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Forced migration in the United Kingdom: women's journeys to escape domestic violence

This paper examines a process of forced migration within the United Kingdom: that of women (often with children) escaping violence within relationships. Studies of internal migration in the UK have rarely examined forced migration or emphasised gendered processes, and studies of migration and relationship breakdown have under-recognised abuse in forcing migration decisions. This study used administrative, survey and interview data to identify and explore processes at a range of scales, from individual to national. The empirical analysis reveals that there are high rates of forced residential mobility within many local authorities as well as migration across local authority boundaries, with over 18 000 journeys a year by women to access formal services in England. The migration is distinctive from other internal migration in the UK because of its gendered and forced nature: women are relocating to escape violence and had not otherwise intended to migrate. Journeys are therefore typically focused on trying to minimise disruption either by staying as local as they can, but avoiding friends, family and known locations, or by travelling to a similar type of place to the one left. The primary concern is safety, and journeys are often complex and segmented into multiple stages over time and space. However, despite such disruption at the individual scale, the journeys do not aggregate into net migration flows at the local or national scale and the overall process is one of spatial churn. The multi-scale analysis of this research reveals the turbulence beneath the surface, and highlights a forced migration process which had previously remained invisible to studies of internal migration in the UK.

Key words internal migration; residential mobility; violence against women; spatial churn; segmented journeys; scale

Introduction

Whilst gendered forced internal migration has been recognised in studies in other countries, the concept of forced migration has rarely been considered in the UK context. According to the UNHCR, the UK has no Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or people in IDP-like situations (persons displaced by armed conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations) (UNHCR 2013, 41). Journeys of internal migration in the UK tend to be seen as options that people take for financial, housing, education or employment reasons (Fielding 2012, Trevena *et al* 2013), rather than forced journeys to escape threat and abuse. Fyfe and McKay (2000, 77) highlight that “most empirical work [on forced migration] focuses on the developing rather than the developed world, and on the international rather than intranational movement of forced migrants”. However, their work is an exception, using concepts of forced migration in their research on witness protection in Scotland. They argue that “these displaced witnesses would appear to fit well within existing typologies of forced migration which emphasize the social causes of movement and the limited decision-making autonomy of forced migrants” (Fyfe and McKay 2000, 78).

Turton (2003) argues that the term ‘forced migrant’ is an artefact of policy concerns to obscure the origins of the force, and deny the agency of individual migrants. However, degrees of force and agency can be conceptualised (King 2012, 137). Explorations of who is in control of (im)mobility - about “power in relation *to* the flows and the movement” (Massey 1994, 149) - are therefore important in understanding patterns and processes. There is therefore value in drawing on typologies and concepts of forced

migration in the UK context as it enables exploration of differences and similarities in both processes and individual experiences. Studies of the dispersal within the United Kingdom of international forced migrants, such as the work of Bloch and Schuster (2005), Gill (2009a, 2009b, 2009c), Darling (2011) and Hynes (2011), highlight processes of both forced mobility and immobility. Forced waiting has also been recognised in research on the liminal spaces of international refugee camps (Hyndman and Giles 2011, Mountz 2011, Mountz *et al* 2012), whilst recognising the actions and practices of individuals beyond the original forced relocation (Ramadan 2013). However, the concept of forced migration has not been used to focus on domestic violence journeys, despite the international recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation (WHO 2013, UN General Assembly 2009).

Similarly, there has been limited focus on gender and internal migration in the UK, particularly in quantitative work. Whilst including the census category of sex in their modelling of internal migration, Fotheringham *et al.* (2004, 1655) highlighted that “there was generally very little difference in model performance between the two sexes”, and research has emphasised distance, economic factors and age/lifecycle as far more important influences on migration in the UK (Champion *et al* 1998, 2002, 2005, Catney and Simpson 2010, Stockdale and Catney 2014). In his recent overview of migration in Britain, Fielding (2012) argues that economic drivers of migration are paramount, and he does not detail any forced migration within the UK. He relates any gender differences to “gender-specific social mobility and family formation behaviours”(Fielding 2012, 127); however identifying that at the inter-regional level “the differences are extremely slight” (2012, 14). Coulter *et al.* (2012) analysed partner

disagreements over moving desires, but only considered the residential mobility of couples who stayed or moved together. Overall gendered differences in migration rates or processes are therefore little recognised within the UK, with Champion *et al.* arguing that “the differences [between male and female migration rates] are small because men and women migrate together for the majority of their lives” (Champion *et al.* 1998, 67).

However, there are circumstances where men and women do not migrate together and studies of family migration increasingly emphasise the complexity of family dynamics which influence both international and internal migration (Kofman 2004). Cooke (2008b, 255) traces the evolution of family migration research away from the “trailing wife effect” towards a recognition of the family as a central component in internal migration. Women are increasingly seen as agents rather than followers in migration, due to greater equality of migration decisions in couples (Smits *et al.* 2003), and greater autonomy of women in the United Kingdom (Fielding 2012). Within the UK, several studies have related family and household dynamics to different geographies and internal migration, such as Finney (2011, 468) on how “Gender [and ethnicity] mediates the relationship between residential mobility and partnership formation”. Duncan and Smith (2002, 471) identify geographical differences in the “‘traditional’ male breadwinner/female homemaker family”, and argue that rather than ‘north–south’ or ‘urban–rural’ geographies of economic factors, migration may be towards “what they [migrants] see as a more sympathetic area in terms of gender roles and family ideals” (2002, 491). However, there has been greater focus on the patterns and distance of ethnic minority migration (Stillwell and Duke-Williams 2005, Finney and Simpson 2008, Simpson and Finney 2009, Stillwell 2010) than on gender differences in internal

migration in the UK. Cooke (2008a) examines how gender role beliefs affect migration (in the USA), and Smith (2011) argues the need for deeper knowledge of the operation of power in family mobility; but neither go as far as recognising that gendered abuse might force migration. There has been no identification of something more like a ‘fugitive wife effect’ of women escaping abuse.

