

CRONEM
Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and
Multiculturalism

University of Surrey

Research Report for the RES-000-22-1294 ESRC project:

Class and Ethnicity - Polish Migrants in
London

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BACKGROUND

Theoretical Note

This research explored the relationship between ethnicity and social class in the context of migratory movements between Poland and Britain. We interpreted ethnicity as ‘an aspect of relationship, not a cultural property of a group’¹ and we focussed on how ethnicity is produced, perceived and interpreted, drawing on the approach taken by Barth² who places ethnicity in the context of boundary maintenance and power relations.

As for social class the tradition, which has developed from Lockwood’s analysis of how employment relations determined class, fitted well with the quantitative aspect of our study. Here class is seen as ‘a characteristic not of people but of locations within the division of labour’.³ However, in the qualitative part of our project we concentrate on the more complex world of people’s understandings of class in both London and Poland. As Reid notes ‘it is hardly surprising that deeper or indirect questions elicit increasingly complex or even conflicting shades of recognition and understanding of social class’.⁴ As another commentator puts it:

*it is more than income, [it] is rather a complicated mixture of the material, the discursive, psychological predispositions and sociological dispositions being played out in interactions with each other in the social field.*⁵

Class, therefore, has to be placed in a social and cultural context where people relate to others in an individualised hierarchy of difference.⁶ While these new theories of class are

¹ T. H. Eriksen (1993) *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, London: Pluto Press p. 34

² F. Barth (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Boston: Little and Brown

³ E. Harrison (2006) ‘Social class in Britain’, *ISER Newsletter*, p. 1

⁴ I. Reid (1988) *Class in Britain*, London: Polity, p. 43.

⁵ D. Reay (1998) ‘Rethinking social class: Qualitative perspectives on gender and social class’, *Sociology*, 32: 259-75.

⁶ See D. Reay (1998) *Class Work*, London: UCL Press; B. Skeggs (1997) *Formations of Class and Gender*, London: Sage; M. Savage (2000) *Class Analysis and Social Transformation*, Oxford: OUP.

very useful for our analysis Bottero notes that they still slip ‘between different meanings of “class”, and the continuing influence of older models’ which has made them ‘reluctant to address issues of hierarchy itself’. She recommends restricting ‘class’ to:

those explicitly ‘classed’ discourses which emerge when organizational cultures, social networks, or politicized representations combine to create perceptions of social identity and social division in specifically ‘economic terms’. Individualized and implicit processes of positional inequality are better described as social stratification or hierarchy.⁷

Bottero’s point is well made but the debate about class in Britain is still restricted by a failure to address adequately the problems involved when applying the concept of class to the study of migrants and their transnational life strategies. The debate has been primarily confined within the border of the nation-state, revealing the bias of methodological nationalism where processes outside national boundaries are analytically ignored.⁸ The transnational migrants, whom we interviewed, vividly illustrate the inadequacies of methodological nationalism since they use several reference points and different kinds of capital to construct their social class position. Their employment relations and life strategies transcend national borders and their position in an ‘individualised hierarchy of difference’ is related to other hierarchies where different rules of social relations and classifications may apply.

It is no surprise then that migrants’ relatively recent, open-ended and, in many cases, transient stay in Britain deeply influences their understandings of social class – a process which is also shaped by the transition to a free market economy within Poland.⁹ The importance of process means that we have to understand social class in the context of

⁷ W. Bottero (2004) ‘Class identities and the identity of class’, *Sociology*, 38 (5): 1000.

⁸ N. Glick Schiller and A. Wimmer (2003) ‘Methodological Nationalism, the Social Science and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology’, *International Migration Review*, 37, 576-610.

