie started a visibility campaign to spread a sense of support and share a message of welcome. Online and in communities, they speak to 'neighbours', not 'migrants', in an attempt to generate care and compassion without othering or victimising.

Unite St Cloud attempt not only to speak to those who may be more anxious or ambivalent about immigration, but also to attempt to mobilise those who are supportive of migration, to apply their ethos of kindness not only to people who are different to themselves, but also those they don't agree with. Natalie finds that deepening political divides are much of the challenge, with growing political polarisation creating more fear among already divided communities: *"People say, 'well, how do you talk to Trump voters?' like they're on another planet… But that's like my parents"*. They hope they can work to nurture a softer approach of neighbours supporting neighbours, to increase understanding between all groups in the community.

Engagement is an essential component of shifting the migration debate. As Suzette Brooks Masters puts it: *"People need to feel heard and respected before they can make themselves vulnerable and open their minds to other perspectives."*



Welcoming sign, Pittsburgh, PA

While concerns about immigration are often rooted in xenophobia and racism, many come from a place of confusion or uncertainty. If people do not feel listened to or represented, it's understandable that the only narratives that resonate with people who are anxious about migration come from the extremes. Given the mainstreaming of anti-migrant sentiments, it's essential that progressives can engage with people who have concerns about the pace of change.

During the National Conversation on immigration, we found that not only was it possible to reach a consensus for a fair immigration system, but that 'breaking the taboo' and opening up a conversation on immigration was often enough in itself to change the tone of the debate. As people were given space to better understand related issues, to account for nuance and complexity, and for different opinions to be heard and challenged, many softened their stance.

People's Action take the approach of engaging with people through conversations in communities in order to identify common ground, identifying space for solidarity and shared solutions rather than holding discussions about concerns than inevitably amplify fears and engrain division. Their community organising approach means that their action is rooted in and led by engagement, allowing them to shape the debate on migration from the ground up.

In Duisburg, Germany, I visited a mosque in the suburb of Marxloh-Duisburg which had been built on the foundation of pubic engagement. By taking a participatory planning approach to a mosque construction, bringing together a broad coalition of stakeholders to share input in what they wanted to see from the community building, the Marxloher Merkez Mosque was one of the first recent mosque constructions in Germany that did not see mass protests, and has become a point of pride for the local area.

'Mitdenken'

Saxony integration minister Petra Köpping has responded to fears of immigration through engaging with some of the drivers of these sentiments. Repeated calls from local people, angry about immigration, who felt a palpable sense of loss and frustration driven by inequalities in the post-reunification era spurred her to change how she saw integration: *"People said to me: 'You and your refugees! You should integrate us first!"*.

She decided to take a novel approach to integration, one that attempts to include everyone, to listen and to raise the demands of those feeling this sense of loss across East Germany as political priorities, at the same time as supporting newcomers. She holds regular correspondence and discussions with the former railway workers, miners, those in the manufacturing industry and other stakeholders so that they feel heard, and works to ensure positive change to the conditions in which resentments towards migrants and minorities have flourished.

Simon Morris-Lange of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR) stresses the importance of this broader sense of inclusion. He tells me that in the public imagination, *"the better it [integration] gets, the worse it feels"*. Simon explained how increased educational attainment and employment among migrant populations can often transfer into a sense of resource competition among longer-standing residents who are struggling. As he sees it, addressing inclusion by improving access to opportunities for everyone, migrants and non-migrants, is essential. If not, tensions can rise and spill over, setting back progress on inclusion.

Gloomy perceptions of integration are in part, because there is no consistent meaning or measurement of an integrated society. People place the bar at very different heights. For those who feel their position in society is challenged by others or generally have more anti-immigrant views, the bar is held higher. People are seen to be integrated when they are culturally assimilated, sometimes only once they become 'model citizens', highly skilled economic contributors.

But this gap between perceptions and realities also stems from feelings of unfairness and resource competition. For some who feel that their expectations of integration are not met, many also feel that resources have been stripped away from them while put towards supporting migrants. The more resources put into raising the educational or employment attainment of migrants, many see more of a disjuncture between this and the decline or loss they feel in their own lives.' To 'When more resources are put into raising the educational or employment attainment of migrants, some non-migrants see a disjuncture between this and the decline or loss they feel in their own lives.

Simon believes that the best answer to develop a more holistic approach to inclusion may be *"Mitdenken"*; to think with. The idea is that inclusion of migrants and minorities is mainstreamed across all areas of service provision and support, so that inclusion is 'thought with', not treated as a separate issue. It is a kind of policy consciousness rather than policy formation, because integration is about living well together, something that cannot be contained to one policy area.

- **Good communication is key. An approach which uses effective messaging to reach different groups, leads through public engagement and participation helps to bridge division between communities and address difficult issues head on.**
- **Mainstreaming inclusion as an approach across different policy areas, such as transport, housing and education, ensures that inclusion is about everyone and helps to raise it up as a policy priority.**

Marxloher Merkez Mosque, Marxloh-Duisburg

Duisburg is a city made up of connected sprawling towns in the Ruhr metropolitan area of North West Germany. Built on the Steel industry, today most of the mines and processing plants have closed. Around 15% of its 500,000 residents were born outside of Germany. Including the children of migrants born in Germany, this group make up 32% of local residents.

The majority of the BAME and migrant population in Duisburg are Turkish, with most arriving though Germany's 'guestworker' scheme in the 1960s, a recruitment of foreign workers to work manual jobs in the industrial sector as part of post-war reconstruction efforts. There was little infrastructure to cater for these new populations, who were treated as temporary although most made their homes in Germany, and as late as 1985 the Muslim community in Duisberg were using canteens in local coal mines as places of worship.

Unease and outright hostility toward Islam in Germany and in Europe as a whole have led to huge protests against the construction of mosques. Disadvantaged, working-class areas like Marxloh-Duisburg are frequently named 'no go zones' by far right commentators. Towards the end of the 1990s, a plan to build a central mosque in Duisberg to replace the growing number of 'backyard mosques' was met with fears that this construction would ignite protests, attacks and grow hostility towards local Muslims.

Instead, the mosque was turned into an opportunity for integration that involved the whole community. Unlike other mosque construction projects, there was little local opposition and none of the large scale protests seen elsewhere in Germany against the construction of this religious building, which has become a site of civic pride. Sometimes referred to as the 'Marxloh miracle', the success of the central mosque in Duisburg was in fact no miracle, but a lot of hard work, patience and forward thinking.