Research on violence against women has tended to be more sociological than geographical, with a limited focus on the spatial aspects of domestic violence in particular. Drawing on her earlier work on women’s fear of sexual violence (Pain 1991), Pain has questioned the spatialising of crime and fear to particular locations of urban areas, rather than the grounding of violence in social relations (2000, 381). She emphasises that the vast majority of incidents of violence against women take place in the home or other private and semi-private spaces (Pain 1997, 233), and has recently highlighted the ongoing nature of fear of an intimate partner, potentially continuing long after separation or leaving (Pain 2012, 2014). However, though the gendered nature of fear and violence in public and private places (Koskela and Pain 2000, Moser 2004), the blurring of boundaries between public/private (Duncan 1996), and the possibilities of resistance (Koskela 1997), have been areas of geographical research that have considered domestic violence, very few geographical studies have addressed domestic violence in any detail. A notable exception is Warrington’s research into the spatially restricted lives of women who had left domestic violence and accessed women’s refuges in East Anglia (Warrington 2001), exploring how spatial constraints continue despite women leaving the abuse. She concludes that “only when gendered power relationships

within the wider spaces of society are confronted will women be safe within the micro-spaces of the home” (Warrington 2001, 379).

Whitzman (2007, 2720) draws on Warrington’s work to problematise public/private divides, and to engage with concepts of home, stating that “Warrington (2001) begins her article on the geographies of private violence by wondering why there is little attention paid to the annual internal migration of 50 000 refugees¹ from domestic violence within England. For her, the policy emphasis on danger in public space helps exclude the experiences of women for whom the ideal of home as haven falls short”.

Ideals and realities of home have been widely explored in research and literature (Mallett 2004, Blunt 2005); with much feminist work resisting the idealisation of home for women (Rose 1993). Particular studies include Goldsack (1999) and Wardhaugh (1999) challenging the notion of home as haven by highlighting women’s experience of domestic violence, and Brickell (2012) identifying the continuing invisibility of domestic violence as a widespread and negative expression of home.

However, specific studies of how women use space in response to domestic violence are limited. Over a decade ago, Warrington (2001) did give indications of places and distances of women’s journeys. Of the 27 women she interviewed “five had moved to a refuge in their home town, and of the rest, the nearest distance moved was 10 miles, and the furthest was 215 miles; the average move was one of 78 miles” (Warrington 2001, 375). However, such a small-scale study in a region of England can give little indication of wider patterns or processes of journeys. To research more comprehensively, it is clear that mixed methods research is necessary. Whilst studies

using census data can reveal patterns of migration, Smith and Bailey (2006, 1340) also emphasise the need to relate quantitative and qualitative analysis, concluding that “our empirical analysis cannot address the ‘why’ questions of such differences [in migration], and this dimension requires qualitative research”. Using Austrian data, Boyle *et al.* (2008, 219) investigated whether migration or residential mobility might lead to relationship separation, but they recognised that the data did not allow them to “examine the reasons why a couple separated or who stimulated the decision”. In the UK, Flowerdew and Al-Hamad (2004, 348), were only able to identify an “interesting tendency for women to move in the years immediately preceding divorce” (which they could not explain), whilst men tended to move following divorce. Qualitative research may have been able to indicate the meanings of such patterns; for example that women may be moving out to escape abuse, and subsequently seek a divorce, whereas, in the case of divorces without abuse, women (as primary care-givers for children) may be more likely to remain in the house (Mulder and Wagner 2010).

This research therefore analyses both the national scale of women’s journeys to escape domestic violence, and the individual scale of women’s experiences, explanations and meanings of the journeys they have made. Journeys include both ‘migration’, referring to a change of residence via a journey that crosses an administrative boundary, and ‘residential mobility’ where relocation is within administrative boundaries (Boyle *et al* 1998, Fielding 2012). The journeys are defined as forced movement from home, because “coercion has taken place and individuals have had to uproot themselves against their wishes” (Boyle *et al* 1998, 180).

The remainder of this paper is divided into six sections. In the next section the research methodology is outlined and the following four sections detail the empirical findings around the distinctive nature of this migration: the gendered and forced nature, the attempt not to change place, the complex and segmented journeys, and the overall process of spatial churn. The final conclusions highlight the significance of this forced migration, and point to future work on the policy and practice implications.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this paper is based on a mixed methods research project, funded by an ESRC PhD studentship. The project involved analysis and mapping of six years of administrative data (2003-2009) from housing-related support services in England, interviews with 20 women in seven locations in the Midlands, South Coast and London, groupwork with nine women in the Midlands and South Coast, surveys with 34 women in domestic violence services and on 267 calls to the National Domestic Violence Helpline, and interviews with workers in services in eight locations.

The administrative data are from the Client Record system of the Supporting People Programme, which was developed by Government² to record standard information about clients starting to receive accommodation or support services through that funding programme in England from April 2003 (ODPM 2002). Data monitoring was carried out by each service provider and submitted to the Client Record Office at the Centre for Housing Research (CHR) in St Andrews for data collection, processing and preliminary statistical analysis. Supporting People funding was no longer ring-fenced from April

2009 and central coordination of monitoring ceased in March 2011; however the researcher was only given access to Administering Authority level data up to March 2009. Supporting People services provided support to a range of “Client Groups” and the Client Record therefore identifies both Primary and up to three Secondary Client Group for each case. However this research was concerned with domestic violence as the primary purpose for accessing support and therefore only cases where the Primary Client Group code was “Women at risk of domestic violence” were selected for further analysis. In addition, the focus on journeys meant that analysis was only carried out on cases where the woman had changed accommodation at the point of accessing the service. This gave a total of approximately 19,000 cases per year, with around 10,000 women (over half with children) migrating across local authority boundaries to access services and nearly 9,000 relocating within their local authority (i.e. residential mobility).