⁹ H. Domański (2002) *Polska klasa średnia*, Wrocław; A. Giza Poleszczuk, and A. Rychard (2000) *Strategie i system*, IFIS PAN, Warszawa; H. Domański and A. Rychard (1997) *Elementy nowego ładu*, IFIS PAN, Warszawa; J. Frentzel-Zagórska and J. Wasilewski (2000) *The Second Generation of Democratic Elites in Central and Eastern Europe*, Institute of Political Studies, Warszawa.

time. It is exactly the temporal, fluid and fast changing dimension of social class construction and identification in a transnational context that our approach has revealed.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Questions

1. What can quantitative data on Poles in Britain tell us about Polish migrant workers who have migrated to London?
2. In what terms do Polish migrant workers understand their socio-economic position within London's market and in what ways can their understandings be analysed in terms of analytical distinctions between class and ethnicity?
3. In what terms do Polish migrant workers in London understand their socio-economic position in Poland and in what ways can their understandings be analysed in terms of analytical distinctions between class and ethnicity?
4. In what ways are their understandings of their socio-economic position in London related to their lifestyles?
5. What are the social and economic links they maintain with relatives and friends in Poland?

Aims and Objectives of Research

1. Demonstrate the continuing importance of class for an understanding of minority communities in Britain
2. Complement the preoccupation in migration research with 'black and Asian' minority communities, asylum seekers and refugees through an analysis of recent migration from Eastern Europe
3. Bridge the customary divide between quantitative and qualitative research by relating existing quantitative data to new data generated through qualitative methods.
4. Look beyond the local and national contexts of class and ethnicity through research undertaken in both London and Poland.

METHODS

The quantitative aspect of the project was mainly based on the analysis of large scale microdata, in particular the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Census. Standard labour economics techniques, as well as those used in quantitative sociology, were then applied to these microdata (e.g. augmented Mincerian wage equations and limited dependent variable models of social class outcomes). Both occupational and earnings measures of social class were examined because some authors have criticised the categorical nature of the occupational-based measures.¹⁰ The occupational measure of social class, however, is based on the NS-SEC variable, developed by David Rose and David Pevalin, following a thorough review of such measures. The relatively small sample provided by the LFS means that Polish respondents in London could not be examined separately but this could be achieved using Census microdata.¹¹ LFS data were also compared with the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) because of the relatively small sample in the former. The personal and labour market characteristics of A8 migrants were found to be very similar in the two data sources. As well as confirming the accuracy of the LFS data, analysis of the WRS also served the purpose of providing the information needed to ensure that the sample of interviews in the qualitative part of the project was made as representative as possible.

The qualitative data came from 50 in-depth interviews and participant observation¹². Multi-sited ethnography has been applied and additionally 19 people in five different (urban/rural) locations across Poland were interviewed. The London respondents were chosen in the light of the demographic data from the WRS and LFS, while those in

¹⁰ See, for example, M. B. Stewart (1983) 'Racial discrimination and occupational attainment in Britain', *Economic Journal*, 93: 521-41.

¹¹ Although the 2001 Census pre-dates the large wave of migrants who moved to the UK following EU enlargement in May 2004, the LFS reveals that the characteristics of those who moved immediately prior to enlargement was almost identical to those who arrived immediately afterwards. Also the WRS indicates that unlike previous cohorts of immigrants, the most recent wave of Polish migrants has tended not to locate in London, with only 14% of A8 migrants moving to the capital since May 2004.

¹² For the interview guide, along with some more fine ethnographic details, see the interim report: www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM

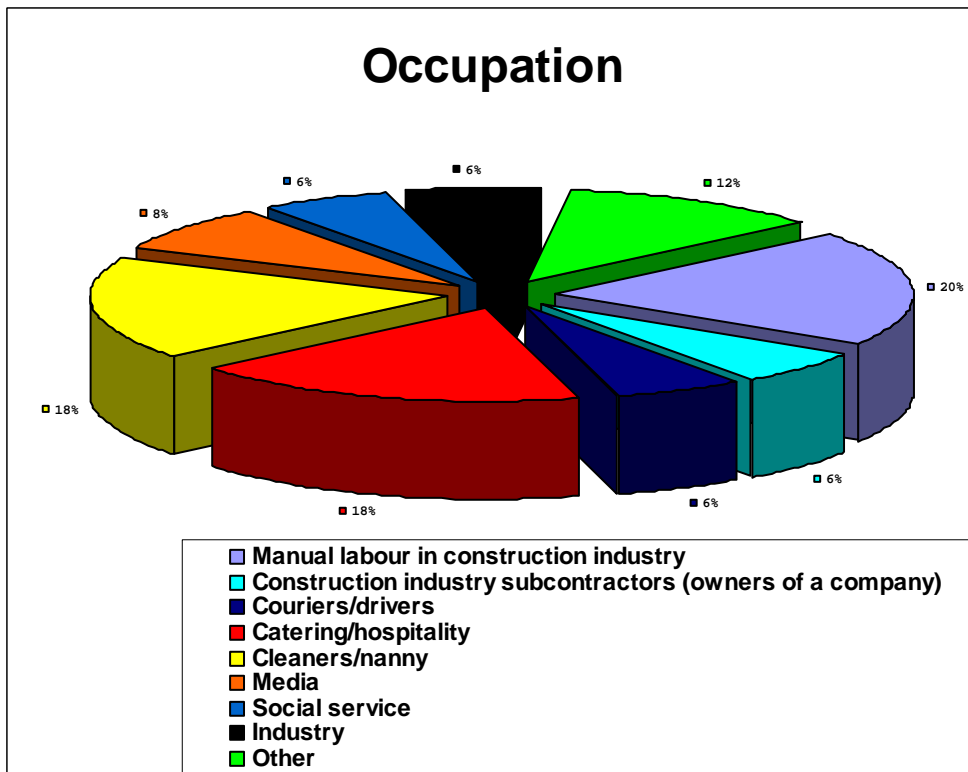
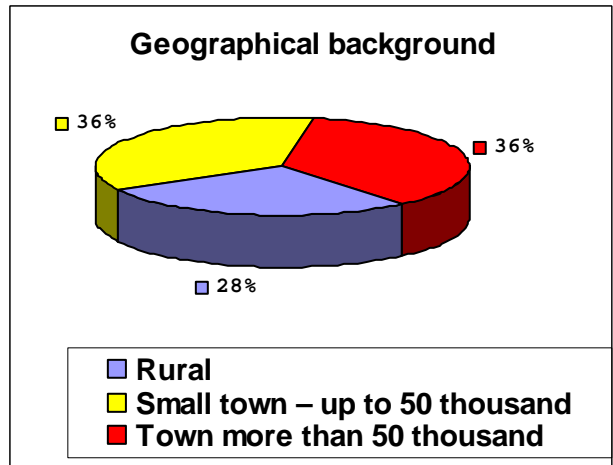
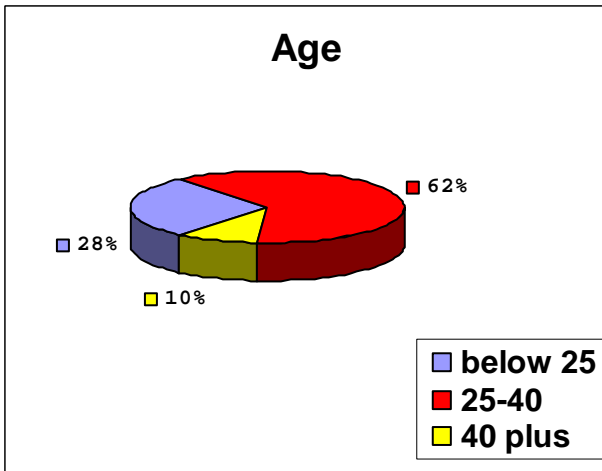
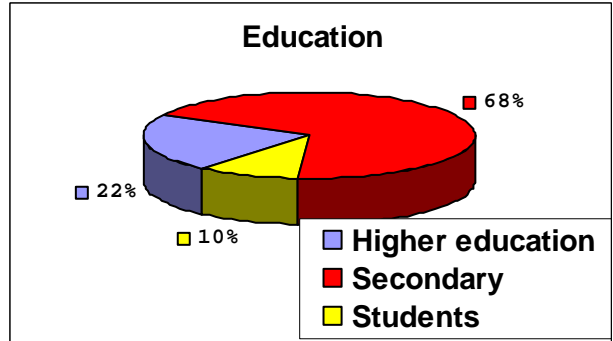
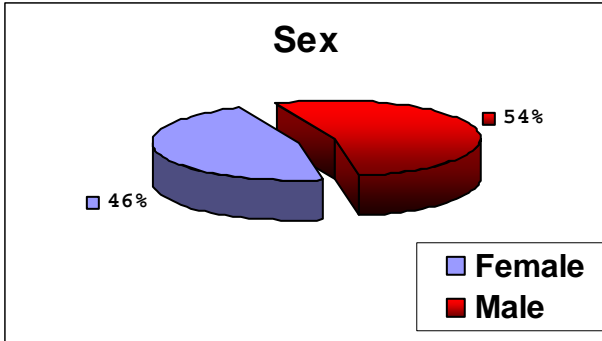
Poland were chosen from the friends or family of the London respondents. Care was taken not to rely too much on snow-balling and to select people from different social environments. 26% respondents were recruited through friends or relatives of people already interviewed, others were contacted through the researcher's networks but to avoid the 'interviewer effect' almost half of the respondents were recruited randomly in accordance with the demographic characteristics outlined above. By using these different methods of recruitment we contacted as wide a variety of migrants as possible. Nevertheless, as in most migration studies in such a dynamic and fluid social environment, the representativeness of our sample should be treated with care.

