



Cosmopolitan Leicester UNITY Project Overall Research/Evaluation Report Momodou Sallah

Following the successful award of funding to Cosmopolitan Leicester, the consultant has been contracted over a three-year period to conduct research and evaluate the project on an annual basis. This report builds on the three previous annual reports from 2019 – 2021 and seeks to present the overall findings over the three years of the project. The report attempts to capture a snapshot of mainly project participants in relation to their views about race relations in Leicester. It is based on a structured questionnaire, self-administered online, over a period of three years through Surveyshare. The sampling approach was based on opportunity sampling and 149 respondents, representing 14 different communities (identified on the basis of ethnicities/nationalities) took part in the survey.

Demographic context

In order to contextualise this research/evaluation, it is important to provide the demographics of the ethnic groups and their migration patterns into Leicester (14 such groups/communities have been profiled over the last three years).

It has been claimed that Leicester is one of the most diverse cities in Europe with its population is derived from over 50 different countries (Leicester City Council 2012) and has a rich history of immigration. The population of Leicester was estimated to be 417,824, with an average growth rate of about 3% (Population UK online). World Population Review (online) put this number at an estimated 552,178 for 2020. White as an ethnic group makes up 50.6% of the population (45.1 White British, 0.8 Irish, and 4.6 White other). Asians are put at 37.1%, Blacks broadly as a category was put at 6.3%, Arabs at 1.6% and other groups at 1.6%. In relation to religious diversity, 32.4% of the city are Christians, 18.6 percent Muslims, 15.2% of Hindu, Sikhs at 4.4%, 0.4% are Buddhists and 0.1% as Jews. It is also significant to note that: “72.47 percent of the population can speak and understand English language. Gujarati is the second most common language in the city; 11.54 percent of the population can speak the language. Other languages are Punjabi (2.4 percent), Polish (1.97 percent), Urdu (1.07 percent), Somali (1.06 percent), Arabic (0.8 percent), Bengali (0.57 percent) ...”.

This illustrates the cultural diversity of Leicester; however, as this piece of work is directly linked to the Cosmopolitan project and with a focus on communities considered diverse, this research/evaluation survey has mainly been circulated to participants of the earlier mentioned project. It is a summary of the individual annual reports done as part of this project over the last three years.

As per the table below, the Cosmopolitan UNITY Project research/evaluation component engaged a total of 149 respondents over the three years across 14 constructed communities, all based on identity, with the exception of the Braunstone geographical community.

Year	Community	Numbers
2019	Zimbabwean, Chinese, Hindu, Polish, and Caribbean	52
2020	Filipino, Gambian, Nigerian, Braunstone	47
2021	Cameroonian, Irish, Punjabi, Malaysian, Somalian	50

1. Which part of Leicester do you live in?

Ward	2019	2020	2021
skipped this question	0	1	5
Abbey	3	0	3
Aylestone	11	3	1
Belgrave	7	3	5
Beaumont Leys	4	7	6
Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields	4	11	4
Castle	0	0	1
Evington	2	6	2
Eyres Monsell	1	1	0
Fosse	3	2	0
Humberstone and Hamilton	4	4	6
Knighton	5	2	5

Ward	2019	2020	2021
North Evington	1	0	0
Rushey Mead	1	2	1
Saffron	1	2	2
Spinney Hills	2	1	2
Stoneygate	1	0	2
Thurncourt	0	0	0
Troon	0	1	2
Westcotes	4	0	0
Western	2	1	1
Wycliffe.		0	2
Total	52	46	45

2. . How would you define yourself?

Option	2019	2020	2021
skipped this question			
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	0	5	3
Irish	0	0	1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0	5
Any other White background	11	1	6
White and Black Caribbean	2	3	4
White and Black African	0	1	1
White and Asian	0	1	2
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0	1	0
Indian	19	11	0

Option	2019	2020	2021
Pakistani	0	0	6
Bangladeshi	0	0	5
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other Asian background	1	7	1
African	4	15	2
Caribbean	3	0	2
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	5	1	2
Arab	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	2
Total	52	47	45

3.

3. What is your age?

Option	2019	2020	2021
Skipped this question	1	0	1
16-25	5	8	12
26-35	11	10	5
36-45	15	10	9
46-55	10	13	9
56+	10	6	14

4. Do you feel part of your community and why?

It is significant to note that 73% in 2019, 87.2% in 2020 and 68% in 2021 feel part of their community whilst 19.2% in 2019, 16% in 2020, and 12.7% did not feel part of their

community. Whilst the vast majority of respondents across the three years reportedly feel part of their community, it is also significant to note that on average 16% of respondents do not have a sense of belonging when it comes to their community. In addition to the external factor of racism reported in the questions later, it is an added later that intersects with a sense of belonging, linked to selfhood.