Building on already-strong interfaith relationships in Duisberg, this project was not just about a mosque, but about creating a strong, resilient network of community leaders, and about "dialogue, dialogue, dialogue".

The Marxloh mosque was built through participatory planning and public engagement, a slow process, finally completed in 2008. A panel of key stakeholders from all faiths and none none, from across the local area was brought together to allow the whole district to discuss the project. This was to be a mosque that had the input of the whole community, a building everyone could view with pride.

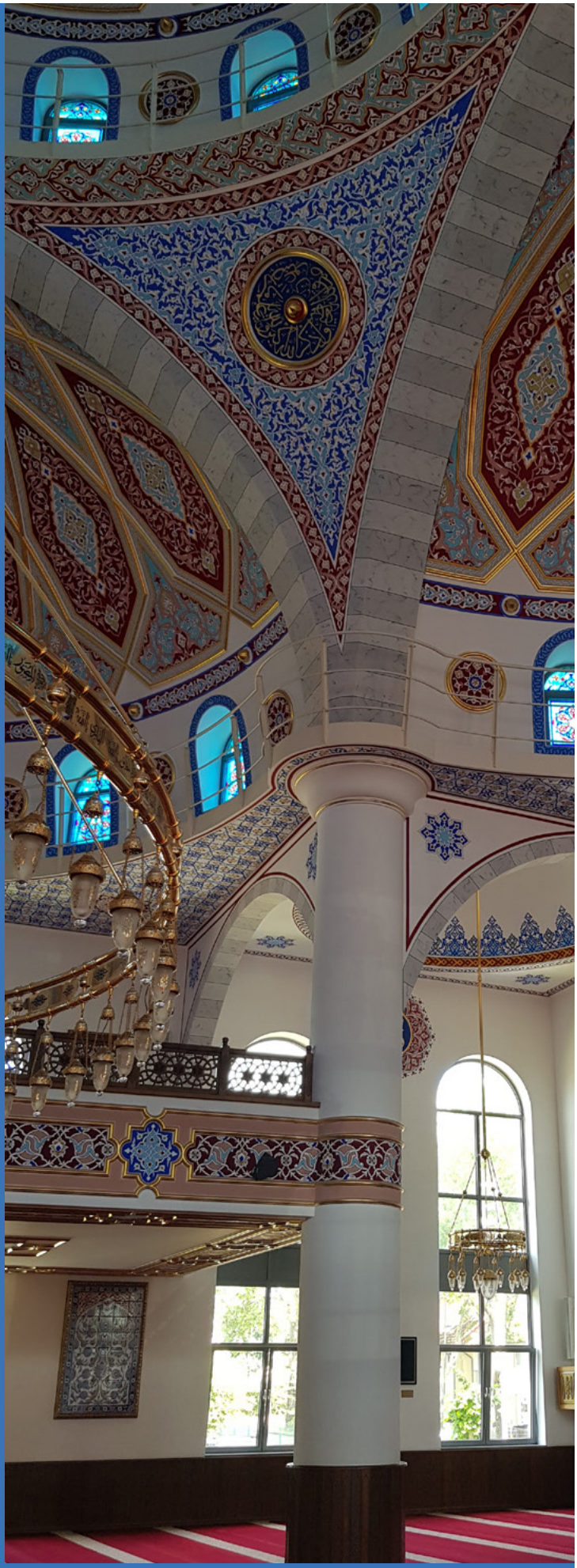
It is an impressive and beautiful building that bears the marks of the development process. In the education and community centre, each of the three domes are hand painted with Islamic art, each bearing a different flower- roses to symbolise Islam, white lilies for Christianity, olive branches for Judaism. The walls are lined with books from multiple faiths and there is even an interfaith archive.

There is a meeting centre and a bistro open to the public, and there are two separate entrances – one for the prayer halls and one for the education and community centre, designed to make non-Muslims feel more comfortable coming in. There is no muezzin call, a decision taken by the Muslim community at the very beginning of the project, and the minaret is no higher than the steeple of a nearby church.

Transparency was key, from the very beginning. One of the smartest aspects of the project are the enormous windows that line the prayer halls, a central aspect of the design to create transparency, visibility and openness between the local Muslim population and the wider community. I am told that through the participatory planning phase, it became clear that it would be important to be able to look in and see what was going on but also to see out in order to stem suspicion and conspirational thinking about activities in the mosque among non-Muslims.

The result has benefitted the whole community, and the surrounding neighbourhood has been regenerated by the development. The mosque is a source of civic pride for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, drawing visitors from around the world. Yet the completion of the building was not the end of the project and the mosque now acts as a centre for dialogue, where the physical space creates opportunities for local people to openly discuss any concerns, anxieties or tensions so that they can be resolved.

The success of the Marxloh mosque shows the importance of engagement and dialogue in overcoming fears and in creating space for inclusion and cohesion. HOPE not hate's own work has found that the best way to combat tension is through difficult conversations. We have also found that by engaging people on immigration, most people have balanced views and want to meet a consensus, and often change their minds just through the process of talking. Marxloh is no miracle, instead it shows how we can do better by overcoming our fears to engage.



