CS958: Dissertation

Information Seeking Behaviour of Romanian immigrants

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This is a type 4 survey dissertation that studies the Information Seeking Behaviour of recent Romanian immigrants, based on data gathered from interviews and participant observation of 12 Romanian immigrants living in and around the Greater Glasgow area.
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1.0 Introduction

This study focuses on immigrant information behaviour and seeks to provide a basic understanding of how Romanian immigrants approach their every day information needs. Working within a theoretical framework that considers information poverty and social capital as being closely connected, this study uses empirical data extracted from interviews and participant observation sessions with 12 Romanian immigrants living in the Greater Glasgow area in order to inquire into the ways in which this group engages with the new information world they have recently entered.

The processes of immigration and the subsequent adjustments necessary in order to adapt to a new society have a powerful, often detrimental effect on immigrants' access to information resources (Adler, 1977; Varheim, 2010; Audunson et al, 2011), although the effects of immigration are constantly being reformulated due to rapid developments in mass and personal communication, social networking, and worldwide mobility (Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007; Rozenfeld, 2013). Immigration also affects the migrants' social capital, which is generally lower in immigrant populations (Fisher et al, 2004; Putnam, 2007; Varheim, 2010; Nawyn et al, 2012). Both information poverty and low social capital have been linked to a decrease in individual health and social wellbeing, while also being connected to negative societal developments (Helliwel & Putnam, 2004; Varheim, 2010; Varheim, 2014). Starting from the premise that recent immigrants are at risk of being information poor with low levels of both bridging and bonding social capital who live in a small information world, this study draws from both information poverty theories and social capital theories and provides empirical research that furthers our understanding of the Information Behaviour of Romanian immigrants in Glasgow.

Immigration to the United Kingdom (UK) is on the increase, with Romanian immigrants (the focus of this study) being the most common European nationality in the UK and the fifth most common worldwide nationality in the UK in 2016, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2016b). This data shows that immigration into the UK, including immigration from Romania, is a significant social phenomenon, one that is likely to grow in scope even further. Failure to integrate the incoming flux of immigrants would have a negative impact on both the migrant communities and the host society. It is therefore suggested that in order to prevent immigrants from falling into a self perpetuating, downward spiral of information poverty and social exclusion, we need to examine their information behaviour and develop effective and appropriate services to help them successfully integrate in their new social environment.

1.1 Background

Net immigration to the UK, which is calculated by reviewing the number of National Insurance Number (NINo) applications being submitted to the Home Office government department, is estimated at 630.000 people as of March 2016 (ONS, 2016a). Approximately 270.000 of these were immigrants coming from the European Union (EU), a slight increase from the previous year.

Romanian citizens who applied for a NINo as of March 2016 are estimated at 179.000 registrations, which make Romanians the largest group of immigrants from the EU. Romania is part of the EU2, a group which consists of Romania and Bulgaria and which joined the EU on the 1st of January 2007. Additionally, transitional controls have been lifted on the 1st of January 2014, which means that nationals from countries who have recently joined the EU, i.e. nationals from EU2, Romanians and Bulgarians, no longer need to apply for a Work Permit in order to work legally

within the UK, although they still need to apply for a NINo (ONS, 2016a). The ONS explains the significant shift that took place in the 7 years period, 2007 – 2014, as follows:

> 'There were an estimated 42.000 usual residents in the UK who were born in these two countries [Romania and Bulgaria] in 2007. In 2014, there were an estimated 235.000 residents in the UK who were born in these two countries, a statistically significant increase from 2007' (ONS, 2016a).

In addition to being the primary source of immigrants from the EU, Romania is also the fifth source of immigrants worldwide, according to the ONS (ONS, 2016b).

To put this data into a Romanian, rather than a UK, context, Marcu's (2015) historical breakdown of the migration process of Romanian nationals provides a useful framework. The study explains the changes that took place in migratory patterns of Romanian immigrants, a process which comprises of three periods:

> (1) the 1990 - 1996 period, characterised by pioneers of migration,
> (2) the 1997 - 2002 period, characterised by restriction of movement due to EU migration policy, and
> (3) 2002 - present time, a phase during which major developments have taken place, such as the opening up of the Schengen area borders to Romania, its admission into the EU and the subsequent lifting of transitional controls into the UK (Marcu, 2015, p. 70).

Furthermore, recent data from the European Office for Statistics (Eurostat, 2016) estimate the number of Romanian citizens who emigrated in 2014 at 136.000 emigrants. If we compare this to the 179.000 NINo applications made by Romanian citizens in the UK in 2016, it is apparent that a large proportion of Romanians who leave their home country choose to immigrate to the UK.

According to statistics from Eurostat, a primary cause for migration within the EU is the appeal of the economic well being and social equality found in developed European countries such as the UK. Migrants who move countries in order to increase their economic opportunities are termed 'economic migrants'. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes an economic migrant as: 'a person who migrates, especially to another country, in search of employment and economic opportunity' (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Finally, data gathered within the EU also focuses on groups of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (ARPSE). As this data shows, in 2014 a total of 40 per cent of Romanian citizens were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, second only to Bulgarian citizens. The European Office for Statistics describes the two interrelated terms of poverty and social exclusion (ARPSE): '*at risk of poverty or social exclusion* refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived or living with a very low work intensity (Eurostat, 2016).

Before we review previous research studies focusing on information behaviour, and particularly the behaviour of immigrants and other information poor groups, the concept of information behaviour needs to be defined. In Donald O. Case's (2007) definition:

> 'Information behaviour encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviours (such as glimpsing or encountering information), as well as the purposive behaviours that do not involve seeking, such as actively avoiding information' (Case, 2007, p. 5)

Theorists and researchers are debating the concepts that make up information behaviour, such as information, information need and information seeking. Case (2007) points out that what is often called an 'information need' is in fact 'information behaviour' - because an

information need resides inside a person, all we can examine is the manner in which the need is being expressed, i.e. information behaviour (Case, 2007, p. 78). He clarifies 'information seeking' as the purposive activity of looking for information, whether it is to satisfy a goal or to fill in perceived knowledge gaps (Case, 2007, pp. 80 - 81). Thus, information behaviour includes both direct seeking and passive, unintentional information practices.

Research on the topic of information behaviour of immigrants is scarce and studies of Romanian immigrant men and women in Glasgow non-existent. Only a few studies have looked at the information behaviour of Asian and African diaspora in the United States (US) (Fisher et al, 2004), Canada (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Silvio, 2006), Australia (Khoir et al, 2015) and Europe (Aabo & Audunson, 2012; Audunson et al, 2011; Varheim, 2010; Varheim, 2014). These studies show that immigrants exhibit specific Information behaviour, often influenced by their culture of origin. For example, immigrant populations from cultures where oral traditions prevail find it difficult to navigate the predominantly written information resources available in the West (Mikal & Woodfield, 2015), while immigrants from Eastern Europe find it difficult to adjust to the Canadian use of social networking as a means to secure employment, considering this to be a form of nepotism (Bauder, 2005). These findings highlight that information behaviour is affected by various factors besides ease of access, and that the simple provision of information resources, without considerable attention being paid to specific needs and habits, is likely to be unsuccessful.

However, despite the fact that immigrants are not a homogenous group and so cultural characteristics must be accounted for when approaching

specific groups, studies into the needs of various groups of migrants consistently reveal some basic shared information needs.

Caidi & Allard (2005), in a paper that theorises social exclusion as a consequence of information poverty, described the information needs of immigrants in Canada as progressing in stages, with the first stage defined by a need to access the information world of public systems and institutions: municipal, legal and health services, long term housing, language- and employment- related advice.

In another Canadian study, Silvio (2006) focused on Sudanese youth in London, Ontario and categorised information needs into five main areas: education, health, employment, how to deal with racism and politics. The immigrant youth were shown to prefer informal information over formal and use sources such as radio, television, internet, newspapers, libraries, churches, mosques, community centres and colleagues, teachers, neighbours, family doctors and nurses, etc. (Sivio, 2006, pp. 263 - 264).

Khoir et al (2015) studied the information needs of Asian immigrants in Australia and concluded that the most urgent information needs of the studied demographic are finding accommodation and employment. The information resource most used was the Internet, followed by personal contacts and online social networks, while a minority of the participants reported using public services as well.

In a study of immigrants in Queens, New York, Fisher et al (2004) reports a diverse range of information needs: security and feeling welcomed, navigating their new environment, establishing a source of income and a bank account, adjusting their children to the new educational system, and learning about local services, including health, social and legal systems.

In Europe, studies on the use of public libraries have touched on the topic of immigrant information needs. Audunson et al (2011) found that immigrant women use public libraries to meet linguistic needs, to learn

about society, to answer questions regarding motherhood and to find out news about their home country. Varheim (2010, 2014) also found that introductory courses to Norwegian language and cultural skills meet some of the information needs of immigrants in Norway. However, these studies approach behaviour from a system's, rather than a user's, perspective. Due to the fact that the focus rests on the library and not on the public that uses the library, the studies provide an inevitably incomplete picture of the information world of immigrants.

A condensed summary of the literature suggests that some of the common needs of immigrants can be categorised as general (accommodation, transportation, local culture), formal (immigration, education, legal) and personal. General and formal needs are mostly addressed using the Internet as a main source of information, while personal networks are used to solve personal needs. Sources of information range from informal spaces (homes, cafes, shops) to more official domains (offices, libraries, schools and universities), with online social networks becoming increasingly important and useful. However, because there are such few studies of immigrants and the ways in which they engage with the information world, only a general and inevitably incomplete picture of the information behaviour of immigrants can be formulated. Furthermore, each of the studies discussed emphasises the fact that information practices are heavily influenced by factors such as native culture, adopted culture, gender, age, education, financial stability, etc.

On the topic of Romanian immigrants in the UK, there are no studies that consider Romanian immigrants' every day life behaviour from an information science perspective.
A couple of studies consider other Romanian groups in the UK: students and high-level professionals (Csedo, 2008; Marcu, 2015). These two

groups, viewed from an information science perspective, are arguably different from the immigrant group because they move within organisations with processes that guide students and professionals towards different information behaviours and resources. Immigrants, on the other hand, only have access to public resources, which they need to seek out independently.

In a study of human capital of Romanian migrant workers in the UK, Poiana (2008) provides a descriptive account of the general social and professional trajectories of 23 study participants. The information needs reported are subject to the gender, age and familial circumstances of the interviewees. As such, participants with young children are interested in information regarding public schooling, while young professionals seek to gain better employment or continue their studies. All participants single out proficiency in English as a crucial step in the immigration process. Despite providing rich contextual data, the study does not discuss the ways in which participants search for, select and access resources that could potentially answer their information needs.