Use was also made of a large survey conducted by CRONEM which looked at Polish migrants across Britain exploring their migratory patterns and intentions about staying¹³. Also content of the media based in London and in Poland was monitored.

Interviews were conducted in Polish, then translated, transcribed, coded and analysed using the Envivo7 qualitative software package. As some expressions were left in Polish (in order not to lose the semantic context), an interviewer-reader help-tool was designed in the form of a Polish-English ethnographic glossary. All the interviews, along with the glossary and additional documentation, are being stored at the University of Essex's QualiData unit.

¹³ The survey results are available on www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM

LONDON SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS:



RESULTS

1. Earnings

Recent Polish migrants have mainly found employment in low paid jobs. For example, the LFS data revealed that average earnings were just over £6 an hour for both Polish and other A8 migrants arriving after 2003.¹⁴ This was much less than the earnings of post-enlargement migrants (e.g. average earnings for Other European migrants was £10.52 an hour). Furthermore, Poles and other A8 migrants arriving before 2000 also earned over £11 an hour but the earnings of A8 immigrants arriving earlier in this decade were only slightly higher than those arriving after May 2004. However, although Poles were similar in age and levels of education to Other A8 migrants, they benefited least from education and experience. It was also found that the returns from education were lower for recent Polish arrivals compared with earlier cohorts of Polish migrants.

2. Social Class

Wage information from the LFS also revealed that around three-quarters of recent Polish and other A8 migrants are employed in semi-routine and routine jobs. This situation contrasts sharply with other recent immigrants to the UK, since 68% from English-speaking countries and 42% of other Europeans had professional/managerial jobs, compared with less than 10% from the A8 countries. Large proportions of earlier cohorts of migrants from A8 countries had also entered high level or intermediate/skilled occupations, although a lower percentage of A8 migrants arriving between 2000 and 2003 were managers and professionals. Given these findings, we investigated the social class of those born in Poland in further detail using the 1991 Sample of Anonymised Records and 2001 Controlled Access Microdata Sample. These datasets were helpful since the 2001 Census revealed that London was the only area to experience an increase in the Polish population between 1991 and 2001, whereas the fall in the percentage of the

¹⁴ Earnings data are based on pooling Quarterly LFS data up to June 2006 and are reported in May 2004 prices. The earnings information reported here is consistent with information in the WRS and in the COMPAS survey (see <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus>). For example, 80% of WRS respondents earned between £4.50 and £6.50 an hour and mean earnings were £5.94 in the COMPAS survey.