Marxloher Merkez Mosque, Marxloh-Duisburg

3. Leadership, Anti-bodies and Assets

Leadership

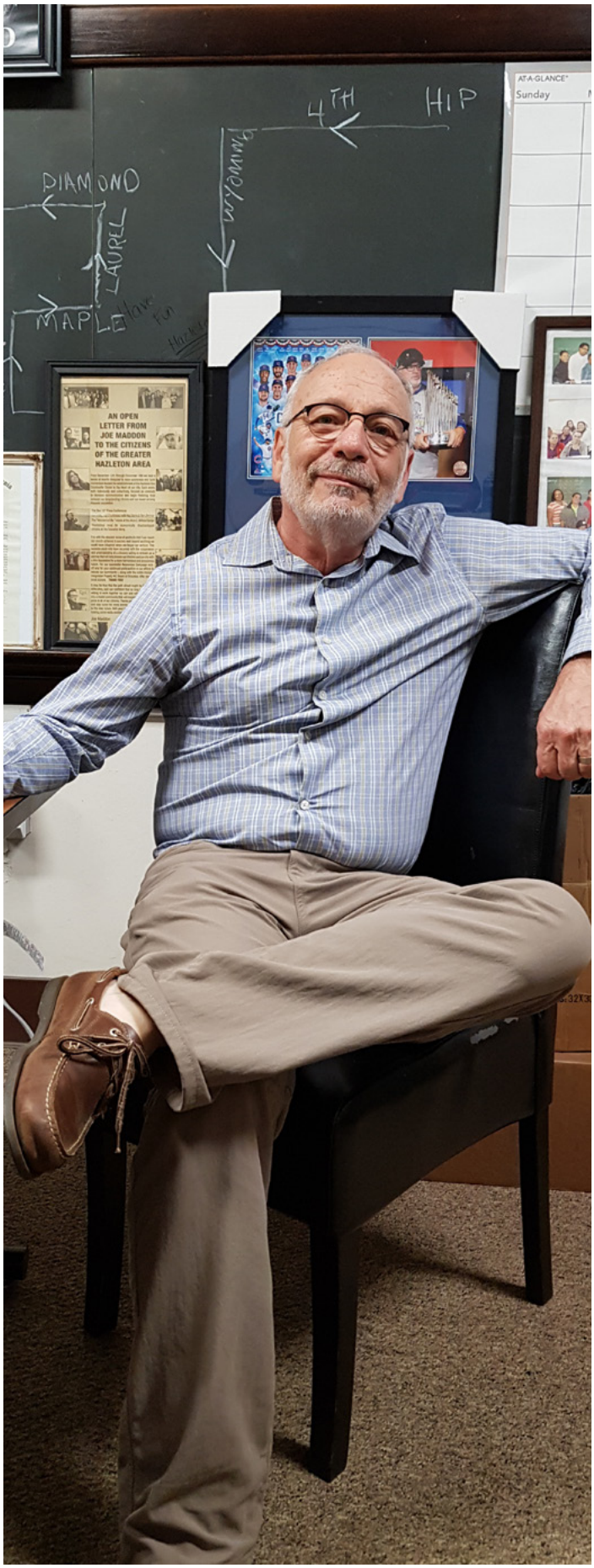
Throughout my Fellowship, individuals and organisations I met with all stressed the need for leaders not just at the national level, but also at the local level and within communities. Good leadership can portray a positive inclusive vision of a town, can create structures that work in order to make that vision a reality, and can have a strong influence on shifting attitudes and cultures.

Welcoming America make government leadership a priority of their welcoming standard, with a focus on city governance. The core elements of this include creating a unit and designating staff for immigration inclusion, partnering across sectors, agencies and jurisdictions, sharing information and community resources with migrant residents, and planning for community-wide migrant inclusion and implementing that plan in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, and maintained in conversation with the immigrant community.

Traditional local leadership, such as mayors, can have a huge impact on shaping inclusive places and making migration and diversity something that is welcomed as a central part of local identities and heritage. Making inclusion a political priority, using a leadership platform to tell a story about inclusion, and allocating resources to create more inclusive communities have a huge impact.

In Kennet Square, PA, a town where around 50% of residents are migrants working in the town's mushroom farms, the majority of whom come from Mexico, there have been significant efforts to increase the visibility of this community. The Advisory Commission for Latino affairs was established within the town council, to bring visibility to its Latino residents, support them through the struggles they face, and develop local political leaders with migrant backgrounds. The commission is volunteer-led, made up of ten local community leaders, but is part of the city council. This leadership body ensures all voices are heard and represented, that the needs of minority communities are fixed into everything the city does.

In Hazleton, PA, local celebrity, Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon, played a key role in setting up an integration centre in the town, opening new avenues for funding and support, and creating an unlikely spokesperson for the benefits of immigration. Maddon is seen as a local hero, revered by many, including those who have concerns about the pace of change in Hazleton. As a revered and trusted figure, with deep roots in the community, his supportive leadership on migration has had a powerful impact in shifting the culture locally, as a powerful and trusted voice able to reach out beyond the choir.



Bobby Curry, Hazleton Integration Project, PA

Hazleton, PA

Hazleton is considered by some to be the fault line of America's immigration debate, sitting within Luzerne county Pennsylvania, pivotal in the election of Donald Trump. In 1964, it was named an 'all American city', a place where those who immigrated to make their fortunes from the coal industry worked hard and prospered. But it has since struggled to accommodate change.

It is a place that has seen the decline of traditional industry and demographic transformation, while the dramatic landscape surrounding Hazleton paints its past, sweeping valleys of dense forest, dotted with coal operations. In 2000, Hazleton housed only a few hundred Hispanics, less than 5% of the population, but today, nearly 60% of the city's 25,000 residents are Hispanic – I am told that over 90% of pupils in some schools in the city are Hispanic. Latin music and reggaeton echo from car windows down quiet streets and people speak in a blend of Spanish and English.

The Hispanic population in Hazleton is largely Dominican, a population who first arrived in New York City in the 1960s under the Immigration and naturalisation act of 1965 which initiated family-chain migration, many fleeing poverty and political upheaval. The majority of Hispanics living and working in Hazleton today come as a spill-over from New York and through their networks, arriving in search of greater security, affordable housing and abundant work in the area's growing industrial parks.

But cultures clashed, as many of the town's residents felt too much change was happening too fast. Following the decline of the coal industry, the city's population dropped by 40% between 1940 and 2000, leaving a profound sense of loss. Economic struggles added to local resentment, triggered by incidents between neighbours, in particular older established residents rubbed up the wrong way by family celebrations and parties, which many saw as a cultural affront.

Tensions came to a head in 2006. The city, then gripped by debt and rising crime, witnessed the killing of a 29 year-old man. Two undocumented migrants from Dominica were charged with his murder. Former Republican Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta, a notoriously anti-immigration figure, responded with an ordinance that was passed by the city council, banning landlords from renting to undocumented migrants. The law was quickly overturned by the courts, leaving the city with millions in legal fees, but left a political legacy in whipping up hostility to immigration.

Being in Hazleton reminds me a little of visiting the Fenlands, an isolated area of Eastern England where a deep seated local identity has met tension in rapidly increasing immigration, with Eastern European migrants drawn to work in farming and food processing industries. While the Fenlands had seen population decline, many among those who have remained have met the new population with hostility. In a visit to the Fenlands as part of the National Conversation on Immigration, participants shared fears about pressures on public services, and spoke of challenges they faced in working alongside migrants who could not speak English.

In Hazleton, much of this resonates. But today, the city is more comfortable with its diversity, crime rates have fallen, and the Latino community have helped to revive dying high streets and invest in the local area. In the 2016 election, the city generally rejected immigration as an issue, although in the wider county, which had favoured Obama by 52% in 2012, Trump became the favourite with 58% of the vote.

