**Undocumented Migrants, Ethnic Enclaves and Networks: *Opportunities, traps or class-based constructs***

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*Findings: undocumented migrants*

Reasons for migration varied; most often it was economically motivated or due to fear of persecution. A number of interviewees used smugglers or agents to organise their journeys, resulting in debts. Others entered on visas.

Work was found through existing or newly developed social networks. Over time routes into work expanded to include previous employers and individual strategies such as the internet, community newspapers and cold calling.

Fewer women were currently working than men usually because they had young children. However their lives were isolated; for some dependency on a partner was problematic.

Clustered in a small range of largely unskilled and less regulated workplaces, there were few opportunities for vertical mobility and limited possibility of horizontal movement between sectors. Work was characterised by low pay, generally below minimum wage. They felt themselves disadvantaged relative to other workers. Little choice was exercised in the workplace, a minority were able to exert individual agency to make incremental job progression through skills’ acquisition and expanding social networks.

Government policy, especially sanctions, created high levels of fear but had negated the need for work. The consequences appeared to be a worsening of terms and conditions and a greater vulnerability among some undocumented migrants.

The lack of a formal immigration status was the lens through which undocumented migrants lived their everyday social and economic lives. It informed all decision-making and inhibited wider non-community social networks, limited spatially mobility and negatively impacted on any potential for integration and rights’ claiming. It also created greater levels of dependency on employers and co-ethnic networks, increasing potential for exploitation.

There was a hierarchy based on immigration status, however these were more complex and intersected also with class, religion (sects) and caste.

*Findings: employers*

Some went into business because of discrimination and blocked opportunities. Others came from families with a history of entrepreneurship.

Decisions about who to employ were informed by skills’ shortages consequent on immigration controls, small low profit margin businesses, trust derived from social networks and obligations.

Employers were aware of sanctions, knew the implications of breaching employment regulations and carefully weighed up whom they employed and in what capacity. Tactics to minimise risks included: short-term employment and employing small numbers of undocumented migrants. Fewer claimed they employed undocumented migrants than in the past. There was clear evidence that social networks, kinship, community, political obligations, ethnic and political solidarity, their own experience of being an asylum seeker or undocumented migrant, availability of workers, linguistic, cultural and gender preferences, perceptions of ‘good’ workers, government policy and economic considerations influenced employment decisions.

Stereotypical concepts were adopted of what constituted a good worker based on ethnicity and gender.

Trust was a unifying aspect of the ways in which both employers and undocumented migrants operated in relation to employment.