Shifting the focus from the migrant to the type of information being searched for, Stan (2014) studied the health seeking behaviour of Romanian immigrants in Ireland. Although the study does not take into consideration any other information needs apart from health information, the study signals certain distinct characteristics of the Romanian migrant demographic, mostly beliefs around social status and its relationship to academic and financial achievement, and beliefs around traditional gender roles.

In view of the lack of studies and empirical data on the topic, the objective of this present study is to use an information poverty and social capital theoretical framework in order to formulate a basic understanding of the Information Behaviour of Romanian immigrants in Glasgow.

The primary data that informs this study is collected through participant observation and semi structured interviews with 12 respondents. The group studied consists primarily of Romanian adults who have been living in the Glasgow area for 2 years or less (83,3 per cent), with two of the participants (16,6 per cent), which acted as informants for this study, having been in the UK for approximately 7 years. The criterion of 'recent immigration' has been considered as an essential aspect when designing the study in order to ensure that most of the interviewees are recent immigrants, whose behaviour and needs are likely to be different from those of more settled immigrants (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Khoir et al, 2015). Additionally, all 12 participants (100 per cent) have immigrated into the UK in search of work, aiming to increase their earnings and improve their economic status, and not as students or employees of international businesses or organisations. As such, following the OED definition, they could be classified as economic migrants.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Literature review

The theoretical framework of this study brings together the concepts of information poverty and social capital. The premise is that in order to explore the information seeking behaviour of Romanian immigrants, we need to consider these behaviours in the context of a marginalised, small and information poor community, and also take into consideration the social habits, norms, networks and resources of this community, i.e. its social capital.

This link between information resources and social resources has been studied in a recent paper focused on the information seeking behaviour of adolescents not in education, employment, or training (NEET), which

used an inter disciplinary framework based on the theoretical concepts of information poverty and social capital (Buchanan & Tuckerman, 2016). The study suggests that there is a link between an information impoverished world and a reliance on bonding social capital, while bridging social capital remains low. The current study follows a similar theoretical and methodological framework to study Romanian immigrants and their information behaviours and social capital.

Information poverty, as conceptualised by Chatman (1996), develops when a group of people live within a small information world of insiders. This segregation from the mainstream knowledge of outsiders results in the information poor community being unable to obtain information on every day life issues. Therefore, living in a small information world leads to social exclusion and can contribute to low social capital.
Social capital in this discussion is defined as: 'the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and work together' (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 2016, p. 103).

2.11 Information poverty

Throughout her research studies, Chatman applied various theories and models to study the information practices of various fringe communities in order to develop a framework that helps us investigate and better understand the information behaviour of segregated communities.

In a study of working poor temporarily enrolled in a training program, Chatman (1986) used diffusion theory, a theory which examines the spread of innovation or in this case (job related) information, in order to map out the job seeking behaviour of 50 women. Chatman analysed empirical data gathered through interviews within a framework

comprised of 3 models of diffusion theory: elements of diffusion model, attributes of innovations model and stages of adoption model. The study found that the 3 models could be applied to the examination of job seeking behaviour of the working poor, with allowances being made for the substitution of 'innovation' with 'job information'. Time and personal referrals were found to be important elements in the participants' engagement with employment related information, together with relative advantage, compatibility, complexity and trialability (Chatman, 1986).

In a later study Chatman applied gratification theory, which proposes that certain populations are focused primarily on instant satisfaction of needs, to study the information behaviour of lower class janitors working at a US university (Chatman, 1991). She analysed data extracted from interviews against the 6 propositions of gratification theory and concluded that this disadvantaged group can be approached from a conceptual framework based on the theory. Specifically, the janitors were shown to live in a small, impoverished information world; they had low expectations and believed in luck; they tended to believe information coming from familiar, accessible and verifiable sources; they had a limited time horizon; they had an insiders' world view, i.e. a practical and individualistic approach to every day life; and they viewed mass media from an utilitarian standpoint, as a valuable source of both information and diversion (Chatman, 1991).

Bringing together the concepts and propositional statements that form the theory of information poverty, Chatman (1996) used her studies to demonstrate how the theory of information poverty can be used to study small, information poor worlds and their inhabitants. She described an impoverished information world as one in which 'a person is unwilling or unable to solve a critical worry or concern' (Chatman, 1996, p. 197). That is, information poverty refers to the inability to access and navigate

available information resources, but it is also characterised by the reluctance, even fear, to engage with unknown resources, resources outside of the known environment. Four concepts were found to define an information poor world: *secrecy, deception, risk taking* and *situational relevance* (Chatman, 1996, p. 194).

Secrecy is the action of hiding certain details about oneself, particularly personal information, in order to 'protect ourselves from unwanted intrusion from whatever source' (Chatman, 1996, p. 195). Chatman used examples from her studies to reveal situations in which information poor people kept secrets from other members of the community due to fear, suspicion, or a desire to 'fit in'.

Deception is similar to secrecy, but while the latter is a passive behaviour of hiding information, deception is actively trying to convey a message that is different from reality, 'to hide our true condition by giving false and misleading information' (Chatman, 1996, p. 196). Her studies reveal that participants engage in deceptive practices in order to appear to be coping successfully with a situation, or to appear 'normal' and socially acceptable.

Risk taking refers to the mental process of estimating the advantages and disadvantages of a certain action, such as asking for advice or revealing a need. In the case of information poor people, the drawbacks are often seen as outweighing the benefits, and so this group is more likely to engage in self protective behaviours and avoid taking risks. Drawing on her previous studies, Chatman demonstrated that women who were enrolled in temporary training programmes reverted to risk taking practices when choosing not to share job information with other women in similar situations, fearing that this would increase competition, while incarcerated women and elderly women partook in risk taking behaviours when choosing to hide their true condition, whether social or medical condition, in order to be accepted and avoid being ostracised.

Finally, *situational relevance* refers to the ways in which people judge the utility of certain information, and so information poor people are more likely to ignore a general resource, despite its potential usefulness, and prefer directly pertinent sources of information, in spite of these often being biased, incomplete or limited.

Chatman (1996) continues her theoretical formulation of an information poor world by proposing 6 propositional statements that describe such a world: information poor people perceive themselves as lacking any helpful resources; information poverty is partly associated with class distinction; information poverty is characterised by self protective behaviours; secrecy and deception are self protective mechanisms; exposure of problems is often avoided due to the belief that potential drawbacks outweigh potential benefits; and new knowledge is introduced in information poor worlds based on its relevance to every day issues (Chatman, 1996, pp. 197 - 198).

Moreover, Chatman (1996) defined the inhabitants of these marginalised worlds as *insiders*, disconnected from those who are actively engaged in mainstream society, i.e. *outsiders*, and made an interesting observation: while it is understandable that insiders often viewed outsiders with suspicion and were wary of interventions, insiders were also mistrustful of their own peers, i.e. other insiders.

In a social understanding, information poverty also manifests as social exclusion. In a study concerned with immigrant information problems and social exclusion, Caidi & Allard (2005) found that inability to access or understand information resources leads to social exclusion and the development of fringe communities:

> 'The particular circumstances of newcomers, the social capital that they have access to, and the environment in which they find

> themselves often put them in a vulnerable position and can lead to feelings of marginalisation or even exclusion. The provision of information has not been clearly established as a factor of inclusion; however, when we realise not only that finding information is a necessity for newcomers in a way that might not be for other vulnerable groups, and the way that information seeking is caught up in other 'recognised' facets of social inclusion (like the ability to access social networks and social capital), we can infer that information is most certainly an important aspect of social inclusion.' (p. 319)

Thus, in Caidi & Allard's (2005) view, recent immigrants experience both an increased need for information, and a reduced number of information resources available to them. This shortage of information outlets available to immigrants develops into low social capital and, inevitably, social exclusion.

2.12 Social capital

Social capital is a relatively new conceptualisation of capital. From an every day life perspective, social capital is holistically defined as formed of 'social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness' (Putnam, 2007, p. 137). These social networks, translated into every day life as social relationships and measurable by the strength of family, neighbourhood, religious and community ties, greatly influence personal health, social wellbeing and positive societal development (Helliwel & Putnam, 2004). Whereas other forms of (material or non material) capital exist as resources belonging to individuals, social capital exists in the connections and networks between individuals. Thus, social capital is seen as a dynamic and collective form of capital that facilitates the flow of information between members of various communities (Lin,

2003, pp. 19 - 20). In Lin's (2003) discussion of social capital, it is proposed that

> 'Social groups have different access to social capital because of their advantaged or disadvantaged structural positions and social networks. […] Inequality of social capital offers fewer opportunities for [disadvantaged groups] to mobilise better social resources' (Lin, 2003, p. 95).

Membership to various groups and communities, establishing social connections and sustaining social ties all produce social capital, and possessing social capital leads to social integration. Lin (2003) sees 4 hypotheses as definitive to the achievement of social integration: the (inter generational) transfer of personal resources, followed by the accumulation of social resources, which are then transformed into social capital, which in turn leads to greater integration and information flow within the labour market (Lin, 2003, pp. 208 - 209). Conversely, social exclusion and information poverty limit the information resources and social capital available to excluded communities, including immigrants (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Helliwel & Putnam, 2004; Putnam, 2007).

Particularly relevant to studying immigrants' engagement with information is the theoretical understanding of social capital as being comprised of *bonding* and *bridging* capital.
Bonding capital is represented by, and manifests through strong ties with members from the community, 'people who are like you in some important way'; while *bridging capital* exists within weaker ties between people within wider society, ties that transcend social divides (Putnam, 2007, p. 143).

Studies of the interplay between immigration and social capital, although a phenomenon not yet fully understood, suggest that 'diversity might

actually reduce both in group and out group solidarity - that is, both bonding and bridging capital' (Putnam, 2007, p. 144). Other researchers have also concluded that immigration leads to a loss of both bonding and bridging social capital (Aabo & Audunson, 2012; Audunson et al, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Nawyn et al, 2012; Varheim, 2011; Varheim, 2014). Bonding capital is often high in close knit poor communities which use it to 'get by', while bridging capital is more diffused and can be used by the non poor to 'get ahead' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 3). Importantly, *bridging capital* is linked to better social integration and positive societal developments, such as access to a wider job market and training opportunities. On the other hand, high levels of *bonding capital*, which is the primary form of social capital available to immigrants, has been linked to reduced levels of bridging capital, although some researchers suggest that in the long term, 'bonding social capital can be a prelude to bridging social capital, rather than precluding it' (Putnam, 2007, p. 165).