Initiatives such as the Hazleton Integration Project are making significant efforts to help migrant communities in the city to adapt to life in the Pennsylvanian town, and in turn, to make the community better understand and accommodate newcomers. When I arrive at Hazleton Integration Project (HIP), it is busy with people coming and going, phones ringing and case notes being written up. The project, which aims to bring together the different cultures that call Hazleton home and unite assist economically disadvantaged residents, was established by 'the most famous Hazletonian', manager of the Chicago Cubs, Joe Maddon. Occupying a community centre near downtown Hazleton, the project gives visibility and support to the city's growing diversity, and in doing so has helped to shift perceptions among long-standing residents.

When the centre first opened, 1,800 people walked through the door to register in the first week, but many locals met this with opposition. The centre was inundated with letters, emails, and social media comments. Outsiders aiming to divide attempted to capitalise on this local opposition, and the KKK even threatened to come to town. Nonetheless, HIP persevered.

HIP is thoughtful in how it projects itself to the community that once rejected them so strongly. As manager Bobby Curry tells me, *"It's simple. Nobody's going anywhere, there's jobs, safety, affordable housing. You have two choices. Make things better or make things worse. And if you make things better, you make things better for everybody"*.

Elaine, HIP's co-manager, tells me how they started with the 'easy wins', approaching the university, the hospitals, but step by step have widened their reach to the broader community. Hostility remains in pockets across the city, and many residents who strongly opposed the changes left for the suburbs. But resistance from local residents has eased off, and as the hard work of the centre reaps rewards, the nasty comments on social media have almost completely disappeared.

HIP is built on generous donations; old chairs from a maternity ward, a basketball court with new hi-tech flooring, a room packed with new apple macs, and even a small STEM centre with a 3D printer. Many of the staff and volunteers come from local high schools and I meet a full room of students from Penn State University, who send a stream of students to stay in Hazleton for a couple of weeks, delivering digital tutoring to local kids, "*levelling the field, so everyone in this town can access opportunity*". The centre puts a real emphasis on helping to develop young leaders in the Latino community and trusting in them to be innovative and enact ideas built through lived experience.

It is evident that the centre would work well without the presence of Joe Maddon, although his reputation as a local hero and his strong leadership cut through beyond the choir. As a trusted local voice local voice, have helped shape attitudes among the local population, making Hazleton a more welcoming city. The centre frequently runs events to bring in people from the wider community, which Joe often attends, bringing celebrity friends with him- most recently Hollywood actor Bill Murray. This appeals to a far broader audience than the centre's usual audience, mixing different people from across the city, and adding legitimacy and mainstream appeal to the centre's message that inclusion is *'the Hazleton way'*.

The centre has been bold in its messaging, but has not alienated anyone in doing so. A huge banner featuring children from the centre hangs over the basketball court, with the slogan *"We are Hazleton!"*, tapping into a proud local identity to mark the belonging of Latino and migrant residents. In the centre, they are working on a huge new mural to be painted on a building downtown, featuring images of Hazleton as it really is. In the design, diversity is not toned down but neither is it made exceptional. It's normalised, alongside other bits of Hazleton heritage, like Joe Maddon and the Cubs, coal mining and the area's mountainous scenery.

There is still a way to go in Hazleton. As I visit, the town is decked out with election banners and I overhear conversations about decline, that the town isn't what it used to be because of demographic change. But the Hazleton Integration Centre has some lessons on leadership and local roots that could help transform similar communities facing these complex challenges.

Anti-bodies and assets

Peter Coleman, a conflict resolutions expert and founder of the Difficult Conversation Lab at the University of Colombia, describes communities as a set of relationships. He describes peace building efforts he has studied, and finds crossing the divides is most effective when it builds on pre-existing relationships; *"it's not, what can you do better, it's looking at who is already doing good stuff to make things better."*

Coleman refers to these working relationships as 'antibodies' in the system, often these are less familiar organisations or individuals for issue-based campaigners, but are deeply embedded in the context in which they work. Anti-bodies are not only those who share a progressive agenda, but are also groups like the YMCA and YWCA, the girls' and boys' scouts, or the WI.

Many of the organisations I meet, and many in the UK, particularly those with a community organising approach, have long been building these cross-organisational progressive alliances, linking causes and objectives. Many of these connections and cross-sector initiatives arise organically. As Shelly Callahan of the Mohawk Valley Community Resource Centre tells me, *"if we expect people to turn up for us, we have to turn up for them"*.

Working with anti-bodies strengthens the ability of organisations and individuals working in the migration space, not only to maximise their reach to others coming into contact with migration issues, such as those working on housing or homelessness, or healthcare. But it also helps to expand their audience reach, and to speak about immigration through organisations and institutions that are more trusted, and in a way that describes shared goals, not competition, helping to normalise and humanise immigration.

Welcoming America and American Immigration Council have been working to build a broad coalition of organisations to explore how inclusion could be deepened across America. Together with the Ad Council, the organisation has launched a high profile campaign, with a series of videos to encourage welcoming support from the so-called 'anxious middle' or 'moveable middle'. At the same time, they are working with networks of antibodies such as the American association of community colleges, the American alliance of museums, Goodwill and the YMCA of the USA, to run a campaign across three pilot areas on the ground.

Wendy Feliz, head of communications at the American Immigration Council tells me how working with these groups has been central in their work to overcome the polarised immigration debate in the U.S. Research shows that these sorts of groups are far more trusted by the majority of the public. Further, their detachment from the political system means that they have the potential to help to normalise migration as a part of how our communities are, rather than pose it as a specific threat or as something that needs to be defended.

This also works at the local level. In Kennett Square, PA, the senior centre- a kind of old people's social centre to challenge loneliness and isolation- had established an initiative with the support of local community organisations and the association for Latino affairs whereby seniors taught English to migrant workers. This worked to tackle isolation among both the elderly population, and among the Latino population, while increasing social contact to bring together people of different backgrounds, and to open opportunities to migrant workers by improving their language skills.

