Queen Margaret University
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'My soul has no colour' – Exploring the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants: A case study in Scotland, United Kingdom.

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Completed in fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Science in MSc Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

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Abstract

A great deal of political and public discussion has emerged through theory and policy about refugees and asylum seekers' integration and the experience of their settlement process. However, the experience of other migrant groups seems less explored by both theory and policy. Therefore, this case study aims to explore the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants. The objectives of this study are to understand participants' perspectives on the meaning of integration and the challenges they face in their everyday lives. I employed the conceptual framework of integration to guide focus group discussions, which elicited an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions on the effectiveness of integration initiatives such as citizenship and English language tests, employment, housing and education services that are supposed to facilitate appropriate environments, where migrant groups can integrate with the host community. The findings of this study show that the experiences of the South Asian economic migrant group are significantly different from other migrant groups. For instance, the UK Home Office considered citizenship as one of the fundamental factors for refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into British society. However, Participants of this study clearly state that citizenship has a very minimal impact on their settlement process. Instead, race equality, positive public perception and reduction of racial discrimination were identified as the key to creating an environment where economic migrants' groups successfully engage with the other community members. Such effective and positive social engagement is essential for successfully integrating the South Asian economic migrant group into British society.

Keywords: Integration; social cohesion; economic migrants; South Asian; host; Natives; Communities; Host; Theory; policy.

Introduction

South Asian migrants have a long history with Great Britain; the post-second World War labour shortage actively created significant migrant flows from South Asian countries, mainly India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, to the UK (Peach, 2006, P.133). This migrant group intend to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and socio-religious-cultural identity. Such distinctiveness and social and religious identity are essential in their settlement process and influence their living experience in the UK. However, immigration policy and public perception also affect how much this migrant group wants to settle in the receiving countries (Peach, 2006, pp 134-135). For instance, bringing the family to the UK only became a priority for South Asian migrants since the immigration controls were introduced by the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 (which introduced control over the number of people entering the UK from the Commonwealth countries). Thus, I propose that immigration policies like the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 significantly influenced South Asian economic migrants moving to the UK permanently.

In the UK, immigration control is at the top of the political discussion and agenda. Still, some policies and states fail to maintain an effective immigration system and create an environment where the host and migrant groups can successfully integrate (Castles, 2004). Similarly, MacGregor and Bailey (2012) found that the State policy process further reinforces the 'Otherness' or creates differences among various ethnic groups. For example, in the UK, the New Labour government 2009 introduced multiple tools, including requiring newcomers to learn English and pass a citizenship test to foster community cohesion (I refer to these tools as integration initiatives). Such requirements may create community cohesion to a certain extent. However, the finding suggests that these initiatives are more likely to highlight the differences between migrants and natives (Strang and Ager, 2010, p 593).

Further, the ECRE (1998), cited in Ager and Strang (2008, P.176), stated that integration and community cohesion are two-way processes where newcomers should be prepared to adapt to new lifestyles, and the host community must be willing to adjust to newcomers. However, policies seem inclined to impose various responsibilities on the migrant groups to adjust to the receiving community. They are very reluctant to outline the responsibility of the host

communities. Therefore, such a policy approach can conflict with integration dynamics as a two-way process.

Macgregor and Bailey (2012) argue that national policies and theoretical aspects shape the immigration and integration process, in which mainly academia and experts are involved in deciding what would be needed for newcomers to integrate with the host society. Therefore, policies and theories do not reflect the accounts of the migrant group's first-hand experience and can lead to failure in identifying their integration needs (Kierans, 2021). As a result, some migrant groups may not fully integrate with the host community and find it challenging to settle into British society (Rutter, 2007, cited in Macgregor and Bailey, 2012, P.383). It is helpful to note that the integration needs and experiences of different migrant groups have been less explored or even mixed up with refugee and asylum seekers' integration by policymakers over the years (Rutter, 2015). In addition, minimal research and study were conducted based on migrants' experiences, which can be why significant research gaps exist in understanding the integration needs of specific migrant groups (Rutter et al., 2007, P.15). Informed by the above, I ask to explore' what the integration experiences of South Asian economic migrants are?'. I also anticipate that the findings of this study will inform the need for further exploration in understanding the integration needs and the experiences of other migrant groups.

Background

Integration became a considerable public and political concern due to post-second World War migration and, more recently, the increasing number of asylum-seeking populations in the UK (Thompson, 2014). Both policy and theory have different ways of addressing these concerns: policies tend to develop strategies to address the issues and use indicators to measure the desired outcomes (Daley, 2007, P 158). On the other hand, theory generates the discussion of how the key objectives are formed, what is known about the topic and what else can be further explored (Meyer and Ward, 2013, p. 527). Despite such differences, integration is still a standard term used by both theory and policy to examine the relationship between the migrant population and the host communities (Ager and Strang, 2008; Kierans, 2021). It is also important to point out that both theory and policy identify some core elements of integration, including access to work, education, health and the ability to interact with other members of the community as an indicator to understand what constitutes a successful integration (Ager and Strang, 2008; Ndofor-Tah *et al.*, 2019). Both policy and theory suggest that integration is a two-way process: the host population must adjust to the needs of the migrant and facilitate the right environment, and the new arrival should also be willing to blend in with the host communities (Ager and Strang, 2008). Similarly, The Scottish Government (2018-2022b) stated that integration is a long-term two-way process that requires positive interaction between individuals and the host population.

Considering the above debate, there seem to be similarities between theory and policy in defining integration. According to the International Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland (2001. p.9), integration is the ability of the migrant people to participate in all the significant events in the society in which they live without giving up their cultural identity. Therefore, integration is the central concept of the political discussion in determining the rights of migrants, their settlement process and their way of adapting to the host population (Thompson, 2014). Interestingly, Mulvey (2015, P.360) states that integration means forms of assimilation; it is also referred to as the multiple overlapping factors that focus on 'Britishness' and the 'Notion' of making migrants less different from the receiving communities. In the UK, the Home Office introduced a new policy called the 'Indicator of

Integration and community cohesion' that focuses on developing community relationships, in which both host and newcomers take their share responsibilities and access to opportunities like socialise, learning, work, regardless of their background (Ndofor-Tah *et al.,* 2019).

The migrant group's ethnic diversity contributes significantly to improving social cohesion, but there is still a strong misconception that migrant populations are often reluctant to integrate with host societies. Such unwillingness is perceived as one of the barriers to building social cohesion (Daley, 2007, P.159). The concept of integration is complex, and there is also a considerable lack of clarification about the idea of integration with 'what?' For example, does it mean integrating with their ethnic group, local community, or British society? Such a lack of clarification marginalises migrant groups and creates barriers to engaging with host populations (Spencer and Charsley, 2021). In addition, some policies and their implication create further challenges on how policymakers define and perceive the integrations, shaping the public perception of migrant settlements (Lewis, 2005). For example, the UK government has increased restrictive legislation to operate the "entry" and the rights of the migrant population, which increased the hostile public behaviours towards the new arrival, resulting in increased numbers of racist incidents and also negative public views towards migrant people, especially the refugee population (Daley, 2007, P.160). Arguably, the media seems to play a crucial role in shaping public views towards migrants and refugee integration: negative stories regarding the number of immigrants coming to the UK and how that impacts the British economy have increased the hostility towards asylum seekers and negatively impacted their settlement process (Lewis, 2005). Therefore, the media can play a crucial role in creating public anger towards the immigrant population, increasing the number of racist incidents and preventing social cohesion between host and migrant populations.