To summarise the theoretical concepts discussed so far, this study approaches the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants from an inter disciplinary perspective of information poverty and social capital. Information poverty, defined by the concepts of secrecy, deception, risk taking and situational relevance, is a state characterised by marginalised and small information worlds, limited information resources and restricted information behaviours. By investigating the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants, this study aims to discover to what degree and in what ways can the Romanian community in Glasgow be described as information poor. Information poverty is seen as a precursor of social exclusion and low social capital. Social capital, understood as the social resources available to an individual through his of her social networks, is relevant to this study in terms of the interplay between bonding and bridging social capital.

In order to test these hypotheses and gather empirical data on the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants, the research questions aim to develop a clear understanding of the information needs of the studied demographic. Specifically, is the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants in Glasgow demarcated by the characteristics of information poverty (secrecy, deception, risk taking and situational relevance)? If so, how does this affect their social capital? Do they possess more bonding social capital? If so, how does this affect their bridging social capital? Lastly, does a higher level of social capital manifest as greater awareness of the Scottish / Glaswegian information world?

2.2 Field work

2.21 Sample group and access

Gaining access to participants was the first and primary concern. After extensive Internet searches, two Romanian organisations were chosen: the Romanian Orthodox Church in Glasgow, which runs a weekly service in Romanian, and a Europe wide delivery service run by Romanian citizens, with headquarters in Glasgow.

Initial contact with the priest in charge of the church, and the manager of the delivery business, was made through both telephone conversations and regular visits to the church and the business headquarters. The two informants agreed to take part in the research and allowed the researcher to actively participate in activities organised by the two institutions, which assisted with the formation of a preliminary sample group, and also allowed for initial observation and for a trial interview to be arranged.

Qualitative research manuals generally encourage purposive sampling as the most appropriate technique for selecting participants (Pickard, 2008,

pp. 59 - 60) and so participants were selected based on a few shared characteristics relevant to the present study. The primary criterion for selecting participants was the length of time since immigration, with an aim of interviewing people who have lived in the UK for 2 years or less. The average length of time since immigration for the sample group of this study is 1.9 years. This criterion was chosen in order to ensure that most of the interviewees were recent immigrants, whose behaviour and needs are likely to be different from those of more settled immigrants (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Khoir et al, 2015). Another requirement was that participants were not enrolled in full time education, i.e. they were not students. This criterion was based on the fact that the information behaviour of students is different from that of economic migrants.

A total of 15 participants were interviewed, out of which 4 participants were also observed during periods of participative observation. 3 of these 15 participants were women and their accounts have been removed from the final draft of the study due to the incompatibility between the data extracted from their interviews and the rest of the evidence gathered. The removal of the data derived from female participants, which makes this study entirely male focused, is one of the limitations of the study and will be discussed in more depth in a following chapter.

Regarding the 12 participants that form the basis of the study, 7 participants were approached and agreed to take part in the research. Following this initial contact with members of the Romanian immigrant community in Glasgow, the snowballing sampling technique was used where the participants interviewed provided contact details for at least one other willing participant.
Thus, the purposive sampling began by making use of critical case sampling, where ‘a case might be chosen precisely because it is

anticipated that it might allow a theory to be tested' (Bryman, 2008, p. 419), followed by snowball sampling in order to allow for diversity in the sample group and also to explore further into the chosen demographic (Bryman, 2008, p. 424). As Bryman (2008) suggests, using more than one type of sampling is a fairly common approach to qualitative research because this technique allows researchers to find a balance between the specific and the general. In other words, critical case sampling insures that the participants are relevant to the topic and the research questions central to the study, while snowballing sampling provides 'at least the semblance of representativeness' (Bryman, 2008, p. 428).

Previous research suggests that saturation during purposive interviews is reached between 6 and 12 participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as seen in Pickard, 2008, p. 65; Guest et al, 2006) and this phenomenon was also noticed in the current study. The similarity between participants' accounts of immigration and subsequent life in the UK may also have been caused by the close connections between respondents, many of whom are friends, acquaintances or members of the same family who have immigrated using the same strategies and information channels.

The qualitative nature of the research suggested semi structured interviews and participant observation as the most appropriate methods for data collection.
All interactions and interviews took place in Romanian due to the fact that participants felt more comfortable speaking in their native language, and their grasp of the English language was very limited. The participants were asked to self assess their level of spoken English by describing their level as either 'beginner', 'intermediate' or 'advanced'. The beginner level was defined as 'no knowledge of English, or a very basic understanding of simple, common words and commands'. The 'intermediate' level was

described as 'being able to read simple texts and extract a summary of main ideas without assistance'. 'Intermediate' speakers were also asked to assess whether they can use their knowledge of English in order to participate in every day life activities without assistance, such as visits to the supermarket or use of public transport. 'Advanced' speakers were those who used English as their main language in work related situations, and who could read newspapers and official documentation with ease, or watch TV and films without the aid of Romanian subtitles.

Following a brief introduction, each participant was given an informed consent form and, after reading and understanding it, participants were asked to date and sign it. The form included the title of the research ('A study of the Information Seeking Behaviour of recent Romanian immigrants in Glasgow'), a description of the research ('investigating the information needs, sources, search strategies and difficulties or barriers experienced by recent Romanian immigrants'), information about data collection and anonymity of personal data ('interviews will be recorded using a dictaphone and the recording will be listened to by the researcher during the data analysis stage; all personal data, such as first name, age, level of English and date of entry into the UK will be kept secure and anonymous, and used only for determining a statistical average') and voluntary involvement ('after you agree to take part in the project, you can stop the interview at any time, you can refuse to answer any of the questions asked or avoid any of the subjects proposed, and you can opt out of being audio recorded'). Although the participants were presented with the choice of not being recorded, all of the participants interviewed agreed to the use of a dictaphone.

Following procedures observed in similar studies (Buchanan & Tuckerman, 2016), a research proposal was submitted online via the Institutional Ethics Committee and ethical approval was obtained before

undertaking field work. Thus, all interviews and participative observations were run in conformity with the guidelines determined by the University of Strathclyde Code of Practice on Investigations of Human Beings.

2.22 Interviews

In the case of interviews, they are 'usually used when we are seeking qualitative, descriptive, in depth data that is specific to the individual and when the nature of the data is too complicated to be asked and answered easily' (Pickard, 2008, p. 172). Considering the open ended nature of the research questions (What is the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants? What are their information needs, sources, strategies, and barriers? To what degree and in what ways can Romanian immigrants be described as information poor?), the aim was to encourage a naturalistic setting for both observation and interviews, and so the researcher participated in as many community activities as possible, often without the definite purpose of gathering data. Aside from gathering factual data, it has been suggested that qualitative research also consists of becoming accustomed with the environment being studied:

> 'Gaining entry does not only include the formal aspects of signing off and gaining permission, it also includes establishing trust and building up a rapport with all of the stakeholders: participants, informants and gatekeepers' (Pickard, 2008, p. 88).

Thus, following this introduction into the community, the researcher attended the weekly Sunday service ran by the Romanian Orthodox Church in order to immerse in the community and also to encourage open, informal interactions between potential participants and the researcher. The researcher also offered her services as Romanian - English interpreter, which allowed her to assume the role of participant observer and study the information seeking behaviour of respondents while they attempted to find and understand various information materials and engage with a

range of information sources, both public workers and online resources, in spaces such as a health clinic, a bank, a public library and a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Seeing as all the participants were busy with work and family commitments, data collection and interviews had to be approached from a practical standpoint and so discussions often took place in the participants' personal cars, while in transit from one work place to another, in parks while the participants walked their pets, or in private homes in the case of self employed respondents working in construction or related businesses.

Pickard (2008) suggests that qualitative research should allow the design of the study to grow and develop throughout the research process, and an initial plan that 'maintains the focus of the study without precluding the use of individual techniques, as they become apparent' (Pickard, 2008, p. 16) is encouraged. As such, the design and implementation of semi structured interviews were based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and the Sense-Making Methodology (SMM).

Critical Incident Technique is recognised as a useful approach to qualitative research where people's activities, beliefs and behaviours are the focus of the study (Schluter et al, 2007). Furthermore, CIT has been used in a recent, similar UK study concerned with the information behaviour of NEET adolescents (Buchanan & Tuckerman, 2016). As a strategy, CIT is described by its developer as 'a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principals' (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327). It is customary for each respondent to choose one or two information rich incidents and recall them in details (Urquhart et al, 2003), and the

technique is often used in studies that examine information seeking, types of information required, sources used, and reasons for using those sources (Urquhart et al, 2003, p. 70). In the case of the present study, this technique was applied by asking the participants to think of two critical incidents and recall their information behaviour in regard to these important life events. However, the initial trial interview revealed that asking participants to choose their own critical incidents was cumbersome and time consuming, and thus two critical incidents were chosen by the researcher and suggested as topics at the start of each interview: the period immediately after moving to Glasgow, and the recent European Referendum.

Sense-Making Methodology was also used to inform and guide interviews due to its focus on encouraging natural, self reflective discussions. When attempting to uncover information behaviour, self reflection on the part of the respondents is an essential element of the interviewing process (Foreman-Wernet & Dervin, 2011). Furthermore, SMM was developed as 'an approach to studying information needs, seeking, and use communicatively' (Dervin, 1999, p. 729). Although the full methodology is too complex to consider fully in this paper, Dervin's practical advice for interviewers proved very useful. Specifically, the focus on 'why' and 'how' questions helped guide discussions towards the 4 concepts of information poverty (secrecy, deception, risk taking and situational relevance), topics that are otherwise difficult to cover. During field work, the question 'if you could wave a magic wand, what would you do ideally?' (Dervin, 1999, p. 742) proved to be particularly helpful because it encouraged respondents to think abstractedly and creatively about their behaviours and uncover information barriers of which they themselves might have been previously unaware. A list of potential SMM questions, organised under topics such as Situations, Gaps, Bridges, and Outcomes (Ma, 2012) was kept to hand

and referred back to whenever the conversation became stagnant, veered off topic or reached a dead end.

