

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Glasgow
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D27: Area Studies
<b>Title of case study:</b> Creating a forum for public dialogue and policy influence on refugee, asylum and migration issues
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>

University of Glasgow research has contributed to the founding and development of two unique research networks, the Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet) and Translating Russian and East European Cultures (TREEC), creating new, innovative forums for dialogue and influence on refugee, asylum and migration policy across Scotland and beyond. By cultivating relationships with policy-makers, practitioners and other stakeholders, Glasgow researchers have enhanced service delivery for marginalised groups such as LGBT asylum seekers, and informed policy debates at local, regional and national level. GRAMNet and TREEC have also fed directly into a series of public engagement events and activities around the translation, performance and memorialisation of different cultures in Scotland.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b>
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Rebecca Kay's (Professor Russian Gender Studies, 2006-present; Senior Lecturer 1999-2006) research on men's experiences of, and responses to, social, economic and cultural developments in post-Soviet Russia has addressed the notion, developing in many societies in the mid-20th Century, that men were 'in crisis'. Kay found that the male crisis was particularly evident in the communities in post-Soviet Russia where she undertook ethnographic research. Key insights from this research also revealed the various responses to the crisis by policy-makers and those involved in the delivery of social services [1, 4, 6]. This body of research explored issues of economic, cultural and social (in)security and identity, which are important issues for migrant experience.

Dr. Francesca Stella (Research Fellow, 2013-present; Lecturer 2007-12) also investigated gender issues in her work on LGBT communities in Russia in urban and provincial locations and the construction and meaning of queer space. She examined the tactics used to carve out communal space to question ethnocentric assumptions about the empowering potential of visibility [5].

Dr. Moya Flynn (Senior Lecturer, 2006-present; Lecturer, 2002-06) also addressed the issue of the 'post-Soviet experience' in her research on the construction of 'home' and 'homeland' by members of ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking communities from the former Soviet republics who returned to the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR. Flynn demonstrated that interacting factors such as kin and its continuity over generations and attachment to the land; a sense of socio-economic and socio-political security; and social networks of family and friends all influence a sense of self and identity as they change over space and time. More generally, Flynn's research findings provided a deeper understanding of what underpins changing attachments to place, which is also an important factor when examining migrant's experiences [2, 3].

Flynn and Kay collaborated with Dr. Jon Oldfield (Senior Lecturer, University of Glasgow, 2007-present, previously University of Birmingham) and colleagues at Queen Mary, University of London and the University of Westminster to organise an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Seminar Series on 'Trans-National Approaches to Locally Situated Concerns: Theoretical and Practical Insights from Russia, CEE and the UK' from 2003-04. When Oldfield joined the University of Glasgow in January 2007, he edited (with Kay and Flynn) a collection of papers from the seminar series, published in 2008 [1]. A key finding of this research is the importance of dialogue between academics, policymakers and communities.

Their research into the Post-Soviet experience, combined with insights from the ESRC Seminar Series and resultant book, were pivotal in driving forward two subsequent research initiatives: the Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet); and Translating Russian and East European Cultures (TREEC).

**GRAMNet:** Kay co-founded GRAMNet with Professor Alison Phipps (Professor of Languages and Intercultural Studies, 2007-present; Senior Lecturer, 1995-2006) in 2009. Phipps brought expertise

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from her extensive research into languages, intercultural communication, and issues affecting refugee and asylum communities in the UK and abroad, whilst Kay made a distinct and material contribution through her research expertise of working with migrant groups and non-academic communities in Russia and the UK.

Kay and Phipps established GRAMNet on the basis of their cumulative research findings which showed that creating a collaborative flow of information between academics and 'frontline' practitioners is key to understanding, addressing and advocating for issues around migration, asylum and refugees. GRAMNet acts as forum for academics, activists, service providers and policy makers to work together around issues of asylum and migration to make a vital contribution to the lives and experiences of these different migrant groups.

**TREEC:** In 2011, Oldfield (PI), with Kay, Flynn and others established TREEC, along with colleagues from other institutions, to explore the social and cultural impacts of Central and East European migration into Scotland and the UK. This programme reflected the methodological outcomes of their research, stressing engagement with non-academic partners. The network was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and operated through the Centre for Russian Central and East European Studies (CRCEES), led by the University of Glasgow. The researchers investigated multiple ways in which Russian and East European cultures are translated, constructed and narrated through social, cultural and artistic encounters.