Polish-born in all other regions was at least 12%.¹⁵ This suggests that relatively large numbers of young Polish migrants started to move to London before 2004. Regression models indicated that Poles living in London were still significantly more likely to be in managerial/professional jobs and were less likely to be in partly skilled/skilled occupations in 2001. However, these differentials had narrowed compared to 1991. There were no significant differences within London according to whether individuals lived in areas that had experienced an increase in Polish migrants between 1991 and 2001, compared with those which had suffered a decline. The importance of higher level qualifications in determining social class outcomes was evident in both years, although the possession of such qualifications had a larger impact in 1991.

3. Meritocracy and Migration

The qualitative part of the research put the above findings into a much more dynamic perspective. Interviews included a question taken from the International Social Survey Programme¹⁶ on perceptions of inequality. Respondents were asked to locate Poland and the UK within a model and then indicate where they saw themselves in that distribution. 76% saw Poland sharply divided between a small elite and a vast mass of people. In contrast, 84% saw Britain as a predominantly middle class society based on merit where social mobility is more achievable than in Poland.

ISSP strata visualisation	ISSP self-positioning:												
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Poland:</td> <td>UK:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A: 54%</td> <td>A: 2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B: 22%</td> <td>B: 2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C: 14%</td> <td>C: 22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D: 6%</td> <td>D: 42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E: 0%</td> <td>E: 20%</td> </tr> </table>	Poland:	UK:	A: 54%	A: 2%	B: 22%	B: 2%	C: 14%	C: 22%	D: 6%	D: 42%	E: 0%	E: 20%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Higher/better socio-economic position; more chances and more perspectives for the future than in Poland: 58% 2) Loss of status, social position: 14% 3) Same as in Poland, no difference in social position: 14% 4) "I don't see myself here (in UK)": 12%
Poland:	UK:												
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¹⁵ Falls of at least 30% were reported in the North West, Yorkshire & Humberside, the Midlands, Scotland and Wales. There were also large differences with respect to age since the median age of Poles living in London fell from 64 to 48 between 1991 and 2001, whereas it increased from 67 to 74 in the rest of Britain.

¹⁶ Details on that question are available in the interim report: www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM

4. Migration Pattern and Social Class

The respondents overwhelmingly constructed their class position in terms of their perceived life chances and plans. Their relatively recent arrival led them to understand class, in contrast to the British majority,¹⁷ in terms of the opportunities that lay ahead rather than an occupational or economic position held at present. Not surprisingly, 86% stressed that what was crucial was not ‘occupation’ or ‘earnings’ but the person’s qualities as a worker and ‘how well’ the job was done. This approach towards class treated current occupation and social position in highly temporal and transient terms.

The respondents’ understanding of their class position depended heavily on their migration strategy, settlement plans and the extent to which they were engaged in transnational activities. It is, therefore, logical to categorise them on the basis of their migratory strategies and we have developed the following typology.¹⁸

- *Storks* (20%) – circular migrants¹⁹ who are found mostly in low paid occupations (catering, construction industry, domestic service). They include different types of seasonal migrants - farmers commuting to London’s building sites in winter, students working during the summer in the catering industry in London to pay for their tuition fees in Poland, others working in London but returning to their Polish universities, sometimes twice a month. *Storks* usually stay between 2 and 6 months. Since they mostly arrange employment and accommodation through their Polish relatives or friends, they tend to be clustered in dense Polish social networks which sometimes encourage suspicion and competition between co-ethnics. Their commuting behaviour often becomes a long-term

¹⁷ Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 43.

¹⁸ The proportions in each of the categories is consistent with the CRONEM survey undertaken by in July 2006 for BBC *Newsnight*.

