

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 (History)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Creating a 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Diasporic Association: Transforming the EU Citizens Campaign Group 'the3Million'		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> February 2009 – July 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Tanja Bueltmann	Professor	01/02/2009 – 31/07/2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> January 2018 – September 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The challenges faced by emigrants when establishing a new life in an unfamiliar country with little or no state support can be alleviated by forming and growing diasporic/immigrant associations to enable collective action. Research undertaken at Northumbria University by Professor Tanya Bueltmann applied the historical experience of emigrant communities to inform the operation, growth, and effectiveness of the UK's largest campaign organisation for EU citizens, the3million (T3M), founded in 2016 in response to Brexit. The research informed how the group redefined itself as a grassroots immigrant association, changing how it engaged with, mobilised, and acted on behalf of its 40,000-strong forum membership. This dual transformation was evident in the scope and focus of T3M's national 'This is our Home' tour and its increased profile as a lobby group, ensuring its recognition by the UK parliament and international thinktanks as a key advocacy group.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Since the UK government made its commitment to leave the European Union, it has become clear that the political questions posed by the status of EU citizens resident in the UK resonate with the historic experiences of emigrants and diasporic groups. Emigrants have always faced external challenges when establishing a new life in an unfamiliar country, and diasporic immigrant associations have played important roles in leading and enabling collective action in these contexts. Bueltmann's extensive body of research (supported by research grants from the AHRC, ESRC, and the British Academy), on Scottish, English, and German diasporic communities during the long nineteenth century, and particularly the formation of mutual self-help organisations, informed changes to the T3M's identity and ethos, making it more effective in campaigning for the rights of European immigrants in the UK during the crisis period following the EU referendum [R1-R4].</p> <p>While Bueltmann's activism on behalf of EU citizens after Brexit drew her and T3M together, it was her transnational research into ethnic associations and wider diaspora networks that helped to transform the organisation's strategy. Of particular significance is the research's recognition that the failure of local, provincial, or colonial/federal governments to support immigrant groups, like the Scots in New Zealand or the English in Canada - places where they were ostensibly equal citizens - catalysed the formation of social and activism hubs [R1-R4]. Uncovering diasporic agency is central to this research, which equally establishes how the long-term social and political significance of working-class diasporic organisations often outweighed that of elite configurations. Insurance-based provision and self-help principles rather than charitable giving was important to this success [R3]. Numbers mattered too, and diasporic agency was most effective when immediate ethnic remits were outweighed by the need to build solidarities across diasporic groups. Bueltmann helped T3M recognise the parallel experience of the UK's multi-</p>		

national EU citizenry after the EU referendum result, ensuring the organisation learned lessons from these diasporic experiences [R1-R4].

In particular, this research demonstrates that migrants, even when they were not poor involuntary migrants, but instead opportunity-seeking voluntary immigrants moving across open borders, still saw the utility of forming associations to represent their interests on a collective level [R2, R4]. As such, these diasporic experiences chimed with those of highly educated or entrepreneurial EU migrants who are successfully established in UK professions or in business but have felt 'othered' by the politics of Brexit. By complicating conventional notions of what constitutes 'a migrant', these EU migrants occupy a similar position to the former English diaspora in North America. As this research establishes, though treated in the literature as 'invisible immigrants' because thought easily assimilated to Anglophile US culture, the English diaspora, whether 'settler' or 'sojourner', was as conscious of its ethnicity as any other [R3, R4].

In sum, Bueltmann provides a systematic account of the organisational basis of immigrant diasporic cultures, and through longitudinal evaluations of cultural activities, demonstrates that diasporic communities could be mobilised across class lines, and even nationalities, in pursuit of common interests and goals. This insight proved invaluable to T3M in its attempt to become an effective organization in the interests of immigrants who faced the loss of long-held rights [R2-R4].