The annual datasets were processed to geocode the Local Authority (District or Unitary) location for both the Origin and Destination of each woman’s journey to access a service. This enabled the generation of flow maps (see Figure 2) and the measurement of straight-line distances (between Local Authority centroids) for migration journeys. Because the location data were only at the Local Authority level, no distance measurement was possible on the journeys of residential mobility.

Origin and Destination data from the datasets of women’s journeys were also used to generate annual datasets with the 354 English Local Authorities (2001 boundaries) as the individual cases, plus Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Outside the UK as

additional Origins. For each year variables were generated on the frequency of Residential Mobility (i.e. women relocating within that Local Authority), frequency of Origin (i.e. women leaving that LA), and frequency of Destination (i.e. women arriving in that LA), as well as rates per 10,000 female population aged 15+ (Office for National Statistics 2008, table 9). These rates were used to generate choropleth maps of rates of leaving, arriving, residential mobility and net leaving (see Figure 3).

Additional data of Local Authority characteristics were incorporated into the datasets to enable further analysis to relate the nature of women's journeys to the characteristics of place. Within this paper there is particular discussion of analysis using the six-category Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authorities (DEFRA 2009), and the Area Group Classification of Local Authorities (Office for National Statistics 2001). Dennett and Stillwell (2008, 2010a, 2010b) use a more detailed area classification (Vickers *et al* 2004), but the ONS classification provides twelve categories in England and has also been used in analysis of internal migration in the UK. For example, Raymer and Giulietti (2009, 450) use the ONS classification to analyse ethnic migration, and argue for the value of combining analysis of migration distances and spatial patterns with analysis of the types of places "migrants were leaving or choosing". Such a combined analysis is attempted in this paper, using a district-level classification as an effective way of characterising areas, and therefore providing a basis for relating migration patterns and flows to types of origin and destination.

Interviews and groupwork with women and workers were carried out via the specialist domestic violence service provider Refuge in a range of locations in the Midlands,

London and Southern England. This ensured that women had access to support, and were therefore more able to make informed choices about participation in the research, about the level of detail to disclose about their journeys, and about maintaining contact with the researcher to enable second interviews up to eight months later. A purposive non-probability sample of women with a range of different ages, ethnic origins, disabilities, and with or without children was interviewed. They were aged 19 to 56 at the time of first interview and 60 per cent of them had dependent children. They came from a wide range of ethnic origins, including White British, White Other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan within the Asian/Asian British category, and both Caribbean and African within the Black/Black British category. They had left places in all six Rural-Urban Classifications, and in ten out of the twelve Area Group Classifications, so provide evidence on a range of places of leaving. They also had travelled to places in five out of the six Rural-Urban Classifications, and six Area Group Classifications, including the two not previously travelled from. A total of 20 women were interviewed, with 14 being interviewed a second time at a later stage of their journeys, providing a longitudinal element to the research.

The range of data sources was brought together in analysis to explore the nature of women's journeys at a range of scales from individual to national. The following sections will discuss four key ways in which women's domestic violence journeys are a significant and distinctive migration within the UK: the gendered and forced nature, the attempt not to change place, the complex and segmented journeys, and the overall process of spatial churn.

Gendered and forced migration

The UK is generally neither seen as a country of forced migration, nor a country with strongly gendered processes of internal migration. However, relocation to escape domestic violence is highly gendered - in 2009-2010, of all people relocating to access any type of Supporting People support service in England due to domestic violence (n=18,232) only 1.3 per cent (n=241) were male. The research therefore examined women's domestic violence journeys.

A wide range of women make such journeys, with a very similar demographic breakdown over the six years of administrative data. From April 2008 to March 2009, 18,812 women³ relocated to access support services in England due to domestic violence (as the primary need – other women were recorded as being at risk of domestic violence as secondary needs but are not included in this research). Just over half (53.9%) of the women had children with them, with nearly a quarter having one child and nearly 12 per cent having three or more; giving a total of 18,819 children aged under 18. Though women's ages ranged from 15 to 88, eighty per cent of women were aged under 39, and their mean age was nearly 31. The age profile is therefore skewed towards younger age groups than the general population; and a key factor in this is likely to relate to the importance of children in women's decision-making to seek help, such as accessing services, with younger women more likely to have children with them.

Nearly seventy per cent (67.4%) of women were of White British ethnic origin, with Asian/Asian British-Pakistani (6.6%), Black/Black British-African (3.9%), White Other (3.6%), Asian/Asian British-Indian (3.1%) and Black/Black British-Caribbean (2.6%) as the other ethnic origin census categories over 2 per cent; though all ethnic categories were represented. The ethnic profile therefore includes a higher proportion of ethnic minorities than the general population, despite the domestic violence literature (Mama 1989, Rai and Thiara 1997, Minhas *et al* 2002, Burman *et al* 2004) which highlights the additional difficulties faced by ethnic minority women in leaving abuse. An important factor in this is likely to relate to ethnic minority women having, on average, fewer personal resources (such as wealth) and therefore being more likely to access public resources, such as support services, when they do leave.

Under ten per cent (8.2%) of women were recorded as Disabled, with 2.1 per cent having a mobility disability, 0.3 per cent visual impairment, 0.4 per cent hearing impairment, 0.8 per cent chronic progressive illness, 3.5 per cent mental health problems, 1.0 per cent learning disability, 1.0 per cent another disability, and 0.4 per cent did not want to disclose their disability.

Not only are women with a very wide range of demographic characteristics making these journeys, but statistical analysis indicated only very weak associations between any demographic characteristics of women and the distances travelled, and whether or not they migrated across local authority boundaries. This suggests that factors such as individual circumstances are more important in determining such journeys, rather than broader demographic characteristics. Interviewed women's accounts indicate that

where and how far they went were determined by a range of factors – both force and agency – including their judgement of where they could be safe, the availability (or not) of refuge spaces, and the practicalities of travel. They also indicated that the disruption of their journeys did not simply relate to distance, but also to practical and emotional pressure points regardless of mileage.