With these two techniques in mind, CIT and SMM, a trial interview took place with one of the informants, i.e. one of the managers of the delivery service. The respondent was asked to think about one or two important life events (critical incidents) that happened after he had immigrated to the UK and that led to the development of an information need (or a series of information needs), and talk through the situation. The concepts of information need, source, strategy and barrier were used as pointers, together with the notions of bonding and bridging social capital ('Did you ask family members or did you use public resources? Why / Why not?'), and issues of trust ('Do you prefer asking friends, family, or public workers? Why?' 'Do you think friends / family / public sources gave you the right information? Did you trust it? Why / Why not?'). It soon became clear that asking participants to choose their own critical incidents was impractical as it caused them to become stressed, frustrated and reticent, and so two important life events were suggested by the researcher: the first few months after immigration, a situation rich in data regarding information behaviour and strategies for social adjustment and integration, and the recent European Referendum, which led the discussions towards topics less paramount, but still relevant (such as politic- and entertainment- related subjects). Following this trial interview, a flexible interview schedule was developed around those two topics: The Move and Brexit.

2.23 Observation

In addition to interviews, participant observation was also used as a data collection method. Although this had not been considered as an option at the start of the study, participants expressed the need for a Romanian -

English interpreter to help with basic activities such as registering for a General Practitioner (GP), update personal details at the local bank, find out information about English courses at the public library and inquire into various citizenship rights at the CAB. These interactions allowed the researcher to observe the participants engage with the administrative and social environment of their adopted country and note subtle behaviours which could not have been uncovered during interviews, such as feelings of shame and fear and prejudiced or deceitful behaviours. The observation sessions were characterised as 'lending a helping hand' and were not recorded in order to maintain an atmosphere of a natural setting and influence the situations as little as possible (Pickard, 2008, p. 204; Bryman, 2008, pp. 442 - 450). Mental notes were translated into full field notes soon after each observation took place.

2.3 Data analysis

At the end of the data collection phase, 15 participants had been interviewed. 3 of the respondents were not included in the analysis because their characteristics were too different from the general characteristics of the sample group; these cases will be discussed briefly under the 'limitations & further research' section of this paper. 4 of the final 12 participants were both interviewed and observed, and 1 participant volunteered for the trial interview and was thus interviewed twice. The interview schedule was very flexible but broadly designed to take between 20 and 40 minutes to complete, which was indeed the length of most interviews. However, a few respondents gave detailed accounts of their first few months following immigration, with the longest interview being two hours long.

The recordings were listened to, partially transcribed and translated from Romanian into English. A list of codes was used in order to index the

data extracted. The code list included the 4 concepts that form the theoretical basis of information poverty (secrecy, deception, risk taking and situational relevance) and concepts relating to social capital theories (bonding and bridging social capital, formal and informal information sources, trust and mistrust). In addition to this, the 4 concepts that form the basic focus of the study were also coded (information needs, sources, strategies and barriers). Finally, several tables were created for all the codes identified. Each table contained relevant data extracted from the interviews; for example, in the 'information needs' table, all of the information needs mentioned by the interviewees were listed in the top row, and cells were filled in whenever one of the interviewees mentioned an information need previously identified. This allowed for the codes to be indexed and presented in the form of rank lists, starting with the most common elements and narrowing down to the least common elements. Whenever a particularly illustrative or relevant quote or anecdote was uncovered, this was graphically represented inside the table to aid subsequent summation and discussion of findings.

Bryman (2008) suggests focusing on the following criteria while coding and thematically organising interviews and other qualitative data: repetitions, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data, and theory related material. Focusing on these abstract themes brought to light codes which eluded previous analysis.
For example, it became clear that most participants relied heavily on driving in their daily lives, despite living on low incomes and acknowledging that owning a personal car is more costly than using public means of transport. During the analysis stage, these repetitions and similar conceptions of the world became symbols for social exclusion and risk taking behaviours - respondents judged public transport as too stressful,

frustrating and taxing and preferred to 'lose money' rather than submit themselves to what they perceived to be awkward interactions and social misunderstandings.

Similarly, a preoccupation with 'Scottish friends' and a clear distinction between social contact with 'ours' and 'Scottish' acquaintances could be observed in a number of interviews. Coding these concepts as theory related material helped extract ideas of bonding and bridging social capital from within respondents' narratives.

3.0 Data analysis

3.1 Findings

In total, 12 Romanian immigrants were interviewed, and 4 of them (33.3 per cent) also took part in sessions of participant observation. These participants were observed (and assisted) while running basic administrative errands at a bank, a public library, a doctor's surgery and a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

The length of time since immigration ranged from 5 months in the case of the most recent immigrants, to 7 years being the longest period since immigration. The average length of stay in the UK was 1.9 years. All respondents were male, aged from 20 years old to 57 years old, with an average age of 38 years. Most participants described their level of English as beginner (66.6 per cent), with only 2 participants rating their English as intermediate (16.6 per cent), and 2 participants claimed they were advanced speakers (16.6 per cent).

3.11 Observation

4 participants, which amounts to a third of the total number of participants (33.3 per cent), expressed an interest in using the researcher as an interpreter and translator during visits to various public

organisations. This allowed the researcher to observe the participants engage with the administrative infrastructure in the Glasgow area.

To begin with, 3 participants, 2 brothers and a friend, expressed a need for language assistance in order to perform a number of administrative tasks. All 3 were living and working together, and they also travelled to and from work using the same car. Therefore, they asked to take part in the participant observation activities together, and these took place on two different occasions. During the first session, all 3 visited the bank and the doctor's surgery; during the second sessions, the 2 brothers visited the CAB.

The first interpreting session happened at the bank and included all 3 participants.
2 of the participants, who were brothers and lived in the same apartment, wanted to change their address - although they had moved house more than 6 months previous to the interview, they postponed the change of address due to lack of knowledge of how the banking system works. They had decided to deal with this issue because they both needed a proof of address in order to register with a GP. Although one of the participants described his level of English as 'acceptable', he could not understand basic requests from the financial consultant working at the bank, and thus could not follow basic instructions such as confirming the first line of his previous address, or entering his PIN number.
The third participant also wanted to change his address and to obtain a bank statement. He described his level of English as 'below beginner' and refused to have any interaction with the bank employee, instead communicating solely with the researcher.
Additionally, all 3 participants were unfamiliar with using a debit card and stored all of their personal data, including card number and PIN number,

on a piece of paper which they kept in their wallets. They seemed uncomfortable with speaking in Romanian while inside the bank, one commenting: 'because it is better they do not know what we are'. One of the participants refused to give his phone number to the bank employee, recalling a past event when he received a phone call in English, tried to explain he could not understand who was calling and for what reason, and eventually hung up the phone. He later found out that the call was in regards to a fire alarm check in his building.

At the GP, the same 3 participants wanted to register with a doctor. One of them was partially deaf and using a hearing aid, and he mainly communicated through his brother, who could not speak English despite rating his level of English as 'acceptable'. All 3 men chose the same date for an initial doctor's appointment, later realising that none of them will be able to make that appointment. They asked the researcher to call the surgery and arrange another date for the appointment. While filling in the administrative forms required in order to register with a GP, the 3 respondents once again refused to leave their phone numbers on the forms, commending that 'there is no point, if we can't speak if they call'.

The last place where observation of the 3 participants took place was the CAB, where a disabled respondent and his brother wanted to inquire into the financial aids available to them. The third man, a friend of the 2 brothers but otherwise unrelated to them, waited outside. During the assessment interview between the 2 brothers and the CAB adviser, which the researcher translated and interpreted, the 2 men would not answer questions related to their employment status, specifically whether they were unemployed, employed part time or full time, and stated that they 'need to ask the boss'.

Finally, the fourth participant who asked the researcher to act as interpreter was a man who had lived in Glasgow for 7 years. He described himself as an 'average' speaker of English and explained that he needed an interpreter because his information needs were more complex and specialised, i.e. information regarding the requirements necessary for enrolling on a higher education course at a university. Thus, the participant wanted to study English in order to pass a standardised English language test (International English Language Testing System - IELTS) and use this diploma to continue his higher education. He was observed seeking information on English courses in his area. Although he described his level of English as 'intermediate' or 'average', he could not read the pamphlets in the library and decided to leave the library without gathering any of the information he initially needed. When a library worker approached him offering assistance, he said he was fine and did not need any help.

In summary, legal, financial and health information needs were observed throughout the observation activities. Information barriers ranged from poor language skills and lack of knowledge on their personal status and data, to a general awkwardness and confusion in regards to how they should conduct themselves. The information sources used were the various consultants and advisers working for the public institutions visited, while pamphlets and other written sources of information were ignored. All 4 participants seemed to prefer receiving general information that they could further investigate, analyse and understand after the appointments, presumably at home and in private. They also expressed the need to discuss these findings with other relatives and friends, seemingly unable or unwilling to reach a decision on their own. However, they assigned little value to written information and appeared confused towards the verbal information gathered. The fact that none of the

participants accepted the pamphlets offered to them, while also being unable to recall all of the information received even minutes after the appointments ended, deemed it unlikely that they would be able to recall this information hours, or even days after the appointments took place.

3.12 Interviews

A total of 12 interviews form the basis of this study. The interviewees were aged between 20 and 57 years old, with 38 being the average age. Although 3 women were also interviewed, bringing the total number of participants to 15, this data was not used in the final draft of the study. Thus, all 12 participants were male and this issue of gender constitutes one of the limitations of the study and will be discussed in a later chapter. Inconsistencies between Romanian and British educational systems, together with major political shifts that took place in Romania in the past few decades and that fundamentally changed the academic infrastructure of the country, made it difficult to ascertain the educational level of the participants. Therefore knowledge of English was the only criterion recorded: 8 respondents (66.6 per cent) described their level of English as 'beginner' or below, 2 respondents (16.6 per cent) claimed an 'intermediate' level of English, and another 2 (16.6 per cent) were 'advanced' speakers. All of the respondents were engaged in some form of work, whether full or part time employment, or self employment. 5 participants (41.6 per cent) were performing manual labour, 5 (41.6 per cent) were engaged in semi skilled jobs while the remaining 2 (16.6 per cent) were employed as skilled workers. None of the participants were enrolled in further education, training programmes or English courses. 6 participants (50 per cent) rented their own accommodation, while the other 6 (50 per cent) sublet rooms from either family members or (Romanian) friends.

The information needs reported by all 12 participants (100 per cent) were legal needs, such as information on how to obtain a National Insurance Number (NINo) or various licenses relevant to their professions; financial needs, such as information on the British taxation system, minimum wage legislation and banking; health need, specifically registering with a GP and a dentist; and social needs, specifically the desire to take part in local community activities.