Most of the research focuses on the discussion around the refugee population, their settlement experience, and the integration process often does not consider the experience of other migrant groups (Ryan, 2018). Several factors, including the right to move, opportunities for network building, and interpersonal relationships, may influence how the migrant population would integrate with the host country (Ryan, 2018). In addition, mobility

rights often influence whether the migrant population choose to stay for the short-term or long-term in the host country. For example, the migrants who came to Great Britain post-war II were influenced by their right to move within British labour markets, which provided opportunities for adjustment with their migration plans and ultimately led them to decide to settle in the host country permanently (Ryan, 2018; Ryan, 2011). As discussed above, there might have been similarities regarding integration facilitators, such as access to services, jobs, education, and housing for all groups of migrants. However, migrant integration is more than just mixing up with the host population or learning a new language and their values; it is about having the possibility to be included in the host society (Rutter, 2015).

It is evident that migrant policy seems to have a more general approach to defining integration and might not consider the differences among various migrant groups. According to Ndofor-Tah *et al*. (2019), integration is a multidimensional process that enables a positive relationship between newcomers and the host communities, creating social cohesion. However, It is necessary to understand the reasons behind refugees and other migrants' migration and their experiences of integrating into a receiving society, such as the economic migrants' group making conscious decisions to move to another country and refugees may be forced to move (Kearns and Whitley, 2015, P4). It is because different migrants are perceived differently; this impacts how people experience integrating into receiving society.

Informed by the above, I suggest that the integration needs and experiences of various migrants will differ. Therefore, the integration experiences of other migrant groups should be identified by policy and theory, enabling meaningful social cohesion among the various groups at the community level.

Rationale

This research has grown from the lack of understanding of the integration experience of other migrant groups. As discussed above, both policy and theory explicitly focus on the experience of refugees and asylum seekers and suggest that all groups of migrants may have similar needs as well as their experience of settling in the new country (Ager and Strang 2008; Ndofor-Tah *et al.*,2019). However, some theories and researchers (Rutter, 2015, p. 17; Ryan, 2018; Ryan, 2011) acknowledge that migrants are a diverse group; broader aspects such as country of origin, routes of travelling, the purpose of the move, and past and current experiences need to be considered before generalising the concept of integration needs.

Scotland recognises the significant contribution of migrant groups and has introduced several policy tools to facilitate their integration into the Scottish economy, such as   The Scottish Government, 2018 a; Scottish Affairs Committee, 2018. On that account, Scotland seems to have a more liberal approach toward welcoming migrants nationally, especially skilled workers (Scottish Affairs Committee, 2018). Most economic migrant tends to be well-educated and have a significant social contribution history (The Scottish Government, 2018a, 2018; Kierans, 2021). According to the Scottish Affairs Committee, 2018, the total number of non-British nationals living in Scotland is 388,000, seven per cent of the Scottish population. However, non-refugee migrants, especially non-EU nationals, can only get permission to come to Scotland or the UK through a specific Visa category, known as 'The UK's Point-based Visa System', which is currently known as skilled worker visa (Scottish Affairs Committee, 2018, P11). However, Asia is not part of the EU; therefore, most migrants follow the point-based visa system (Scottish Affairs Committee, 2018). The number of Asian origin population living in Scotland is 69,000, which is still a significant workforce for the Scottish economy. Some initiatives to ensure race equality are taken, including Indicators of Integration (2019), Race Relation Amendment Act (2000) and Race Equality Framework and Action Plane (2016-2030), to reduce the racial disparities. Nevertheless, people from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are more likely to be subject to institutional racism and most services fail to meet their needs (Prajapati and Liebling, 2019).

Further, these economic migrants may not be able to get suitable employment based on their previous qualifications; the UK's policy often does not recognise foreign qualifications, which

could negatively impact their self-esteem and social connection, and such lack of social connection may impact their psychological well-being. It is also important to mention that other migrant groups, like refugees and asylum seekers, face challenges, like economic migrants. Therefore, the findings of this case study can be useful in contributing to addressing the integration barriers for refugees and asylum seekers.
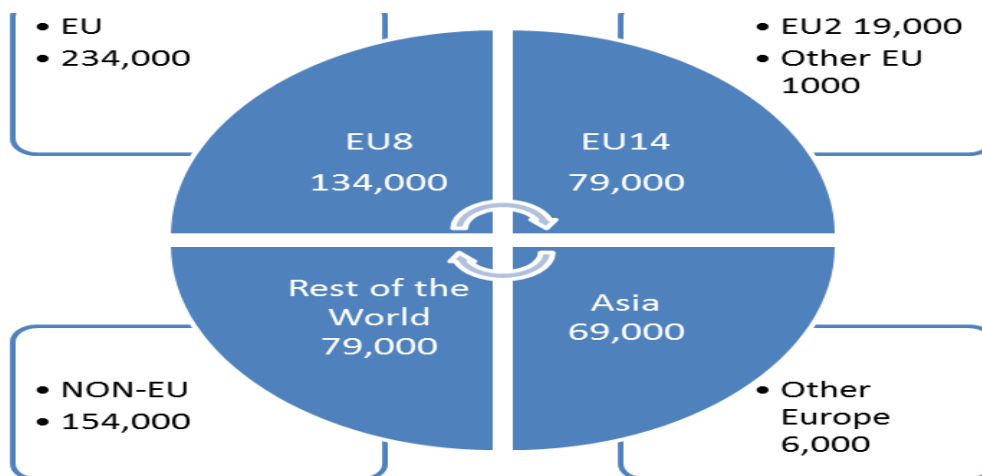

Figure 1: *Number of non-British nationals living in Scotland, 2019 (Source: Annual Population Survey, January to December 2019, Office for National Statistics)*

This research focuses on Asian economic migrants, as there is a long history between Asia and the British Empire. After World War II, Asian economic migrants were encouraged to come to the UK to fill the gap between skilled and unskilled jobs (Thompson, 2014). The number of economic migrants increased significantly between 1953 and 1961, leading to the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962, to restrict the number of migrants entering the country, and a citizen of commonwealth countries became subjects of immigration (Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962, 2022). In 2008, the Point-based Visa System was introduced to reduce the increasing number of non-EU migrants. Currently, people from Asia migrants can proceed the following route to enter the UK.

Types of Migrants	Routes of entry to the UK
Family	A family visa provides permission to stay in the UK
Skilled work	Skilled workers visa can apply for leave to remain in the UK after five years.
Temporary work	A temporary work visa does not lead to settlement; further leave is possible by switching to alternative visa routes.
Study	For a study visa, the duration of the stay may depend on the length of the course.
Visit	Visit visa, provide leave to stay in the UK for up to 6 months.
Dependents	Visa based on the relationship with another migrant who has gained settled in the UK

Table 1: Entry routes for economic migrants (Sources: The Home Office, 2015)

The justification of this study is the research gap and limitations of understanding the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants. Findings suggest some migrant groups can face significant disparities that could impact their ability to create a social network with the neighbourhood communities due to a lack of attention to understanding the integration experience of the specific migrant populations (Ryan, 2011; Rutter, 2015). Such prevalence of disparities can be higher in South Asian communities as their views and experiences are often neglected by the research field and policy-making process (Prajapati and Liebling, 2021).

