Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia

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Context

Long history of Polish and other migration to UK –

**CHOICE**

The accession (A8) - the facts?

### Polish migration

#### UK migration statistics

“not fit for purpose…. little better than a best guess”

- **A8 migration**
  - Nino: 1,708,030
  - WRS: 1,134,711
  - Census: 1,100,000

- **May 2004 – May 2011**
  - Nino: 950,570
  - WRS: 705,890
  - Census: 654,000

**A new type of migration?**
The government policy response

A crisis of governance?

• Joint working and alliances

• National policy discord?

Coalition and Labour policy now very much support this trajectory
Xenophobia

Project investigate moral panics and Polish migration:

- Data 124 questionnaires and 46 semi-structured interviews in the north – today talk about questionnaire responses.

Over half (63 of 124) of respondents had experienced some form of xenophobic incident. Of which 14 incidents were at work;

- Where I live I was verbally abused
- my car was damaged and my home window was damaged...

- Often it happens in poor districts of Manchester like Salford...
- Frequent attacks on our estates, broken fences, broken glass...
- you can feel it when listening TV programmes that cover migrant issues.
- ...neighbour called me Polish whore...
- ...said I should leave country because Englishman cannot get a job...
- ...statement about taking British jobs...
Integration

Integrated into British society?:

53 out of 124 felt integrated;

yes, good relations with people and neighbours. Yes, I feel integrated into British society, because generally they are fantastic people....

Yes, I am accepted and feel good in the community...

I guess I am generally yes, it’s hard to integrate with indigenous population but it’s even harder to integrate with your Polish migrant fellows.

I have good relations...

I probably have more British friends than Poles.

Membership of UK organisations:

- 11 were trade union members

- 5 involved in other UK NGOs

(Church – volunteer at social services – free interpretation for organisations – drug addition).

yes, I live and work exclusively with the British
Integration

But only 39 felt integrated into their local Polish community;

9 worked with a Polish community organisation;

Interestingly there were 12 poor comments about fellow Poles;

...I am not surprised about bad opinions that are circulating about Poles...

No, because Polish community is full of envy...

...work in the factory for 12 hours - sort of Polish hell...

...in my town Poles do not want to integrate...

...do not speak English and have many pretentions.

...there is strong social distance among them [Poles] based on class and status...
Future research: Community formation

Our approach is to explore xenophobia further through a greater understanding of Polish community formation;

With so many new entrants we should expect to see diversity and indeed group formations around status and class;

Initially xenophobia seems to be less against those who are professional or middle class;

Overall we believe this formation around group ‘identity’ is a fruitful area of study.