Other common information needs reported were finding out about better employment opportunities (75 per cent) and further training (50 per cent). Apart from 2 participants (16.6 per cent), all others (83.3 per cent) interviewed expressed frustration with their current occupations, which were either too demanding and time consuming ('I wish I had at least one day off every week'), or did not match their training and previous occupations ('I am fed up with working as a labourer. I used to be a site manager, now it is too hard, and I am not the right age for it'). Surprisingly, only half of the respondents (50 per cent) reported accommodation or technological needs - despite claiming they do not feel the need for information on how to use technology or how to find more suitable accommodation, these 6 participants agreed that they did not use technology to its full potential, and also that their living situations were too expensive and / or uncomfortable.

Regarding the information sources used by the interviewees, friends and other Romanian acquaintances were unanimously mentioned as the main information sources (100 per cent). Family members were also described as important resources (66.6 per cent). Where family members were available, particularly if they immigrated earlier and were more accustomed to life in the UK, they were preferred over friends and acquaintances: 'I prefer asking family to friends. I trust them more. But they do not always know'. One respondent described his search strategy

as follows: 'First, I ask friends and family and after that, I look online'. The Internet, particularly YouTube, Google and Google Translate, and social media, particularly Facebook, were all seen as equally important (66.6 per cent). However, social media was primarily used for socialising rather than gathering information due to the amount of information available, which most of the participants considered to be excessive and overwhelming: 'You know the block feature on Facebook? I use that a lot. Without it, the [news feed] is too long'.

The Romanian Orthodox Church and its associated activities, groups and seminars were used by the majority of the men interviewed (83,3 per cent). Interestingly, participants who were approached independently of the social channels associated with the Romanian Orthodox Church, i.e. participants suggested as appropriate candidates through the use of the snowballing sampling technique, were aware of the existence of the church and the programmes it ran. This suggested the possibility that the church was a main information resource for the entire Romanian immigrant community in Glasgow. Respondents recounted meeting other immigrants through the programmes ran by the church, but these new acquaintances had to be verified by the community before they could be safely used as a trustworthy information source. One participant recalled an event when he trusted another Romanian immigrant and was subsequently taken advantage of:

> 'I asked a [Romanian] guy for help with setting up a mobile phone but he stole money from my house and now I never ask strangers for help anymore. Unless someone says, hey, ask this or this person, they know and will teach you well'.

Thus, safety measures in the form of community approval were used by immigrants as a strategy for assessing which people to trust with their personal information and other personal resources. Although such informal safeguarding techniques can be helpful in protecting new

immigrants against cheats, these unwritten social norms also restrict spontaneity in the information behaviour of new arrivals. For example, one (8.3 per cent) participant who was a trained electrician in Romania but now worked as a night time cleaner recalled a chance meeting with another Romanian electrician who practiced his profession in Glasgow. Despite having many questions regarding the process through which he could get his international qualifications recognised by the UK labour market, he did not broach the subject with the other electrician: 'We were not linked, as it were, so I did not ask. You do not want to impose, if you do not know the person'.

Other information sources reported were TV and radio, hospitals and doctors, Job Centre Plus and its affiliated Romanian translators and interpreters, which were all used regularly by just over half of the sample group (58.3 per cent). Other sources mentioned were local colleges (41.6 per cent), the public library (33.3 per cent), newspapers and newspaper mobile applications (33.3 per cent), accountants (33.3 per cent), notice boards in post offices, corner shops, or street advertisement (16.6 per cent), and the work place (16.6 per cent).

Similarly to the manner in which social media was reportedly being used, other types of media such as TV, newspapers and radio were also primarily used for entertainment purposes, and not as a way of learning practical information. Speaking about the recent European Referendum, one participant explained:

> 'I do not follow media, politics or stuff like that. Maybe films or music. Other things, it is too confusing. Everybody has different alliances, here, and you need to know this to understand'.

An interesting discovery was that although most participants considered formal sources of information to be useful and trustworthy, they rarely used them:

> 'Some [friends] give you good advice, some rotten advice. […] I

> would use public sources. People here would help you, they are very polite, honest, and they know things. […] But I never actually use them. It is the English, and I do not know how. You can't just go there and say I do not know anything, tell me, no?'.

As a consequence, they relied almost entirely on informal resources, although these were considered to be more unreliable:

> 'I get news from [Facebook], Romanian groups, and also phone conversations with folk back home. They tell me what it says on TV. I do not know if they know the truth, but it is something, anyway'.

The respondents reported a number of information barriers that prevented them from accessing vital information. Poor knowledge of the English language was the main difficulty experienced by respondents, with all 12 participants (100 per cent) having experienced some form of language-based barrier to accessing information. Moreover, the language barrier is not only a barrier to information sources, but also an obstacle to becoming autonomous. A respondent described this feeling of dependency:

> 'I would know more English, if I could magically make something happen. So I would not have to rely on anyone, so that I could form my own opinions'.

Despite his interest in learning and improving his language skills, he did not feel confident enough to search for classes on his own, and reported a complacent attitude within his Romanian community:

> 'There, on my building site, we are 50 Romanians and only us three [himself, his father and his uncle] went to English courses. Why? Eh, they say it is a waste of time, what is the point, you waste energy, time and petrol and for what? Maybe they would have gone if [the classes] were held in their living room, maybe not even then. Plus at first we did not have a car and buses are hard work'.

Even the participants who were employed as skilled workers and who reported a good knowledge of the English language talked about how difficult it was when they first arrived in the UK: 'I needed a good few weeks to let go and loosen my tongue. You speak Romanian at home, so that is making it harder. But it is fine now'. While 8 participants (66.6 per cent) are classified as 'beginner' speakers of English, 6 of them (50 per cent) described their knowledge of English as 'worse than beginner' and did not attempt to improve their language skills, pronouncing proper nouns and names (such as Glasgow and Scotland) with a thick Romanian accent rather than trying to mimic the English pronunciation. All respondents (100 per cent) also mentioned the local accent as being particularly hard to understand. Out of the 2 participants (16.6 per cent) who claimed their use of English was 'mid range' or 'acceptable', one of them (8.3 per cent) was observed to experience great difficulty while interacting with people in English, or when reading official documentation. Within the constraints of this study lies the fact that participants were asked to self assess their knowledge of the English language and this lead to what was probably an overestimation of their actual language skills.

Language was closely linked to other information barriers: lack of time, lack of involvement in local activities and lack of social contact with English speakers. One young participant described this catch-22 situation with frustration:

> 'I have so many obstacles, I can't even think about them now. Because they are all connected - to do A, you need B, and you can't have B without A'.

In the words of another interviewee: 'I never speak to natives. If I spoke to natives, I would know English'. Another respondent, who was an unusual case as he worked primarily with English speakers and spoke only English at the work place, considered this engagement with native speakers to

be a vital step towards mastery of the language. Yet another participant recalled an English course he started a few months previous to the interview:

> 'I was going to the college and it was very good, I was starting to open up, but they started giving me more and more shifts at work and I stopped going, there is no time'.

9 out of 12 participants (75 per cent) mentioned lack of time as a significant barrier to information. Other information barriers were bad advice (83.3 per cent), poor knowledge of the job market and other social conventions (83.3 per cent), and lack of trust (41.6 per cent). In one instance (8.3 per cent), disability acted an information barrier because it forced the participant to rely entirely on one family member for all his every day life information needs.

In regards to poor knowledge of social conventions, one participant (8.3 per cent) stated that:

> 'The Job Centre was not that helpful. They give you a bunch of papers and you need to sieve through them, but who has got the time and patience for that?'

Navigating the world of administrative paperwork led to feelings of frustration and helplessness:

> 'There are places online, like the Immigrant's Guide and gov.co.uk, thousands and thousands of pages to digest. I did it all on my own. It is very hard. Google Translate takes forever, and often it does not make sense'.

Participants were also asked whether they use the public library, and only 2 (16.6 per cent) reported ever having visited their local branch. One respondent (8.3 per cent) used it to secure a place on an English course at a local college, while another (8.3 per cent) used it with their child for borrowing books and other materials, and they also attended child-focused activities. The latter talked favourably about the library, but

complained over the lack of bilingual materials. Also, he stressed the fact that he was the only immigrant in the group, and this made him feel out of place:

> 'They are curious about other people and how they behave, I can understand that. But if my boy is agitated or argues with another kid, they look at me as if to say, look at that one, how he is with his kid'.

3.2 Discussion

The empirical findings of this study were analysed using the concepts described by Chatman as the building blocks of information poverty: secrecy, deception, risk taking and situational relevance. During interviews and observations, these 4 concepts were used in order to guide the conversation and extract data on elusive topics such as beliefs, alliances, and thought processes.

The information needs reported by participants were legal, financial, health and social, mentioned by all 12 participants (100 per cent); employment needs were also indicated by 9 participants (75 per cent); followed by further training (50 per cent), accommodation (50 per cent) and technological needs (50 per cent).

In terms of information sources, all participants reported having used friends and acquaintances as a main source of information (100 per cent), followed by the church (83.3 per cent), family members (66.6 per cent) and the Internet and various social media platforms (66.6 per cent). Other sources used were TV and radio, doctors and nurses, and the Job Centre Plus and affiliated translators and interpreters, all of which were mentioned by just over half of the participants (58.3 per cent). Local colleges were used by 41.6 per cent, and public libraries, newspapers

and accountants by 33.3 per cent. Only 2 participants (16.6 per cent) mentioned having used either notice boards in public places, or the work place as information sources.

The main information barrier experienced by all respondents (100 per cent) was their poor English skills and the local accent. This was followed by bad advice (83.3 per cent) and poor knowledge of the job market and of other social conventions, difficulties that were mentioned by 10 respondents (83.3 per cent). Lack of time, lack of involvement in local activities and lack of social contact with English speakers were highlighted as barriers by a total of 9 participants (75 per cent). Other information barriers reported were lack of trust (41.6 per cent) and disability, which was a barrier for one respondent (8.3 per cent).

The participant observation sessions took place before the interviews and were designed to encourage an atmosphere of familiarity between the researcher and the 4 participants observed. Although before the appointments all 4 participants revealed the need to access a variety of information sources, once faced with public workers and a formal environment, administrative paper forms to fill in and various other administrative questions, they became uncommunicative, withdrawn and secretive. They appeared to not know what information could be safely shared with the authorities, making the interactions slow, difficult and unproductive. Legal, financial and health information needs were the most prevalent during the observation sessions, and information barriers ranged from poor language skills and lack of knowledge on their personal status and data, to a general awkwardness and confusion in regards to how they should conduct themselves. They wanted to receive general information which they could ruminate on at a later date and in private, and they seemed unwilling to part with almost any personal data which

would have made the appointments more relevant to their specific needs and situations. Even a small amount of information quickly lead to information overload, which in turn lead to information avoidance tactics and a generalised lack of focus and hope. In the words of one participant: 'my head hurts. Let's leave and I will try another time'. Furthermore, one participant seemed unable to read or write efficiently, although he did not directly state this issue.