The overwhelming individual circumstance of being forced to leave by the abuser was clear from the analysis of the groupwork and interview data. Many interviewed women saw themselves as both ‘forced’ and ‘migrants’; though some were uncomfortable with using the actual word ‘forced’ because of its implied lack of any agency on their part. As also found in other studies (for example, Kirkwood 1993, Abrahams 2010), interviewed women had experienced many months, and usually years, of abuse and tried a range of actions – including civil and criminal law – to stay put and stop the abuse.

‘I tried an injunction – not just on my house but on my grandma’s house as well – where I’d stayed sometimes. And both of them were broken – it was like he didn’t care – it didn’t really change anything. But then – him as a person – those things don’t bother him anyway; he’s not really scared by police or anything like that.’ [Jenny]⁴

Women’s accounts included the force and control within the abusive relationship, as well as being forced to leave.

'I felt forced into everything really; because it was just such a very controlled house. Everything had to be done in a certain way; and just – I don't know – the only person who seemed to be able to come and go as they pleased was him. You know, everything else had to be like the way he wanted it.' [Louise]

Women also continued to experience force on their journeys, either because of being traced and threatened by the abuser (see also, for example, Humphreys and Thiara 2003), or by the lack of control and peace of mind they had once they were homeless and in a new area (see also, for example, Wilcox 2000, 2006).

'I just feel he's still controlling me in a way. You know – and I think he will be for quite a few years. Even though he's nowhere near me and I have no contact with him... he's controlling my life, isn't he. So – he won in a way. OK – he's in there [prison], but he's caused havoc for me.' [Maud]

These domestic violence journeys are therefore distinctive from other internal migration within the UK, because they are gendered and forced. Unlike a process where migrants are focused on (or at least aware of) their destination, women have generally not chosen their initial destination at all; their focus is on leaving rather than arriving. However, these journeys do have origins and destinations, and the next section analyses where women leave and where they go.

Residential mobility and migration – attempting not to change place

Women travel from everywhere due to domestic violence. Not only are women experiencing domestic violence in every local authority, they are accessing formal services from every local authority, and leaving every local authority. The administrative data on women accessing services record women leaving from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, abroad and all English Local Authorities to access services in England. However, most journeys were relatively short distances, with 45.6 per cent remaining within the same Local Authority ('residential mobility') and half the journeys of migration to another Local Authority being under 18 miles (29 km). These migration journeys had a mean straight-line distance of 36.7 miles (59.1 km), with 75 per cent of journeys being under 42 miles (68 km); however 3 per cent of journeys were over 125 miles (200 km) and some women travelled hundreds of miles. In the same way as there was very weak association of distances to the demographic characteristics of women, there was only weak association of distance with type of local authority left, with women travelling short and long distances to and from all types of Local Authorities.

Women were travelling as far as they needed to be safe, and often had little option about where they initially escaped to, accessing accommodation via direct contact, helpline referrals, statutory services, and a range of other routes.

'I wasn't sure what was going on – I was very scared. I wasn't sure where I was going – I hadn't heard of the area before. I just had instructions – I just had to follow – I didn't know what to expect.' *[Faith]*

Their accounts show that they tried not to relocate, and often stayed as local as they could, but that a combination of the threat of the abuse, and the availability (or not) of services shaped when and where they went initially.

'I think there aren't many women's refuges in England; so the ones they called – which were nearby – they hadn't got places; so wherever they get you a place they put you there. So this was OK – it wasn't very far away. I was dreading to drive to Birmingham – because if they found a place there; and that's how it was. If they call Birmingham and there's a place, they send you there.'

[Gloria]

However, after the initial escape, women often tried to minimise the disruption if possible; including trying to move on to a place they could imagine themselves resettling.

'I wouldn't find it bearable to live in Wood Green or Finsbury Park, because I'm not used to that kind of place... I come from a small town – [East Anglian town] – and Wood Green is crushed with people.' *[Cathy]*

The tendency to want to migrate to a similar type of place to the one left is different from much other migration where people are trying to change place (though later-life migration may relate to a return to familiar types of places (Stockdale *et al* 2013).

However, it is a distinctive feature of these domestic violence journeys, both within women's accounts and in statistical analysis of the administrative data.

Administrative data record the outcome of accessing a service, rather than whether women chose where they went, or the constraints under which any choices were made.

However, women were significantly more likely to go to the same type of Local Authority as the one they left in terms of Rural-Urban Classification and Area Group Classification; and least likely to go to the most dissimilar types of places.

Crosstabulation compares the Origin Local Authority type to the Destination type for all migration journeys, and tests the difference from a distribution of no association between Origin and Destination type. In terms of rural and urban local authorities, Table I shows that the strongest association (shown by the highest positive adjusted standardised residual) is for Major Urban areas, followed by Large Urban areas; however there is also a tendency to travel between rural areas.

Table I. Crosstabulation for migration journeys between Rural-Urban Classifications of English Local Authorities

2008-9 Origin LA type	Destination LA type (Rural-Urban Classification)					
	Major Urban	Large Urban	Other Urban	Significant Rural	Rural - 50	Rural - 80
Major Urban	42.1	-13.2	-9.3	-11.7	-14.6	-11.9
Large Urban	-16.4	16.8	*	5.1	2.4	*
Other Urban	-15.8	*	5.2	4.8	6.7	6.3
Significant Rural	-9.6	2.5	3.2	*	6.4	*
Rural - 50	-9.2	*	*	4.7	*	8.7
Rural - 80	-12.7	*	5.9	2.4	5.5	6.2

Journeys to accommodation services n=9,205

Chi-Square = 2132.920 (df=25) p<0.001 Kendall's tau b = 0.310

Strongest positive association for each Origin type (figures are the adjusted standardised residuals)

Strongest negative association for each Origin type (figures are the adjusted standardised residuals)

* Association < ±2 adjusted standardised residuals

The more complex categorisation of local authorities into Area Group Classifications, which includes factors such as housing types, ethnic minorities, occupations and household compositions, also indicates a tendency to migrate to a local authority of the same or similar type (Table II). For most categories, the strongest positive association is for the same category, and there are also positive associations between all three London categories. London migration journeys are also clearly least likely to be to smaller towns, indicating the tendency to migrate within London or to the London Periphery.