### 3. References to the research

1. Flynn, M., Kay, R. and Oldfield, J. (eds.) (2008) *Trans-National Issues, Local Concerns and Meanings of Post-Socialism: Insights from Russia, Central Eastern Europe and Beyond*. University Press of America, Lanham, MD, pp. 1-21. ISBN 9780761840558 [Available from HEI]
  2. Flynn, M.B. (2008) Experiences of displacement and perceptions of 'homeland': a comparative study of returning Russian migrant and Russian diaspora communities. *Revue d'Etudes Comparatives Est Ouest*, 39 (1). pp. 39-65. (doi:[10.4074/S0338059908001034](https://doi.org/10.4074/S0338059908001034))
  3. Flynn, M. (2007) Reconstructing 'home/lands' in the Russian federation: migrant-centred perspectives of displacement and resettlement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 (3). pp. 461-481. ISSN 1469-9451 (doi:[10.1080/13691830701234756](https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830701234756))
  4. Kay, R. (2007) Caring for men in contemporary Russia: gendered constructions of need and hybrid forms of social security. *Focaal: European Journal of Anthropology*, 50. pp. 51-65. (doi:[10.3167/foc.2007.500105](https://doi.org/10.3167/foc.2007.500105))
  5. Stella, F. (2012) The politics of in/visibility: carving out queer space in Ul'yanovsk. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64 (10). pp. 1822-1846. ISSN 0966-8136 (doi:[10.1080/09668136.2012.676236](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.676236)).
  6. Kay, R. (2006) *Men in contemporary Russia: the fallen heroes of post-Soviet change?* Ashgate, London. ISBN 0754644855 [Available from HEI]
- [Outputs (2-5) above have been published in leading journals which operate rigorous peer-review]*

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Creation of an innovative forum for stakeholder dialogue and policy influence

GRAMNet brings together 40 member organisations ranging from community-based groups, local authorities and campaign groups to large NGOs, such as: Scottish Refugee Council, the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland (BEMIS), Glasgow Housing Association, Oxfam Scotland and British Red Cross. In this way, GRAMNet has successfully shaped the form and content of association between these different civil society organisations and practitioner groups.

This partnership approach has resulted in a strong suite of funded projects that link researchers with these practitioner organisations (£5M in research income from 2009 to 31 July 2013), demonstrating the effectiveness of the network in achieving a broad level of participation and the generation of research based evidence for policy and practice across the UK. GRAMNet was specifically recognised as an example of university research delivering benefit to humanity and society by the Research Councils UK and Universities UK in its 2011 publication entitled 'Big Ideas' [1]. The overlapping relationship between GRAMNet and TREEC has also led to joint initiatives

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between the networks which have resulted in substantial impact during the review period. These include the following:

### **(i) Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity: Enhancing service delivery for marginalised groups**

In collaboration with BEMIS and the Equality Network, TREEC and GRAMNet members, including Dr. Francesca Stella, investigated the barriers facing LGBT asylum seekers in Scotland, under an Equality and Human Rights Commission funded project between June 2010 and March 2011. Stella co-authored the joint research report *Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Scotland* [2]. The report was shared through events organised by the Equality Network to practitioners from public and third sector organisations working with asylum seekers, including the Glasgow Housing Association. It was subsequently used by the Equality Network when designing training on LGBT issues for practitioners and service providers in the voluntary and third sector; the Equality Network uses the report in bespoke training as well as making it readily available online as a training resource [3].

The report is cited by, for example, [the Metropolitan Migration Foundation](#) (pg43) and [LGBTory, the Conservative LGBT Group](#) (pg9). It was also presented to practitioners and academics in the Netherlands examining similar issues as part of the [Fleeing Homophobia Project](#), funded by the European Refugee Fund, the Dutch Ministry of Justice and other organisations. The report was featured and circulated by public bodies and organisations beyond Scotland, such as the [Wales Strategic Migration Partnership](#) (pg2) whose membership extends to the Welsh Government, the Welsh Association of Assistant Chief Police Officers, and the UK Border Agency Regional Director.

### **(ii) Social and Cultural Impacts of Migration: Influencing policy debates and developments**

GRAMNet and CRCEES form an important contributing force in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) Strategic Migration Partnership (CSMP). Kay undertook research with the CSMP in 2012 which considered the social and cultural impacts of migration in Glasgow and involved interviews with stakeholders from organisations and services having regular contact with, or consideration of, issues relating to migration [4]. The Policy Manager at CSMP notes that the project *'informed policy debates at local, regional and national level'*.

Kay and Flynn also participate in the CSMP Board, which involves senior officer representation from local, Scottish and UK Government and various partners in the public and voluntary sector. The Policy Manager also expressed the positive contribution that GRAMNet and CRCEES make to the work and forward planning of the CSMP through their input to the Board, which is *'...invaluable as we seek to develop a coherent strategic approach to migration policy matters'*. Going on to more specifically outline collaborative initiatives with GRAMNet, he states that they *'...have greatly enhanced our evidence base in relation to the social and cultural impacts of migration'*. This joint work, he notes, has included a collaborative Masters project with the CSMP on the impact of migrant children in Glasgow schools. This included a placement for the student at the CSMP during which he converted his academic thesis into a policy paper, shared with the Glasgow City Council and CSMP's other partners in local government and beyond [5].