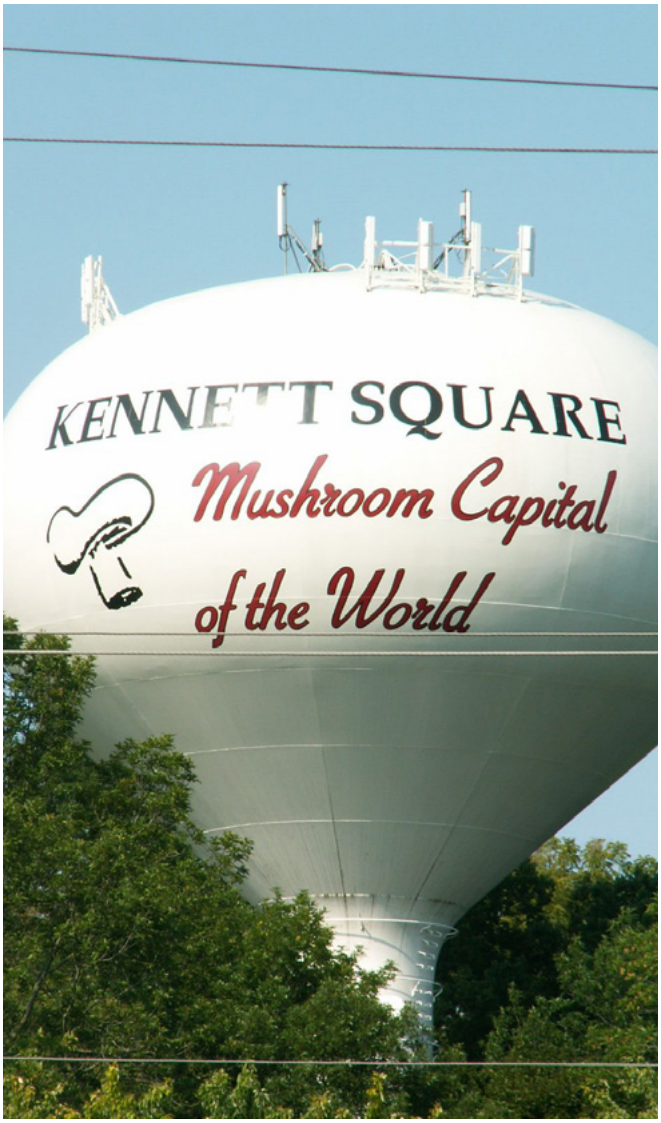
Savannah Miles, a rural organiser for Hometown Action, part of the People's Action network, is working in small town and rural communities across Alabama, places that still reflect America's segregated past. As part of People's Action, Savannah's work follows the thesis that perceived interdependence is the greatest way to make change in communities that have struggles to keep up with social norms, but also lack resources and are burdened with poverty, deprivation, and all the social ills that accompany this.

She has found that there is willing for multiracial cooperation in rural communities across Alabama, but often the resources for doing such work are not. Moreover, the long history and hangover of racial segregation in these isolated areas adds a huge barrier to an inclusion model that relies on bringing people together. Instead, Savannah is working through existing assets and anti-bodies to try and shift attitudes and create a more inclusive culture by developing trust and soft approach to understanding a shared struggle over competition.

As she puts it, it's not just about bringing people together in a room, it's how that room works; *"y'all keep separate if you want, y'all do what you want, so long as you recognise the common ground that you have."* She talks about an annual Bluegrass festival in Gadsten, AL. Though it remains a predominantly white American space, it's somewhere where people come together and celebrate the local spirit, which offers her a starting point to develop inclusive identities. She sees these as pillars of strength in communities; an essential component of building community resilience, which can foster better relations between different groups.

There is clearly more that could be done to collaborate and to work across sectors and interest groups to mainstream inclusion and in doing so, to help depoliticise immigration. But there is also the potential to use existing community assets without forcing change that is unlikely to succeed.

- **Leadership that presents migration in a positive, honest and accessible way, and does not just react to negative public opinion, can drive inclusive change. Traditional leaders such as mayors have the capacity to embed inclusion across areas of local policy, while non-traditional leaders like local celebrities have the power to shape an inclusive culture.**
- **Mainstreaming inclusion as an issue that affects, and needs to be a responsibility of, everyone through broadening partnership work beyond those focussed on migrants taps into existing structures that work, and helps to depoliticise immigration.**
- **Inclusion does not always have to mean bringing different groups of people together, it can mean strengthening things that are already there to make communities more resilient and weaving inclusive approaches into these.**



Water tank, Kennett, PA

4. Getting things right locally

Changing things locally

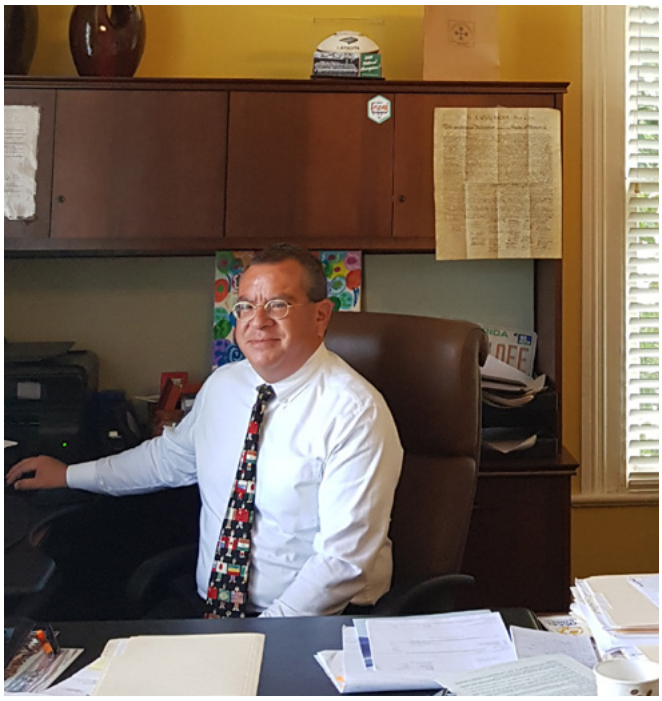
In the National Conversation, we found that small, localised issues – often concentrated to just one or two streets where there was poorly-maintained and overcrowded private rental housing for migrants – could create a negative local frame through which national discourse on migration is filtered. Where migration is seen as putting pressures on public services or is associated with badly-maintained private rental housing and neighbourhood decline, there is usually less public consent for immigration.

Moreover, no place functions in isolation and these impacts, although often minor, can also have an effect that stretches far beyond their locality. We found that people would often cite small, localised issues in surrounding areas, for example, in satellite towns of the West Midlands speaking about what they saw to be effects of migration in certain parts of Birmingham. Addressing these local issues is often not a huge job, but can have an enormous impact on stemming negative perceptions of immigration.

In Clarkston, GA, a small town that has received over 40,000 refugees over the past 25 years, city manager Robin Gomez remarks, *"I've never been in a city where the council provide as many trash cans"*. Clarkston is a bit of a building site during my visit – the entire central area is dug-up as part of a huge regeneration process. They are pedestrianizing the city, not only to make it look more appealing, but also to make it safer for those who walk - predominantly refugee families. Efforts to improve local infrastructure, and as Gomez calls it, a focus on beautification, are all parts of plans to help people in the city live well together. The city has good and affordable amenities and parks, with more being developed, to create non-commercial spaces where people of all backgrounds can come together.