Table II. Crosstabulation for migration journeys between Area Group Classifications of English Local Authorities


2008-9 Origin LA type	Destination LA type (Area Group Classification of Local Authority)											
	Regional Centres	Centres with Industry	Thriving London Periphery	London Suburbs	London Centre	London Cosmopolitan	Prospering Smaller Towns	New and Growing Towns	Prospering Southern England	Coastal & Countryside	Industrial Hinterlands	Manufacturing Towns
Regional Centres	2.7	-3.2	-4.7	-4.5	-4.2	-5.6	8.4	-3.4	-2.5	2.8	5.8	*
Centres with Ind.	-4.9	33.2	-7.0	-5.8	-5.0	-6.4	-2.6	-9.9	-10.6	-5.5	-3.3	9.1
Thriving London Periph.	*	-5.4	*	2.4	*	2.4	-2.4	*	15.1	*	-4.2	-3.9
London Suburbs	-5.1	-7.5	11.7	13.4	10.1	17.9	-10.9	4.5	5.9	-4.3	-7.3	-6.4
London Centre	*	-5.3	8.2	13.8	7.0	13.8	-6.7	*	*	-2.5	-4.5	-4.5
London Cosmopolitan	-3.9	-9.3	7.4	20.8	24.8	19.2	-11.0	*	*	-4.2	-6.7	-6.6

Prosperin g Smaller Towns	*	*	-3.9	-7.6	-6.2	-5.9	13.1	2.2	-5.4	*	2.3	*
New & Growing Towns	*	-7.4	*	-2.3	-2.1	-3.5	2.3	19.2	5.6	*	-8.0	-4.6
Prosp. Southern England	*	-9.4	6.4	*	-2.5	-3.2	-4.4	5.8	24.6	*	-6.6	-5.4
Coastal & Count ryside	9.8	-6.0	*	-5.1	-3.6	-4.8	3.9	-2.1	-2.9	20.5	-4.3	-3.6
Industrial Hinterlan ds	3.5	-2.6	-4.6	-5.7	-4.4	-5.1	-2.6	-7.5	-6.3	-2.0	30.1	4.1
Manufact uring Towns	*	3.5	-4.5	-5.8	-4.7	-5.3	2.7	-4.8	-7.0	*	4.2	14.4

Journeys to accommodation services n=9,205

Chi-Square = 8128.630 (df=121) p<0.01 Cramer's V = 0.283

 Strongest positive association for each Origin type (figures are the adjusted standardised residuals)

 Strongest negative association for each Origin type (figures are the adjusted standardised residuals)

* Association < ±2 adjusted standardised residuals

Positive associations between all three London classification types

Some of the strongest associations are women from industrial areas being most likely to migrate to another industrial area; as well as women from countryside areas to another countryside area. Though there is a positive tendency to travel from a Regional Centre to another Regional Centre, this is not the strongest association; and it may be that the greater likelihood of migration to a smaller town reflects the previously noted tendency to travel relatively short distances (another Regional Centre is likely to be some distance away).

Overall, therefore, this migration reflects a tendency *not* to change type of place. It can be concluded that women are not relocating distinctively from or to a particular type of place, but from their individual circumstances of abuse, and from a place that they had

not otherwise intended to leave. Whether or not they can exercise some control over where they go, they tend to go to a similar type of place to the one they left; and thereby potentially reduce the disruption of being forced to move.

However, despite the relatively short distances of many journeys, the residential mobility, and the migration to similar types of places, these domestic violence journeys are often highly disruptive. The next section explores how the journeys to access services typically represent only one stage in longer overall journeys away from the abuse to a safe, settled place.

The complex and segmented journeys

The interview accounts show that even journeys of relatively short mileage often have multiple stages over time and place; either to be safe from the perpetrator, or as required by housing authorities or the availability (or not) of services. For example, Jenny and her daughter stayed within London, but had to relocate six times due to being found by her ex partner; but also because of Local Authority rehousing policies. As Figure 1 shows, her journey from the abuse had taken over two years so far, and she was still in temporary accommodation. For her, the disruption was not about distance in miles.

'It's just been eight months here, eight months there, and I'm thinking – I might as well get a caravan and just ride around in it! [laughs] At least it's on wheels and I can move – and I'm in one house! So it's just – and for my daughter as

well – different areas, different nurseries and stuff like that – I just want her to be in one place with me.’ [Jenny]