Regarding the element of secrecy, participants were observed to be very wary of sharing their personal data, even innocuous information such as name and telephone number. When asked about the reasons why they act cautious and secretive, the respondents could not offer a clear answer and claimed to be adopting an attitude of 'better safe than sorry'. In the most extreme cases, this introversion manifested itself as unjustifiable fear and shame that stopped immigrants from speaking in Romanian in public places in order to hide their 'foreignness'. For example, during an interview in a park, one respondent became increasingly tense when he noticed a group of (Scottish) teenagers on a nearby bench. When the group walked past us, the respondent pretended to look at his phone and refused to speak until the teenagers were out of view. He explained this as follows: 'It is these kinds of people you need to be careful with. You never know when they will snap'. Fear of the unknown, and particularly of the unknown social environment in which he lived, caused the observed participant to preventively avoid social interactions in order to insure he would not make himself susceptible to potential abuse.
Thus, secretive behaviours stemmed from a lack of knowledge regarding their civil rights and responsibilities, a severe lack of confidence and general feelings of fear towards the surrounding environment.

Similarly, deceptive behaviour could also be observed. One respondent

spoke about an upcoming holiday, which he chose to have in Romania. At first, he volunteered no information regarding this holiday, but further into the interview he explained that he had been experiencing severe back pain and will go to a balneological resort for treatment. However, he had kept this condition as a secret from his employer, fearing he would be preventively replaced at the work place with a younger, healthier worker. He told his employer he will be going on vacation, and not to a health clinic, and went as far as to create an entire back story and relate it to his employer in detail in order to insure he successfully deceived him.

Another topic where deceptive behaviours were prevalent was knowledge of the English language. Although most respondents (66.6 per cent) reported a very basic understanding of English, a couple of respondents (16.6 per cent) claimed to be 'average speakers'. However, during one observation session, one respondent who self assessed as an 'average' speaker went to great length in order to avoid situations where the use of English would be required. Whenever use of English could not be avoided, he was observed to be incapable of basic conversation and thus awkward, fruitless interactions between him and public employees would result in abandonment of the task at hand. The respondent explained this as arising out of shame - he had been in Glasgow for over 7 years, yet his level of English hardly improved in this period. He expressed relief in being able to speak about this issue, and explained that pretending to know more English than he actually did was a constant stressor in his daily life:

> 'I cannot go to intermediate classes because I do not understand them, but I cannot go to beginners, again, because people find out and they ask me, I thought you were good at English, what is happening?'.

Thus, he attempted to protect himself from judgement and ridicule by engaging in self protective behaviours such as deception. The English language was not the only topic on which this participant was vague – he

also spoke about his past academic achievements and future academic goals, but he withheld details and described his knowledge and previous experience in unclear terms. Phrases such as 'I have been to many schools', 'I have many diplomas' and 'I am not stupid, I study a lot' were used repeatedly throughout the interview, yet the respondent did not mention any specific schools, universities or types of diplomas, and was observed to lack knowledge and understanding of how both the British and the Romanian academic systems work.

Deceptive behaviours seemed to be employed by the immigrants interviewed in order to justify and explain an isolated and, in their view, unsuccessful social existence. Thus, while the participant discussed above attempted to convince others that he was better educated and more proficient at English than he actually was, another participant attempted to hide the fact that he could not read or write in his native language. When faced with an administrative paper form he was asked to read and sign, he showed signs of extreme embarrassment and created a number of distractions, such as pretending to have received a phone call, or to have lost a personal item, in order to avoid having to sign his name on the paper. Yet another participant spoke at length about his professional achievements back in his native country, many of which were unlikely to be real seeing as he had only very recently finished high school. He used this enumeration of his past achievements in order to explain that he was 'not like this, I am much better, but in this country, you can't do anything so you do this [manual work]'.

Deceptive behaviours, therefore, were born out of lack of security, primarily at the work place, and also embarrassment in public places and a sense of failure around family members, friends, and even strangers. Participants engaged in self protective behaviours such as deception and secrecy in order to preventively guard themselves from criticism and derision. However, these self protective behaviours also limited the

opportunities available to the participants – since they did not reveal their true situations, to either family members, friends, or even unknown agents such as recruitment consultants or various other counsellors, they failed to access many of the academic, professional or other type of information sources that could have improved their situation.

This limited horizon is a characteristic feature of people living within information impoverished worlds (Chatman, 1991), and so people living within information poor communities fail to see the longer term potential of certain activities, instead assessing opportunities based on their immediate benefits. The participants in this current study ignored a range of useful activities such as courses and further training programmes because of the immediate inconveniences they presented, such as disclosure of academic and professional inadequacies, and failed to see and consider the long term benefits, such as access to better paid jobs, increased social integration and increased confidence.

Risk taking, and particularly the habit of avoiding taking risks due to beliefs that potential negative outcomes far outweigh positive outcomes, led to immigrants living within a small, heavily regulated world. To begin with, these restrictive behaviours were adopted based on stories shared by more settled immigrants. Thus, a shared mythology was perpetuated where outsiders were seen as ruthless and disingenuous. 10 out of 12 respondents (83.3 per cent) reported having been tricked or cheated by someone since they had immigrated, although none of them could recall a specific event when such a fraud took place. One respondent, who had moved to Glasgow less than 6 months previous to the interview, claimed that 'I am tricked by Romanians, often. Actually, I was tricked by Scottish people, as well. I am being tricked all the time'. Whether this was actually the case or not, he had lost trust in both outsiders and insiders, and thus was unwilling to partake in any speculative behaviour, an attitude which

was greatly restricting his life options. He claimed that 'other [Romanian immigrants] do not take any chances because they are cowards', but became elusive when further inquiries were made into how his own behaviour was different from that of the other immigrants he mentioned. He enumerated a number of speculative activities he would like to engage in, such as learning about further education, limiting his working hours in order to have time to apply to other, more fulfilling jobs, or even becoming self employed and escaping what he described as being taken advantage of by an 'abusive manager and just, everything, work place, payment style', but his lack of trust towards his current employer transferred into a generalised lack of trust towards the entire job market.

Another reason used by immigrants in order to argue themselves out of uncertain, but potentially rewarding activities was discrimination, both actual and illusory. All respondents except one (91,6 per cent) reported having experienced discrimination and xenophobic attitudes. In one case, a participant stopped going to child - parent activities at his local library because he felt that 'they are looking at me funny'. Yet another participant was certain that Scottish co-workers, despite acting friendly while at work, were gossiping and collectively judging him when he was not around. Based on this belief, he refused to allow any friendships to form with people he worked with, despite lamenting the fact that he felt socially isolated. One participant, who had lived in Glasgow for just over 6 months, described the degree of isolation he was experiencing: 'I think I spoke to Scottish people… maybe 4 times? But only at the pub, when they are drunk'.

Thus, risk taking considerations often informed immigrants' social world and more often than not, engagement with outsiders was seen as stressful, difficult and too risky. Avoiding contact with outsiders, based on previous negative experiences, lead to prejudices and xenophobic attitudes. One respondent described this prejudiced approach to social interactions

with strangers: 'there are some Scottish guys at work but we never talk. I talk to the Poles more. The Scottish think they are better than us'.
Similarly, an older respondent described his only social engagement with local people, despite having lived in the same apartment for almost a year: 'Last winter, there were some kids in my neighbourhood, they broke my rear view mirror, they threw a snowball at my eye… I am sure it is because I am a foreigner'.
A direct consequence of this prejudiced way of engaging with the outside world is that most participants see outsiders as also harvesting xenophobic attitudes: 'I think that they think we are destroying their labour market, and that we steal from them. […] You are labelled, as an immigrant, so there is a lot of shame, coming here'.
Furthermore, the concept of 'luck' was another reason why people avoided new and unknown situations. Respondents who described themselves as 'unlucky' could not logically prove this to be the case, yet they based major life decisions on this belief:

> 'I need to be very careful. I am very unlucky. For example, someone can park illegally and leave their car there for days, but I will get fined in the first 5 minutes. So I can't just jump into things. I need to plan very carefully'.

This finding confirms previous research, specifically Chatman's study of janitorial workers (Chatman, 1991), which suggests that life within a small world is characterised by low expectations and the belief in luck (p. 439).

Finally, the fourth factor that can be used to describe a small, impoverished information world is situational relevance. Situational relevance refers to the behaviour that allows new knowledge to enter an information world only if this knowledge is relevant to immediate, every day life needs.
For the purposes of this study, one technique in which the researcher

tried to assess whether situational relevance played a part in the ways participants searched for information was by inquiring into their media use, or rather lack of engagement with the media. A substantial finding was that all 12 participants (100 per cent) reported that they were not consuming any media. When further inquiries were made, some participants mentioned newspapers but could not recall the last time they had read one, and TV, although they were similarly vague on the type of TV programmes preferred, claiming to 'keep the TV on in the background, you know, reality TV'. One participant (8.3 per cent) even subscribed to Romanian TV channels, despite this service being disproportionately expensive for someone living on a low income.

In order to gauge the edges of their information worlds, participants were then asked to speak about the recent European Referendum and describe the ways in which they formed an understanding of this subject. Discussions on this topic revealed a generalised feeling of lack of control over one's own destiny. When questioned on their views on recent events, 9 participants (75 per cent) reported having no interest in major social and political events happening in their area, i.e. the European Referendum. 2 participants (16.6 per cent) were peripherally following the news regarding these events, but did not form any opinions because 'what happens to everyone else will also happen to us, eventually'. Only one participant (8.3 per cent) claimed to have followed the proceedings closely, even staying up all night on the day of the voting - however, he used Romanian media, specifically online streaming of Romanian TV news programmes, rather than local media. He described this as a poor information strategy, because 'they [British media] do not even know themselves what is happening, yet ours [Romanian media] talk as if they know better than anyone else'. Lack of trust, therefore, was again an information barrier, and the participant explained that he does not trust the media, either Romanian or British, yet he followed it nonetheless

because, he claimed, 'what else can you do? They are all liars, but you need to listen to someone, don't you?'.

Thus, knowledge regarding world events was generally not considered relevant because none of the consequences had yet reached the small world inhabited by immigrants. In the case of participants who were searching for information on current affairs, both the information found and the information sources used were not trusted by participants, who were engaging with this knowledge reluctantly.

Interestingly, the only facet of the European Referendum that all participants had formed an opinion on was the fluctuations in monetary currency, i.e. the relation between the British Pound and the Romanian Leu. However, participants failed to see the link between fluctuations in currency and political events.

This feeling of powerlessness was further intensified by feelings of segregation.

All respondents reported 'friends' as their preferred source of information, despite describing friends as 'not that trustworthy'. 'Family members' were also important information sources and more trustworthy than friends, but often described as 'not knowledgeable'. In contrast, media outlets, particularly TV and newspapers, were described as 'more trustworthy', but were also very rarely used and mainly for entertainment, rather than practical information needs. Formal sources of information, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, public libraries and Job Centre Plus were unanimously described as 'very helpful' and 'honest', with participants reporting high levels of trust towards these public organisations. However, these were almost never used, and when participants did visit these organisations, it was for practical and unavoidable issues such as applying for legal documentation.

Thus, formal media was theoretically preferred over informal social

channels, yet the latter were used much more often. Immigrants consistently chose inadequate sources of information because they felt that these were more relevant to their situation, and also more accessible and less threatening. Furthermore, respondents also appeared to identify with their 'Romanian immigrant' status to such a degree that they failed to see how general news could be applied to their situation.

This information poor community studied was shown to have a limited horizon, which inevitably lowered their expectations towards life possibilities and achievements. Participants rarely ventured outside the information channels provided by their community, preferring instead to wait for relevant information to filter through and eventually reach them, however tainted this information may have been with the subjective beliefs prevalent within the community. This strategy of information avoidance, although it protected immigrants from information overload, also forced them to live a segregated life inside the small information world of their diasporic communities.

Information avoidance behaviours were also applied to other facets of every day life. For example, one young respondent who was considering enrolling in a higher education course had few hopes of achieving this academic goal. He expressed his frustration in the following terms:

> 'Thing is, you can find out about general stuff, things other people did before. But if I want something new, something different, there is nowhere to go. Like, I finished high school but did not sit my exams. I would like to maybe go to university one day, but how?'.

Another respondent expressed a similar dilemma, this time in regards job opportunities:

> 'I want to be self employed, but there is paperwork. I do not go looking for it, no, I wait for [an acquaintance] to tell me, but he has got other things on his plate… it has been a few months, but he

> might still get back to me'.

Occasionally, venturing outside of the information world of the Romanian immigrant community proved fruitful, but such exploits were rare and born out of basic, short term, every day life needs. For example, one respondent described the 'Romanian shop', a business that appeared to be very well known by all the men interviewed.

> 'Do you know the Romanian shop? No? You have to watch your pockets, there. And they are nasty, arrogant. But I wanted some [Romanian specific food], so my dad and I, we went. I asked for cigarettes but they would not sell me any and finally I went walking and found a Polish shop. They were nice, they sold me cigarettes'.

As shown, markers of the 4 concepts of information poverty can be found throughout the interview transcripts. Respondents consistently reported feeling helpless and powerless, without helpful information resources at their disposal. They engaged in self protective behaviours such as secrecy and deception in order to shelter themselves from outside intrusion and potential injustice, despite having no real cause to fear external harm. Not exposing their problems caused the immigrants in this sample group to internalise every day life worries, and this lowered the chances of these worries ever being understood and resolved. Furthermore, new knowledge was introduced in their information world only when this knowledge was directly pertinent to basic, daily life issues, pertinence which was generally determined by the community. Thus, a small world was created where immigrants' basic needs became standardised, and individual needs were ignored or suppressed.

However, this state of information poverty was not caused by lack of *physical* access to information resources. Although some participants reported not being very familiar with technology, all of them owned at

least a smart mobile phone (and some also owned a laptop or a computer, though exact data on this issue was not gathered) and navigated the Internet at least once a week, with some of the participants going online daily. Instead, the condition of information poverty was more far reaching than lack of access to information and technology, and rested on the quality of engagement between immigrants and information resources. In fact, previous studies have pointed out at this quality over quantity dilemma; Caidi & Allard (2005), in a seminal study that conceptualises social exclusion as an information problem, discuss the role of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in overcoming social exclusion and information poverty and argue that the mere provision of access to ICTs is not sufficient, and that a deeper understanding is needed in order for information poor communities to engage meaningfully with ICTs and the Internet (Caidi & Allard, 2005, p.135). This also related back to Chatman's (1996) findings on the link between sense making and relevance in fringe communities, specifically that in order for information provision to be useful for segregated communities, the information provided needs to be generally helpful, but also specifically relevant. In other words, there is no such a thing as 'good' or 'bad' information, but information fit for various purposes. Thus, it becomes clear that information provision is a two-step process: firstly, making the information available and secondly, ensuring that the information is disseminated in a way that meets the needs of the target audience.

Answers towards the reasons why disengaged immigrants fail to make use of available information resources could lie within the theoretical realm of social capital. As seen from the data gathered and analysed for this paper, the social capital of both recent and more settled Romanian immigrants in Glasgow is rather low. None of the respondents interviewed could describe themselves as having any 'British friends'. One young

respondent who had been living in Glasgow for approximately 6 months could recall all the instances during which he had spoken to a local citizen - a total of 4 conversations over a 6 months period. This amounts to a conversation every 6 weeks, which could be described as a socially isolated way of living. Attitudes towards social engagement with natives range from hopeful towards much more negative, even fatalistic views. On the hopeful side of the spectrum, one respondent recalled a time when he attempted to 'make friends' with people living in the same building as him:

> 'In our building, we cleaned the [inner yard], made it nice. We told the Scottish that we were Romanian, to show them we were good people, we were all right. So they would not think… you know'.

Another participant chose a more pessimistic approach to social integration: 'I cannot get any help, not even any benefits, here. It is clear I am a zero, no?'.

In terms of social capital, conversations with participants revealed low levels of both bonding (relations with intimate friends and family) and bridging (relations with more distant acquaintances) social capital. Although it may be understandable that bridging social capital diminishes immediately after immigration, participants reported also having lost contact with close friends, many of whom were either still in Romania, or had immigrated to other countries. One participant, who had a young child (3 years and 7 months) and had moved to Glasgow 18 months previous to the interview, explained that friends and family from his native town think he is having an 'easy, happy and rich' life in Glasgow, and thus showed little empathy for the social problems he was experiencing. He found this rupture from his previous social life, which can be theoretically conceptualised as a sudden drop in his bonding social capital, very painful and went as far as to describe immigration as a 'first death'.

Although all participants interviewed use the immigrant community and the many services it provided for recent immigrants, views towards other Romanian immigrants varied greatly. For example, one recently immigrated young man, who was living with 3 other Romanians and working on a construction site that employed dozens of other Romanian builders, expressed negative views towards his co-nationals. He described them as complacent towards academic betterment, specifically learning the English language, and also as self centred and opportunistic: 'they show a total lack of interest. Such cowards. And when they become 'someone', they start acting cool and will not help others anymore'.

Yet another participant, who can be described as an unusual case within this study, as he was employed full time as a sound engineer and worked in a diverse work environment where most other people were British and none of them Romanian, expressed very clear views on how to 'get ahead', i.e. build bridging social capital. He described his strategy towards social integration, which started before he moved to Glasgow:

> 'Before actually moving here, I got a good piece of advice, a general thing that everyone gets told. It is sad, but true: whatever you do, do not get involved with other Romanians'.

He also described the quality of the area in which he lived by explaining that 'it is a good area, and there are only very few Romanian families living around there'. He even used a well known Romanian acronym, which used to be the acronym for the Romanian Communist Party (PCR), as a joke in order to describe how 'these type of immigrants', i.e. Romanian immigrants who rely almost entirely on bonding social capital, live: 'PCR, it stands for: nepotism, acquaintances, relatives'. Painting a bleak picture of how this practically manifests in the daily life of socially isolated immigrants, he explained:

> 'I know of so many of these people. They come over here to work for their so called 'brother in law', they can't speak any English, they

> do not know anyone, they work and live with other Romanians… Then this 'brother in law' drops them, or he moves away - and they are lost'.

However, he was still attending the weekly service held by the Romanian Orthodox Church, an activity which he described as 'purely social, not professional. I would never work with these people. But it is good for my kid'.

This relates to previous research that suggests that in theory, 'bonding social capital can be a prelude to bridging social capital, rather than precluding it' (Putnam, 2007, p. 165). However, in practice it appears that relying on bonding social capital, the type most often found in close-knit communities such as the Romanian immigrant community in Glasgow, hinders the creation of bridging social capital. This fact can also be observed from the ways in which immigrants engage with the local language. As has been previously argued in this paper, reliance on bonding social capital is an impediment to learning the English language, which in turn prevents the formation of bridging social capital. In the words of one respondent: 'If I spoke to natives, I would know English'.

Another interesting way in which fear, lack of social capital, social isolation and unfamiliarity with the surrounding environment informed the every day life behaviours of participants was observed soon after the data gathering stage of the study began, and this was the fact that all participants except one (91,6%) owned a personal car, and used it extensively for both personal and professional reasons. This fact seemed unusual and impractical because participants were living on a low income and using a personal car for daily chores and commute was more expensive than using public transport. One participant was commuting daily to his work place, which was on the outskirts of Edinburgh. 3 other participants were commuting every day to their night time cleaning jobs

in the city centre of Glasgow, and complained repeatedly about the 'exorbitant parking. It is more expensive than rent. I pay more for my car's rent than for my own'. Yet another respondent explained he used his personal car in order to travel regularly to London for 'business purposes', although it was not made clear what those purposes were. The only participant who did not own a car due to the fact that he could not drive explained that this was a major inconvenience and that he was forced to live and work in close association with 2 other Romanian immigrants who owned a car because 'without this, I could not get around'. When further inquiries were made into the reasons why participants did not use public transportation for their daily activities, the general consensus was that public transport was difficult to use. One participant, who was forced into using the buses in Glasgow while his car was being repaired, described a scene:

> 'You get on, and they are all staring at you, and you need exact change and to tell [the driver] where you are going, but I do not understand what he says, and he does not understand what I say. So I often say a [generic place], like centre, and end up paying more [than the required fee]'.

He explained further that this engagement with bus drivers and other travellers was so stressful that he chose to use a bike in order to commute to his night time cleaning job:

> 'I used to bike 30 kilometres there, 30 back. So 60 every day, and then 12 hours shifts in between. It was very hard, and when it rained or snowed… Very, very hard'.

Thus, respondents preferred to allocate a disproportionate amount of their monthly earnings, or to undergo severe physical hardship, in order to avoid contact with an external world whose language and social rules they did not understand and, as a consequence, feared.

It can be argued, however, that a loss of both bonding and bridging social capital is unavoidable and natural, immediately after immigration. In a paper that discusses the immigrant adjustment process in relation to Abraham Maslow's motivational hierarchy theory, Seymour Adler argued that

> 'Immigrants undergo a state of impaired psychological functioning upon their arrival in a new country. […] Whatever level of the hierarchy their personal development had reached prior to emigration, they are pushed by various factors towards the bottom of the hierarchy' (Adler, 1977, p. 445).

As such, immediately after moving, immigrants are likely to focus mostly on their physiological needs, i.e. findings shops to buy food, and a house or apartment in which to live. This has indeed been observed in the case of all participants, whose initial concern was finding accommodation and a source of income. One respondent reported having tried to find accommodation outside of the Romanian diaspora, but found this difficult:

> 'It is hard to find a house to rent. I have no paperwork. Landlords ask for letters from previous landlords, but Romanian letters do not count, so there is no way out'.

Thus, in the cases studied, all immigrants had moved into a friend's or a relative's house and remained there until they found their own accommodation.

However, what is striking is that following this initial loss of social capital, participants failed to recover from this fall. Levels of bonding social capital increased slightly through engagement with other Romanians met through institutions such as the church and other businesses owned by Romanian citizens, but this immersion into the Romanian community appeared to deter immigrants from increasing their bridging social capital by hindering the formation of social connections with people from outside the Romanian community.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Summary and recommendations

The theoretical framework underlying this study was an inter disciplinary approach that considered information poverty in parallel with social capital, and this framework was used to investigate the information behaviour of Romanian immigrants living in social isolation and information deprivation. Thus, social exclusion was conceptualised as an information problem, and migrants were observed to live in a small world determined by the fringes of the Romanian community. Evidence gathered from interviews and participant observation suggested that immigrants' information behaviour was characterised by self protective behaviours such as secrecy and deception, and also risk taking and situational relevance. Participants were observed to be secretive as many refused to share personal information with public workers, often concealing harmless data such as address, telephone number and employment status, or even fundamental information such as nationality. Some participants behaved deceptively by trying to disguise serious medical conditions as mere temporary inconveniences, and almost all participants tried to deceive the researcher, public workers, employers, friends and family and at times even themselves in regards to their actual knowledge of English. Respondents were also very aware of the potential risks attached to every day life activities, and they limited their life choices in regards to further training, education, better employment opportunities and increased social integration based on feelings of fear, shame and a generalised lack of trust. Situational relevance was also a major concern in participants' approach to life in the UK, and so data gathered supports the idea that immigrants living in information poverty judge the relevance and usefulness of information based on how easily accessible and directly pertinent such information was to their immediate needs. Participants avoided useful

services such as public transport, English courses and employment related advice classes on account of these services being regarded as incompatible to their lifestyles and unrelated to their segregated communities.

The information needs perceived by immigrants were basic, every day life needs, often determined by the collective needs experienced by all the members of the community. Specifically, the information needs reported by the immigrants who took part in this study were primarily legal, financial, health and social, followed by employment and further training, and also accommodation and technological needs. However, these are basic and general information needs, and participants seemed unable and unwilling to divulge more personal concerns. Thus, the needs of immigrants became standardised and particular needs specific to each individual were suppressed or ignored.

The information sources used by the migrants studied were also determined by the small world of their daily lives, and they made use of sources found primarily within the immigrant community or through gatekeepers endorsed by the community, such as friends and family members, the Romanian Orthodox Church, media and the Internet, primarily social media and online translation services. Doctors and nurses, Job Centre Plus and local colleges were also used, while only 4 participants (33.3 per cent) recalled ever having used the public library.

Information seeking behaviours were formulated according to previous behaviours vouchsafed by the community, and independent or original plans were perceived as too complex, risky or outside of the resources and capabilities of (particularly recent) immigrants. Personal hopes, usually relating to academic or professional advancement, were often kept a

secret from friends, acquaintances and family members, and this led to these hopes being overlooked and eventually abandoned.

Immigrants who could not communicate in English, a characteristic which described the majority of the men from the sample group, reported lack of English as the main barrier they encountered when attempting to locate and access information. English illiteracy, combined with lack of time for either group or independent study, both lead to a lack of social engagement with people outside of their immediate community. Although respondents seemed to acknowledge that social media, the Internet and other online resources could theoretically be useful, none of them used these resources actively. This was not due to a lack of physical access to technology, but due to a lack of understanding in regards to how online resources could be applied to their specific situations.
The evidence was symptomatic of an information impoverished world, and it is the conclusion of this study that the Romanian immigrants studied suffered from information poverty.

Furthermore, participants were found to suffer from reduced levels of both bonding and bridging social capital. The evidence suggested that a reliance on bonding social capital, particularly the social resources and connections available to recent immigrants through the social networks of more established immigrants, hindered the creation of bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is characterised by self contained behaviours which were seen to amplify social segregation.

Thus, issues of low levels of English literacy and low social autonomy are reciprocally exacerbated, and it is suggested that measures to rectify these problems should be implemented. Particularly, public courses in both the English language and local customs and societal structures could be

designed and aimed specifically at recent immigrants. Such free of charge classes and courses exist in Scandinavian countries, many of which are compulsory, and they are reported to be very useful in socially integrating immigrant communities. Norwegian studies report that low intensive courses encourage socially isolated groups such as immigrants or refugees to engage with their host societies and overcome self protective habits (Aabo & Audunson, 2012; Audunson et al, 2011). Researchers point out at the ideal position and role of public libraries within the social milieu for designing and running such courses. Public libraries are places that immigrants automatically trust, and they are arenas where immigrants can manifest their cultural identity, while also being exposed to cultural pluralism, all of this in a safe environment.

Furthermore, the regular use of public libraries has been shown to increase social capital in segregated and disadvantaged groups (Varheim, 2010; Varheim, 2014). Evidence from this study confirms the appeal that public forums hold for disengaged immigrants, with participants who attended English courses at local colleges having reported feeling more confident and more socially integrated, and also making social connections outside of the Romanian immigrant community, which in turn lead to increased bridging social capital. However, the participants reported that these courses were ran sporadically, in impractical locations and at inconvenient times. Colleges that ran English courses attended by participants were mostly based in the city centre and proved difficult to reach for immigrants living in the outskirts of the city.
Moreover, participants felt insecure and fearful of attending such courses on their own, and relied on the willingness of other Romanian friends and family members in accompanying them. It is suggested that running English courses aimed at specific nationalities, such as Romanian, would

encourage immigrants to feel more confident and thus, more likely to participate.

Additionally, courses outlining local customs and social, legal or administrative structures were non-existent in Glasgow and the surrounding areas. It is therefore suggested that running both English language and other informative courses through local public library branches throughout Glasgow could be more productive and appropriate. Participants reported trusting public library staff, but they did not approach them for information or help they because believed staff to be busy with other activities.

Furthermore, shame and lack of confidence also played an important role in participants' attitude towards library (and other public) workers. Outreach programmes, which could make use of already established social networks such as the Romanian Orthodox Church, or online social networks and websites, could help immigrants overcome their lack of confidence. One participant mentioned an introductory seminar on legal matters held on the church's premises that was well attended and well received, which suggested that further alternative outreach solutions could be successfully designed and implemented. Yet another participant mentioned the lack of bilingual materials as a barrier to using the public library, therefore it is suggested that a larger stock of Romanian - English bilingual books and other materials could encourage Romanian immigrants to use public libraries more.

Considering the issue of situational relevance, a method through which such courses could be made more pertinent to immigrants would be to make them compulsory upon entry into the UK and, specifically, into the UK job market, as seen in similar strategies implemented throughout Sweden, Norway, and other Scandinavian countries.

4.1 Limitations and further research

The two main limitations of this study were the lack of female participants, and the potentially subjective manner in which the participants' level of English was determined, i.e. using self assessment.

In regards the first limitation, the lack of female participants, this emerged as an issue early into the data gathering stages of the project, when Romanian immigrant women were difficult to locate and gain access to. In order words, both the church and the delivery service used as gateways into the Romanian immigrant community in Glasgow were run and used primarily by men. Three female participants were interviewed, but all three presented very different circumstances and this made it impractical for the emergent data to be analysed and used within the study.
One female participant was a nun, the second female participant was a professional academic employed by a local university, while the third female participant was an unemployed, stay at home mother. The average age of the three respondents was 33 years old, and the average length of time since immigration was 5.8 years. The female participants highlighted information needs that could be deemed as gender specific, such as sexual health information, information regarding childbearing and general knowledge of the social norms related to child education in the UK. Markers of information poverty appeared to characterise the information world of the three female participants, potentially even more so than in the case of their male counterparts. Prejudices regarding gender roles, which are prevalent and widespread particularly in the uneducated social classes of Romanian society, could be considered within a study focused on female immigrants, since these prejudices could exacerbate self protective behaviours such as secrecy and deception, and also risk taking and situational relevance.

In terms of the social capital reported, particularly in the case of the stay at home mother, this was almost non-existent and she relied entirely on the resources of her partner. The three women also reported a more profound emotional response to the inevitable loss of bonding social capital that took place immediately after immigration, such as missing family life. The mother expressed great difficulty in raising her child alone, without the female inter-generational help prevalent in Romanian communities, i.e. grandmothers, aunts and so forth. The other two female participants also reported intense feelings of isolation and need for community engagement and support.

Thus, it is suggested that a study focusing on female immigrants could focus on the information behaviour of women, and the ways in which they accommodate to a society that runs on arguably different social norms and attitudes towards genders and gender specific roles.

The second limitation of the study lies in the manner in which participants' English literacy was determined. Because participants were asked to self assess their knowledge of English, many described their situation as 'so so', 'okay', 'enough to get by', and 'not so good'. They appeared to find it difficult to think within the categories suggested by the researcher, i.e. beginner, intermediate or advanced. Moreover, the 2 participants who described themselves as 'intermediate' speakers were observed to be unable or unwilling to use English during casual conversation with both the researcher and public workers. Thus, it may be that they overestimated their grasp of the English language, and this could be explained by either a lack of self awareness, of feelings of shame and awkwardness. It is suggested that more evidence-based and demonstrable methodology of assessing language literacy should be used in future research studies in order to assess this variable. For example, participants could be asked to complete a short test, provided by the researcher at

the start of the interview - examples of such basic multiple choice tests are widely available free of charge on the Internet and they could easily be adapted to function as an objective method of assessing language proficiency.

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