### **(iii) Future Memory in Red Road: Challenging imaginations through creation of cultural capital**

GRAMNet and TREEC research fed directly into a series of public engagement events and activities around the translation, performance and memorialisation of different cultures in Scotland. In particular, Glasgow researchers led initiatives commemorating the iconic Red Road flats in Glasgow prior to the start of their demolition in May 2013. The high-rises were used to house asylum seekers dispersed to Glasgow by the Westminster Government. Glasgow accommodates the largest concentration of refugee and asylum seekers in the UK outside of London. Designed in 1962 as a cost-effective solution to problems of overcrowding, the Red Road Flats were a landmark in the city skyline for over 50 years before their removal began as part of a social housing regeneration programme. By the time demolition plans were announced in 2005, the flats had become synonymous with poverty and deprivation.

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*Future Memory in Red Road* was part of a larger project, 'Red Road Flats: Past, Present, Future', which sought to collect and preserve stories, cultural artefacts and commentary from the flats for the future. It brought TREEC and GRAMNet researchers together with another AHRC-funded initiative, 'Future Memory in Place', organised through the University of Exeter (Dr. Elena Isayev; and artists Catrin Webster and Marion Woods). Both projects used collaborations with artists to engage communities in the production and communication of research findings.

The University of Glasgow's unique contribution was driven by research expertise in constructions of 'home' and place-making and living with insecurity developed by Flynn and Kay, respectively; as well as the public engagement and knowledge transfer expertise which Kay, Flynn, Oldfield and Phipps brought from their lead roles in TREEC and GRAMNet. Current and former residents' portraits and life stories were collected, many of which featured in the Red Road Flats: Past, Present and Future exhibition at the People's Palace Museum in Glasgow. The exhibition opened in February 2013 and will run for one year. In 2012-13 the People's Palace Museum attracted over 310,000 visitors, demonstrating the reach that the Red Road exhibition will continue to have during the rest of its run [6]. Glasgow Life – the City Council's main cultural and heritage body – will then archive the artefacts to memorialise the Red Road Flats and inform the public about their history and significance.

*Future Memory in Red Road* culminated in an innovative public performance organised by GRAMNet, TREEC and colleagues from the Future Memory in Place initiative on 18 May 2013. A community choir performed the oral histories of the Flats' residents, transposed into music, to a gathering of approximately 500 people and against a backdrop of portraits of residents and former residents. The vibrant performance allowed the translation and expression of multiple narratives from changing populations of migrant and non-migrant groups, challenging public perceptions of life at the Red Road Flats. Other events in the project included an archaeological site survey at the Flats as well as a programme of oral histories developed by Stella and Swain (Professor, CEES, 2006-present) with pupils of St. Martha's Primary School, located beside the Red Road Flats [7].

In a related initiative the team also developed the theme of home and migration through a series of workshops involving pupils from five secondary schools in Glasgow, exploring how students from diverse cultural backgrounds expressed their understanding of place and home through creative forms. The team subsequently developed the project with two of the secondary schools, (Shawlands Academy and Govan High School), by helping students produce a photography exhibition of their work and a short animated film in which they discussed their experiences of the project. The exhibition was curated by Street Level Photoworks and displayed at the University of Glasgow in December 2012, with the launch event attracting approximately 100 guests.

Thus, by cultivating relationships with policy-makers, practitioners and other stakeholders, Glasgow researchers have used their research to influence refugee, asylum and migration policy and practice in Scotland and beyond.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. *Big Ideas for the Future: University research that will have a big effect on our future*, Universities UK/Research Councils UK (2011) [pg93]. [Link](#) or available from HEI.
2. Cowen, T., Stella, F. et. al (2011) *Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity: Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Scotland, A report by BEMIS and GRAMNET*. [Link](#) or available from HEI.
3. Intersectional Projects Co-ordinator, Equality Network can attest to impact of report in work and training with voluntary and public sector organisations (contact details provided)
4. Kay, R. and Morrison, A (2012) *Evidencing the Social and Cultural Benefits and Costs of Migration in Scotland*. CoSLA Strategic Migration Partnership. [Link](#) or available from HEI.
5. Statement from Policy Manager, COSLA SMP re: impact of GRAMNet research and initiatives on the work of the CSMP [Available from HEI]
6. People's Palace Exhibition: [Link](#); Glasgow Life 2012/13 Annual Report (visitor numbers) [Link](#) or available from HEI.
7. Future Memory in Red Road information and images : [Link](#); Project Facebook page: [Link](#)