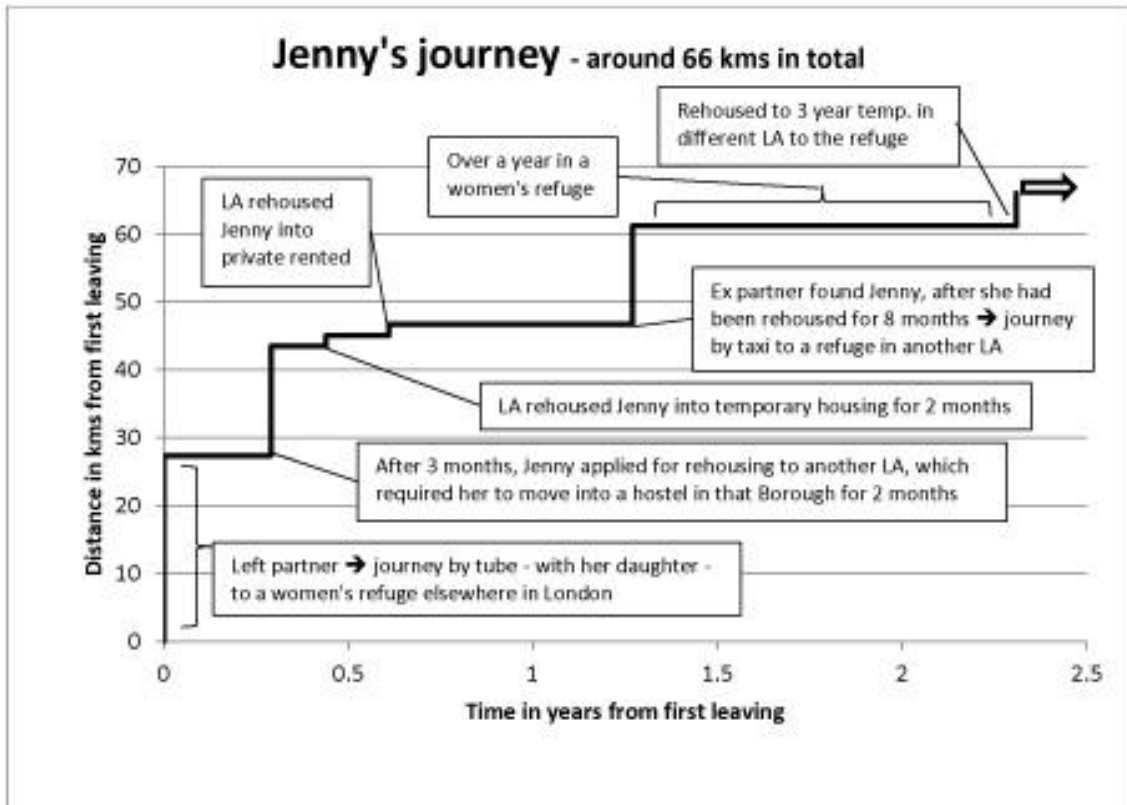


Figure 1. Time-Distance graph of one woman’s journey

Such complex, segmented journeys were not planned as such in advance. After the initial forced leaving, each stage grows out of the previous stage through a mixture of force and agency. Women often continue to be at risk from the abuser and therefore need to travel via a hidden and unpredictable route to ensure that they are not traced.

‘I thought he’d always find me; and that he’d be violent towards my family if I did go – because I’ve tried many times before. And when the police came they said – “you can go back to your parents”; and I said to them – “no, there’s no way, because he always finds me”. [The police said] “You should go to a

friend” – but I said – “I don’t want to put this on any of my friends”.’

[Violet]

The interviewed women had made up to ten moves, giving a total of over eighty moves by the twenty women so far. Their journeys included considerable stays in interim places – from months to over a year – as well as considerable travelling; and the total time from first leaving the abuser to relatively settled rehousing ranged from seven months to five years, with an average of two years and two months. As was mentioned earlier, processes of forced mobility and forced waiting identified in studies of international forced migration, and the dispersal of asylum seekers within the UK, also highlight issues of power beyond the initial forced leaving. Recognising such processes within women’s domestic violence journeys raises policy and practice issues, particularly around housing and support services, and questions around whether and how practical and emotional pressure points could be eased. Many women expressed how unsettling both the practicalities and the lack of control were, and that they did not know when they would ever feel settled.

‘I don’t know what I’m doing; you know you feel embarrassed sometimes – moving all your stuff, you know; and with children and all that. It was like – oh, what am I doing, what am I doing? Where am I going? It’s not easy. You don’t know really – it’s only like that I left but I don’t know where I’m going.’

[Julien Rosa]

For many women they become “settled in mobility” (Morokvasic 2004), as has been recognised in international migration. However, these are complex, segmented multi-stage migration journeys within the UK. This leads to the question of why these migration journeys have not previously been researched and recognised; and the next section explores this in considering the migration patterns at the national, rather than the individual, scale.

Spatial patterns of migration journeys – the process of spatial churn

The individual domestic violence journeys are not only complex in themselves, they form a complex spatial pattern at the national scale. However, they do not aggregate into large flows between particular local authorities. Mapping the journeys as straight flow lines between local authority centroids generates nearly two-thirds as travelled by only one woman within a twelve month period (65.9% in 2008-9). Over eighty per cent (81.8% in 2008-9) were travelled by only one or two women; and over ninety-five per cent (98.0% in 2008-9) were travelled by ten or fewer women. Around 10,000 journeys to access services a year map as nearly 5,000 different lines (4,934 out of 10,161 in 2008-9). Figure 2 provides a comparison of the flows from and to a Major Urban local authority, which indicates that the spatial patterns are very similar. Women are travelling from everywhere to everywhere, in individual, isolated journeys, which tend to cancel each other out in terms of net effect.