5. Do you think that people from your community interact well with people from other cultures/communities in Leicester?

In relation to the respondents' perception as to whether they feel that people from their communities interacted well with people from other cultures/communities, 58% said yes in the first year, 65.9% in the second year, and 64% in the third year. To the negative, 32% said no in the 2019 cohort, 17.2 in the second cohort, and 16% in the third and final cohort. In between, 10% in the first year, 14.8 in the second year, and 18% in the final year said 'yes and no' or 'not sure'.

6. Have you got friends from different cultures/communities that are not linked to work or training?

Option	2019	2020	2021
Skipped this question	0	1	0
Yes	76.92%	97.8%	88%
No	23.08%	2.13%	12%

7. Have you experienced racism towards you or your cultural/community group?

In relation to the question as to whether respondents have experienced racism towards themselves or members of their community, 61.5 responded in the affirmative as opposed to 36.5% in 2019, 57.44% said yes as opposed to 38.29% in 2020, and 56% also stated yes as opposed to 42% in 2021. This makes it an average of 58.98% over the three years who have experienced racism towards themselves or other members of their culture/community in contrast to 38.93% who claimed to not have experienced racism.

8. Do you think that the media and Brexit have altered people's views in relation to race and discrimination?

In relation to respondents' perception as to whether the Media and Brexit have altered people's views in relation to race and discrimination, 69.2% in 2019, 49.5 in 2020 and 58% of respondents in 2021. In contrast, 15.6 in 2019, 25.5 in 2020, and 34% said it has not. 13.7% in 2019, 10.6 in 2020, and 3 people said 'somewhat', 'somehow', and 'don't know'. It is crucial to note that the reported perception decline from the first year which could be attributed to the proximity of the Brexit vote as the perception of its impact declined over

the second year, even though it picked up in the third year. Covid might also be a crucial factor that affected both the survey and especially this particular question as Covid became the dominant news item.

9. What would you suggest for better cultural integration in Leicester between different communities/cultures?

A number of pertinent suggestions were made by different cohorts over the past three years of the research. Following a thematic analysis of the suggestions, the main suggestions include: holding of events to promote cultural integration, promotion of positive stories and examples, secure funding for organisations working with communities, education and public engagement for wider British society, addressing diversity within the school curriculum, rectifying the media and government's perception of minoritised communities, and wider representation in decision making bodies, including within Leicester City Council, and Government.

10. Conclusions

This project has been an interesting study in understanding 'communities' perceptions of racial difference and ethnicities. Respondents from 14 different communities within Leicester have been able to give valuable insights into their perceptions of whether they feel part of their communities, with the overwhelming majority (76%) responding to the affirmative; it is however significant to note that 16% do not exhibit a perception of belonging which adds to an intersectional positioning as an added layer.

It is also worth highlighting that on average, 62.6% of respondents feel that people from their community interact well with people from other cultures/communities in Leicester; this is extremely positive and points to the great diversity of Leicester, however it is also important to note that 32% in the 2019 cohort, 17.2 in the second cohort, and 16% in the third cohort stated their view to the contrary which also has implications for Leicester's continued cohesion.

As a proof of Leicester's diversity, it is heartening to gather that 87.5% of respondents reported having friends from different cultures/communities that are not linked to work or training which illustrated the integration and interaction between different communities in Leicester.

A key finding of this research/evaluation report is that almost 59% of respondents claimed to have either experienced racism towards them or other members of their cultural/community group; whilst some of these instances might have happened over a number of years ago, it is still alarming and points to the need to address the issue of discrimination urgently.

Given the immediate aftermath of Brexit, 69.2% of respondents claimed that the Media and Brexit have altered people's views in relation to race and discrimination. Whilst this dipped to 49.5 in 2020, it climbed again in 2021 to 58%. This is a crucial finding as it demonstrates the impact of Media and especially the narratives around Brexit. There is a lot of work that

needs to be done around this area as it is one of the main tributaries of racism and discrimination.

It is worth noting that Covid which occurred in 2020 had a demonstrable impact in the recruitment of participants that year and this is crucial to note.

Whilst there might be limitations in terms of being able to drill deeper into the sub-ethnic groups/communities especially given the necessity of anonymity, this piece of research/evaluation gives us significant understanding into the perception of minoritized communities in relation to racism, discrimination and community relations in Leicester.

Reference

Leicester City Council (2012) Diversity and Migration. Leicester City Council: Leicester.

Population UK (online 2022) Leicester population 2022

<https://www.ukpopulation.org/leicester-population/>

World Population Review (online) Leicester Population 2020.

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