Clarkston has also sought to make significant efforts with housing in order to improve the quality of life for all residents. In Clearwater, FL, where Gomez was previously the city manager, the city gave out community development block grants for housing maintenance. These were pots of funding that homeowners and landlords could access through the city, federal funding that was made available to cities with the capacity to manage such grants.

Lancaster county is – according to the BBC – the refugee capital of America, taking 20 times more refugees per capita than the rest of the US. The Church World Service have been supporting refugee resettlement in Lancaster for 32 years, under the same management. It is this consistency which has seen the organisation succeed in becoming a hub for referral and connection to services. They employ both a housing specialist – who builds relationships with landlords – and a housing manager – who works with residents to ensure they understand basic rules about rubbish collection etc. The necessity of this approach was evidenced recently when CWS lost funding for their housing manager, and saw local tensions flare up between neighbours, and some landlords pull out from the scheme.



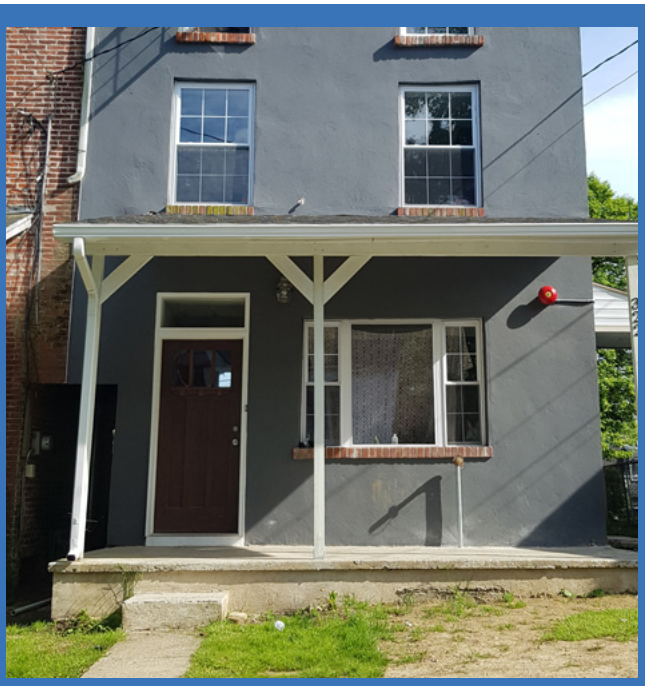
Robin Gomez, Clarkston, GA

Kennet Square, PA

Kennet square is a small town in Eastern Pennsylvania. Just one square mile, it calls itself, the 'Mushroom capital of the world', with a huge industry turning over an annual revenue of $5bn. With such a huge agricultural industry, Kennett is largely reliant on migrant workers – and the small town's population is estimated to be around 50% Latino. Sitting within Chester County, PA, which only has a Hispanic population of 6.5% (82.1% of the county are white non-Hispanic), Kennett is an island of diversity which has seen rapid change.

Kennett is a town that once had significant community tensions, where local employers are heavily reliant on migrant workers but some among the settled population struggled to accommodate rapid change. The local council, along with the 33 non-profits working in the immediate area, have worked hard to change perceptions of local residents and to support newcomers in making Kennett home.

Luis Tovar, head of the Kennett association for Latino Affairs tells me that Kennet is a contradictory place. At first sight, Kennett is a quaint, quiet place, with a bustling high street, and a small



Historic East Linden St, Kennett, PA

tourist industry, proudly named as one of America's top ten small towns. But once you head off the main street, you start to see a different side of the town; mushroom farmers peel off their hairnets outside of large white warehouses and hang outside the beer shop after work.

Kennet has made efforts to bring visibility to its Latino residents and support them through the struggles they face, and established the Advisory Commission for Latino affairs within the town council. Luis tells me that when they first established the commission there was some pushback from the local population; *"people said, 'why do we need this, we get along fine'. But people see what they want to see".*

The commission is volunteer-led, made up of ten local leaders, but is part of the city council. They have worked with the city to pass an equal access pledge, to ensure that the needs of migrant workers are embedded across city departments, which is displayed in public service offices and community organisations across the town. By ensuring the needs of minority communities are fixed into everything the city does, they can ensure that everyone is able to access opportunities and that people live well together.

In the National Conversation on Immigration, we visited some areas that had experienced rapid migration, but lacked sufficient infrastructure in place to cope with the needs of new populations, so tensions between newcomers and settled residents came to a head. Small issues could escalate quickly, such as areas of high occupancy housing which saw neighbourhood decline, or people working long shifts perceived to be 'hanging out' on the street.

Kennett Square had felt similar effects, and tensions arose in one neighbourhood, East Linden St, where large numbers of migrant workers began moving into poorly maintained multiple occupancy properties. As the migrant population grew, some started to exploit the precarious situation, and drugs and Mexican criminal gangs began to take a hold. Many of the houses fell into disrepair, some completely falling apart with rat and cockroach infestations. Tensions built and the end of driveways around town, signs started to appear with a resounding message, "Mexicans go home".

With support from the local Quakers, a transformative community effort was set up, the Historic East Linden Street project. The project not only renovated the homes to be in better condition, but changed the neighbourhood environment, painting each house and clearing litter, adding historic plaques to the buildings, changing the look and injecting historic pride into the place. At the same time, faith and community organisations joined together with the police for a trust-building programme, holding street parties and working to help the police better understand the community and its needs and reduce community fears around authorities. Simultaneously, the police worked to crack down on gang activity. Today, it feels like a diverse neighbourhood, not one in decline.

The Advisory Commission on Latino affairs continues to advocate for more affordable housing with landlords and property developers, and the US department of agriculture runs a scheme to help low income families into home ownership, with low interest loans that require no deposit but just the closing fee. However, for many migrants on low wages with commitments to send remittances back home, even this is not affordable, and there is still a challenge of homelessness in the area.

Local organisations paired up with the YMCA to offer a number of scholarships and fee waivers every year so that migrants can access their sports club, opening opportunities that increase contact between different communities, and aim to offer recreational outlets for marginalised young people.