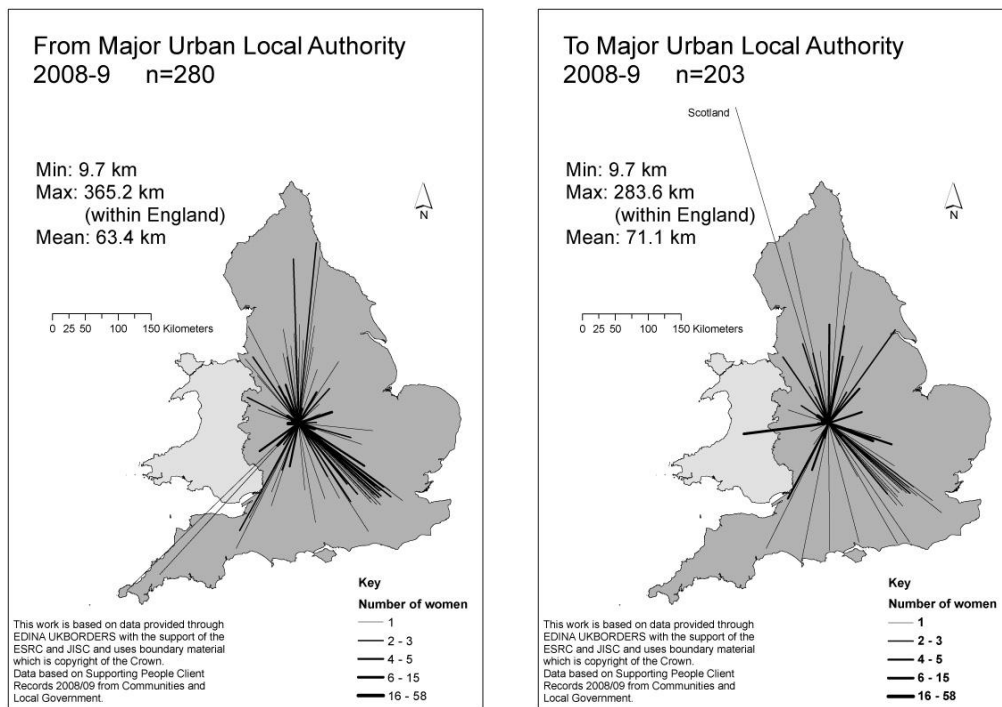


Figure 2 Flow maps of journeys from (left) and to (right) a major urban local authority

It is this lack of net effect which helps to explain why this migration has remained hidden at the national scale. Women themselves keep details of their journeys hidden because of the risk they are at; and the lack of net migration flows keeps this domestic violence migration hidden within other migration flows.

This lack of net effect at the national level is also largely the case at the local authority level. Because women leave every local authority and go to every type of area, tending to go to similar types of places to the ones they left, most local authorities have around the same number of women leaving and arriving per year. Therefore, despite around 10,000 migration journeys a year to access formal services in England, there is a lack of net effect at the local authority level. The more rural areas have lower migration rates per population, more deprived areas have higher rates, and areas with more specialist

services have higher rates; but these are lower or higher rates of leaving *and* arriving. The strongest associations are between rates of leaving and arriving, meaning that the *net* rate of leaving/arriving for most local authorities is around zero. At the national scale, therefore, the very individualised journeys of women leaving domestic violence represent a process of spatial churn.

Mapping net leaving per local authority (Figure 3) shows that the majority of local authorities have a net rate between ± 3 women per 10,000 female population. There is no clear pattern, with authorities of higher net gain (negative rates) or loss (positive rates) being distributed around the country; indicating no North to South net trend and no Rural/Urban net trend.

Net leaving to accommodation services in English Local Authorities 2008-9 n=9,394

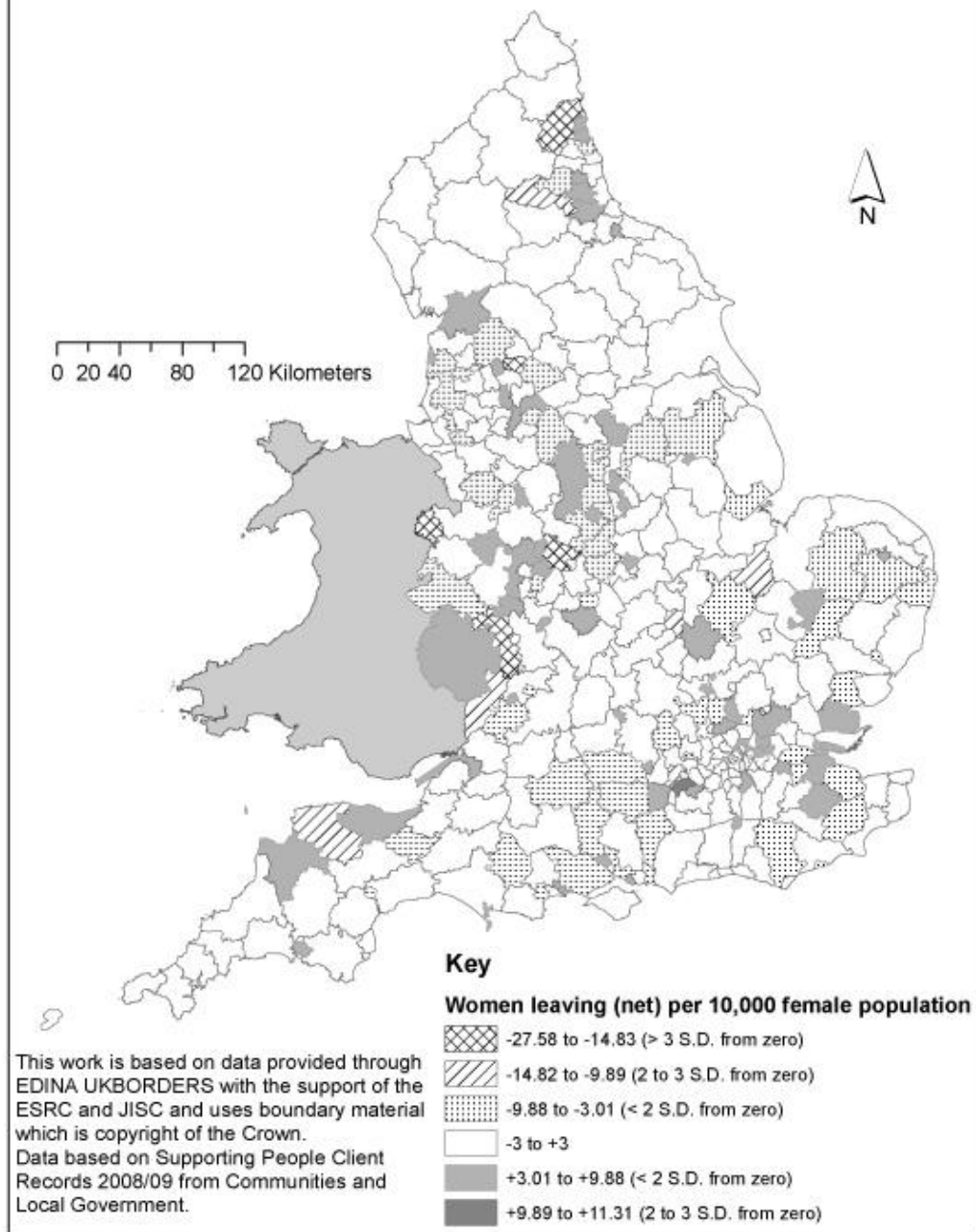


Figure 3. Local Authority Map of net leaving/arriving to access accommodation services

