

Polish Migrants in London and European Enlargement: social networks, transience and settlement

This one-year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) examines the experiences of recent Polish migrants to London. Poland's membership of the European Union in May 2004 opened up new opportunities for legal employment in Britain, and has brought a substantial increase in migration. Little is known about how EU enlargement is impacting on the plans of these new migrants, and whether new patterns of migration to Britain are developing which reflect neither the permanent settlement of past generations nor the extreme transience of the past decade.

The project will investigate the implications of EU membership for the migratory strategies of recent migrants, and their decisions about migration, return and settlement. It will explore the diversity of current migratory strategies, particularly in relation to gender and family situation; their short-term plans and longer term aspirations, and their sense of belonging in London and Poland. A key focus will be on the networks they use to help them find work, accommodation and social support, and the different ways in which men and women use social networks.

The project aims to:

- contribute to our understanding of transnational migration, the factors encouraging transience and permanence in migratory strategies.
- provide information about the experiences and needs of Polish migrants which will be of interest to service providers and policy makers.

Research Methods

Fieldwork will take place from March-July 2006 and includes:

- interviews with **key informants** with experience of working with the Polish community to explore their understandings of recent patterns of migration and settlement;
- focus groups and interviews with **individual migrants** to explore their reasons for migration; attitudes to living in Britain, plans for the future and changes since May 2004; and their main sources of support in Britain and Poland.

If you would be interested in participating the research, or would like further details, please contact the research team. The study findings will be presented to a workshop to which participants will be invited.

The research Team

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