The commission have also made efforts to respond to niggling issues, but also to help others better understand why they might emerge. Concerns about kids not keeping up in schools has been met with engagement with teachers and schools to help them understand that students sometimes aren't doing their homework because their parents are working 20 hour days and don't speak English so cannot help them. They then pro-actively set up an afterschool club and tutoring services with local churches to resolve the problem, in conjunction with schools.

The strength of civil society in Kennett and the willingness of the city council to show leadership in raising the visibility of isolated migrants to ensure they are included, tackling 'difficult' issues head on and creating proactive solutions that open up opportunities for everyone, have made huge cultural shifts in Kennett.

Support from day one

Wealth inequalities between core cities and smaller conurbations, alongside relatively small numbers of migrants, or experiences of migration as a new phenomenon, mean that often towns cannot offer the same level of support to new migrants, who are instead at the mercy of a postcode lottery for the support they can receive.

Some of the best examples of small town integration I visited during this Fellowship often relied on the presence of a physical space in the area, which serve as a one-stop-shop for new arrivals to receive various forms of support, but also create a social hub and act as a stepping stone to develop trust between institutions and new residents. Joined up thinking, brings multiple services together under one roof, or creating the infrastructure for simple referral to other service providers helps newcomers

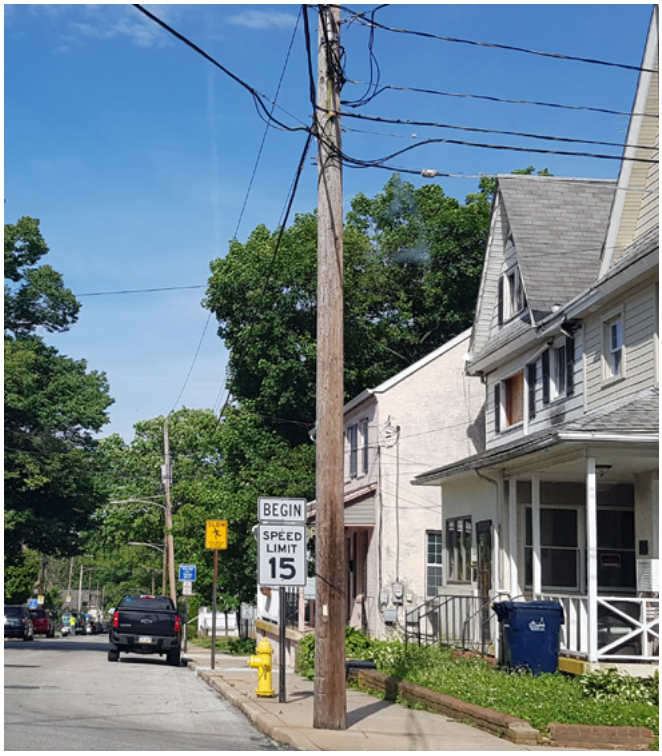
For example, the Mohawk Valley Resource Centre which offers everything from traffic safety to workforce and employment development and a health access programme, or La Comunidad Hispana in Kennett Square, PA, a health centre which also offers social assistance, legal referrals and education and job placement services . These centres can also be more informal, like Refuge, a coffee shop in Clarkston, GA, which creates a central space for welcome and hosting community events.

Approaches employed by some cities, such as welcome centres set up in libraries which offer outreach sessions from immigration support workers or direction to multiple services could be useful in towns with fewer resources, especially those with very small numbers of migrants or less visible migrant communities.

Welcoming America have developed the 'welcoming standard' which has created what it sees as *"a comprehensive roadmap for places building more cohesive and equitable communities and fostering connections between newer immigrants and long-time residents"*. It contains a set checklist of requirements for places across seven areas, from governance and leadership to policing and education. If a place can meet all of the core requirements, they can become a certified welcoming place, and can be held accountable against these measures.

This attempt to standardise welcoming gives clarity to municipalities, civic society and others over what they can do. While only a handful of places have now been granted certification, the model's attempts to standardise what it means to be welcoming is a strong attempt to close the gaps between what different places offer.

Welcoming America are now working to roll out their approach at a regional level, in the Atlanta region, Georgia. The Welcoming region initiative is a different way of matching change at scale, running localised campaigns and lobbying city councils across the region to work collectively for the same approach. Rather than taking the Welcoming standard as a blue print, the initiative brought together leaders from across



Kennett, PA

the region to adapt this in a series of workshops, and developed a series of recommendations that they wanted to pursue.

While this regional approach is working well, it has raised questions about the ability of using a blanket approach for such a large and diverse area, and often linking this to the national approach remains a challenge. National immigration policy can often contradict localised integration work. Many of the organisations I meet in the U.S. have had their funding for integration work slashed by the introduction of more restrictive immigration policy under the Trump administration, which is already resulting in increased tensions locally.

There is no real way to jump scales without working at the local and national level simultaneously. It is important to get things right locally, but there is also a need for adequate investment from the national level in infrastructure, engagement and ensuring people can access services and opportunities; one that closes the gaps between core cities and towns or more isolated areas.

- **Getting the small things right locally, addressing points of tension and investing in local infrastructure to meet the needs of new communities, can make a big difference in the local area and beyond.**
- **Offering joined-up support from day one helps to support new migrants to become active members of their communities and mitigates any points of conflict arising.**
- **Resourcing inclusion needs to be more than a postcode lottery. Provision for things like language classes and legal support must extend outside of core cities.**

5. Conclusion: Leadership, stemming the spread of hate and making inclusion about everyone

This Fellowship sought answers to some of the biggest questions facing community relations in the UK. Questions of inclusion in this context are complex, and there are no shortcuts in getting there. Successful inclusion is a long-term project, requiring contributions from migrants, receiving communities, local organisations, service providers and local and national government.

At the local level, positive leadership and vision help to drive an inclusive agenda forward, set the tone for welcome and where possible, to depoliticise immigration, and maximise the use of local assets and anti-bodies. It is essential to lead by talking about the difficult issues as well as celebrating everything good about our communities. But this needs to be matched with action, to address sometimes difficult challenges that arise, particularly around rapid demographic change.

This work cannot function in isolation from what happens at the national and even international level. Not only do support services, like language classes, need resourcing through national funding, but hostility towards migrants is often driven by underlying frustrations and resentments about far bigger issues like isolation, jobs and housing. Overcoming these issues means addressing disconnection and inequalities between places, and challenging decline and loss. Addressing inclusion within this broader context in which hostility develops requires policy change across multiple areas, from policing to housing to industrial development.

Moreover, it is essential to challenge enmity both within and external to communities. If a community presents hostile ground for migrants and minority groups, hatred will override the potential for integration and inclusion. At every level, racism and the mainstreaming of anti-migrant sentiment need to be tackled by positive leadership.

