

## SIPR Progress Report – July 2010: Policing and racial and ethnic diversity: a local case study

Since beginning my research in October 2008 I have made steady progress. Most recently I have been focusing on primary data collection –the fieldwork phase – of my research, which is now coming to an end. At the same time I have begun to analyse the data collected in relation to the secondary data collected previously and have begun to put together chapter outlines for my thesis. I hope to have a full draft of the thesis by next spring and to complete the research process by the end of my SIPR funding period next September.

The methodology for my research involves a triangulation of different methods to capture the breadth and depth of factors that contribute to the uniqueness of the Govanhill area of Glasgow as a case study, including its remarkable history of migrant settlement (and increased media attention in the face of crime and anti- social behaviour). The research project commenced with me developing the original proposal, in which I outlined the main aims of the research and the objectives of collecting the data, which included providing useful and practical suggestions to a variety of agencies including the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR). I am particularly interested in:

- The implications for policing of the changing racial and ethnic composition of Govanhill, following the widening of the EU to include the A8 countries. This will involve exploration of the extent to which these changes have affected local patterns of crime and ant-social behaviour;
- Identifying the main policing needs of young people in Govanhill across the racial and ethnic divide;
- Identifying the main policing approaches in relation to young people of different racial and ethnic groups in Govanhill, and the response to these strategies by local young people.

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In the development of the research proposal and other preparation for the research I have received useful input from my supervisory team (including developing the research methodology and literature review sections), and I have benefitted from the opportunity to attend conferences and other *fora* where I have interacted with other students and academics active in the areas of my research interest.

For the primary data collection phase of my research, I have conducted interviews and focus group discussions with various actors in the Govanhill policing framework. In the interviews I am gauging the opinions of police officers of different ranks from the Strathclyde Police Diversity Unit and the local community policing team at Newgorbals Police Station. I am also carrying out interviews with Glasgow Community and Safety Services (GCSS) and other community agencies that are a part of the Govanhill policing partnership.

For the focus group discussions I am bringing together a purposively selected group of young people (in the age category of 18- 26 years old) drawn from various ethnic groups in Govanhill to discuss a range of issues touching on their policing needs, including the level and nature of contact with local policing services, the implications of living in Govanhill, interaction with other young people across the ‘ethnic divide’, awareness of policing services, and their preferences on the issues that are important to them. I am looking forward to completing my fieldwork in good time and starting the writing-up phase. In the meantime I will have an opportunity to share some of the research findings in the two presentations I will be making at the British Society of Criminology Conference being held at the University of Leicester from 11<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

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In a nutshell my research is making good progress; it is possible even at this stage to outline the contours of the thesis from the data collected so far. For example, the secondary data collected has indicated a degree of disengagement among the young people of different ethnic backgrounds from the mainstream policing agencies in the local area, itself a legacy of historical factors (including, among others, deep-reaching poverty amplified by poor housing and unemployment, which leads to overcrowding and misuse of communal areas; a suspicion of authority among the new migrant groups; the transient nature of the average family, which makes community cohesion and bonding difficult to establish; language barriers, including a shortage of translation facilities; over-crowding in local community facilities and poor waste disposal practices, which have raised resentment and contention between different groups). As most of this data was collected immediately following the arrival of the A8 groups in Govanhill, there is a chance that things have changed – but for better or worse? My primary data collection, therefore, is seeking to go beyond the ‘facts’ of the secondary data to put together a narrative of the evolving activities of policing agencies and the local community. In the next phase of my research I will have the opportunity to paint a holistic picture of these developments on the basis of my in-depth conversations and observations. Tangentially, however, it is worth noting here that both the local community and the policing agencies have made progress in identifying and responding to several problems which have caught the attention of the world-outside-Govanhill (mostly through media anecdotes of lawlessness and ethnic strife) as well as to emerging opportunities.

Although significant achievements have been made (including the secondment of police officers to the local regeneration and diversity agencies; the creation of a local multi-agency policing

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hub; recruitment of A8 personnel and boosting of translation services in local policing agencies; a Strathclyde Police fact-finding mission to Slovakia, increased vigilance on local crime and anti-social behaviour; improved environmental clean-up and education, increased use of community police officers and availability of information on policing services in a variety of local languages) my preliminary findings suggests that deep-seated challenges to the local police- community relations (especially among the young people) still exist.

Other progress beside the research includes:

- Participation in the conferences hosted by Glasgow Caledonian University, the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) and The British Society of Criminology (BSC).
- Involvement in teaching on the BA Criminology and Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Programme at Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Participation in the research training offered by the Glasgow Caledonian Graduate School.

My research plans looking further ahead include the following:

- Completion of the data analysis within the next four months and the writing-up phase within the next twelve months. I hope specifically to submit the first draft by March 2011.
- To participate in academic conferences and to use the same to disseminate the developing findings of my research

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- To draft at least one article relevant to my research for an academic journal in the next twelve months.