Neighbouring authorities can be at opposite extremes, giving a complex pattern of rates within regions; and no indication that any area of the country is “a more sympathetic area in terms of gender roles and family ideals” (Duncan and Smith 2002, 491), in terms of women escaping domestic violence. Unlike the net flow to the South under the primacy of economic drivers of internal migration identified by Fielding (2012, 97), this migration is therefore not a net flow at all.

There is also no distinctive London effect on the rest of the country as three-quarters of London journeys stay within London (of 2,482 in 2008-9, 32.1% are residential mobility and 43.4% are between London local authorities). The journeys that are very hidden and secret at the individual level are also, therefore, a hidden migration because these thousands of journeys cancel each other out at the regional and national scale. Overall, it is a process of spatial churn from everywhere to everywhere across the country.

Conclusions

On the basis of a mixed methods study, this paper provides an insight into an under-recognised process of forced migration and forced residential mobility within the United Kingdom. Unlike migration driven by economic or lifecycle factors, this forced migration is driven by the factor of escaping abuse. The initial move is about a fracture in the course women hoped and expected their life to take, with subsequent moves being about trying to get their life back on course afterwards. The analysis across a range of

scales connects the experiences of individuals to the local and national implications; and international responsibilities towards internally displaced persons (IDPs). As a result, conclusions can be drawn about the extent and the distinctive nature of these migration journeys.

The paper has shown, first, that this is a gendered and forced migration process, with journeys to access formal services being overwhelmingly (over 98%) made by women, often accompanied by children. Interviewed women's accounts evidence the force they experienced in the abusive relationship, and the threats and violence that forced them to leave, as well as the agency they exercise – like other migrants (Turton 2003) – when they can. It therefore extends Warrington's (2001) exploration of women's spatially restricted lives due to domestic violence, by providing evidence of the extent of relocation and its implications at the national scale. It also highlights a distinct form of family migration, recognising the operation of (abusive) power in family mobility (Smith 2011); and makes conceptual connections across internal and international migration theory (King 2012). Specifically it employs a gendered approach to internal migration, identifying a gendered process experienced by women and children. This highlights the importance of such migration for individuals, and the state (in terms of responsibilities and responses), despite the lack of overall net effect within the UK. It goes beyond migration as a primarily economic phenomenon, and highlights forced displacement as a phenomenon of internal, and not just international, migration for the UK. Given the recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation, there is evidence that the notion of the UK as a country of no Internally Displaced Persons (UNHCR 2013, 41) needs to be re-examined.

Second, women's forced domestic violence migration is not about intending to change place. In addition to the attempts women make to stay safe without relocating at all, nearly half the journeys to access services are forced residential mobility within a local authority, rather than migration. The migration journeys are also often relatively short in distance, though some women do travel hundreds of miles. However far they travel, and within the constraints of limited options (especially at the point of initial leaving), women are significantly more likely to travel to a similar type of place to the one they left.

However, even relatively short journeys, or journeys to similar types of places, can be part of longer journeys over time and distance, and the third point in conclusion is the complex and segmented nature of the individual journeys. As Wardhaugh (1999, 104) argues, women's experiences of home and homelessness can be complex and shifting, as they seek both literal homing and to "salvage the self". There is a constant interplay between force and agency in this process. Beyond the initial journey to escape abuse, women often make many further moves due to threats from the abuser or policies and practices of services and authorities. Some are unable to achieve a settled location, even years after leaving the abuse.

This profound disruption of domestic violence journeys at the individual scale, is not, however, visible at the local or national scale, and the fourth point in conclusion is the lack of net effect of this forced migration. The journeys of women and children from and to everywhere tend to cancel each other out in terms of migration flows, patterns

and rates. Overall, the process is one of spatial churn; a process also identified by Gill (2011) in terms of asylum seekers in the UK.

This paper therefore concludes that women's domestic violence journeys are a significant and distinctive migration within the UK, with tens of thousands of women and children being forced to leave home in all types of places. Beyond identifying domestic violence as a driver of internal migration, this paper has also examined the extent and nature of these journeys, and their distinctiveness from other migration patterns and processes. In contributing to critical geographies of home, as called for by Brickell (2012, 234), the research both maps the landscapes of "domestic injustice" and aims to do something to transform them. The research will go on to identify the implications of this distinctive migration for individuals, services, Local Authorities, and National Government.

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Notes

¹ Refugee has a strict definition from the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; and this author would instead argue that the status of these women and children is that of Internally Displaced

Persons (UNHCR 2013), and therefore the responsibility of the state in which they remain (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2004).

2 Initially developed under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), subsequent reorganisation brought it under the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG).

3 These are unique journeys by women to access these formal services, and therefore recorded in the administrative data required under the Supporting People Programme. From these anonymised data it cannot be identified if these journeys are one stage in more complex journeys – as is likely – or if particular women relocated to access services more than once in this or other years. However, through data-linkage, Supporting People identified that 94.7 per cent of clients only accessed one service in the year 2006-7 (Supporting People 2009, 42)

4 Participants chose pseudonyms for themselves and judged the degrees of anonymity required in reporting the names of places on their journeys.

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