Fundamentally, inclusion needs to be about everyone. Efforts which focus only on minority and migrant groups will fail, because living well together is the responsibility of everyone.

Recommendations

Addressing town-city divides

- Inclusion needs to be about levelling the playing field of opportunity to everyone. We can get there by identifying a shared struggle and developing the infrastructure to fight for that.
- Inclusion and integration narratives need to be about the inclusion of everyone, including non-migrants who feel marginalised or excluded. There is space to bring together inclusion work with community economic renewal, as both share aims to opening opportunities and building resilient communities.
- Supporting the economic potential of all migrants, whatever their skill level, should feed into economic and industrial strategies at a regional and national level.
- Current UK law prevents asylum seekers from working in the UK, which limits the ability of those seeking asylum to integrate, often harms their wellbeing, and limits their economic potential. The Government must allow asylum seekers to work if their case has not been decided within six months, unconstrained by the Shortage Occupation List.

Making inclusion about everyone: Engagement, communication and shaping a culture of inclusion

- Good communication is key. An approach which uses effective messaging to reach different groups, leads through public engagement and participation helps to bridge division between communities and address difficult issues head on.
- Mainstreaming inclusion as an approach across different policy areas, such as transport, housing and education, ensures that inclusion is about everyone and help to raise it up as a policy priority.

Leadership, Anti-bodies and Assets

- Leadership that presents migration in a positive, honest and accessible way, and does not just react to public opinion, can drive inclusive change. Traditional leaders such as mayors have the capacity to embed inclusion across areas of local policy, while non-traditional leaders like local celebrities have the power to shape an inclusive culture.
- Mainstreaming inclusion as an issue that affects, and needs to be a responsibility of, everyone through broadening partnership work beyond those focussed on migrants taps into existing structures that work, and helps to depoliticise immigration.
- Inclusion does not always have to mean bringing different groups of people together, it can mean strengthening things that are already there to make communities more resilient and weaving inclusive approaches into these.

Getting things right locally

- Getting small things right locally, addressing points of tension and investing in local infrastructure to meet the needs of new communities, can make a big difference in the local area and beyond.
- Offering joined-up support from day one helps to support new migrants to become active members of their communities and mitigates any points of conflict arising.
- Resourcing inclusion needs to be more than a postcode lottery. Provision for things like language classes and legal support must extend outside of core cities.

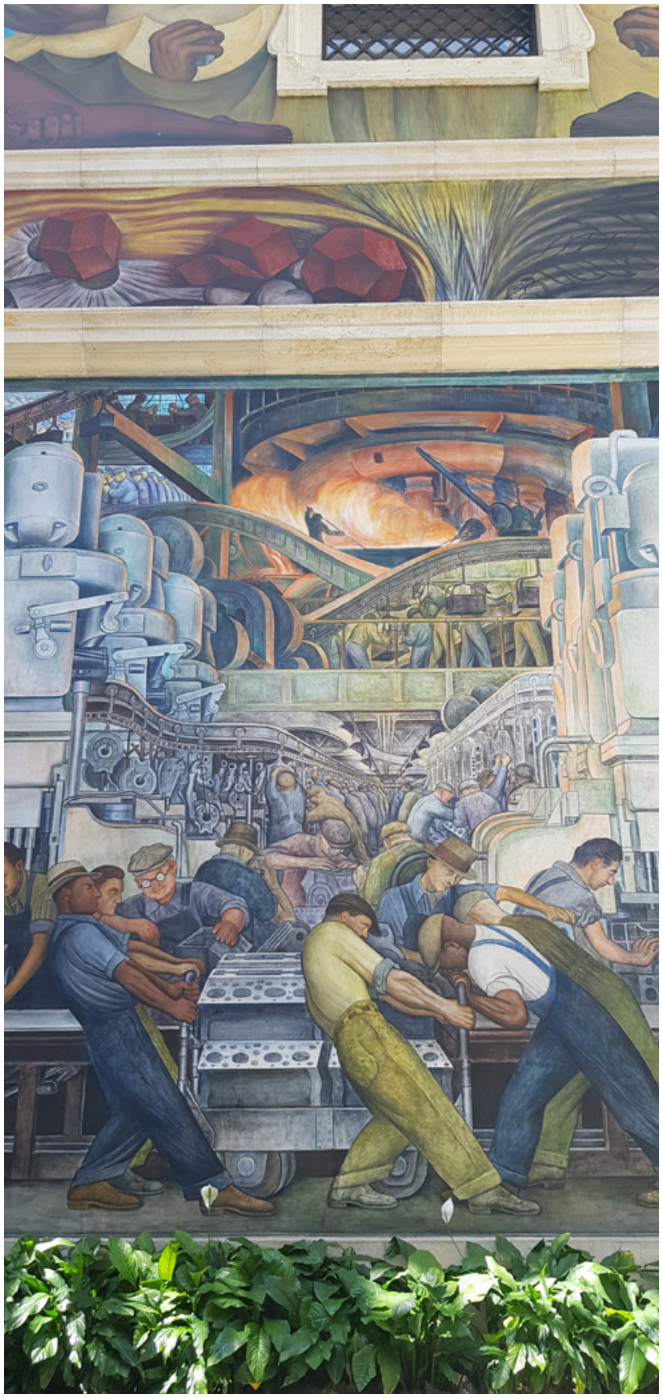
Hopeful Towns

Applying the learnings of this Fellowship, Hope not hate Charitable Trust have launched the Hopeful Towns project. The aim of the Hopeful Towns project is to help towns across England and Wales to fulfil the potential. Delivered by Hope not hate Charitable Trust and the Centre for Towns, it will provide support at a local level, as well as seeking to influence national policy.

We want to address the root causes of hate, to stop divisive narratives from taking hold in the first place. And we want to promote policies which champion the value of towns, and stress a fundamental equality between different sorts of UK settlement.

To understand the issues that are specific to towns, we are developing pilots in three flagship areas. We want to understand what works and what does not, when it comes to building a robust local identity and positive shared goals.

The Hopeful Towns project aims is to collaborate with community leaders – developing ideas and helping to scale them up to a national level. A local panel of key stakeholders will drive each pilot. Via extensive engagement with the local panels, initially running for 18 months throughout 2020 and early 2021, the Hopeful Towns project will develop and test ideas. We aim for these to feed into national best practice and government policy – as well as helping to develop a clear strategy for each area.



Diego Riviera mural, Detroit Institute of Arts, MI

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Endnotes

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