¹⁹This is one of most characteristic modes of migration from Eastern Europe, see M. Okólski, ‘The Transformation of Spatial Mobility and New Forms of International Population Movements: Incomplete Migration in Central and Eastern Europe’ in W. J. Dacyl (ed.) (2001) *Challenges of Cultural Diversity in Europe* (Stockholm: CEIFO).

strategy and the means of survival hence they regard their economic status as improving but mainly with reference to the economic situation in Poland.

- *Hamsters* (16%) – migrants who treat their move as a one-off act to acquire enough capital to invest in Poland. Compared with *Storks* their stays in the UK are longer and uninterrupted. Like *Storks*, they tend to treat their migration as only a capital-raising activity. They also tend to cluster in particular low-earning occupations and are often embedded in Polish networks and see their migration as a source of social mobility back home.
- *Searchers* (42%) – those who keep their options deliberately open. This group consists predominantly of young, individualistic and ambitious migrants. They occupy a range of occupational positions from low-earning to highly skilled and professional jobs. They emphasise the unpredictability of their migratory plans – a strategy we have termed *intentional unpredictability*. *Searchers* focus on increasing social and economic capital, both in Poland and UK, and prepare for any possible opportunity such as pursuing a career in London, returning to Poland when the economic situation improves or migrating elsewhere. Their refusal to confine themselves to one nation-state setting underlines their adaptation to a flexible, deregulated and increasingly transnational, post-modern capitalist labour market.²⁰
- *Stayers* (22%) – those who have been in the UK for some time and intend to remain for good. This group also represents respondents with strong social mobility ambitions. However, this is the only group which explicitly

²⁰ Supporting evidence for this also comes from the WRS about intentions to stay where the question ‘How long do you think you will stay in the UK?’ is asked. The responses to this question reflect the contingency and fluidity of the migration flows since around 43% stated that they intended to stay less than 3 months, whilst 48% left the question unanswered or ticked the ‘I don’t know’ box.

stresses the existence of social class in Britain and its role in determining social mobility.

5. Social Mobility and Rite of Passage

Class perceptions among these four types of migrants strategically engage different reference points. *Hamsters* and *Storks* relate their social class position to the economic and social position in Poland, literally converting their London earnings into Polish currency. They believe that migration has improved their status because of the focus on their earning power in Poland. This explains why the British public sees them as having a strong ‘work ethic’, since their strategy is to maximise earnings and minimise the time needed to achieve this. Because *Searchers* and *Stayers* are more open to the prospect of living in the UK for longer, they emphasise most the openness of the British class system, where opportunities for the ambitious and hard working individuals are plentiful. They stress the amount and variety of opportunities available in London and emphasise other forms of capital crucial in a meritocratic environment, such as acquiring a language, becoming more mature, learning to sustain oneself, getting the know-how to operate in a capitalist labour market and living in a global city.

Given the age distribution of migrants, migration is seen by many as a rite of passage into adult life, a *school of life* – as most of them put it. Female respondents, in particular, mention this in the context of moving from the parental home ‘growing up’ and becoming independent. Working below one’s qualifications and de-skilling – however sometimes bitterly felt - is acceptable as long as it is for a short time and other forms of capital are acquired during that period.²¹

It may seem paradoxical that migrants mainly employed in low paid jobs see their social class position as having improved. However, this is only the case if we take a static, non-processual and state-centric view of migration. Most migrants emphasise the opportunities for social mobility which lie ahead and these opportunities are contrasted with a seemingly protectionist, non-meritocratic and anti-business Polish labour market.

²¹ This supports the findings of the COMPAS study, *Changing Status, Changing Lives*, see p. 39.

