

Dr Laurence Brown
Mapping migrant cultures in Manchester 1880-2000
End of year report for 2008

This project breaks new ground in exploring the mobility and networks that shaped the formation of Jewish and Caribbean migrant communities in Manchester. Migration studies has been dominated by the mapping of immigrant residence based on census data, however this research uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to understand the dynamic lived experience of migrants. Connecting migrant oral testimony with newspaper accounts, government records and other historical sources has enabled the project to map the micro-histories of individual settlement, mobility and re-migration.

The overlaying of maps in GIS provides a powerful tool for visualising the physical routes of emigration from Eastern Europe and the Caribbean to understand the relationships between divergent migrant flows and social groups. Through mapping the mobility of Jewish and Caribbean immigrants within Manchester as they moved across the city reveals the importance of village, religious, occupational and political networks. The patterns of such internal migration were also shaped by class, gender and the changing policies of state agencies and charitable associations.

The project has increasingly concentrated on four central themes:

1) Mobility and Emigration

Exploring how emigration was often concentrated in particular villages, towns and regions at particular times and the impact this had on the social composition of the Jewish and Caribbean diasporas in Manchester.

2) Processes of Settlement

Mapping initial mobility in Manchester and how this was shaped by social, political, religious networks and other elements of the city environment.

3) Internal Migration and Generational Identity

Analysing how migrant communities changed over time, and how their identities responded to broader socio-economic changes in Manchester

4) Contact Zones and Material Culture

Identifying sites of interaction both within and between diasporas

During the project's second year, archival research and oral interviewing focused on the first three themes, and the fourth theme will be explored over the next six months through follow-up interviews and questionnaires targeted at retailers.

During the period of the report, Brown conducted archival research in Manchester and London on Caribbean migration, and conducted interviews with informants identified by the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre. In June 2008, he delivered a keynote lecture on "Mapping Migrant Cultures: Comparative Approaches" at an inter-disciplinary postgraduate workshop on Migration and Identity held at the University of Manchester.

Dr Owusu constructed the project web-site, which was initially based around ArcGIS but after review has been revised to include Google Map as a search tool that is far more accessible to schools and community groups. Dr Owusu also worked on mapping census data from 1971 – 2001 through developing a micro-approach to areal interpolation that integrated a range of socio-economic data on migrant groups in South Manchester. He has also worked on analysing networks

of Jewish internal migration and mapping Jewish businesses based on historic commercial directories.

Dr Balkelis has identified a sub-sample of the oral interviews held by the Manchester Jewish Museum which has enabled him to reconstruct the trajectories of a range of migrants from Lithuania. He has subsequently conducted archival research in Lithuania to explore the spatial and temporal concentrations of emigration and how this was shaped by the politics and socio-economic development of the Russian Empire.

Dr Williams provided guidance on relevant Jewish sources for the project, including his index of local newspaper coverage of immigrant groups, which was a rich source for event data on the interactions between Irish and Jewish immigrants, and for the cultural and social tensions within the Jewish community.

On 20 May 2008, the project co-hosted with the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre and Greater Manchester County Records Office a Local Studies Day for those interested in researching family history which was held at the Windrush Millennium Centre in Moss Side.

On 16 August 2008, the project presented a stall as part of the Manchester Caribbean Carnival in Alexandra Park in Moss Side. The stall publicised the project and its web-page, although we were slightly over-shadowed by the neighbouring stall which involved two young men rapping gospel tunes while wearing inflatable sumo-suits.

Samantha Connolly who had begun an AHRC PhD studentship on "Migrant Cultures in Moss Side, 1940-2000" withdrew from study in March 2008 to take up full time employment.