Conceptual framework

This study uses the conceptual framework of integration to explore the integration experience of non-refugee Asian economic migrants. This framework was proposed by Ager and Strang (2008) to draw a central understanding of the need for the successful integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Although this research aims to understand the experience of economic migrants, it is anticipated that this conceptual framework would provide clear structural guidelines to analyse the integration needs and the experience of this target group. However, as discussed above, economic migrants appeared to be overlooked by both theory and policy, leading to minimal research on these groups; therefore, no specific framework was developed for mainly economic migrants.
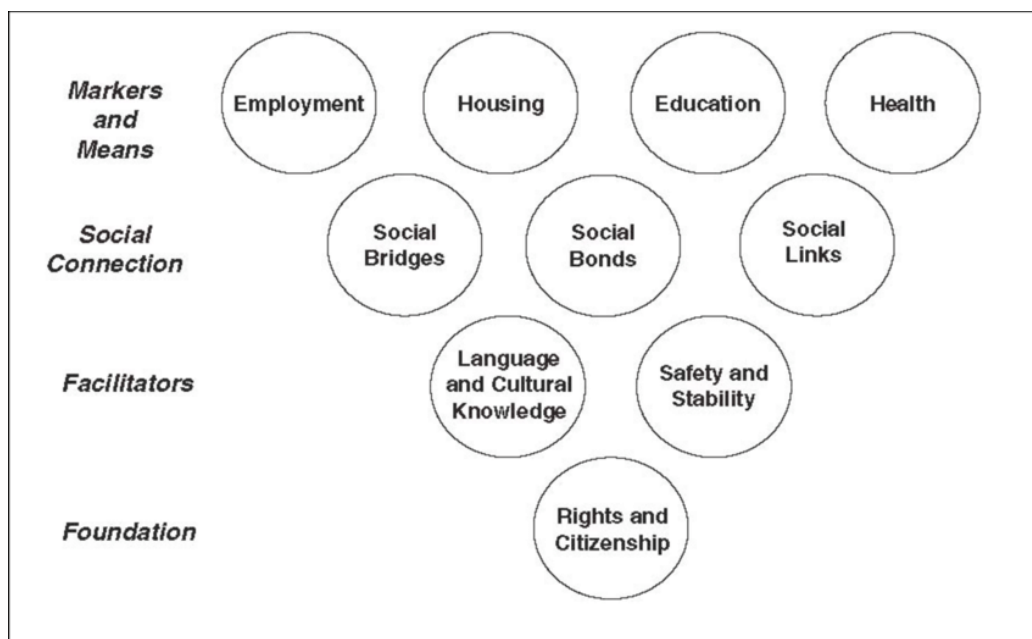

Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager and Strang, 2008)*

This framework proposes four key themes: Makers and means, social connection, facilitators and foundation, which provide a structure for analysing, measuring, and shaping the understanding of integration concepts (Ager and Strang, 2008). Each theme consists of several vital domains or areas of activities, including employment, housing, education, health, social bridges, social bonds, social links, language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability,

rights and citizenship. These key areas indicate the success of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008).

Therefore, these domains provide a guideline for measuring the level of participation that occurred by the refugees and asylum seekers within domains of activity in public areas, indicating what constitutes a successful integration. In addition, several researchers have adapted and used the conceptual framework of integration widely, including (Strang and Quinn, 2019 Yahani, 2019; Gibs, 2014; Strang and Ager, 2010), to understand the meaning of integration and what is needed to enable successful social cohesion between the host and migrant population. Therefore, it is anticipated that using this conceptual framework would be an opportunity to understand whether there is a need to develop a specific framework for Asian economic migrant groups or whether the standard framework can measure the integration needs of all migrant groups.

Literature review

During the literature review, I identified significant research gaps in understanding the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants, as most papers focused on the integration needs and experience of refugees and EU migrants. However, some papers provide some crucial guidelines for understanding the integration experience of specific migrant groups, such as South Asian economic migrants.

Barriers to integration

In line with integration studies (Ager and Strang, 2008; Strang and Ager,2010), it can be suggested that integration is a complex process, and some factors such as complex bureaucratic requirements, feelings of insecurity, the notion of unwantedness, racism and bullying are the main barriers to integration. Moreover, such complexities are accelerating due to the super-diversity of different migrant groups (Vertovec, 2007); the ideas of the migrant settlement process and the integration should be revised based on the multi-dimensionality of integration (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). Similarly, Mulvey (2015, P 373) states that policy and its effects can create challenges for refugees and asylum seekers and their integration process, such as imposing restrictions for taking paid employment or allocating housing in certain areas in which new arrivals may not be able to interact with host communities socially. Such policy effects can lead to social isolation and fail to generate social cohesion between communities. According to Strang and Ager (2010), integration is a concept used in debates to understand the adjustments and settlements of refugees and asylum seekers. This settlement process is also described as a two-way interaction between the host and the new arrival. However, Phillimore (2012), cited in the Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore (2017, P.181), highlighted that there is a lack of precision in the definition of integration, despite the majority of policymakers using integration as the meaning of settlements of refugees and asylum seekers. The core themes like makers and means, social connection, facilitators and foundation were produced by Ager and Strang (2008) to identify what constitutes successful integration. However, it can suggest that the conceptual framework of integration proposed by Ager and Strang (2008) may fail to identify the integration needs of other migrant groups because it does not consider the diversity of

the ethnic background of the migrant population. The ethnicity and background of the migrant groups play a vital role in their settlement process and their ability to create a social connection with the host communities (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017, P.181). Therefore, this super-diversity should be considered to understand the integration needs. For instance, Peach (2006) suggested that Indian migrants were more proficient in speaking English than Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrant groups, facilitating Indian migrant groups to integrate easily with British communities and access higher education and better employment than the other two migrant groups. Therefore, the complexity of the diverse backgrounds of the migrant groups was considered during the selection of the participants for this research, as their experience and integration needs may also differ.

Factors such as individuals' lifestyle, age at the times of migration and length of time in the host country can significantly influence migrants' settlements and integration process (Erdal and Ezzati, 2015). However, these factors are often missing in the discussion during the formation of methodological and theoretical frameworks in migration research. For example, the finding of this research conducted by Erdal and Ezzati (2015) suggests that adults or older migrants face significant challenges in their settlement process compared to those who came to the host country as a child or were born. Further, individual lifestyles might impact the settlement process. For example, some migrants' parents decide to stay in the host country if their children start going to school or planning for a future career within the host country (Erdal and Ezzati, 2015, P.1207). The evidence also highlights that the ideas of belongingness develop over time as some may feel more inclusive with the host community once they live there for several years, learn a new language and be able to interact within the community that they are living in (Erdal and Ezzati, 2015; Ager and Strang, 2008; The Scottish Government, 2018-2022b). By contrast, some migrant groups may experience difficulties accessing the labour market and education and lack culturally appropriate services; such experiences can lead to failures in creating social cohesion (OECD, 2018; Ndofor-Tah *et al.*, 2019).

Further, to what extent the integration occurs among different groups of people can be shaped by public perception: a negative public attitude toward migrants can lead to

inequalities and discrimination and create barriers to establishing a trusting reciprocal relationship between the host and migrant communities (Strang and Quinn,2021; Mulvey, 2015). In addition, Caballero and Aspinall (2018), cited in Lewis (2005), illustrate a news article published by the Daily Express in 1930, '***The Street of Hopeless Children***', to identify how print media manipulate the actual state of social cohesion and can misinterpret. The Daily Express cropped actual visual images, removing all but mixed-raced children to show the details of these children's lives. However, the reality was that there were significant social interactions between white and mixed-raced children in Crown Street in London (a road in East London Canning Street). Similarly, Lewis (2005) also states that the media usually shape public perceptions of reports about asylum and immigration issues: the government responses to dealing with immigration matters and using terms like 'speeding up the process, 'Go home campaign', 'limiting abuse system', 'immigration cut' increased the hostile public attitudes towards the migrants' population (Lewis, 2005, PP.20-26). Therefore, the ideas of the two-way process of integration proposed by Ager and Strang (2008) might be difficult to achieve because of these media influences. It is also important to note that 'integration' may be only a matter of discussion within policy and theory. Public perceptions, especially the migrant's account of the meaning of integration, still need to be explored more deeply based on their lived experiences.

Facilitators of integration

According to Ryan (2018), the interpersonal relationship with the host community and transnationally plays a critical role in shaping the migrant's desire to extend their stay. However, minimal attention was paid to investigating how different migrant groups integrate with the country differently. The finding suggests that the discussion around migrant integration usually focuses on integrating refugees and asylum seekers, to some extent, on the EU migrants (Ryan, 2018). In addition, the EU migrants' settlement process in the host country may differ from that of non-EU migrants (Ryan, 2018). Policies, including OECD (2018) and Ndofor-Tah *et al.* (2019), fail to differentiate the needs of various migrant groups and assume that all migrant groups may have the same ability to negotiate attachments and

belonging and build positive relationships. As a result, the integration needs of various migrant groups appear to be absent in theory and policy.

There are significant research gaps based on migrants' first-hand experience, and their voices are missing in identifying the pathways in which migrant groups integrate with different people in different locations (MacGregor and Bailey, 2012, p 372). In addition, Ryan (2011, P. 707) suggested that most of the research intends to believe all migrants can easily create social networks, which ultimately facilitate them to integrate with the host community. However, the different migrant groups can understand the social networks differently: facilitating resources does not ensure all migrant groups will access or have a similar interest in the available resources (Ryan, 2011, P.708). In line with Ryan's (2011) finding, it can be proposed that high professional migrants could have better access to opportunities, shaping their ability to create a social network with the host community, compared to low-skill migrants. Therefore, there might be a limited association among various migrant groups regarding their ability to build social bonds even though they share the same ethnic background.

The ideas of nationhood are associated with integration for refugees and asylum seekers: immigration laws are often problematic and create barriers to the settlement process for the newcomer (Strang and Ager, 2010). In contrast, Kearns (2015, P4) states that such problematic bureaucratic requirements can encourage other migrants to settle in the host country. For instance, the primary purpose of South Asian migrants was to make remittances for their families back home, not to settle in the UK. However, the intention to live permanently only came to the forefront after the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 was introduced (Peach, 2006, pp 136-137). This act was introduced to restrict commonwealth citizens' entry to the UK and required a permit to stay. In such circumstances, most South Asian migrants started to bring their families to the UK and think about permanent settlement. However, Peach (2006, P.133) also highlighted how the experience of migrant groups could be different from each other even though they may share similar ethnic backgrounds. For example, Indian migrants had better access to higher-level jobs and social positions, including the Royal Society to British Academy, the House of Commons and the

House of Lords. In contrast, the migrant groups from Bangladesh and Pakistan were more associated with labour-related jobs and were absent in higher social positions.

Having looked at the above studies, I argue that there are significant differences in integration needs for different migrant groups. Further, the majority of studies and policies focused on the integration needs of refugees and asylum seekers (Ager and Strang, 2008; Strang and Ager, 2010; Strang and Quinn,2021; Ndofor-Tah *et al.*, 2019) and do not differentiate among different type migrant groups, needs and their experiences. Consequently, this case study aims to address this research gap by identifying the integration experience of a specific migrant group based on participants' perspectives.

Integration is a complex process, and it is also problematic to understand the integration experience of specific migrant groups due to their diverse backgrounds. It is also important to mention that the discussion around the integration experience is limited to refugees, asylum seekers and, to a certain extent, EU migrants. However, there are many other migrant groups, and their needs and experiences are different. Therefore, I anticipate that this research finding will inform those passionate about this topic and be helpful for further in-depth exploration of the integration experience of specific migrant groups. It will also be helpful guidelines for policymakers in understanding the conditions that may facilitate or impose barriers in the integration process for individual migrant groups.

Methodology

The primary aim of this research was to explore the integration experience of economic migrants; however, due to limited timelines, this research asks ''**what the integration experiences of South Asian economic migrants are?''** This can illuminate and inform the broader question around the integration of migrants more generally, and therefore, the finding can be considered a valuable guideline for further exploration of this topic. This research utilises the case study method to address the integration experiences of this migrant group. I draw upon two focus group discussions to advance understanding of the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants based on their living experience in Scotland, UK. During these focus group discussions, several themes were presented. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select the participants from South Asian economic migrants: purposive sampling allows thinking critically about the appropriateness of the participants during the selection process (Silverman, 2010) and identifying the right participants can lead to generating the most reliable data for this research. In addition, snowball sampling was considered additional to purposive sampling to identify the most appropriate participants. Several inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered for gaining homogenous samples, which appeared to be appropriate to identify the integration needs of Asian economic migrants in their accounts.

This research was carried out as a part of the master's programme of Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. I have been living in Edinburgh for several years and have had good relationships with various ethnic community groups. Such a relationship helped me to access and establish a relationship with the participants, leading to more accurate information to answer the research question. In addition, the Scottish government has recently empathised with the significance of the migrant population and their contribution to the Scottish economy (The Scottish Government, 2018a). However, there are still significant gaps in research on understanding the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants. Thus, conducting this case study in this context seems most appropriate.

Before conducting this research, ethical approval was received from the Queen Margaret University Research Ethics panel. Therefore, several ethical concerns such as risk to participants, and informed consent were considered during the data collection, storage and analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guidelines were followed during the data analysing process, in which recorded focus group discussions were transcribed through oTranscribe.

Limitations

This study has limitations, such as the small sample size: only twenty-four participants compromise the generalisability of this study's findings. However, I strongly argue that the finding of this study illuminates some of the critical challenges, including racism and discrimination experienced by the participants in settling in the receiving communities. Therefore, the findings should be considered as potential avenues for future research.

In addition, selecting participants from only two locations (West Lothian and Edinburgh) can also be questioned by some, such as Spicer (2008), who argues that places have considerable influences on migrants' experience, as in some places, migrant groups can have a more positive experience than other areas. The participants are selected from only two locations for this case study. However, their accounts are valid as both groups are well connected with other economic migrants because of their family connections and religious and ethnic similarities. Therefore, they are well informed about other experiences who live in different locations.

Further, participants were encouraged to share their experiences based on several themes during the focus group discussion, guided by the Conceptual Framework of Integration (Ager and Strang, 2008). It is essential to highlight that this framework was developed to understand what constitutes successful social cohesion for refugees and asylum seekers. As I mentioned previously, the journey of economic migrants and refugees is different, meaning their experiences and perceptions can be different. Therefore, using a conceptual framework may prevent the unfolding of participants' experiences in other domains not included. However, I

argue that this framework helped to explore the integration experience of South Asian economic migrants, highlighting the facilitators and the challenges they face in their settlement process. These findings raise important questions regarding the complexity of the integration experiences of specific migrant groups and the need for further in-depth exploration of this topic.

Findings

The conceptual framework of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008) was used to guide the analysis of the findings. Emerging themes are also organised based on the core domains such as foundation, facilitators, social connection, makers and means.

Before understanding the integration experience, both groups were encouraged to share their views on the meaning of integration. Participants from both groups used their native words, such as Ekikarana (Nepali) /Ekeekaran (Hindi)/ Misrana (Bengali), to refer to 'Integration.' There were similar views on the meaning of integration; Group 1 (G1) defined integration as unity and having the ability to interact with other members of the community:

> *Integration means 'Unity', mainly unity with my colleagues. I spend a lot of time at work, so I need to be united with them. It also means when we get together with our family, people from next door or even friends from different nationalities*

However, group 2 (G2) referred to integration as the reciprocal relationship with other community members. People from diverse ethnic backgrounds can come together, accept and share other views and ideas: ....' *everyone comes together, sharing their views and ideas, sharing common platforms.* Researchers may find it challenging to provide a standard definition of integration or, in some cases, define integration as a 'chaotic process' (Robinson, 1998, cited in Ager and Strang, 2008). However, Participants from both groups clearly stated that integration is the 'unity' with everyone in the society they are living in. This suggested that research and policy may have different lenses to perceive certain phenomena than those with lived experience.

Foundation: Rights and citizenship

Participants in G1 suggested that positive perception and acceptance by the host communities are fundamental for the settlement process. In addition, British Citizenship may reduce the costs of immigration, such as not having to pay regular Home Office fees and may enable them to access certain services. However, all the participants agreed that it does not change their overall experience of settling in the UK:

> *Being Asian, we always have to suffer wherever we go. ...whether we have British Citizenship or not. It could be on the street, at university, or on medical premises. So, I am just saying our skin colour is a huge issue here...*

Participants from G1 identified several factors such as skin colour, racism, and discrimination that play a vital role in building a relationship with the 'Gora' (white population), and such relationship was recognised as important as an aspect to feel better integrated with the new country. These factors also impact the ability to access the essential services to integrate with the host country: '*... I always feel a Passport cannot change my colour and, therefore, we will never be treated equally to Gora even though my soul has no colour.* Similarly, Participants from G2 also agreed that a positive public perception of the host population is fundamental for their settlement process. In addition, Participants from G2 suggest that Citizenship may help them to access certain services more easily than before; however, still, they are not able to integrate fully due to negative public perception and lack of acceptance by the host population '*We always are Indian and outsiders to them'.* This also suggests that the integration needs and experiences of South Asian economic migrants are different from other migrant groups, such as Refugees and asylum seekers. According to Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework of integration, citizenship and rights are the foundation for their integration. Race equality and reducing racism and discrimination are identified as the integration needs by the participants of this case study.

Facilitators: Language and cultural knowledge; safety and stability

Participants from G1 agreed that improving their ability to speak in English may help them find a better job and can also enable them to communicate effectively with other non-Asian community members. However, they also stated barriers like lack of appropriate support from the employers and their low-income status could prevent them from enhancing their knowledge of the language and cultural aspects of the host country. In addition, such an inability to access the services can impact how much they can interact with host communities: '... *we will still be struggling to get money to learn English; we have to pay for everything by ourselves, such as a house, living costs, and transport.'*

Some participants agreed that they should be more responsive to learning a new language and try to communicate with others. However, another participant hugely disagreed and highlighted that a greater understanding of the host culture and language does not

necessarily help them to be accepted by the host community: *'No, no, I disagree with you. My child grew up here and spoke the same way as the white children. But still, my children suffer at school'.* In contrast, Participants from the G2 stated that it is not only their responsibility to learn the language and culture of the host country. Participants see that the host communities are often reluctant to integrate with people from other countries or have negative perceptions due to their lack of knowledge about other parts of the world. Participants suggest that the host community should have a basic understanding of other communities and their contributions to the country:

> *... their perception needs to be changed before anything else ... Still, they need to have a basic understanding of the different nationalities or cultures; also.... we should be sharing cultural knowledge with each other, so we all know each other*

Further, participants from both groups agreed they feel safe living in the UK, and it is crucial to have the safety and stability to feel integrated with the host country. However, some participants mentioned that even though they feel safe to a certain extent due to good law enforcement facilities. Still, they do not feel fully integrated with the host community; there is a considerable lack of acceptance by the host community due to a lack of cultural exchange: *'We feel safer, and you need to feel safe before you decide whether you want to make this place your home or not'*. Therefore, the migrant community can still be vulnerable to verbal and physical attacks. Such fear of vulnerability is perceived as a barrier to the integration process:

> *'It is about changing people's perception and their mindsets. How do they see us as migrants? ... If we are travelling by bus and we are getting abused, the police cannot stop it then. We will have to face it; then the police will do something. Therefore, we need to focus on individual levels of acceptance.'*

Participants suggest that the host community's perception needs to be changed by educating them about the broader migrants' community. Further, the findings of this study highlighted that participants from both groups had excellent skills in the English language and valuable cultural knowledge through English language and citizenship tests. However, they are still finding it difficult to integrate fully with the host community due to a lack of state support

and negative public perception. Such negative perceptions also impose further challenges for policy measures to remove barriers to integration.

Social connection: social bridges, social bonds, and social links

Both groups highlighted that they find it easy to build a relationship with the migrant groups compared to hosts or people from white ethnic backgrounds. Even though migrants may have different nationalities, they still feel connected due to their similar lived experiences in the host country:

> G1 *We have an excellent relationship with other Asian communities, such as Indian, Bengali, and Nepalese, because we understand each other even though we speak different languages*
>
> G2 *We always feel more connected with our people because we all have a similar experience that usually gets shared and tries to help each other*

Participants identified religious and cultural festivals as critical platforms for creating social bonds with others. However, the participant also agreed that having a relationship with friends and family does not help to integrate with broader society. In addition, due to negative experiences of racial discrimination, people migrants often do not try to engage with the host community: *".... However, our previous negative experiences, including racial discrimination, can be why we are not involved with white people".* As a result, the gaps between the host and the migrant group increased, reducing social cohesion.

G1 mentioned that relationships between people of different backgrounds exist, but it is minimal. 'Galaday' or events at school are perceived as the perfect opportunities to know the people from the host community and the various ethnic groups: *'An event like Gala day is the bridge that will help us connect and build a relationship with everyone'.* Participants also find school plays an essential role in facilitating them to make the connection with other communities: *'We go, especially when there are events at my children's school. So, I do go for my children. I feel my children should have good relationships with other community members...'*

Similarly, G2 also identified the school as a perfect place for creating links with other communities by including diverse subjects in the school curriculum and facilitating open discussion among children and parents; however, this G2 mentioned that there is a significant reluctance to facilitate such platforms: *'They always pick what they want us to know about,*

but there are other parts of the world, and many other things are happening. So, teachers should be open-minded and include diverse topics to discuss within the school setting'. Further, as economic migrants, both groups see the workplace as essential as they spend much time at work and could potentially build relationships with non-migrants: *'I feel workplace important for all of us. We really get to meet people from other ethnic backgrounds. It also allows us to show that we are also equally capable as them'.*

However, both groups shared their negative experience within the work settings due to discrimination, racism and lack of cultural diversity in the host population:

> *G1 'You never get asked to join with them; it makes you feel that you would never be part of them; you always be an outsider to them'.*
> *G2 '...The acceptance for us is not quite there. They always see us as an outsider...*

Both groups agreed that building relationships with the broader community, including white and non-white groups of people, is essential for feeling part of the new country. Such a relationship does not happen overnight. Nevertheless, society is changing, and people have started to try to get to know each other. Both groups also suggest that people should be more open-minded in understanding the diverse migrant groups. The State can also be more accountable for creating a more diverse workplace, ensuring a fairer recruitment and promotion process and equal opportunity to enable migrants to highlight their skills and knowledge, which can change the host population's perception of migrants.

Makers and Means: Employment, housing, education, health

Participants from G1 mentioned that they had similar experiences finding a suitable job according to their qualifications. According to participants, racism and discrimination play a considerable role in creating barriers to accessing the right job for the economic migrants: *'He will never find a job according to his qualification because he does not look like or does not speak in their accent'.* Participants also highlighted that having a job does not necessarily help them integrate or feel settled in the host country due to the discrimination they face during their employment:

> *All I want is equality. If they just treat us the same as them, then we will have access to everything and gradually contribute to the community more. I just wanted to be valued in the same way... I do not feel part of this country because they keep reminding me that I was born somewhere else*

Therefore, participants believe that racial equality and reducing racism would be the key to removing the barriers to their integration process. Similarly, G2 also mentioned racism and discrimination that stopped them from integrating with the host country.

Participants from both groups suggested that their experience in finding a house is often hostile; however, they also agreed that such experiences directly relate to what extent they feel part of the host society. Having a house in a good neighbourhood helps to integrate with other neighbours as good neighbours usually make them feel welcome and safe. However, most participants had a negative experience interacting with their neighbours; as a result, they did not feel like a part of the community in which they lived: '***Having this experience really put off going out and mingling with other neighbours. It indeed takes your motivation away'.***

Lack of support from local authorities, lack of proper guidelines for economic migrants and their rights, and discrimination by the private landlords created challenges for the participants to find a house in a suitable location in which they could interact with other non-migrant community members: *'**There is no proper guidance for people like us; if you are a refugee, then various agencies will be there to support you. However, we will have to find ourselves and ask within our friend circles.*** Participants' accounts suggested they face significant challenges finding a house in a good neighbourhood. A neighbourhood plays a key role in social inclusion; as such, social inclusion helps to feel secure, access to local resources, and the migrants' ability to form relationships with the host community.

Participants from both groups agreed that they are educated, so their qualifications should be recognised; such recognition would help them contribute and integrate with the host community. Participants from G1 feel that more support from the employer and government should be available for them. So, they can enhance their skills and knowledge:

> *We have to pay for everything ourselves, such as a house, living costs, and transport. After covering everything, it will be very difficult for us to get extra money to invest in learning their language and culture. They should (employer and government) should help us because we pay taxes and insurance*

G2 also had similar experiences as they felt insufficient support in learning or enhancing their knowledge and skills; as economic migrants, they are often not entitled to public funds until certain times. As a result, they cannot access educational services, such as not being able to complete higher English language courses. As a result, they cannot get promotions, leading to living in a deprived neighbourhood due to low income. Ultimately, all these factors are interlinked and impact their integration process.

Although there were some difficulties in accessing health care services in general, some participants mentioned that they did experience discrimination due to their ethnicity and inability to be proficient in English as native speakers. However, participants from both groups had a positive experience receiving treatment from health facilities. Therefore, during the discussion, the participants did not see it as directly associated with the settlement process. In contrast, participants faced direct discrimination and were racially abused while working in health care services: *'...while I was working in the nursing home, we had a visit from the local church minister. He asked me if he could speak with a white nurse. I asked him if I could help him with anything as I am also trained like my white colleagues, but he said he would rather speak to a white nurse instead'.* Such negative experiences impacted their motivation to integrate with host communities.

In summary, these findings suggest that Home Office requirements for economic migrants, including minimum English language skills and citizenship tests, may help them to settle to a certain extent. However, racism, discrimination and negative public perception toward migrants are identified as the main barriers to the integration of economic migrants (see Figure 3). In addition, the findings of this study also provide us with some crucial recommendations based on participants' illustrations that will help to generate a positive social cohesion between hosts and other migrant groups, such as race equality, positive public perception, the specific support system for economic migrants and the exchange of cultural knowledge.
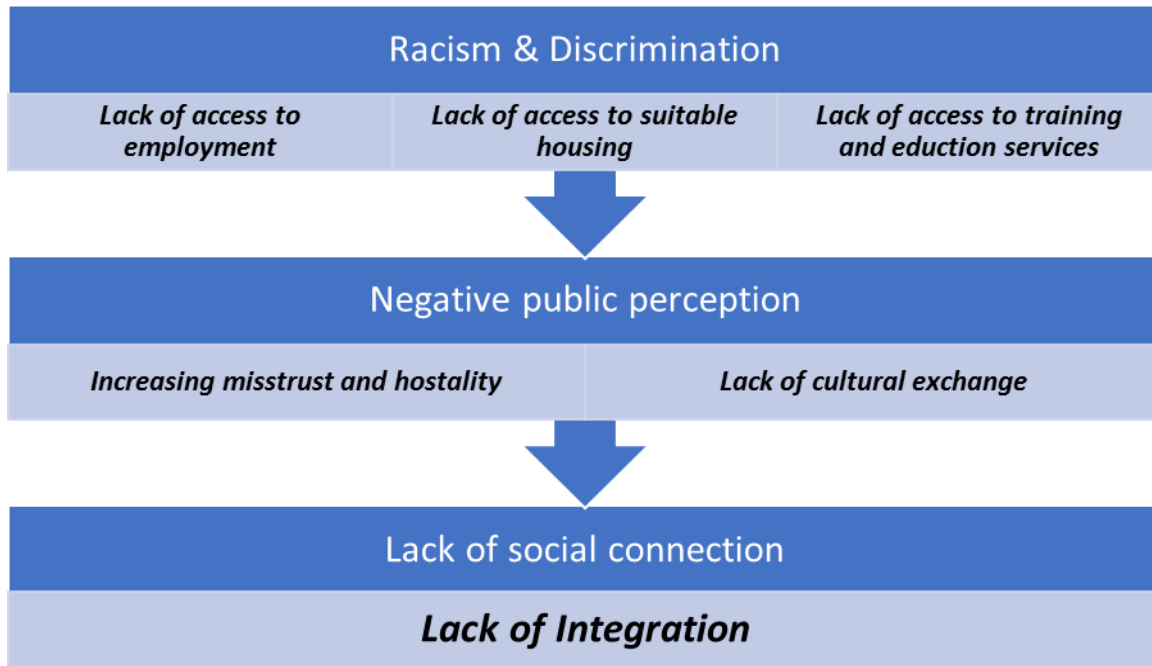
Racism & Discrimination

| Lack of access to employment | Lack of access to suitable housing | Lack of access to training and eduction services |

Negative public perception

| Increasing misstrust and hostality | Lack of cultural exchange |

Lack of social connection

Lack of Integration

Figure 3. Summary of the findings.

Discussion

Based on the participants' accounts presented in Chapter 4, the Conceptual Framework of Integration (Ager and Strang, 2008) is adapted accordingly to outline the findings of this study (see Figure 2). This framework has been very useful in understanding the integration needs of economic migrants and helped to understand to what extent the integration experiences of this migrant group are different from other migrant groups.
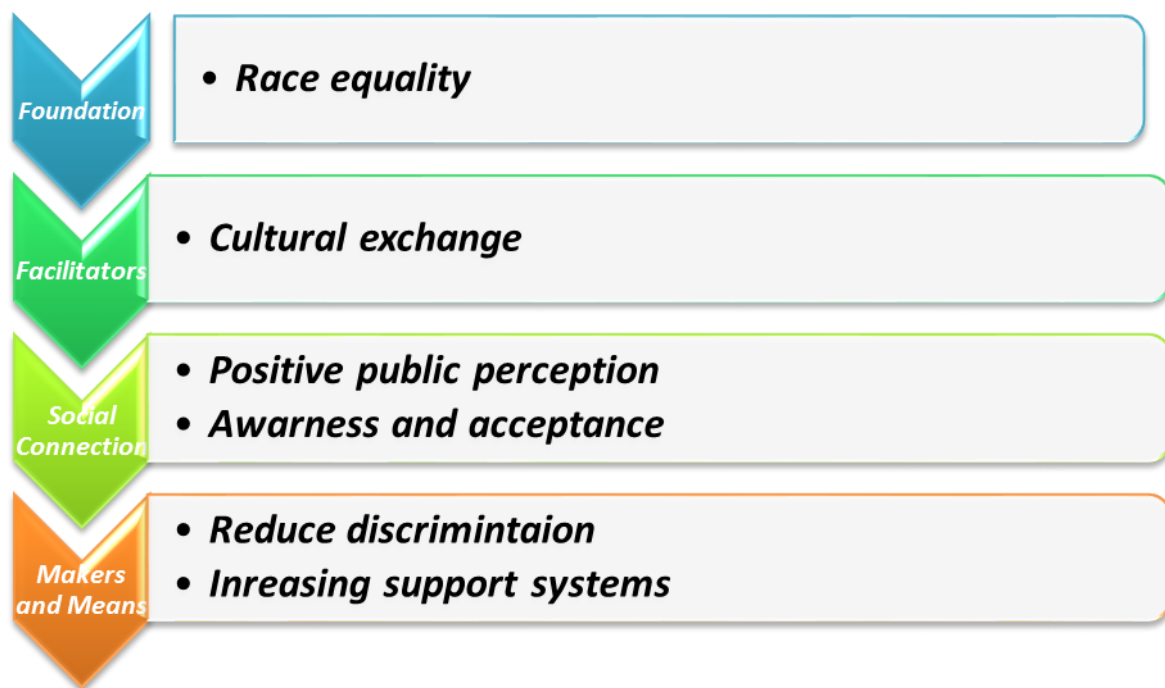

Figure 4: Summary of Integration needs of South Asian economic migrants using the conceptual framework of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008).

Foundation: Needs of race equality

In line with the findings of this study, I suggest that race equality is the key factor that can facilitate an environment in which South Asian economic migrants fully integrate into the receiving society; such equality can provide full access to all civic rights and enable this migrant group to engage with the host community. Interestingly, the participants' experience in this case study suggests that citizenship is not fundamental for their integration because it does not prevent the negative experiences that they face due to their ethnic background. Instead, bureaucratic requirements for citizenship, including citizenship and language tests,

are perceived by the participants of this study as a systematic way to differentiate between the host country and the migrants. Such a feeling of otherness can create a negative image, and therefore, migrant groups are perceived as less equal or less worthy to the host community. In contrast, Ager and Strang (2008), citizenship and rights are fundamental for refugee integration into the host country; similarly, Duke et al. (1997), cited in Ager and Strang (2008), stated that full citizenship is the 'prerequisite' for the integration because citizenship allows individual actively participate fully in civic life. However, Ager and Strang (2008) also found some evidence in their study that the citizenship process for refugees and asylum seekers is also problematic and 'otherness' often refers to the untrustworthy until their innocence is proven to the system.

The findings of this study also show that the motivation of economic migrants to settle in the UK depends on the feeling of wantedness. However, theories suggest that economic migrant groups are perceived as the preferable migrant groups or 'wanted'; therefore, this group will receive preferential treatment from the host countries (Ager and Strang,2008). Nonetheless, participants experienced it differently, and most of them experienced it unwanted by the host community, leading to excluding their motivation to integrate with the non-migrant group. Participants' account is consistent with Thompson (2014), who suggests that migrant groups are often portrayed as a 'problem' and the reason for straining social welfare, creating a negative perception among the host communities. Such negative perceptions create distance between established and newly arrived communities.

Finally, the participants identified positive public perception as the key to ensuring equality despite their ethnic backgrounds; such equality is fundamental for their integration process. This study also shows that having legal immigration status does not necessarily help to create an atmosphere in which both host and migrant groups collectively understand belonging and share their values, leading to building up meaningful relationships. Similarly, Daley (2007) found that meaningful relationships were missing among different ethnic backgrounds due to racial inequality, prejudice and lack of inter-group contact, leading to a lack of integration at the community level. Support for newcomers and host communities is needed to create effective inter-group communication, enable cultural exchange and reduce race inequality. Similarly, the participants of this study suggested that cultural exchange between migrant and

host communities can mitigate race inequality, in which both groups can access civic rights actively and contribute to the society they are living in.

Facilitators: Needs of Cultural Exchange

Based on the participants' experience, I suggest a need for cultural exchange between migrant groups and the host communities. Such exchange will help educate host communities about the diverse ethnic backgrounds and should be able to highlight the benefits of multicultural societies. This finding is also consistent with Daley (2007), who found that the new arrivals may face significant challenges if the dominant groups do not integrate or there is a lack of cultural exchange, as such lack of exchange can create misunderstanding and mistrust, leading to creating further distance between both groups. The ECRE (1998), cited in Strang and Ager (2010), referred to integration as reciprocal, and it does require preparedness and willingness from both the newcomers and the host society; integration is a two-way process. However, the findings of the study suggest that this integration appeared to be more likely **'One way'** as the UK Home Offices introduced various policies such as citizenship tests and language tests to ensure that migrant groups gain an appropriate level of understanding of British culture and the languages (MacGregora and Bailey, 2012). However, I argue that there are no specific policies to understand to what extent the host societies are aware of the other cultural diversity and language. Therefore, the host societies may not be willing to learn about the different cultures, leading to not integrating or reaching out to newcomers (Daley, 2007).

Further, participants agree to a certain extent that enhancing their cultural knowledge and language skills can facilitate accessing some services. However, it does not provide a condition that would help them fully integrate into British society. Instead, they see the need to change people's perceptions about migrants; negative perceptions create a hostile environment that imposes fear and instabilities. Such a feeling of hostility socially excludes migrant groups. It creates barriers to integrating with the host societies as peoples' everyday experiences are linked to developing attachments and feelings of belonging (Spicer, 2008).

The participants' narratives also show a significant lack of opportunities for host communities to learn about the non-native members of the communities, as the policies and the media describe migration as a national issue (Lweis, 2005). Therefore, the host community perceived migrants as a group of people constrained by their resources (Strang and Ager, 2010) and unable to understand the contributions of the various migrant groups to the British economy. One of the issues that emerge from these findings is that the British media are reluctant to highlight the world histories in their production, including movies, drama series or documentaries, contributing to the native's lack of understanding of diversity. It can, therefore, be assumed that additional support from the government and media may facilitate the cultural exchange between migrant and native groups, in which the actual integration may happen as a two-way process.

Social connection: Needs for positive public perception, awareness and acceptance

In policies and theories, the idea of social connection is a central concept in understanding refugee integration. For example, Ager and Strang (2008) have considered three forms of social connection: social bonds, social bridges, and social links that facilitate a mutual accommodation between the host and refugees and are responsible for creating social cohesion. During the focus group discussion, participants also agreed with the importance of social connection to form relationships with other community members that could help them be interested in the host society. Therefore, I suggest that participants focus more on social bridges and social links, as both can create significant barriers to making a social connection. Participants also mentioned that they could easily make social bonds with people from any other migrant group. However, such relationships with other migrants do not help them feel settled in the receiving society. In contrast, Ager and Strang (2008) found that connecting with other ethnic groups helps refugees share cultural practices and maintain family relationships, leading them to effective integration. It can, therefore, be assumed that there is a difference in integration needs between refugees and economic migrants.

The primary purpose of the economic migrants is employment, and they intend to spend most of their time in the work setting. Therefore, participants of this study believe building relationships with the non-migrant group in a work setting would benefit their integration

process. As mentioned earlier, economic migrants face considerable challenges in building relationships with white ethnic colleagues due to racial discrimination; negative perception is also identified as a key barrier to integration. Spicer (2008) found similar findings; refugee families faced difficulties forming social bridges with natives in excluding neighbourhoods, where participants experienced racial discrimination due to ethnic backgrounds and exposure to physical and mental abuse by the majority-ethnic groups.

The participants from both groups emphasised that a positive public perception toward economic migrants can help them build a trusting relationship with the host community; such a relationship can also reduce the distance between both groups and mitigate the feelings of isolation, insecurity and mistrust. Similarly, Colson (2003) and Putnam (1993), cited in Strang and Ager (2010), highlighted that the growth of trust is essential for social connection, and such trust depends on reciprocity. Furthermore, Ager and Strang (2008) stated that integration is a two-way process, and both groups' mutual accommodation, willingness and preparedness are needed for successful integration. The finding of this study also liaises with Ager and Strang (2008), as participants also believe that natives should be educated and informed about the differences among various migrant groups and their contributions. The majority should be willing to accept the co-existence of minority groups within the society in which they are living. The government and media were identified as the key actors who could play key roles in facilitating opportunities in which both groups could meet and exchange their values and recourses for mutual benefits. Daley (2007) has also proposed that there is an urgent need for the UK government to develop strategies and policies that would enable equal access to services and provide appropriate support for newcomers and receiving communities so they can interact more effectively. Such positive interactions can lead to reducing tension and create meaningful social cohesion.

Makers and Means: Reducing discrimination and increasing specific support systems

According to Ager and Strang (2008), the key areas of activity, such as employment, housing, education, and health, are an indicator of successful integration for refugees and asylum seekers. Unfortunately, due to a significant lack of research on exploring the integration

experience of South Asian economic migrants, the integration needs of these groups are unrevealed. However, it is anticipated that economic migrants need full access to the above-mentioned key areas of activity in the public arena to integrate into the host society.

Having learnt about participants' experiences, I strongly suggest that South Asian economic migrants face significant challenges in integrating with the host communities, even though they have access to employment, housing, education and health to a certain extent. Racism and discrimination are considered the main barriers to integrating and enabling this group of people to contribute to positive change for the host society. A similar finding was found in Delaporte and Piracha's (2018) research, which found that immigrant groups are more likely to be discriminated against for job offers and promotions due to a lack of policy for international transferability of human capital, such as education and training. Similarly, the finding of this study also highlighted that lack of recognition of their past education and limited training facilities to enhance their skills impact their income. It was also pointed out that the government and employers are reluctant to provide facilities to enhance their skills. As a result, newcomers often enter a relatively low occupation status, leading to living in poor housing conditions, in which they feel hostile and insecure and end up not feeling part of the receiving society. Like Glover *et al. 2001;* Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE 2001 cited in Ager and Strang (2008) stated that refugees' overall physical and mental well-being depends on to what extent they feel at home in the host country.

Moreover, the participants of this current study also suggest that due to low income, they are often forced to live in poorer neighbourhoods and live among communities with minimal experience of immigration, where they experience racial and physical abuse from the host communities. Such adverse experiences impact people's ability to connect with the majority groups and make them feel socially excluded. According to Spicer (2008), refugees and asylum seekers are less likely to integrate with the host communities if they live in 'Excluding' neighbourhoods because people are more exposed to racist harassment and violence in excluded neighbourhood areas.

Further, Ager and Strang (2008) stated that health is a core factor in the integration process, as good health seemingly helps actively engage in a new society. In contrast, participants of the current study shared that even though they have a positive experience with using health services, such experience has minimal impact on social cohesion with the host society. The participants also mentioned that working in health services is challenging due to direct racism and patient discrimination from host communities. Such adverse experiences minimise the motivation of economic migrant groups to integrate with the receiving communities.

Looking into the above findings of this study, it is appropriate to summarise that access to employment, housing, education, and health may create social cohesion between the host and the economic migrants to a certain extent. However, based on participants' lived experience, I propose that racial discrimination seems to be a considerable risk for enabling a safer environment where this economic migrant can feel safe, which ultimately helps them to settle into the new society. This is consistent with Daley (2007), who found that specific support systems and active intervention are crucial for promoting community cohesion, in which people can mix safe, supported and shared values.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This case study aimed to identify the integration needs of South Asian economic migrants. Through a social constructivist lens, this study revealed the unique meaning of the integration based on the participants' perspective. This study confirms that there are significant research gaps in understanding the integration needs of different migrant groups, as most theories and policies intend to focus on refugees and asylum seekers. Although integration became a key policy objective, there is still a lack of comprehensive integration policy in the UK that would help to understand the diverse integration needs of various migrant groups and host communities.

The most prominent finding to emerge from this case study is that integration can have different meanings to different groups of people based on their ethnic and religious background and the purpose of the move. Participants of this case study defined *integration* as 'Unity'; such unity creates a safe environment where they may interact with the other ethnic groups living and working in the same community. These statements consisted of theory and policy defining the integration as two processes of mutual accommodation. However, participants believed this process of 'Unity' is challenging to achieve as policies made integration a 'One-way' of the process by introducing various immigration requirements for only migrant groups. Therefore, host communities are unaware of their role in the integration process, and such a lack of understanding creates mistrust and distance between migrants and receiving communities.

The results of this study indicated that the conceptual framework of integration was very appropriate for this research, although this framework was developed for refugees and asylum seekers. It has not only successfully highlighted the integration needs of economic migrants, facilitators, and barriers but also helped to understand to what extent the integration needs of economic migrants differ from refugees and asylum seekers. The findings of this study and in-depth insights from participants have been advantageous in identifying the integration needs of this specific migrant group and drawing some key recommendations, which will conclude this case study.

Promoting race equality: Most importantly, the finding suggested that race equality is the foundation for South Asian economic migrants, not British citizenship, as gaining citizenship seemed to have little influence on how much this migrant group felt integrated with the native British society. Racism and discrimination still play a vital role in creating a hostile environment, fear and mistrust. As a result, this migrant group feel socially excluded, isolated and less motivated to integrate with host communities. Therefore, I strongly recommend ensuring race equality, where every community member will have equal access to participate in every civic and political activity regardless of ethnicity, origin, or religious background.

Positive public perception and acceptance: The research finding also found that even though South Asian economic migrants have a long association with British society and contribute significantly to the British economy. Nevertheless, this migrant group faces significant challenges in integrating with natives. Efficiency in English and acquiring appropriate cultural knowledge are not perceived as helpful in facilitating active participation in community life for the economic migrants. Instead, it does require a positive public perception of the host community and their willingness to adapt to newcomers. In line with participants, I also propose that promoting such acceptance of the receiving society will facilitate a mutual ground in which both newcomers and native interacts and will also help to reduce the mistrust.

Reducing discrimination and increasing specific support system: Social relationship with longer-standing community members was also identified as an essential integration need for South Asian economic migrants as such relationship can reduce social isolation. Unfortunately, such relationships are often missing due to racism, discrimination, and governments' mixed messages by imposing various immigration policies as the solution to the 'problem' of migrant flows. Therefore, I highly recommend that the government should be more focused on creating a positive image of the migrant group, introducing a more comprehensive integration policy to ensure the eradication of racism and discrimination, in which the host and other migrant groups can integrate fully.

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