6. De-Localisation of Class: Subjective and Objective Aspects of Class in Transnational Context

Since most respondents see their current occupation as temporary, either because of their migration strategies (*Storks, Hamsters*) or their potential social mobility (*Searchers, Stayers*), there is a sharp contrast between people's objective class position (occupation) and their subjective understanding of class. As the quantitative analysis has shown, many recent Polish migrants have relatively high levels of education despite the majority being employed in low waged jobs. However, their perception of social class is constructed dynamically in relation to projected opportunities rather than their current position in the labour market. Their transient attitude to their current occupation and an 'open options' strategy explains their clustering in low paid occupations despite their educational levels. This low return to education relates also to the strong criticism expressed by some respondents about the compatibility of Polish educational system with the modern capitalist labour market.

Although the dual character of social class has been noted in previous studies²², our research contains another dimension – the transnational construction of class. This results in the de-localisation of class identity, where individuals dynamically interpret their position with reference to several stratification systems. This strategy is maintained through actively participating in the economic and social life in Poland. Hence from our sample:

- 80% of our respondents make frequent visits to Poland, generally ranging from 3 to 12 times a year.
- 70% of respondents maintain strong economic and social interests in Poland – e.g. buying land, investing in real estate, business or education, job seeking, voting etc.

²² Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-44.

- 26% have bought or are planning to buy a flat or house from money earned in London.

7. Polish Ethnic Identity

Most respondents present what may be termed as an individualised and situational attitude towards their ethnicity. Half of the respondents, predominantly the young, expressed a mild attachment to Polish identity typically stating that ‘one should not judge the other on the basis of their nationality’. These ‘cosmopolitans’ defined themselves as Polish but their belief in British meritocracy, their largely positive attitude towards multicultural diversity and the *Searchers*’ strategy of keeping their options open made that definition compatible with other dimensions of identity.

Criticism of fellow Poles was one of the interviews’ most striking features. This criticism is made even more interesting since the interviews indicated that the vast majority of migrants maintained close ties with Poles in both the UK and Poland and are embedded (especially *Storks* and *Hamsters*) within Polish networks, both socially and economically. This combination of discursive hostility (60% report that they would not like to work for a Polish employer, 80% speak of shame from some Poles ‘staining’ the reputation of the group and 62% believe that one should be careful in contact with Poles) and ethnic cooperation became one of the main focuses of our analysis.

The conclusion is that for respondents, ethnicity is an ambiguous concept since it can be both a resource for accessing capital, networks and information and a source of disappointment, vulnerability and social class transgression. Through ethnic categorizing by the outsiders, individualistic migrants are being associated with people they would rather avoid contact with. Hence the horizontal ties of ethnicity are contested and replaced by individually constructed vertical class divisions between migrants, which are shaped by different occupational niches in London and the influence of different educational and class backgrounds in Poland.

Unsurprisingly, this attitude is shared by migrants occupying the same labour market niches, notably in the construction industry. Direct competition seems to result in deep suspicion and can lead to inequality and exploitation. There is also a clear gender

division, with almost 80% of males reporting that one should be careful when doing business with co-ethnics, compared with only 50% of females. These findings imply that ethnic solidarity is a domain of ideal rather than day to day agency. We find that by discursive hostility towards co-ethnics, individuals communicate ‘warnings’ against treating ethnicity as the sole basis of trust and cooperation – another aspect of importance of individualistic attitudes of these migrants.

The relationship between Poles, therefore, tends to be opportunistic and individualistic, while pragmatically contesting dominant views on ethnic solidarity. People carefully manoeuvre between obligations of ethnic ties and own interests, but in contrary to previous research²³ show high levels of mutual cooperation by engaging in chain migration, information and resources exchange through their dense family, friends or regional networks (the boom in the ethnic labour market being another point). However, class and ethnicity conflict is common. Sometimes it drives people to engage in social mimesis by hiding their ethnicity to avoid being unfavourably judged by the British majority. Again this is pragmatically driven since they see the behaviour of other Poles as a potential liability which may affect their chances in the labour market.