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**R1. Tanja Bueltmann** *Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850 to 1930* (Scottish Historical Review Monograph Series, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, **2011**)\*  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r2680>

**R2. Tanja Bueltmann** *Clubbing Together: Ethnicity, Civility and Formal Sociability in the Scottish Diaspora to 1930* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, **2014**) Winner of the Saltire Society Research Book of the Year 2015. ISBN: 9781781381359 Available on request

**R3. Tanja Bueltmann** and MacRaild, D. M. *The English Diaspora in North America: Migration, Ethnicity and Association, 1730s-1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, **2017**) ISBN: 978-1-5261-0371-0 Available on request

**R4. Tanja Bueltmann** and Robinson L. C (2016), 'Making Home in a Sojourner World: Organised Ethnicity and British Associationalism in Singapore, c1880s-1930s', *Britain and the World*, 9:2 167-96 [doi.org/10.3366/brw.2016.0236](https://doi.org/10.3366/brw.2016.0236)

#### Research Grants

G1. British Academy, 2010, GBP4,160

G2. CI, Tanja Bueltmann, AHRC, 2011-13, GBP240,939 (AH/I001042/1)

G3. PI, Tanja Bueltmann, ESRC, 2013-16, GBP234,809 (ES/K008161/1)

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Bueltmann's studies into historical European migration overseas, identity-formation, and associationism improved T3M's understanding of its organisational values and historical legacy, and her research informed its strategy and operations as a grassroots organisation changing how they engaged with, mobilised, and acted on behalf of UK-based EU citizens. The research enhanced T3M's advocacy work and policy formulation with the UK Parliament, and with the thinktank, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the oldest political foundation in Germany. In sum, Bueltmann's research and work with T3M helped 1) to change its understanding of its organisational values, 2) inform its strategy and operations as a grassroots organisation, and 3) enhance its effectiveness as an advocacy body.

**4.1 Changed understanding of T3M’s organisational values**

Recognised in The Big Issue Top 100 Changemakers 2020, T3M carries out lobbying, litigation, and outreach activity with the UK Government, the European Parliament, and with EU citizens. The Communications Manager for T3M explains the usefulness of Bueltmann’s historical research for the organisation, *‘it explored the role of associations in spearheading and facilitating collective action, this was of interest to us because it is what we do, as an association’* [E1, p1]. These insights provided T3M with *‘a unique perspective on the uncertainty and external challenges encountered by other immigrant groups, historical and more recent, and how grassroots promotion of a shared identity within a wider civic setting, helped immigrant communities to take collective action and engage with diverse stakeholders’* [E1, p2].

This vital historical context gave T3M a strengthened *‘sense of purpose’*, and a new understanding of their role as a successor to earlier immigrant associations [E1, p2]. They have described how *‘like those groups, we too formed in the absence of a responsible state, with individuals coming together and taking collective action to look after our interests as EU citizens’* [E1, p1]. As a result, T3M now possess a *‘unique, wider lens’*, through which to understand and assess their own work:

*While we represent a community of multiple nationalities, the structure, roles, and civic-orientated activity of the 3million is no different from the historical counterparts Professor Bueltmann discussed with us. This sense of legacy, recognizing the long-standing role of immigrant associations, has reinforced organisational confidence in the work we do, and must continue to do, in a post-Brexit landscape* [E1, p1].

**4.2 Informed strategy and operations of T3M as a grassroots organisation**

T3M learned from Bueltmann’s historical research that activist organisations became more effective by broadening their membership and geographical reach within host countries. To pursue a similar route, T3M required an acute understanding of the needs and concerns of the immigrant groups they claim to represent. This led T3M to again draw on Bueltmann’s research acumen, commissioning her to survey the views of UK-based EU citizens on the government’s EU Settlement Scheme (EUSSS).



Fig.1 Word cloud capturing respondents’ words about how applying for settled status, or the idea of it, felt

Bueltmann collected data from over 3,000 respondents, including over 245,000 words in free-text comments, making this the most extensive record of EU citizens views collected to date. Published in January 2020, the survey results provided T3M, for the first time, with a large-scale, quantifiable picture of the fracturing of community bonds that had taken place since 2016 among EU citizens (fig. 1) [E2]. This proved *‘invaluable’* for T3M, enabling them to *‘better understand and pursue [their] core objectives’* [E1, p1].

Coupled with the public report, Bueltmann provided internal analysis for T3M, which helped it to assess the survey (and what it meant for the organisation), by comparing the findings with the history and successes of earlier immigrant associations [E1, p5-26]. The results proved vital for operational planning, convincing T3M that effective engagement with grassroots supporters, including its 40,000 strong forum membership, is critical to their continued success. T3M confirmed how the report *‘revealed the importance of local-level participation beyond our usual strongholds of London and Bristol’*, necessitating increased *‘grassroot buy-in’* [E1, p3]. Bueltmann’s historical insights were thus reinforced by the survey, convincing T3M to understand the need to link immigrant groups across regions and to build higher levels of public participation into their activities.

In response to the outlined findings, T3M reconceived the scope and purpose of their planned 'This is Our Home' tour, launched in March 2020. Originally intended as simply a publicity tour, T3M confirmed that *'in a significant departure from what was originally envisaged, the revised tour placed a greater emphasis on strong grassroots and local engagement'* [E1, p3]. Planned information events for example, were developed into grassroots engagement workshops, such as the popular 'Euro Cafes' [E1, p3; E3, p9]. Scheduled to run until May 2020, the tour was curtailed due to the Covid19 lockdown, but it still reached cities in all four UK nations. This success allowed T3M to build closer links with its membership, engage with local councils and representatives from devolved administrations, and host vital public information sessions [E3, E4]. The tour offered T3M *'unprecedented insights into the national picture of our movement, supporters and grassroots'* and was *'an eye-opener'* in terms of what *'a more locally-focused model'* can achieve [E1, p3].

#### 4.3 Enhanced T3M's Effectiveness as an Advocacy Body

Bueltmann's historical research directly benefited T3M's advocacy work and ability to influence policy development at Westminster. T3M noted how it *'allowed us to underpin our lobbying activities with a substantial body of evidence ...supporting our fundamental campaigning and policy objectives'* [E1, p2].

The EUSS report was launched at an event hosted by the Foreign Press Association and received extensive media coverage [E1, p2; E5]. Lord Greaves (Liberal Democrat peer), cited the report in the House of Lords, emphasising the detailed work of Bueltmann and the *'phenomenal response rate'*, which he hoped would inform deliberations in relation to the EU withdrawal agreement [E6, p4]. Similarly, the Home Affairs Select Committee made a formal request for clarification from the Government by directly referencing the *'report published by the 3million and Northumbria University...which found that nearly 90% of EU citizens surveyed were unhappy with receiving only a digital status [rather than physical documentation]'* [E7, p2]. On the strength of the report, T3M were invited to give oral evidence to the Future Relationship with the EU Commons Select Committee (7 July 2020), further cementing their position as recognised experts concerning the issue of EU Citizens rights [E8, 10:10min].

Working with Bueltmann also enabled T3M *'to reach an entirely new audience and more diverse political stakeholders'* [E1, p2], including the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), an internationally recognised Social Democratic thinktank. Bueltmann prepared several policy briefs for the FES and its stakeholders, including its 'Endangered Rights' policy brochure (2018: 5,000+ downloads). This facilitated policy discussions with key political stakeholders, regarding the adoption of T3M's recommended 'Citizens' Rights Protocol'. As the FES Director explained, Bueltmann *'has supported us a great deal in explaining these relevant political issues to our stakeholders in the UK and Germany and helped raise the political awareness in both countries'* [E9]. Similarly, T3M's policy agenda informed Bueltmann's discussions with the Europe Minister of the State of Lower Saxony (February 2019), and a delegation of state MPs from the Berlin Senate (April 2019) [E9]. Just as the diasporic associations of the past sought to protect their interests across national lines, so too has Bueltmann's partnership with T3M resulted in a deeper engagement with its membership and extended its reach as their advocate.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	Testimonial and Analysis - Communications Manager, T3M	Enhancement of Strategy and Operations at T3M
E2	Newsletter – CEO, T3M	Enhancement of Strategy and Operations at T3M
E3	Evaluation - 'This is our home' report, T3M	Enhancement of Strategy and Operations at T3M

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E4	Testimonial - Scottish Minister for Migration	Enhancement of Strategy and Operations at T3M
E5	Media coverage - EUSSS Report (Spring, 2020)	Informing Policy Discussions and Debate relating to EU Citizens Rights
E6	Hansard - Lord Greaves, HoL. EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill (14 Jan 2020)	Informing Policy Discussions and Debate relating to EU Citizens Rights
E7	Letter - Home Office Select Cmmt. to Home Sec. (3 Mar 2020)	Informing Policy Discussions and Debate relating to EU Citizens Rights
E8	Hansard - Link to video extract from Future Relationship with the EU Cmmt. (7 Jul 2020)	Informing Policy Discussions and Debate relating to EU Citizens Rights
E9	Testimonial – Director, FES, London Office	Informing Policy Discussions and Debate relating to EU Citizens Rights