Ethnicity also becomes a source of division in London’s local and transnational political arena since the established, post-WWII diaspora and newcomers now compete for public recognition in both Britain and Poland.²⁴

8. Transnational Chain Migration and the Future

Research in Poland shows that migration chains established well before EU enlargement are now fully operational. As *Hamsters* or *Storks* return to Poland, new ones leave. Whilst migration from Poland has increased dramatically, as we have seen the flow is predominantly open ended, short term and circular. The well functioning network, which has evolved, puts each type of migrant into a special, interdependent and interconnected

²³ B. Jordan (2002) ‘Migrant Polish workers in London: Mobility, labour markets and prospects for democratic development’, Paper presented at the *Beyond Transition: Development Perspectives and Dilemmas* Conference, Warsaw, April 12-13, 2002.

²⁴ For more details, see M. Garapich, ‘Odyssean Refugees, Migrants and Power: Construction of the Other within the Polish “community” in the UK’ www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM

relationship. *Storks* and *Hamsters*, in order to minimise risks associated with moving and maximise earnings in the least possible time, rely strongly on the *Searchers* and *Stayers* whose networks and local knowledge are much more rooted in the UK. For example, the employers in the construction industry in our sample were both *Searchers* and *Stayers* who employed mainly *Storks* and *Hamsters*.

The role of *Searchers* is crucial since they are keen to raise their own social and human capital in both countries simultaneously in order to keep their options open. They do this mainly by facilitating the migration chain and helping others to find work sometimes becoming informal job brokers. They represent the best example of a de-localised social class where social position and status depends on several reference points in more than one country. Furthermore, as *Searchers* settle, they can assist future waves of *Storks* and *Hamsters*, thus contributing to increased numbers involved in the migration system.

9. London's Cultural Diversity

The perception of a meritocratic and classless Britain contrasts with most respondents' belief that the divisions in London lie along ethnic and racial lines. In this racial and ethnic hierarchy they locate themselves as 'white' people rather than as Poles. Moreover, 54% state or implicitly suggest that 'whiteness' is an important feature in British society and assume a presence of a hierarchy of belonging in Britain. Many also consider 'whiteness' to be an asset and that white minorities are treated better than non-white people. Yet when talking about 'whiteness', respondents usually link it to English employers/friends/public attitudes towards Poles in general. This means that as Poles enter the web of social and economic interactions, they need to reassert their position within the hierarchy of groups. Emphasising their whiteness/Europeanness puts them into a strong position within this hierarchy. In contrast to ethnicity, which carries the danger of being associated with Poles from the wrong social class, an emphasis on race assumes membership within the dominant white English group, which also occupies higher social class position. This emphasis on 'whiteness' is encouraged by sections of the white

majority²⁵ and by comments from some media and politicians about the similarities between Poles and Britons as white, European and Christian²⁶ implying a cultural distance from other minorities.

The experience of London's diversity has resulted in 54% of respondents expressing enthusiastic to positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and treating it as one of the city's main strengths and attractions. At the same time approximately a third of the respondents disagreed and regarded ethnic diversity as abnormal. For them Poland's ethnic homogeneity was the desirable state of affairs and they expressed mild to strong racist views. This wide range of attitudes towards race was reflected in the response to the question about their reaction to their son/daughter getting into a relationship with someone of a different skin colour. 50% said that they would not have a problem, while 38% were more reluctant to accept it and 12% were not sure.

Almost all believe that London's diversity would be impossible in Poland. This implies that migration and living in a multicultural city has changed respondents' perceptions, leading them to criticise what they see as Polish intolerance. Such a change shows that multicultural London provides migrants with social and cognitive skills for pragmatically managing cultural difference in everyday interactions. Despite the overtly racist views expressed by a minority, even these respondents admitted that one can 'get used to it', that living in London requires tolerance and that multiculturalism is a fact of life, not an abstract ideology.

²⁵ Further evidence of this can be found in the CRONEM survey, where 90% of Poles thought they had been favourably or very favourably received by the British public.

²⁶ For more on this see the interim report: www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM